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Vertical Eddy Iron Fluxes Support Primary Production in the Open Southern Ocean

Leading author: Takaya Uchida (takaya.uchida@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr)

Vertical Eddy Iron Fluxes Support Primary Production in the Open Southern Ocean

Takaya Uchida¹, Dhruv Balwada³, Ryan Abernathey^{1,2}, Galen McKinley^{1,2}, Shafer Smith³ & Marina Lévy⁴

¹*Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, Columbia University in the City of New York*

²*Division of Ocean and Climate Physics, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory*

³*Center for Atmosphere Ocean Science, Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences, New York University*

⁴*Laboratoire d’Océanographie et du Climat, Institut Pierre Simon-Laplace*

1 **The primary productivity of the Southern Ocean ecosystem, and associated biological car-**
2 **bon pump, is limited by the availability of the micronutrient iron. Riverine sediments and**
3 **atmospheric dust supply iron at the ocean margins, but in the vast open ocean, iron reaches**
4 **phytoplankton primarily when iron-rich sub-surface waters enter the euphotic zone, link-**
5 **ing vertical transport processes to ecosystem productivity. In addition to mixed-layer en-**
6 **trainment, recent studies in the North Atlantic and Southern Ocean suggest that eddy trans-**
7 **port may be a highly effective pathway for nutrient transport. Here, high-resolution physi-**
8 **cal/biogeochemical simulations of an open-Southern-Ocean ecosystem forced with a realistic**
9 **seasonal cycle reveal that primary production is sustained via iron supply across the mixed**
10 **layer base primarily due to mesoscale and submesoscale turbulence (hereafter “(sub)mesoscale**
11 **eddies”). As model resolution is increased from 20 km to 5 km to 2 km, vertical eddy iron flux**

12 **and phytoplankton biomass increase strongly, despite shoaling of the mixed layer. Diagnostics**
13 **from eddy resolving runs show that the increase in primary production is supported by**
14 **iron supply due to (sub)mesoscale isopycnal stirring. We also highlight that properly tuned**
15 **eddy parametrizations in non-eddy runs can replicate this isopycnal flux and consequently**
16 **the amount of biomass. One important consequence is that iron recycling is second-order im-**
17 **portance in explaining sustained summertime productivity, as eddies continue to supply iron**
18 **to the mixed layer throughout the year. Since eddy mixing rates are sensitive to wind forcing**
19 **and large-scale hydrographic changes, these findings open a new mechanism for modulating**
20 **the Southern Ocean biological pump on climate timescales.**

21 Budgets of iron, the limiting nutrient in the Southern Ocean for primary production (1; 2; 3),
22 estimated from ship-track observations have emphasized the importance of dust deposition, lat-
23 eral transport and recycling of iron, concluding that contributions from upwelling are negligible
24 (4). More recently, however, one-dimensional process studies have highlighted the importance of
25 mixed-layer entrainment (5) and vertical diffusion of iron (6) in regions remote from dust sources.
26 Due to the sparse spatial and temporal coverage of in-situ iron observations and the intermittent
27 nature of iron supply and phytoplankton blooms, a basin-scale view has generally relied on global
28 circulation models (GCMs; 8; 9) and data assimilation products (10). A GCM intercomparison
29 study showed that, although the iron sources and biogeochemical parameters varied widely, the
30 global-mean iron concentrations were largely in agreement, a consequence of model tuning to-
31 wards this target (11). When compared against individual ocean transects, however, the GCMs
32 showed a large inter-model disagreement. This spread was attributed to differences in how each

33 model represented the scavenging of iron. Due to computational constraints, eddy tracer trans-
34 port in GCMs must be parametrized, also potentially causing uncertainty in the physical processes
35 transporting iron (12) and resulting ecosystem.

36 In addition to vertical diapycnal mixing and large-scale circulation, mesoscale eddies (on
37 scales of roughly 20 - 200 km and to first order geostrophically balanced) can make a major con-
38 tribution to tracer transport (13; 14). In the Southern Ocean, upward vertical mesoscale eddy heat
39 fluxes counteract the downward flux of heat due to Ekman pumping (15), and mesoscale eddies
40 help regulate the subduction of anthropogenic carbon from the surface into the interior (12; 16). At
41 even smaller scales where the geostrophic approximation breaks down, submesoscale turbulence
42 (roughly 1 - 20 km and associated with Rossby and Richardson numbers on the order of unity) gen-
43 erates vigorous vertical velocities near the surface (17; 18). In the North Atlantic, submesoscale
44 turbulence has been argued to drive significant transport of nutrients across the mixed-layer base,
45 supporting ecosystem productivity (19). Do eddies play the same role with iron in the Southern
46 Ocean?

47 To our knowledge, this question has only been investigated by examining Lagrangian parti-
48 cle trajectories from a high-resolution numerical simulation of the Kerguelen region. Calculating
49 iron concentration in the reference frame of Lagrangian particles, Rosso (20; 21) argued that sub-
50 mesoscale iron fluxes could enhance primary productivity by a factor of two. While suggestive,
51 their simulation technique did not implement a full ecosystem model, account for the strong sea-
52 sonal cycle in both turbulence and biology, nor include fluxes from vertical mixing or mixed-layer

53 entrainment. The relative contribution of eddies to the open-Southern-Ocean primary productivity
54 therefore warrants further investigation.

55 Here we take a different approach: we run a state-of-the-art numerical simulation at sub-
56 mesoscale permitting resolution in an idealized channel configuration and force the model with
57 a realistic seasonal cycle. Due to the approximate zonal symmetry of the Antarctic Circumpolar
58 Current, such configurations can capture the broad characteristics of Southern Ocean circulation,
59 tracer transport and ventilation (22; 23). The reduced computational cost (compared to a global-
60 scale simulation) enables our model to reach physical and biogeochemical equilibrium, and the
61 simple geometry facilitates straightforward interpretation of the dynamics.

62 **Submesoscale permitting simulation of the open Southern Ocean ecosystem**

63 We use the Massachusetts Institute of Technology general circulation model (24) (MITgcm) with
64 an embedded full ecosystem model (25; 26). The model configuration is identical to a companion
65 paper (27) where we quantify the relative contribution of submesoscale and mesoscale dynamics
66 on the total vertical iron transport. For completeness, details of the set up are also summarised in
67 Text S1 (Supplementary Information). In this study, we focus on the biogeochemical effect of eddy
68 iron transport on primary production and whether eddy parametrizations in non-eddy runs can
69 replicate this unresolved flux. A snapshot of the phytoplankton biomass and iron field in the top
70 300 m on November 1 from the 2 km run, during the height of spring bloom, is shown in Fig. 1.
71 The Rossby deformation radius at the center of the domain is 14 km, so the horizontal resolution

72 of 2 km allows us to observe the imprint of mesoscale coherent features (18), such as fronts and
73 eddies, in both iron and phytoplankton.

74 To simulate the interaction of this region with the rest of the ocean, iron and other nutrients
75 are relaxed to climatological observational profiles at the Northern boundary; in the rest of the
76 domain their concentrations evolve freely based on the simulated circulation and ecosystem. In
77 order to isolate the role of open-ocean transport processes, we do not supply aeolian dust input at
78 the surface or glacial and bathymetric iron sources from the South. The annual-zonal-mean iron
79 transect (Fig. 1c) shows enhanced iron concentrations at depth and strong depletion near the sur-
80 face. A comparison with GEOTRACES iron profiles from the Southern Ocean (Fig. 1d) indicates
81 that our simulation has a realistic ferrocline structure, in contrast with most of the global-scale
82 GCM simulations (11). Deep iron concentrations of roughly $0.4 \mu\text{mol Fe m}^{-3}$ at 1000 m coincide
83 with the observational mean in the ACC, while near-surface concentrations ($0.05 \mu\text{mol Fe m}^{-3}$)
84 are lower than the observational range. This discrepancy is likely due to the lack of aeolian, glacial
85 and bathymetric sources (28), uncertainty in the ecosystem model parameters (11), and potentially
86 due to the lack of storms which have been argued to enhance diffusive entrainment of iron from
87 the interior (29). As a result, iron is the limiting nutrient year round in our simulations, while in
88 the real ACC, silicate limitation is also expected to control diatom growth and transition in phyto-
89 plankton community composition (8; 9). Consequently, primary production in our model is biased
90 slightly low, particularly over the summer (Text S2, Figs. S1, S2). Dust supply maps indicate a
91 supply of dissolved iron to the Southern Ocean on the order of $O(1 \mu\text{mol Fe m}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1})$ assuming
92 10% of total aerosol iron is soluble (30). It is important to note that dust deposition is estimated to

93 account for only about 10% of the overall iron supply in the Southern Ocean, while internal trans-
94 ports make up the rest (31). Hence, although it would be possible to force our modelled surface
95 iron concentrations to become closer to observations by adding dust, here we focus exclusively on
96 internal transport mechanisms.

97 The Southern Ocean ecosystem is highly seasonal, with a strong spring bloom occurring be-
98 tween November and January (32; 33). Our model exhibits a strong seasonal cycle, as seen from
99 Fig. 2, which illustrates the simulated climatological seasonal cycle of important physical and bi-
100 ological quantities, averaged over the center of the domain. Our simulations therefore provide a
101 unique opportunity to investigate how seasonality in biological processes interacts with the sea-
102 sonal cycle in physical transport processes and mixing-layer depth (MLD; definition in Methods
103 section). There is a strong spring bloom, with the vertically integrated phytoplankton biomass
104 ($\langle C_p \rangle$; definition given in Methods section) peaking in early November, after the wintertime MLD
105 has started to shoal (Fig. 2a), consistent with previous characterizations of the spring bloom in
106 the ACC (33). To characterize the strength of (sub)mesoscale turbulence, we also show the root-
107 mean square of vertical velocity ($\overline{w^2}^{1/2}$), which mirrors the MLD closely. This suggests that the
108 vertical velocities are associated with mixed-layer instability (MLI), a type of surface-intensified
109 baroclinic instability associated with submesoscales driven by available potential energy within
110 the mixed layer (34), which is more active in winter with deep mixed layers. It is interesting to
111 note that the vertical eddy iron flux ($w'Fe'$; where $(\cdot)'$ is defined as the anomaly from the seasonal
112 and zonal climatology using 15-daily snapshot outputs) is in phase with the biomass and not with
113 vertical velocity itself (Fig. 2a). This suggests that energetic vertical velocities alone are not a

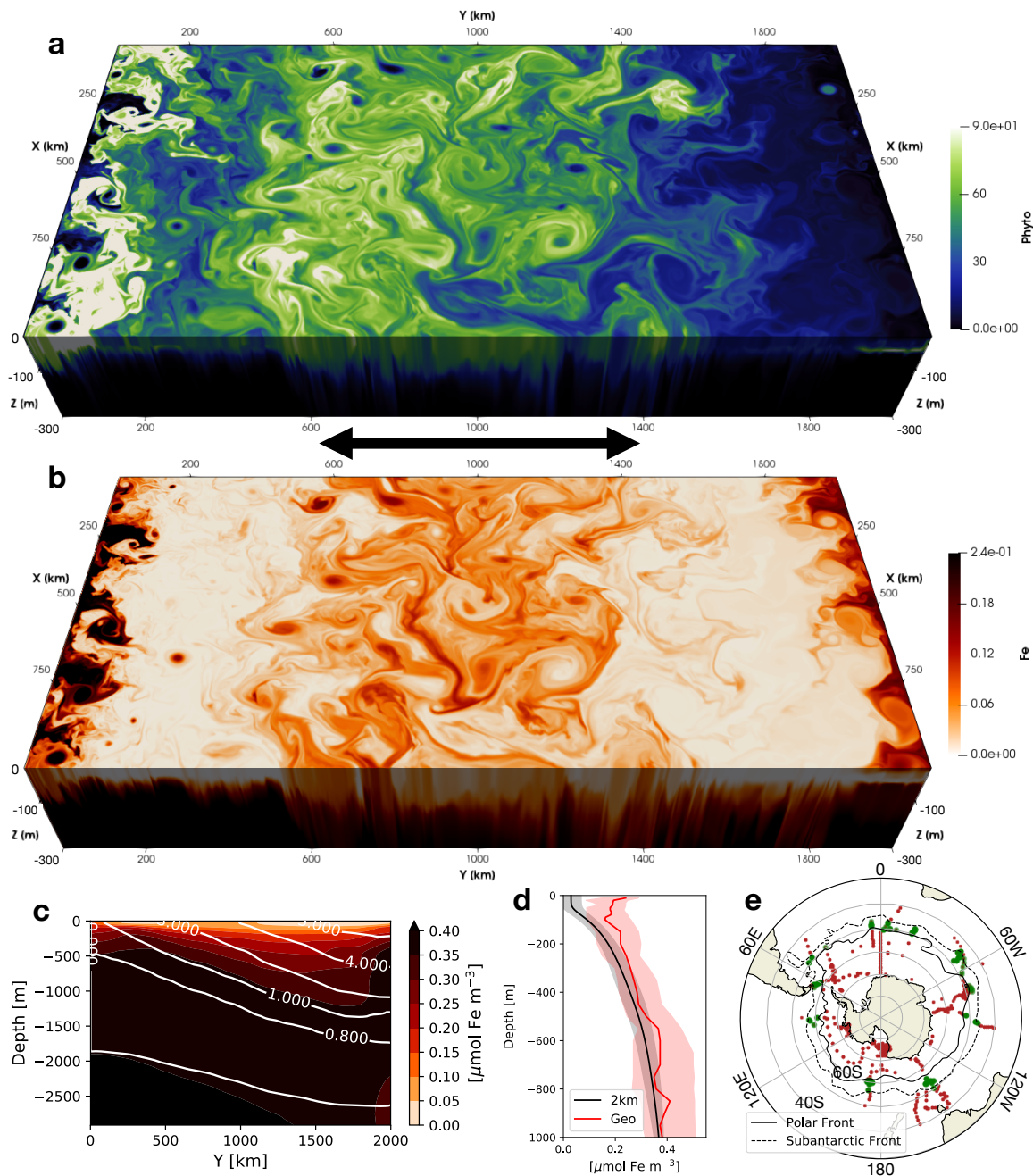


Figure 1: A snapshot of phytoplankton biomass in (mg C m^{-3}) and iron in ($\mu\text{mol Fe m}^{-3}$) in the top 300 m; a,b. c The zonal mean transect of iron and d vertical profile averaged over the meridional extent of $y = 600 - 1400$ km shown as the black arrow in a for our 2 km run (black) and median of the GEOTRACES dataset (red) acquired through personal communication with Tagliabue (6) over all profiles in the open ocean region between the climatological position of Polar and Subantarctic front (green; e) after applying a three-point median filter in the vertical. The frontal positions were taken from (7) and extended by 1° to the south and north respectively to incorporate more profiles. The colored shading show the standard deviation for the 2 km run and due to the lack of spatial coverage, the interquartile range is shown for GEOTRACES. The GEOTRACES dataset was biased towards austral summer so the data used in d for the 2 km run is over Nov.-Feb.

114 sufficient proxy for vertical tracer transport but need to correlate with tracer concentration.

115 The spring bloom is quantified via $\langle C_p \rangle$, which allows us to define the bloom *onset* ($\langle C_p \rangle$
116 minimum) and *apex* ($\langle C_p \rangle$ maximum) (Fig. 2a; (35)). The onset is in late July during the deepening
117 of wintertime mixing layer, and the apex occurs in early November even though surface light
118 conditions (γ^I ; eqn. (S3)) continue to improve over the summer (November-January; Fig. 2b).
119 The decrease in nutrient limitation factor (γ^N ; eqn. (S4)), on the other hand, from 0.8 to 0.2 coincides
120 with the apex and is in phase with iron concentration dropping from 0.13 to 0.03 $\mu\text{mol m}^{-3}$
121 (Fig. 2b). (The limitation factors (" γ "s = 0 - 1) indicate ideal growth conditions when they
122 are unity and zero for no-growth conditions. The effect of grazing by zooplankton is shown in
123 Text S3, Fig. S3.) This indicates that the decline of the spring bloom in our simulation is due to
124 iron limitation, and not associated with light conditions.

125 **Vertical eddy and diffusive iron supply for primary production**

126 To understand what controls the iron concentrations, we now examine the ecosystem in the time-
127 depth plane. The top row of Fig. 3 shows horizontally averaged phytoplankton concentration and
128 vertical iron fluxes by eddies and diffusion vs. time and depth over the seasonal cycle from the
129 2 km run. Iron concentration is given in Fig. 3f showing signals of wintertime entrainment with
130 the orange contours dipping into the ML around September. (We show the complete zonal-mean
131 iron budget in Fig. S1 and time-depth plots of biogeochemical iron consumption in Fig. S2.) As
132 in Fig. 2a, there is a strong spring bloom and a mild autumn bloom. Some phytoplankton live

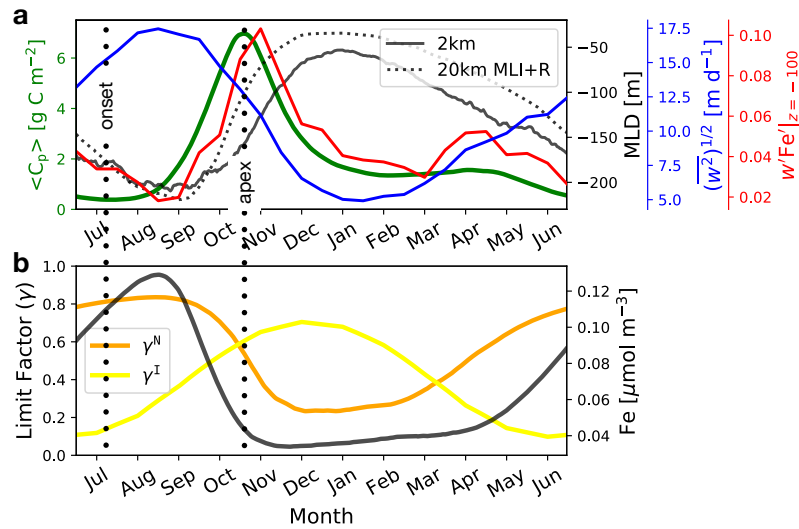


Figure 2: **Time series of the daily-mean vertically integrated phytoplankton biomass ($\langle C_p \rangle$; green), daily mean of MLD for the 2 km (black solid) and 20 km MLI+R run (black dotted) averaged over the meridional extent of $y = 600 - 1400$ km; a.** The seasonal cycle of the root mean square of vertical velocity spatially averaged over the same meridional extent and over 100 m depth from the 2 km run ($\overline{w^2}^{1/2}$) is shown in blue, and spatially averaged vertical eddy iron flux ($w'Fe'|_{z=100}$ [μ mol Fe m⁻² d⁻¹]) at 100 m depth in red. **b** The spatial median over the top 100 m of growth rate limitation factors due to nutrient (γ^N ; orange) and light (γ^I ; yellow) where the former is due to iron year round in our simulation. The iron concentration (Fe) averaged over the top 100 m is plotted in black against the right axis.

133 below the ML base, particularly during summer when the ML is shallow. During wintertime
134 (July-September) when the ML is deepening and light is low, there is low biomass but high iron
135 concentration (Fig. 3a,f), consistent with the limitation factors (γ^{LN} , Fig. 2b).

136 Iron is supplied to the phytoplankton via three processes: recycling, entrainment and vertical
137 mixing (here associated with the K-profile parametrization boundary layer; KPP (36)), and vertical
138 eddy fluxes ($w'Fe'$; explicitly resolved by the simulation). Figures 3b,c and S1 show how eddies
139 and vertical (KPP) mixing work together to deliver iron to phytoplankton from depth. Vertical
140 mixing is, by construction, only active within the ML. When vertical gradients of iron are actively
141 sustained by biological consumption (e.g. during the bloom), vertical mixing drives a strong up-
142 ward diffusive iron flux. This diffusive flux goes to zero at the ML base where KPP turns off.
143 Eddy fluxes, in contrast, peak roughly at the ML base and extend deep into the iron-rich interior,
144 with a magnitude comparable to the diffusive flux in the ML. Thus, eddies play a crucial role in
145 bringing iron across the ML base, where it can be handed off to vertical mixing and delivered to
146 near-surface phytoplankton.

147 Vertical eddy iron transport is absent from previous estimates of the Southern Ocean iron
148 budget (4; 5; 6). One-dimensional iron budgets suggest that during summer, vertical mixing is not
149 strong enough to supply the iron needed to sustain the observed productivity, implying strong iron
150 recycling within the ecosystem (6). Our simulations challenge this conclusion, showing that verti-
151 cal eddy transport can provide a year-round source of iron (Fig. 3b) which exceeds the magnitude
152 of iron recycling (Fig. S1).

153 With the 2 km run as a reference, we use spatial resolution as a parameter to modulate the
154 strength of eddy transport, running two other simulations at eddy-permitting resolutions of 5 km
155 and 20 km. The basin-wide density and iron stratification for each resolution are given in Fig. S4.
156 Figure 4 shows the annual median of vertically integrated phytoplankton biomass plotted against
157 the annual mean of total (dominated by eddy) vertical iron flux across the ML base, or 100 m,
158 whichever is deeper. This depth scale is chosen to exclude KPP mixing from the flux, and is
159 roughly the depth phytoplankton cease to exist (Fig. 3a,c). As resolution increases from 20 km
160 to 2 km for runs without any eddy parametrizations (red markers in Fig. 4), the annual median
161 of daily averaged phytoplankton biomass ($\overline{\langle C_p \rangle}$) nearly doubles from 0.67 to 1.45 g C m⁻² in a
162 roughly linear relationship with the annual-mean total (eddy+diffusive) iron transport (F_{Fe}^z), which
163 increases from 7 to 27 $\mu\text{mol Fe m}^{-2} \text{ yr}^{-1}$. This occurs despite a shoaling of the ML, which reduces
164 the entrainment of iron. Thus, in our model ecosystem, eddies effectively control the primary
165 productivity. We show the time-depth plot of vertical eddy iron flux from each run in Fig. S5.

166 [Sub]mesoscale eddy parametrizations

167 As we move to coarser resolution, we also ask whether conventional eddy parameterizations can
168 provide the missing iron flux. We run three additional simulations at 100 km and 20 km reso-
169 lution. The former represents a standard Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP)-class
170 ocean GCM, while the latter the newer class of mesoscale-permitting GCMs (37). Due to limit-
171 ing computational resources, we will continue to rely on non-eddy and mesoscale permitting
172 GCMs for global climate and carbon cycle simulations. It is, therefore, informative to examine

173 how commonly employed parametrizations perform compared to submesoscale permitting simu-
174 lations. The three different eddy parameterizations we experiment with are: Gent-McWilliams’
175 eddy-induced velocity parametrization (GM; 38) in order to represent unresolved mesoscale re-
176 stratification in the interior, isopycnal tracer diffusion (Redi; 39) to represent mesoscale stirring
177 of tracers, and mixed-layer instability (MLI) parametrization (40) to represent the shoaling of ML
178 due to otherwise resolved MLI. The runs are:

- 179 • 100 km GM+R – with GM and Redi at 100 km resolution. We allowed the GM coefficient
180 to vary between 200-2500 $\text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$, depending on the vertical-mean Richardson number (41),
181 and chose a tapering scheme which accounted for a smooth transition between the diabatic
182 boundary layer and adiabatic interior (42). The Redi diffusivity was chosen as 1000 $\text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$.
- 183 • 20 km MLI+R – with MLI and Redi at 20 km resolution. We tuned the MLI parameters
184 to produce the same wintertime MLD as the 2 km simulation (Fig. 2a, black dashed curve).
185 The Redi diffusivity was chosen as 200 $\text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$, smaller than the case above with mesoscale
186 eddies partially resolved at 20 km resolution.
- 187 • 20 km MLI – with the MLI parametrization at 20 km resolution.

188 Further details on each configuration are given in Text S4.

189 The parameters in eddy parametrizations in global climate simulations are chosen opera-
190 tionally, without community-wide established best practices. In our study, we performed extensive
191 experimentation with different combinations of eddy parameterizations and parameters, here re-

192 porting only the most relevant results. We discovered that, with a novel combination of choices,
193 the parametrized eddy flux in 100 km GM+R run captures the amplitude and timing of cross-ML-
194 base vertical eddy iron transport, particularly around November as seen in the 2 km run (Figs. 3b,e).
195 The vertical flux in the 100 km GM+R is the sum of KPP mixing, GM advection and Redi dif-
196 fusion. In other words, a direct comparison of vertical iron flux between the 100 km GM+R and
197 2 km run is Fig. 3e against the sum of b and c. Although not shown, the resolved eddy advection
198 contribution is negligible at 100 km resolution and vertical mixing (KPP) is contained within the
199 ML. The cross-ML-base iron transport in Fig. 3e is, therefore, predominantly due to isopycnal
200 eddy stirring. Setting the Redi diffusivity to zero — equivalent to no mesoscale isopycnal stirring
201 — in the 100-km run results in F_{Fe}^z decreasing by a factor of two and vertically integrated annual
202 phytoplankton biomass by $\sim 40\%$. The pulse of iron coincides roughly with the spring bloom apex
203 in early November in both the 2 km and 100 km GM+R runs, but summertime (January-March)
204 biomass is higher within the top 100 m in the former (Fig. 3a,d). The higher summertime biomass
205 in the 2 km run may be due to partially resolved MLI actively generating vertical iron gradients
206 within the top 100 m, allowing for larger diffusive flux in the top 100 m for the 2 km run than in
207 the 100 km GM+R run (Fig. 3c,e).

208 We plot phytoplankton biomass against vertical iron transport also for the parametrized runs
209 in Fig. 4. Consistent with Fig. 3, they remain similar between the 2 km and 100 km GM+R runs
210 (Fig. 4). The 20 km MLI+R comes close to the 5 km run (Fig. 4) with Redi diffusion adding
211 cross-ML-base iron transport (Fig. S6). The MLI parametrization contribution, intended to repli-
212 cate the restratification of the ML and not eddy tracer transport (40), is contained within the ML

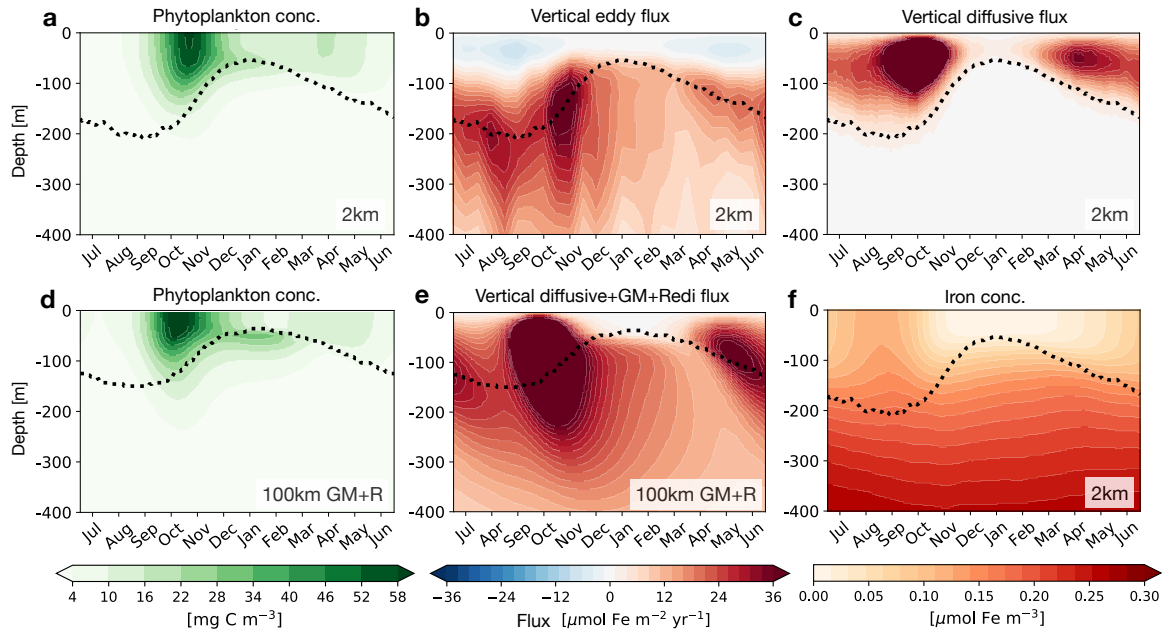


Figure 3: **Time-depth plots of the daily and spatial median of phytoplankton biomass**; **a, b,c** The spatial mean of vertical eddy transport using 15-daily snapshot outputs and diffusive iron transport using daily-averaged outputs. Panels **a-c**, and **f** (daily-averaged iron concentration) are from the 2 km run. **d,e** Daily-averaged phytoplankton biomass and the sum of vertical diffusive, GM and Redi iron flux from the 100 km GM+R run. The dotted lines in all panels show the mixing (mixed) layer depth for the 2 km (100 km GM+R) run. The *mixing*-layer depth (MLD) was too sensitive to the winds in the 100 km GM+R run, likely due to the GM tapering interacting with KPP (42). In all of our other runs, the *mixed*-layer depth defined as the depth at which the potential temperature decreased by 0.2°C from the surface (43) (not shown), proved to be very similar to the MLD so we used the mixed-layer depth for the 100 km GM+R run.

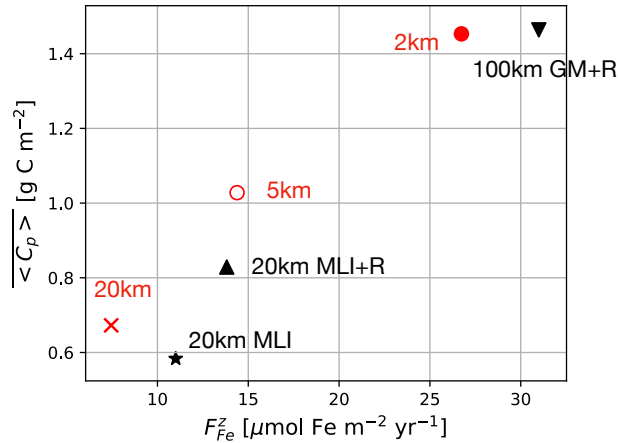


Figure 4: The resolution dependence of annual median phytoplankton biomass ($\langle C_p \rangle$) on the annual mean of total vertical iron transport at the ML base or 100 m whichever is deeper (F_{Fe}^z). The runs without any eddy parametrizations are shown in red and the parametrized runs shown in black include the parametrized eddy flux.

213 and does not enhance cross-ML-base iron transport (Fig. S6b). Isopycnals, and consequently iron
 214 contours, in the interior at 20 km resolution are too steep compared to the 2 km run, with in-
 215 sufficient restratification relative to the resolved-mesoscale run (Figs. S4c, S7b). This results in
 216 weaker vertical gradients of iron and less net iron supply via entrainment and vertical eddy trans-
 217 port. The GM parametrization in the 100 km resolution run allows us to improve isopycnal steep-
 218 ness (Figs. S4d, S7c), and the Redi diffusivity is used to tune the isopycnal iron transport. The
 219 20 km MLI run performs the worst amongst the parametrized runs (black markers in Fig. 4) with
 220 cross-ML-base eddy iron transport coming only from the resolved eddies at 20 km resolution.

221 Implications for iron budgets and biogeochemical modelling

222 We have shown, using a configuration representing the zonal-mean view of the Antarctic Circum-
 223 polar Current region, that eddy iron transport is crucial in supplying iron from depths across the

224 mixing-layer base (Figs. 3, 4). A study using a similar zonally re-entrant channel model, also
225 found an increase in wintertime (August-October) vertical eddy iron transport, and consequently
226 elevated primary production during September-October (29). Their spatial resolution of $1/24^\circ$,
227 however, is similar to our 5 km run and the relative contribution of eddy transport in their study is
228 likely underestimated (Fig. 4). Although 2 km resolution is state of the art for a basin-scale sim-
229 ulation coupled to a full biogeochemical model, it is not sufficient to fully resolve submesoscale
230 processes including MLI (16). Based on the resolution dependence, we would expect the role
231 of eddies in supplying iron to increase further with higher resolutions (44), but this would only
232 strengthen the central finding that eddy iron transport modulates primary productivity in the open
233 Southern Ocean.

234 Our results suggest that, in order to adequately capture the eddy iron transport, we should
235 either at least partially resolve the submesoscales (2 km run) or completely parametrize the eddies
236 using the *current generation* of GM (100 km GM+R run). In particular, we found that a novel com-
237 bination of the Visbeck scheme for scaling the GM coefficient based on linear baroclinic instability
238 (41), combined with the Ferrari tapering method (42), was uniquely able to mimic the eddy fluxes
239 from the high-resolution run. Looking forward, it would be interesting to see whether *recently*
240 *developed* energy backscattering GM parametrizations (45; 46) would improve tracer transport
241 in mesoscale permitting models. The agreement of the 100 km GM+R run with the 2 km run,
242 however, also highlights the potential significance of improving the parametrization for mesoscale
243 isopycnal tracer (Redi) diffusion, which has been argued to be a significant factor in tracer venti-
244 lation using shiptrack observations in the Southern and Arctic Oceans (47). In our study, the Redi

245 diffusivity was tuned in an ad-hoc manner; future eddy parameterizations instead must be able to
246 determine the correct value of this parameter based on physics in order to accurately simulate the
247 response of the Southern Ocean biological pump to climate change. Considering that the MLI
248 parametrization in its current formulation, intended for density restratification, does not capture
249 eddy tracer transport (Fig. S6), it may also be beneficial to develop a new parametrization for the
250 effects of submesoscale isopycnal tracer stirring.

251 There has been growing evidence regarding the relative importance of eddies in the biologi-
252 cal carbon pump (48; 49; 50). The eddies responsible for supplying iron also export phytoplankton
253 downwards in our simulation. We show in Fig. S8a the time-depth plot of vertical eddy phyto-
254 plankton transport ($w'C'_p$) for the 2 km run. The eddies subduct phytoplankton across the ML base
255 and the magnitude increases with resolution (Fig. S8b). Nevertheless, the annual phytoplankton
256 biomass and primary production increase with resolution (Figs. 4, S8b), indicating that the eddy
257 supply of iron and resulting increase in productivity overcompensate for the loss of phytoplankton
258 due to eddy subduction. Considering the annual maximum of eddy subduction occurs after the
259 annual maximum in primary production, accurate representation of the magnitude and timing of
260 eddy carbon subduction may be necessary to accurately model the Southern Ocean carbon cycle.

261 **Methods**

262 **Mixing layer.** The mixing-layer depth (MLD) is the boundary layer over which isotropic turbulent
263 mixing, parameterized by the KPP in this simulation, is enhanced. Here, we quantify the depth of
264 this highly variable layer as the zonal 99th percentile of the daily-averaged KPP boundary layer. In

265 our simulations, the *mixed*- and *mixing*-layer depth tended to be similar to each other. In general,
266 however, the *mixed* layer often used in observational studies can be deeper than the *mixing* layer
267 as the former is defined purely by thermal dynamical properties (43) while as latter is defined by
268 kinematic properties. We argue that the *mixing* layer is the relevant depth scale for tracer transport
269 as it is the layer over which diapycnal mixing is active (16). Figure 3c shows that diffusive fluxes
270 are only active within the mixing layer in our simulation when eddies are explicitly resolved.

271 **Integrated phytoplankton biomass.** The integrated biomass ($\langle C_p \rangle$) is defined as the full-depth
272 vertical integration of the spatial median ($y = 600 - 1400$ km, $x = 0 - 1000$ km) of C_p in or-
273 der to incorporate phytoplankton existing below the mixing layer (5). We take the median as the
274 phytoplankton biomass in our model approximately has a log-normal distribution.

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426 **Code availability** The model configuration is available on Github ([doi:10.5281/zenodo.3266400](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3266400))
427 and simulation outputs for 15-daily snapshot and monthly-averaged outputs of physical variables (\mathbf{v} , θ , Φ)
428 are available on Pangeo ([doi:10.5281/zenodo.3358021](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3358021)). Correspondence and requests for other
429 variables and materials should be addressed to the leading author (email: takaya@ldeo.columbia.edu)

430 **Competing interests** The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests.