

# Remote Forcing of Internal Waves in Regional Oceanic Models

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## Key Points:

- Remotely forced internal waves are essential to obtain realistic internal wave energies in regional oceanic models.
- Online interpolation of data for nested solutions provide high frequency updates at open boundaries of the regional domain.
- New boundary conditions for open boundaries are introduced that provide the correct level of internal wave energy while avoiding excess energy due to reflections.

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**Abstract**

Regional oceanic general circulation models with nested grids are an essential approach to allow the use of higher grid resolutions. High resolution is required for the study of smaller scale processes, such as submesoscale currents and the internal wave field, in particular the baroclinic tide. Limits of available computing power determine the size of the computational grid, setting the maximum size of the modeled domain. A serious problem arises because internal waves can propagate over long distances, providing a remotely forced component for the wave field in any model that doesn't cover a complete oceanic basin. Current approaches in regional oceanic modeling are not adequate. The often used approach of radiative-restoring boundary conditions that work well for flows at sub-inertial time-scales are inadequate to force sufficiently energetic high-frequency internal waves. Prescribed (or "clamped") boundary conditions are susceptible to spurious reflection of energy at the boundaries, leading to an overestimate of internal wave energy inside the regional model domain. We propose a combination of a dynamic tuning between propagating and externally prescribed boundary conditions based on matching the vertically-integrated, high-frequency pressure flux across an open boundary. We show that this approach provides accurate internal wave energy fluxes at the boundaries of the regional domain. This innovation is both necessary and sufficient to investigate the dynamics of the internal wave field continuum and its interactions with submesoscale flows at the high spatial resolutions that regional oceanic models allow.

**Plain Language Summary**

A new type of open boundary condition is introduced for oceanic models that allows for remote forcing of internal tides and waves while avoiding excessive reflections at the boundaries, in addition to previously developed procedures for allowing outward propagation and incoming large-scale influences.

**1 Introduction**

Our ability to simulate small-scale oceanic phenomena such as submesoscale currents, internal waves, and turbulent processes leading to dissipation in global oceanic models is limited by finite computing resources. Regional models provide a means to access higher resolutions by reducing the physical area of computation. To force these regional models at their lateral boundaries, open boundary conditions (OBCs) are employed that use information from an oceanic climatology, or a previously computed simulation at larger scales. These boundary conditions serve to make the mathematical problem well posed and to provide information from the outer "parent" solution to the nested inner "child" solution with finer grid resolution. When done successfully, this approach makes it possible to simulate smaller scale currents under the down-scaling hypothesis of emergent phenomena under larger-scale influence. A good starting point for boundary conditions at open boundaries for regional oceanic models is in Marchesiello et al. (2001).<sup>1</sup>

At a fundamental level, the ocean is a continuous fluid between a solid boundary and a free surface, hence an open boundary in its interior is artificial. Therefore, OBCs are also artificial, and their utility is to be judged by the properties of the fluid solutions that result.<sup>2</sup> Many studies have made use of OBCs with one-way nesting. These include forcing by external values at the boundary and radiating wave energy out of the domain by specifying the wave speed there. This has been applied to surface gravity waves (Chapman,

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<sup>1</sup> Coupled, evolving, parent-child grids (a.k.a. two-way nesting) are also possible (Debreu & Blayo, 2008), but this approach is less widely practiced and, in many situations, it has an uncertain added value over the simpler one-way nesting.

<sup>2</sup> "All models are wrong but some are useful." (George Box)

1985), atmospheric gravity waves (Klemp & Durran, 1983), and hydrostatic oceanic internal currents and waves (Carter & Merrifield, 2007; Marsaleix et al., 2006; Mason et al., 2010; Suanda et al., 2018). The limitation of these approaches is that the approximation of wave speeds and vertical and horizontal wavenumbers inevitably leads to errors in the radiative boundary conditions, which lead to spurious waves reflecting into the domain. It can also be computationally expensive to solve for spectral wave number properties (frequency, wavenumber, amplitude) and estimate the propagation speed. A variant of this approach uses an adaptive algorithm in which inward and outward information are treated separately (Marchesiello et al., 2001); this approach is called *adaptive-Orlanski OBCs* as an extension of the radiation OBCs by Orlanski (1976), and it has proved to successfully deal with, *e.g.*, mesoscale eddies passing through the open boundary (Penven et al., 2006).

In Rogers et al. (2019), an improvement in the OBCs is proposed: to mitigate spurious reflection of internal wave energy at the boundary, an adaptive sponge layer (*i.e.*, damping and smoothing) near the open boundary is applied that depends on the sign of the total baroclinic energy flux of high-frequency energy across the boundary. When the flux is out of the domain, the sponge layer is active to reduce reflections, whereas for a boundary energy flux into the domain, the sponge layer is locally turned off to allow the nested domain to be fully forced by the incoming internal wave spectrum. A variant of this sponge-layer approach is used to manage the incoming wave energy and spurious reflections of the outgoing wave energy at the boundaries (Siyabola et al., 2023), using a frequency-wavenumber analysis to partition the energy fluxes near the boundary. Beyond quantifying the substantial amount of reflected wave energy, the results are used to optimize the diffusion and viscosity parameters as a compromise between weak damping of incoming waves and large reduction of wave reflections. The approach of Rogers et al. (2019) suffers from the inability to separate the net energy flux into incoming and outgoing partitions, which can lead to an incorrect assessment of the direction of the physical flux due to the existence of spurious reflections in the first place. The approach of Siyanbola et al. (2023), is limited by the fact that a choosing a single value for the damping parameter for the whole domain does not allow the distinction of different areas along the boundaries with different internal wave characteristics. In this paper we propose a novel approach that is intended to alleviate the limitations above and allow for an accurate matching of the high frequency energy fluxes at the boundaries of a nested domain with those of the parent solution; we call this new approach *dynamic-Orlanski OBCs*.

Open boundary conditions for the continuous hydrostatic Boussinesq equations are known to be ill posed (Oliger & Sundström, 1978; Bennett, 1992). Notwithstanding this, the discrete approximation can be stable in situations where information is transported in and out of the domain. As a result, the precise specification of OBCs is often not rigorously founded in theory but results from an engineering approach where the results justify the formulation. Small changes have arisen in the ROMS OBCs while making many nested simulations in the last two decades and are. These changes have not recently been documented, and therefore we show here the formulation of the OBCs as now in the UCLA version of the Regional Oceanic Modeling System (ROMS; Sec. 2. This is the code version that has been used in recent studies such as Kessouri et al. (2021); van der Boog et al. (n.d.); McWilliams et al. (2024) and many others that made use of UCLA-ROMS. The particular advance reported here is the treatment of high-frequency boundary conditions (*e.g.*, tides).

## 2 Simulation Model

### 2.1 UCLA ROMS

The UCLA version of ROMS is a hydrostatic, free-surface, terrain-following oceanic model with a split-explicit (*i.e.*, separating barotropic and baroclinic components), predictor-

107 corrector time-stepping scheme and an equation of state for seawater (A. F. Shchepetkin  
 108 & McWilliams, 2005; A. Shchepetkin & McWilliams, 2009; A. F. Shchepetkin & McWilliams,  
 109 2009; A. Shchepetkin & McWilliams, 2011). It uses  $3^{rd}$ -order upwind algorithms for the  
 110 horizontal advection of tracers and momenta; these schemes have a dissipative discretiza-  
 111 tion error that is hyper-diffusive or viscous in nature and automatically scales with grid  
 112 resolution, negating the need for an explicitly described horizontal damping term. Ver-  
 113 tical advection is computed with a  $4^{th}$ -order spline-based scheme. Unresolved mixing pro-  
 114 cesses are parameterized with the K-profile Parameterization for the surface and bot-  
 115 tom boundary layers, combined with a Richardson-number-based parameterization in  
 116 the interior (Large et al., 1994). The model also has a non-hydrostatic kernel that is based  
 117 on a multi-grid Poisson solver (Guillaume et al., 2017) and allows for the simulation of  
 118 smaller-scale physics beyond the hydrostatic approximation (Ho et al., 2021; Hypolite  
 119 et al., 2023).

## 120 2.2 Pacific Basin solution

121 The basis for the numerical solutions in this paper is a simulation of the entire Pa-  
 122 cific Ocean basin with a hyper-mesoscale horizontal grid resolution of  $dx = 6$  km. It  
 123 is a high-resolution descendant of the well-validated simulation in (Lemarié et al., 2012)  
 124 with high-frequency atmospheric forcing, as well as with additional tidal forcing. Strictly  
 125 speaking, this is still a regional simulation that needs to be forced at its lateral bound-  
 126 aries, which are most extensive in the south. To generate information for these open bound-  
 127 aries, we use the GLORYS reanalysis data set (Verezemskaya et al., 2021) that provides  
 128 data at a resolution of 0.083 degree and a time interval of 1 day. The GLORYS data are  
 129 pre-processed to be interpolated in space to the computational grid of the model. Inter-  
 130 polation in time, from the discrete 1 day interval to the model time at each time-step,  
 131 is done while the model is running. For later reference, we refer to the latter type of data  
 132 processing computations as 'online', in contrast with 'offline' computations, which re-  
 133 fer to pre- and post-processing of data before or after the model run.

134 The GLORYS data do not contain tidal information, and the basin-scale simula-  
 135 tions are tidally forced at the open boundaries with sea-surface elevations and barotropic  
 136 tidal currents from the 10 most energetic tidal frequencies from the TPXO9 analysis (Egbert  
 137 & Erofeeva, 2002). In addition to this tidal forcing at the lateral boundaries, the model  
 138 is forced by a surface geopotential forcing. The surface geopotential is a combination of  
 139 the astronomical tide and the self-attraction and loading correction. self-attraction and  
 140 loading corrections are the result of geopotential anomalies that arise from the evolving  
 141 elevation of the sea surface itself, as well as the deformation of the Earth's crust under  
 142 the influence of tidal motions (Arbic, 2022).

143 Atmospheric forcing is obtained from the ERA5 global reanalysis (Hersbach et al.,  
 144 2020). This dataset is available at a nominal 0.25 degree spatial resolution and hourly  
 145 intervals. The COARE formulation (Fairall et al., 1996) is used to compute momentum  
 146 and tracer fluxes from atmospheric variables at the surface of the ocean using a bulk ap-  
 147 proach. The use of sufficiently high-frequency atmospheric forcing allows realistic lev-  
 148 els of near-inertial and tidal internal waves below the mixed layer, which are essential  
 149 to a correct representation of the kinetic energy budget in the ocean (Shcherbina et al.,  
 150 2013; Barkan et al., 2024). Results that assess the high-frequency OBCs in the Pacific  
 151 are in section 4. More complete descriptions of the tidal behavior in this simulation are  
 152 in McWilliams et al. (2024); Damien et al. (2025); Molemaker et al. (2026).

## 153 2.3 Sequentially nested subdomains

154 To achieve the high grid resolutions that are needed to better resolve the subme-  
 155 soscale, internal wave, and turbulent mixing processes, a series of nested numerical sub-  
 156 domains is used. At each stage of nesting, data for the governing variables at the bound-

157 aries of the nested grid are interpolated online during the computation of the parent grid  
 158 and output at 30 minute intervals. The high temporal resolution of the boundary date  
 159 makes it possible to directly force internal waves and tides in the nested domain with-  
 160 out undue loss of variance. Using identical model formulations for both the parent and  
 161 child grids provides maximal dynamical consistency between the two solutions, which  
 162 in turn minimizes numerical artifacts near the open boundaries of the child domain. The  
 163 only changes in dynamics are the result of changes in spatial resolution between the so-  
 164 lutions of the two nested domains. Higher resolution means that horizontal dissipation  
 165 occurs on smaller scales, allowing additional phenomena to be resolved. Since the changes  
 166 in dynamical regime are a function of the ratio between the grid spacing of the nested  
 167 grids, it is advisable to keep this relatively small. Although there is obviously no hard  
 168 and fast rule, we have adopted a nesting resolution ratio of 3 : 1. Based on many pre-  
 169 vious nesting solutions, this has proven to avoid most numerical artifacts at the open bound-  
 170 aries. In addition, we keep to the practices described in Mason et al. (2010), matching  
 171 the topographies and land masks of the nested domains at the boundaries of the nested  
 172 subdomain.

173 In this paper, we present results from two subdomains, in the Northwest and North-  
 174 east sectors of the Pacific, each with a horizontal grid resolution of  $dx = 2$  km (Sec. 4).

### 175 3 Open boundary conditions

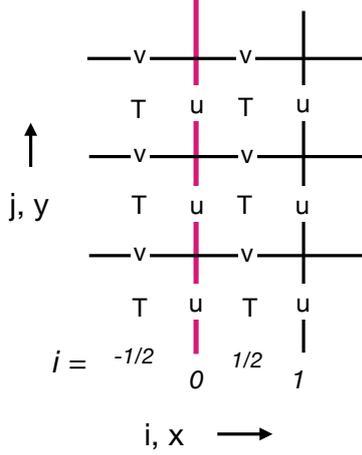
176 For a fluid-dynamical Partial Differential Equation system with open horizontal bound-  
 177 aries, many different choices of the OBCs can be used. For idealized problems intended  
 178 as process studies, some plausible choices might be Neumann, Dirichlet, or periodic OBCs  
 179 for the dependent variables. However, for more realistic simulations, our focus in this  
 180 paper, these OBCs do not adequately represent the essential phenomena of allowing internally-  
 181 generated outgoing signals to leave the domain and externally-specified incoming signals  
 182 to provide the larger-scale environmental context, usually through grid nesting (section 2.3).  
 183 The latter type of OBCs are the subject of this section.

184 ROMS has curvilinear spatial coordinates  $(\xi, \eta, s)$ , where  $s$  is the terrain-following  
 185 vertical (gravity-aligned) coordinate. Discretely, these coordinates have grid indices  $(i, j, k)$ .  
 186 For the horizontal OBCs,  $s$  and  $k$  are implicit and need not be considered further. For  
 187 simplicity, we express the horizontal coordinates as Cartesian  $(x, y)$  with indices  $(i, j)$ ,  
 188 grid spacings  $(dx, dy)$ , and velocities  $(u, v)$ . For brevity, we write the OBC formulas only  
 189 for the left boundary at  $x = 0$ , with analogous conditions for the other three bound-  
 190 aries. The complete documentation is in the code itself (see the Open Research Section).

191 ROMS uses a C-grid, where horizontal momenta are located at cell faces, and the  
 192 first  $u$ -point is located on the boundary at  $i = 0$  (Fig. 1). At this boundary, the tan-  
 193 gential velocity  $v$ , and the tracers  $T$  are defined starting at  $i = -1/2$  in a virtual buffer  
 194 to facilitate the specification of boundary conditions at  $x = 0$ . Throughout the domain,  
 195  $u$  velocity values are located at  $i \in [0..N_x]$  and  $v$ , and  $T$  values are located at  $i-1/2 | i \in$   
 196  $[0..N_x + 1]$ . The prognostic  $u$ ,  $v$  and  $T$  variables are 3-dimensional and therefore also  
 197 a function of the vertical  $k$  index. When needed, simple averaging of variables to the spec-  
 198 ified  $i, j$  locations is assumed. Finally, the time level of variables is indicated with a su-  
 199 perscript  $n$ . The interior variables are advanced to the new time level  $n + 1$ , and the  
 200 boundary conditions are applied afterward to advance the values on the boundary and  
 201 in the virtual buffer to the new time level.

202 In this section, the OBC design principles are expressed in continuous and semi-  
 203 discrete forms while eliding details of the split-explicit, predictor-corrector time-stepping  
 204 scheme; the full discretization formulas in  $(i, j, n)$  are in Appendix A.

205 Unlike the fluid-dynamical equations, the OBCs should be viewed as a necessary  
 206 but somewhat arbitrary model parameterization, analogous to the interior subgrid-scale



**Figure 1.** Location of prognostic variables near the left boundary on a C-grid. The boundary of the computational domain is indicated with a solid red line at index  $i = 0$ .  $i$  and  $j$  are horizontal indices increasing to the right and upward,  $u$  is the normal velocity,  $v$  is the tangential velocity, and  $T$  is temperature, salinity, or any other material concentration. Each variable has its associated  $j$  value.

207 transport representation. The OBC design principles reflect their desired effects: out-  
 208 going transport (a.k.a radiation) across the boundary, incorporation of external environ-  
 209 mental influences (a.k.a restoring or nudging), and smoothing and damping of false re-  
 210 flections (a.k.a. sponging).

The **transport equation** at the boundary in continuous form is

$$\partial_t \phi + c_x \partial_x \phi + c_y \partial_y \phi = 0, \quad (1)$$

where  $\phi$  is a prognostic variable and  $c_x$  and  $c_y$  are projections of the oblique transport velocity, *e.g.*, either through wave propagation or advection. A formal solution of this equation (Raymond & Kuo, 1984) is

$$c_x \rightarrow r_x = -\frac{\partial_t \phi \partial_x \phi}{(\partial_x \phi)^2 + (\partial_y \phi)^2}, \quad c_x \rightarrow r_y = -\frac{\partial_t \phi \partial_y \phi}{(\partial_x \phi)^2 + (\partial_y \phi)^2}, \quad (2)$$

211 and this is a useful guide for the OBC discretization.

The **nudging equation** at the boundary in continuous form is

$$\partial_t \phi = -\frac{1}{\tau} (\phi - \phi^{ext}), \quad (3)$$

212 where  $\phi^{ext}$  represents external data and  $\tau$  is a relaxation time.

The **sponging equation** in the neighborhood of the boundary in continuous form is

$$\partial_t \phi = K \nabla^2 \phi, \quad (4)$$

213 where  $K(x, y)$  is a smoothing coefficient and  $\nabla$  is the horizontal Laplacian operator.

214 In their discrete forms these three principles are combined as described in the rest  
 215 of this section. They are treated separately for the 2D barotropic mode and the 3D baro-  
 216 clinic mode and differently each of the prognostic variables. These OBCs are the same

217 in the hydrostatic and nonhydrostatic ROMS codes, with the addition for the latter of  
 218  $w$  as another prognostic variable (located horizontally at the same  $(i, j)$  as  $T$ ) and of Neu-  
 219 mann boundary conditions in the 3D pressure solver.

### 220 3.1 Barotropic OBCs

221 The OBCs used for the barotropic mode derive from Flather (1976) and are adapted  
 222 in UCLA ROMS in Marchesiello et al. (2001) and Mason et al. (2010) (section 2.1.2).  
 223 A primary purpose is the representation of barotropic gravity waves, especially the re-  
 224 motely generated external tide. Because it has previously been well described, its im-  
 225 plementation details are not presented here. Sec. 4 demonstrates that it continues to per-  
 226 form well in the present Pacific simulation and nested subdomains. The use of a split-  
 227 explicit time-stepping scheme allows for a small  $dt$  value for the barotropic mode, and  
 228 no doubt this helps with its performance for this phenomenon.

### 229 3.2 Baroclinic OBCs

230 Another literature branch for transport-nudging OBCs derives from Orlanski (1976)  
 231 . The existing implementation of the 3D adaptive-Orlanski OBCs in UCLA ROMS is  
 232 similar in spirit to the description in Marchesiello et al. (2001), where a thorough dis-  
 233 cussion is presented of their history and motivation. Some details of the discrete imple-  
 234 mentation have since been changed; these are presented here in advance of the high-frequency  
 235 generalization in section 3.2.3.

#### 236 3.2.1 Normal velocity

The normal velocity  $u$  has a grid node on the left boundary,  $x = 0$  and  $i = 0$   
 (Fig. 1). A schematic discrete implementation is presented here with the full  $(i, j, n)$  de-  
 tails in Appendix A. After all the other  $u$  values have been fully updated at a previous  
 time and at all interior grid points at the new time  $n+1$ , the new boundary value  $u_{0,j}^{n+1}$   
 is determined from a combined transport-nudging form of (1)-(3):

$$\Delta_t u = - (1 - C_u^{ext}) \cdot (R_x \Delta_x u + R_y \Delta_y u) + C_u^{ext} \cdot u^{ext}. \quad (5)$$

The non-dimensional  $R$  coefficients are defined as

$$R_x = - \frac{\Delta_t u \Delta_x u}{(\Delta_x u)^2 + (\Delta_y u)^2} \frac{dt}{dx}, \quad R_y = - \frac{\Delta_t u \Delta_y u}{(\Delta_x u)^2 + (\Delta_y u)^2} \frac{dt}{dy}, \quad (6)$$

The  $\Delta_t u$  are forward differences in  $t$ , the  $\Delta_x u$  are outward differences in  $x$ , and the  $\Delta_y u$   
 are forward differences in  $y$ . The non-dimensional weighting coefficient between trans-  
 port and nudging terms in (5) has the form of a Courant number defined by

$$C_u^{ext} = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } R_x \geq 0 \\ U_b \frac{dt}{dx} & \text{if } R_x < 0 \end{cases} \quad (7)$$

237 for a  $U_b$  an incoming normal velocity at the boundary (see Appendix A). Courant num-  
 238 bers are non-negative by definition, and they need to be bounded by approximately 1  
 239 for time-stepping stability. With the outgoing  $x$ -differencing,  $R_x > 0$  implies outgo-  
 240 ing transport. The values of  $C_u^{ext}$  can be seen as a weighting coefficient that are restricted  
 241 to between 0 and 1, with ranging from pure transport when  $C_u^{ext} = 0$  to full nudging  
 242 to the exterior velocity  $u^{ext}$  when  $C_u^{ext} = 1$ . (see eq. 5) which therefore is imposed as  
 243 a strict upper bound in (5).  $C_u^{ext}$  is related to  $\tau$  in eq. 3 with values close to 1 represent-  
 244 ing strong nudging or  $\sim dt/\tau \gg 1$  and  $C_u^{ext} \ll 1$  is equivalent to weak nudging ( $\sim$   
 245  $dt/\tau \ll 1$ ).

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### 3.2.2 Tangential velocity and tracers

For  $\phi$  equal to either the tangential velocity  $v$  or tracers  $T$ , the combined transport and nudging OBCs are applied to obtain  $\phi_{-1/2,j}^{n+1}$  after previous time and interior grid point values are determined. In contrast to the normal velocity condition (5) with its  $R$  coefficients, the transport velocity coefficients  $C$  are purely advective:<sup>3</sup>

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta_t \phi &= -C_x \Delta_x \phi - C_y \Delta_y \phi, \\ &\quad \text{if } C_x \geq 0 \Rightarrow C_\phi^{ext} = 0 \\ &= (1 - C_\phi^{ext}) C_y \Delta_y \phi - C_\phi^{ext} (\phi_b - \phi^{ext}), \\ &\quad \text{if } C_x < 0 \ \& \ C_\phi^{ext} = -C_x, \end{aligned} \tag{8}$$

where

$$C_x = u_b \frac{dt}{dx}, \quad C_y = v_b \frac{dt}{dy}. \tag{9}$$

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The subscript  $b$  denotes boundary or near-boundary grid points. Again,  $C_\phi^{ext}$  is a weighting factor between transport and nudging contributions with a value between 0 and 1.  $\Delta_t \phi$  is a forward difference in  $t$  at the virtual buffer grid point (Fig. 1),  $\Delta_x$  is an outward difference in  $x$ , and  $\Delta_y$  is a forward difference in  $y$ .

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### 3.2.3 Dynamic-Orlanski OBCs

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As discussed in Sec. 1, adaptive-Orlanski OBCs do not perform satisfactorily when there is high-frequency, baroclinic energy flux across an open boundary. The novel approach in this paper is to partially correct this failing with an extended dynamic-Orlanski OBC.

To separate the high-frequency internal wave signal from the sub-tidal and sub-inertial (a.k.a. slow) motions, we employ a running filter to separate high frequency from low frequency motions. Following the approach in Rogers et al. (2019),

$$\partial_t \phi_{slow} = \frac{1}{\tau_f} (\phi - \phi_{slow}), \tag{10}$$

where  $\tau_f$  is now a filter timescale, which will be chosen as  $T_f = 1 \text{ day}$  for the remainder. While this exponential filter is not very sharp in frequency space and is not symmetric in time, it has the great advantage that it can be run in parallel with the computation. The high-frequency signal is the residual,

$$\phi' = \phi - \phi_{slow}. \tag{11}$$

The high-frequency, baroclinic, depth-integrated horizontal pressure fluxes at the boundary are then defined by

$$F_x = \int_{z=-h}^{z=\zeta} u' p' dz, \quad F_y = \int_{z=-h}^{z=\zeta} v' p' dz. \tag{12}$$

Here,  $(u', v')$  are the velocity anomalies in the local  $(x, y)$  directions, and  $p'$  is the pressure anomaly. The anomalies are with respect to their time-filtered, slow values (10), and the vertical means are removed to retain only the baroclinic components.  $\zeta$  is the sea surface height and  $h$  is the resting depth of the ocean. This is the most important flux component for horizontal exchanges in a depth-integrated kinetic energy balance.  $F$  is computed for both the parent and child solutions. Using the parent normal flux as  $F^{ext}$ ,

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<sup>3</sup> In earlier ROMS versions,  $R$ s as in (6) are also used for  $v$  and  $T$  OBCs, instead of  $C$ s, but the advective form is now preferred.

whenever the diagnosed child flux is too small, the boundary condition shifts the prognostic fields towards the nudging value, and when it is too large, the shift is toward the adaptive-Orlanski value. This is accomplished by modifying  $C^{ext}$  used in Secs. 3.2.1-3.2.2 as follows. A new weighting factor is determined with a nudging toward the normal-direction energy flux correction by

$$\partial_t C_{dyn} = \frac{1}{\tau_f} \frac{F^{ext} - F}{F_0}. \quad (13)$$

$F_0 = 1 \text{ kW/m}$  is a normalization factor on the order of the fluxes found in the simulated fluxes (Sec. 4, and the nudging time scale  $\tau_f = 1 \text{ day}$  is chosen to be the same as the filter scale in (10). These two quantities are both somewhat arbitrary, and they appear as their product in (13); experimentation has shown only a moderate sensitivity to these choices. Note that (13) does not provide a sharp bound on the magnitude or even the sign of  $C_{dyn}$ . After determining  $C_{dyn}$ , the next step is to define a corrected  $C^{ext}$  value from the relation,

$$C_{\phi}^{ext} = \min[\max[C_{\phi}^{ext}, C_{dyn}, 1]], \quad (14)$$

256 applied separately for all three  $\phi = (u, v, T)$  fields. The condition (14) assures that  
 257 the output nudging be as strong as indicated by the any of the input  $C$  values while re-  
 258 maining bounded by 1. The condition (13) does not require that  $C_{dyn}$  itself remain within  
 259 the  $[0, 1]$  range, but (14) ensures that  $C^{ext}$  remains with this range, which is a necessary  
 260 property for a weighting coefficient.

261 The coefficients  $C$  are a function of the along-boundary coordinate, so the incom-  
 262 ing energy flux in the child is tuned to match the fluxes from the parent independently  
 263 for each location at the boundaries. This makes it possible to deal with varying condi-  
 264 tions of incoming, outgoing, and reflecting fluxes at all locations. Notice that for  $C_{dyn} =$   
 265 0, we regain the adaptive-Orlanski conditions, whereas for  $C_{dyn} > 1$ , the specified ex-  
 266 ternal values are used in the OBCs.

### 267 **3.2.4 Sponge layers**

268 Regardless of which OBC is used, a sponge layer is employed near the open bound-  
 269 aries in the child subdomain to reduce accumulation of energy and to spatially smooth  
 270 the interior solution to bring it more in line with the coarser resolution fields in the par-  
 271 ent solution at the boundaries. It has the additional benefit of mitigating the emergence  
 272 of an artificial tangential current along the edge of the subdomain (Mason et al. (2010),  
 273 Sec. 1.2).

The sponge layer is a discretized form of (4) with non-zero  $K$  only near the open boundary and with its values reducing to zero linearly with the normal distance from the boundary. In practice, we often use a relatively narrow sponge layer 15 grid points wide. The maximum value of  $K$  depends on the grid size. It is chosen such that the diffusive Courant condition,

$$dt < \frac{dx^2}{K}, \quad (15)$$

274 does not impose an additional restriction on the time step size. Because the advective  
 275 Courant stability limit,  $dt < dx/U$ , depends linearly on the grid spacing, this implies  
 276 a further limit on the maximum allowable  $K$ ; *i.e.*,  $K < \alpha dx$ . In practice, the Courant  
 277 limit in the interior is often determined by the phase speed of the fastest, mode 1, in-  
 278 ternal baroclinic modes, which can be as high as  $4 \text{ m/s}$ . In our usual practice, often the  
 279 maximum permissible value for  $K$  is used. For the 2 nested domains with  $\Delta x = 2 \text{ km}$   
 280 in the Pacific that are discussed here, we use a value of  $K = 600 \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ .

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### 3.2.5 Online extraction of boundary data

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In practice, we often find that we are limited more by the amount of data produced by high-resolution models than by the computing power. To downscale high frequency signals into nested computational subdomain, we save information for the subdomain boundaries every 30 minutes (*e.g.*, with good tidal resolution). Traditionally, one might save a 3D output file with the required variables; however, UCLA ROMS is modified to interpolate the necessary external data to the required 2D locations and to save it at the required times, thereby greatly reducing the offline storage. Because  $F^{ext}$  is required in (13)-(14), this 2D field is also saved to the subdomain boundary data file.

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## 4 Results

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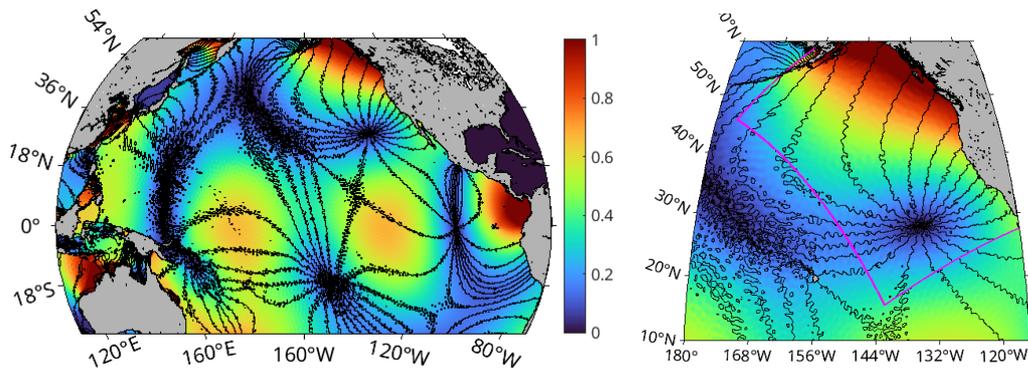
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We now analyze the tidal and/or high-frequency (HF) response in the Pacific basin simulation (Sec. 2.2 and assess the capability of the OBCs to downscale these signals into two nested subdomains (Sec. 2.3 in the northeast and northwest Pacific, designated as NEPAC and NWPAC, respectively.

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A dominant HF signal is the tide, especially the lunar semi-diurnal (M2) component with its frequency of  $2.2 \times 10^{-5} \text{ s}^{-1}$ . Figure 2 shows the surface tidal response in the Pacific. Both its amplitude and phase match known tidal solutions (*e.g.*, Egbert and



**Figure 2.** M2 surface tide in the Pacific (left panel). The color scale shows the tidal amplitude [m] and the black lines are iso-phases. The large scale pattern is primarily the barotropic tide. The phase lines are somewhat irregular due to the surface signature of internal tides. The right panel shows a closeup of the northeast Pacific, where the solution from the NEPAC subdomain (indicated by straight maroon lines) is overlaid on the full-basin solution. The downscaling in these fields is almost flawless, with only small mismatches at the open boundaries.

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Erofeeva (2002)) quite well with an rms error of only a few centimeters over the whole basin (not shown). The right panel shows the response in the nested NEPAC domain. The barotropic surface response in the nested domain is controlled by the Flather OBCs (Mason et al., 2010). The figure shows that the use of these OBCs, in combination with the high-frequency updates of the boundary information extracted from the parent solution (Sec. 3.2.5), performs well, with only very minor mismatches at the boundaries of the nested domain.

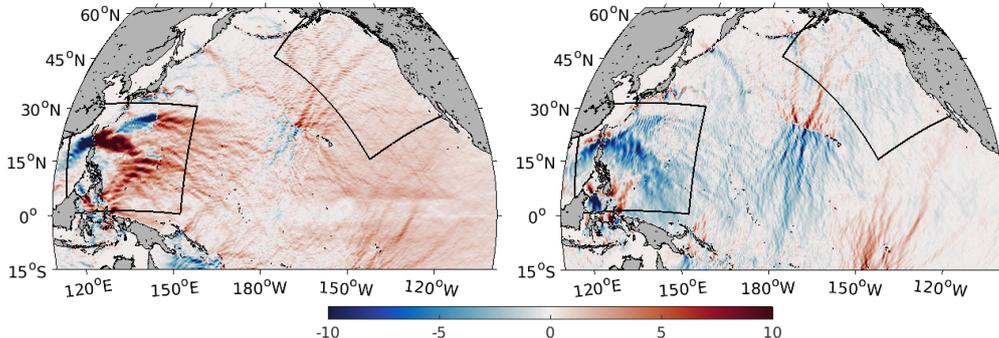
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For the remainder of this section, the analysis focuses on the vertically-integrated high-frequency (HF), baroclinic energy fluxes,  $F$  in (12). The annually-averaged  $F$  fields are in Fig. 3. The zonal fluxes in the left panel reveal that the Pacific basin is dominated

308 by eastward HF fluxes ( $F_x > 0$ ): some well known hot spots of generation are the Hawai-  
 309 ian Islands, Polynesia, and Luzon strait, located in the far Western Pacific around a lat-  
 itude of  $20^\circ N$ . Also indicated in Fig. 3 are the locations of the NEPAC and NWPAC

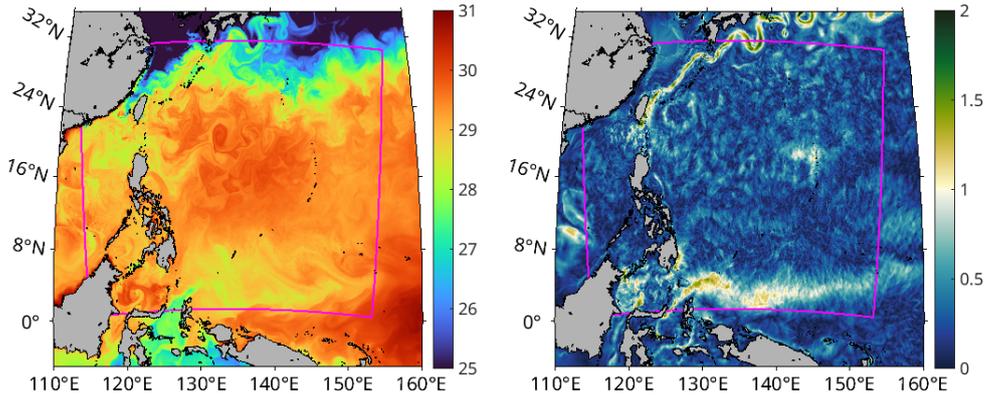


**Figure 3.** Vertical integral of high-frequency (HF) baroclinic tide and internal wave energy fluxes [kW/m], averaged over a 1 year period (2012) in the Pacific basin (parent) solution: zonal  $F_x$  (left panel) and meridional  $F_y$  (right panel) energy fluxes. In black are the locations of the two nested subdomains (children), NEPAC and NWPAC, that can be forced with the basin-scale solution at their open boundaries.

310 subdomains. In the NWPAC region the internal tide generation is dominated by Luzon  
 311 Strait. As a result, the  $F_x$  are predominantly outward from that location, both through  
 312 the western side into the South China sea and out of the eastern side into the broader  
 313 Pacific. The  $F_y$  are mostly to the south in the western Pacific. In contrast, the NEPAC  
 314 region is dominated by eastward HF energy fluxes into the domain, with remote gener-  
 315 ation as a significant source of HF energy.  
 316

317 The primary topic of this paper is the downscaling the HF baroclinic signal through  
 318 OBCs. However, it is also important that the OBCs work well for the sub-tidal motions.  
 319 To illustrate that the new procedures in Sec. 3 do not degrade the low-frequency signals,  
 320 Fig. 4 shows a snapshot of the temperature and speed at the surface on 1 October, 2017  
 321 as a combination of the solutions from the whole Pacific domain and the NWPAC sub-  
 322 domain; the patterns in both of these fields are mostly indicative of the low-frequency  
 323 components of the simulation. In general these fields show good continuity across the  
 324 subdomain boundary. There are a few discontinuities visible along the western bound-  
 325 ary in the South China Sea. Because of the chaotic evolution of oceanic eddies, the nested  
 326 solution may evolve into a different turbulent state compared to the parent, leading to  
 327 small mismatches, predominantly at outflow boundaries. The boundaries of the nested  
 328 subdomain are free of spurious rim currents, and the Kuroshio Current remains contin-  
 329 uous and well behaved as it meanders into and out of the NWPAC domain along the north-  
 330 ern boundary.

331 In the dynamic-Orlanski OBCs (Sec. 3.2.3),  $\mathcal{C}_{dyn}$  is important for weighting between  
 332 transport and nudging influences. Its behavior is examined for the HF fluxes at the bound-  
 333 aries of the NEPAC subdomain in Fig. 5). The range of  $\mathcal{C}_{dyn}$  values is limited to  $[-12]$ ,  
 334 which is larger than its usable range for  $\mathcal{C}^{ext}$  in condition (14). Allowing a larger range  
 335 of values for  $\mathcal{C}_{dyn}$  allows it to more adequately match the HF fluxes during periods where  
 336 the HF flux in the child domain lags behind the changes in the parent HF fluxes. Also  
 337 shown in Fig. 5 are the HF energy fluxes along the boundaries of the child and parent  
 338 domains. They track each other well, although there are still some differences at shorter  
 339 time and length scales mainly along the child boundary. The nudging character of the  
 340  $\mathcal{C}_{dyn}$  condition (13) is designed to enforce parent-child flux correspondences only on time

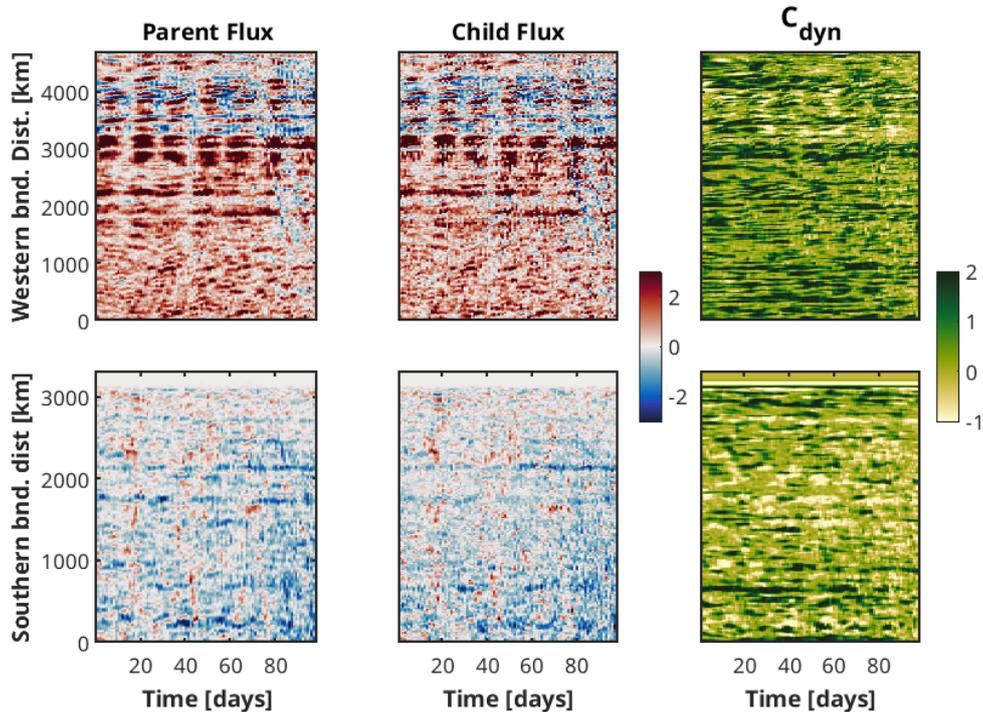


**Figure 4.** Snapshot of basin-scale and nested solutions at the oceanic surface in the Western Pacific on October 1, 2017. The solid black lines show the boundary of the nested Northwest Pacific subdomain. Outside the subdomain grid, the parent solutions from the full Pacific solution ( $\Delta x = 6 \text{ km}$ ) are shown and inside, the nested child solutions ( $\Delta x = 2 \text{ km}$ ) are shown. The left panel shows sea surface temperature [ $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ], and the right panel shows the magnitude of the surface current [ $\text{m/s}$ ].

341 scales comparable to  $\tau_f$  of longer. The western boundary shows fluxes that are gener-  
 342 ally positive into the domain, with the exception of the northern sector which shows fluxes  
 343 alternating into or out of the domain. Also evident are the amplitude modulations of the  
 344 largest positive  $F_x$  values on the western boundary that result from the spring-neap cycle  
 345 in the remotely generated tidal beams; these modulations are tracked well within  
 346 the child domain. The fluxes along the southern domain boundary are generally out of  
 347 the domain and are again well tracked by the fluxes in the child domain. The values of  
 348  $C_{dyn}$  are generally larger for the western domain boundary, indicative of the fact that  
 349 there are incoming HF fluxes, which need OBCs that trend more towards prescribed val-  
 350 ues (*i.e.*, highly nudged). The southern boundary on average has smaller values for  $C_{dyn}$ ,  
 351 consistent weaker local generation of the baroclinic tide and outgoing transport,  $F_y <$   
 352  $0$ . It is clear that the weighting coefficients  $C_{dyn}$  vary significantly both in space and time.  
 353 This clearly highlights the limitation of using a uniform tuning parameter, such as used  
 354 in (Siyabola et al., 2023)

355 Figure 6 shows time-mean values for the incoming HF energy fluxes into the NEPAC  
 356 domain, averaged over the last three months of 2017 (the same as the time range in Fig. 5).  
 357 For both boundaries, and almost all locations, the adaptive-Orlanski OBCs produce the  
 358 least amount of HF energy into the domain. This is consistent with the known behav-  
 359 ior that these OBCs efficiently radiate away wave energy, but are unable to consistently  
 360 enforce the incoming HF signals. In contrast, the prescribed OBCs (*i.e.*, with  $C^{ext} = 1$ )  
 361 produce the largest amount of incoming fluxes. Again, this is consistent with the fact  
 362 that these OBCs can enforce incoming signals at all frequencies, but suffer from spuri-  
 363 ous reflections of outgoing waves. As designed, the new dynamic-Orlanski OBCs gen-  
 364 erally track the incoming HF fluxes as they were computed in the parent domain very  
 365 well for a wide range of incoming and outgoing flux values.

366 In Fig. 7 the energy fluxes  $F_x$  (top row) and  $F_y$  (bottom row) are shown, again aver-  
 367 aged over the last 3 months of 2017 and for the NEPAC area. In this figure, the HF  
 368 energy fluxes are shown throughout the subdomain, not just at the boundaries. Notice  
 369 the narrower colorbar scale range in this figure, compared to Fig. 3, which accentuates  
 370 the patterns. In combination with Fig. 6, this provide additional evidence of the perfor-

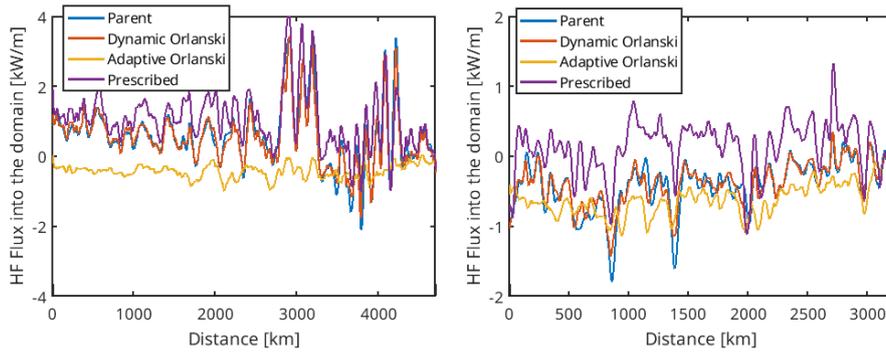


**Figure 5.** HF energy fluxes  $F$  [kW/m] (left two columns, top colorbar) and  $C_{dyn}(t)$  (final column, bottom colorbar) at the boundaries of the NEPAC nested subdomain. The top and bottom rows show the western and southern boundaries, respectively. In the left column, the HF fluxes from the parent grid are shown, and the middle column shows the fluxes from the child grid as a function of time for a period of 70 days since September 25, 2017. (horizontal axis). The vertical axis for all the figures shows the location along the boundaries, starting at the South-West corner. The right column shows the coincident variation in space and time of  $C_{dyn}(t)$ .

371 mance of the different OBCs. Clearly, the adaptive-Orlanski OBCs provide too little re-  
 372 remotely generated HF energy coming in from the west, so much so that that the sign of  
 373  $F_x$  is actually reversed. There is barotropic to baroclinic tidal energy conversion at the  
 374 coastal shelf break and the Mendocino ridge within the NEPAC subdomain, and this lo-  
 375 cally produced energy leads to outgoing fluxes toward the west. The prescribed OBCs  
 376 produce an overestimate of incoming fluxes, due to spurious reflections at the western  
 377 and southern boundaries. The dynamic-Orlanski OBCs yield fluxes much closer to the  
 378 parent fluxes near the western boundary. Toward the coast on the eastern side of the sub-  
 379 domain, differences are visible with all of the OBC choices; this is due to the increased  
 380 local production of baroclinic HF energy with the increased grid resolution in the nested  
 381 subdomain.

382 As remarked, the northeast Pacific is dominated by remotely forced internal tides  
 383 such as generated by the topography around the Hawaiian Islands and the Aleutian Is-  
 384 lands that form the southern boundary of the Bering sea. This is evident in the larger-  
 385 area plot of the energy fluxes in Fig. 8. However, like the previous example, this is not  
 386 uniformly true, because the southern boundary of the domain is characterized by fluxes  
 387 that are predominantly outwards of the domain.

388 The internal tides in the North-Western Pacific are dominated by the generation  
 389 in the Luzon strait between Taiwan and the Philippines, with the highest rate of forc-  
 390 ing of internal tidal energy in the world (Pickering et al., 2015). In addition to Luzon



**Figure 6.** A comparison of the incoming HF energy fluxes [kW/m] into the (left) western edge ( $F_x(y)$ ) and (right) southern edge ( $F_y(x)$ ) the NEPAC subdomain for different OBCs. The fluxes from the parent domain are shown in blue. Using adaptive Orlanski OBCs, the fluxes are typically too negative, reflecting the inability of this OBC to force the nested subdomain with HF data. The prescribed OBCs (*i.e.*, with  $C^{ext} = 1$ ) lead to too much baroclinic HF energy into the domain: incoming fluxes are transferred well, but outgoing fluxes suffer from reflections at the boundaries. The dynamic Orlanski OBCs track the incoming fluxes very well.

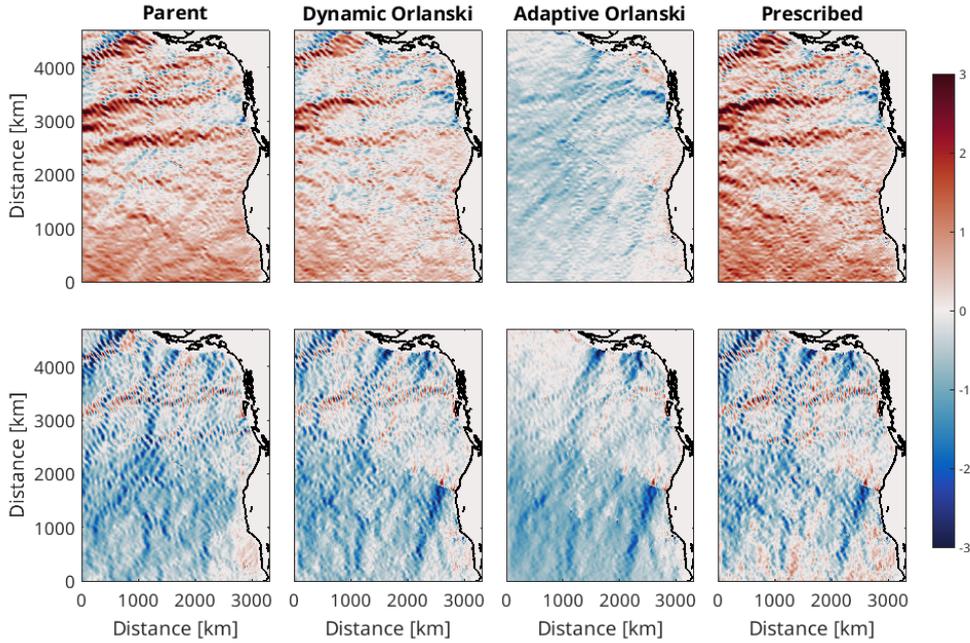
391 strait, many other island and topographic features in the region are strong generators  
 392 of internal tides. This is why the the region in figure 9 mostly shows outward HF energy  
 393 fluxes at the boundaries. However, there are locations along the boundary that show a  
 394 large amount of baroclinic energy into the nested domain such as the location along the  
 395 Southern boundary around 130  $E$  (right panel), near the Maluku islands. Our approach  
 396 not only matching the parent and child domain boundary HF energy fluxes well, it man-  
 397 ages to do so without resorting to sponging alone.

## 398 5 Summary and limitations

399 Velocity, tracer, and baroclinic energy flux data are computed on a parent grid and  
 400 interpolated to A nested subdomain boundary at 30 minute intervals. The cross-boundary  
 401 baroclinic energy fluxes are filtered in time using a running low-pass filter. A smooth switch-  
 402 ing function is used to provide a weighted averaging the transport and nudging OBCs  
 403 and to match the baroclinic energy fluxes between parent and child grids at the bound-  
 404 ary of the child domain, followed by moderate smoothing near the boundary using a smooth-  
 405 ing operator. Assessments are made of the performance of these dynamic-Orlanski bound-  
 406 ary conditions in a Pacific basin simulation with two nested subdomains in the north-  
 407 east and northwest Pacific. Good continuity is demonstrated across the child boundaries  
 408 for both low-frequency and high-frequency fields.

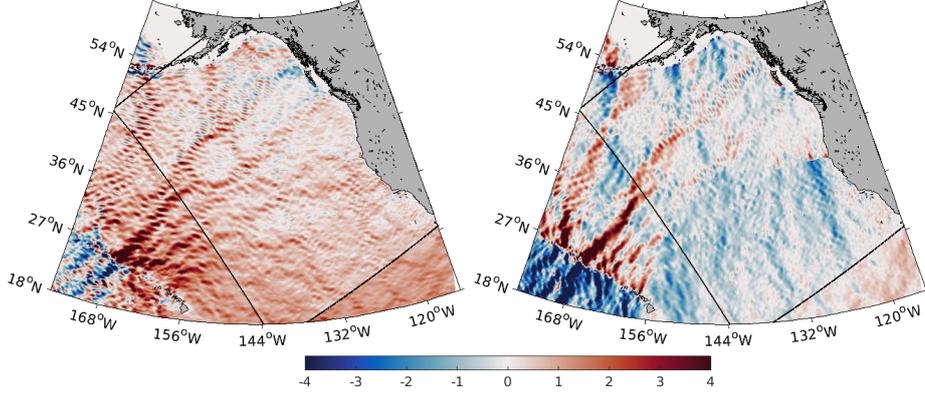
409 Given the general parameterization principles of transport, nudging, flux-matching,  
 410 and sponging (Sec. 3), the procedure involves several choices for spatial and temporal  
 411 discretization and for several tuning parameters in the OBCs. These choices are made  
 412 by trial and error. In these practices, these choices cannot be claimed to be optimal nor  
 413 even universally applicable to all oceanic regimes; rather, they are sufficiently skillful for  
 414 the purpose of realistic basin-scale circulations with nested subdomains using the UCLA  
 415 ROMS code. Most likely, analogous procedures could be made to work well in other cir-  
 416 culation models.

417 A further cautionary remark is the following. Using the dynamic-Orlanski bound-  
 418 ary conditions only matches the vertically-integrated baroclinic high-frequency energy



**Figure 7.** Comparison of the effects of different OBCs on the HF energy fluxes averaged over a three-month period (Oct.-Dec., 2017) for both the parent and child simulations within the area of the NEPAC subdomain. (Top row)  $F_x$  [kW/m] and (bottom row)  $F_y$  [kW/m]. The nested solution with adaptive-Orlanski OBCs are unable to include the high-frequency forcing of the parent due to remote generation near Hawaii and as a result have a net  $F_x < 0$  due to local internal tide generation in the shoaling regions on the western side of the subdomain. The prescribed OBCs overestimate  $F_x > 0$  as a result of excessive reflections at the western subdomain boundary. The dynamic-Orlanski OBCs reproduce the  $F_x$  fluxes from the parent accurately near the boundary but towards the right, they are reduced as a result of increased generation within the child domain. The  $F_y$  differences are less dramatic, but they can be analogously explained.

419 flux at the boundary in the normal direction. This approach does not explicitly distin-  
 420 guish between outgoing and incoming transport beyond what the original adaptive-Orlanski  
 421 boundary condition is able to accomplish. If an outgoing wave has a different vertical  
 422 mode structure compared to an incoming wave, the dynamic-Orlanski approach may not  
 423 be able to exactly match the partitioning of the wave energy flux into the different modes,  
 424 but only in the vertical integral. On the other hand, because the OBCs are applied at  
 425 each vertical level, there will be a nudging toward the vertical structure of the parent  
 426 solution when the transport is incoming. Attempting to a frequency-wavenumber anal-  
 427 ysis to decompose the signal into inward- and outward-propagating signals is not only  
 428 computationally prohibitive, it is also inappropriate for realistically-complex, nonlinearly-  
 429 interactive currents in nested subdomains with high resolution and small spatial scales.  
 430 To successfully compute a frequency-wave number analysis, a horizontal scale that is at  
 431 least equal to the wave length of the first baroclinic mode is needed. For smaller (higher  
 432 resolution) nested domains, this length scale can approach or exceed the size of the do-  
 433 main, which renders the analysis invalid as a measure of signals 'near' the boundary. For  
 434 the examples in this paper, this is not a serious limitation because the energy fluxes at  
 435 larger scales are dominated by the internal waves with a first-baroclinic vertical mode  
 436 structure (Buijsman et al., 2020), with limited partition into other modes. A possible



**Figure 8.** Time-averaged energy fluxes [kW/m] in an eastern Pacific region containing the NEPAC subdomain: (left) zonal  $F_x$  and (right) meridional  $F_y$ . The black lines indicate the boundaries of the nested subdomain. Outside the confines of the nested sub domain, fluxes from the parent solution are shown, while inside the subdomain, the fluxes computed in the child subdomain are shown. Notice how well the fluxes in the nested domain align with the fluxes from the parent domain at the subdomain boundaries.

437 extension of the current method would be to decompose the HF fluxes onto baroclinic  
 438 modes, which would make it possible to match HF energy in different modes independ-  
 439 dently.

## 440 Appendix A Discrete open boundary conditions

441 Here, we present a more complete description of the discrete implementation of the  
 442 various open boundary conditions. The open source repository of UCLA ROMS ([https://github.com/CESR-](https://github.com/CESR-lab/ucla-roms)  
 443 [lab/ucla-roms](https://github.com/CESR-lab/ucla-roms)) can also be used as a authoritative reference.

### 444 A1 Adaptive Orlanski

445 The normal velocity at the boundary, following equation 5, can be written as:

$$u_{0,j}^{n+1} = \frac{1 - C_{ext}}{1 + r_x} [u_{0,j}^n + r_x u_{1,j}^{n+1} - r_y \Delta u_y(0)] + C_{ext} u_j^{ext} \quad (\text{A1})$$

With:

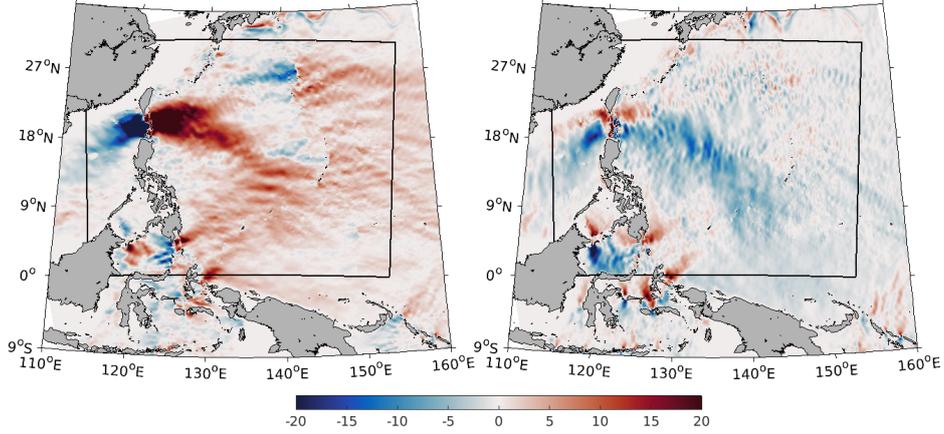
$$r_x = -\frac{\Delta u_t \Delta u_x}{\Delta u_x^2 + \Delta u_y(1)^2}, \quad (\text{A2})$$

$$r_y = -\frac{\Delta u_t \Delta u_y(1)}{\Delta u_x^2 + \Delta u_y(1)^2}, \quad (\text{A3})$$

The value of  $r_y$  is limited to the range  $[-1, 1]$ .

$$\Delta u_t = u_{1,j}^{n+1} - u_{1,j}^n, \quad (\text{A4})$$

$$\Delta u_x = u_{2,j}^{n+1} - u_{1,j}^{n+1}, \quad (\text{A5})$$



**Figure 9.** HF baroclinic energy fluxes in the northwestern Pacific, averaged over a 1 month period (December, 2012): (a) zonal  $F_x$  [kW/m] and (b) meridional  $F_y$  [kW/m]. The black lines indicate the boundaries of the NWPAC subdomain. Outside of the nested subdomain, fluxes from the parent solution are shown, and inside the subdomain the fluxes computed in the child solution are shown. Notice how well the fluxes align with at the boundaries even for this very energetic region of internal tide generation.

$$\Delta u_y(i) = u_{i,j+1}^n - u_{i,j,k}^n, \quad \text{if } \Delta u_t(u_{i,j+1}^n - u_{i,j-1}^n) > 0, \quad (\text{A6})$$

$$\Delta u_y(i) = u_{i,j}^n - u_{i,j-1,k}^n, \quad \text{if } \Delta u_t(u_{i,j+1}^n - u_{i,j-1}^n) < 0, \quad (\text{A7})$$

The weights  $\mathcal{C}_{ext}$ , that determine how strongly the boundary value is nudged towards the externally provided value  $u_j^{ext}$ , vary according to:

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{C}_{ext} &= 0 & \text{if } r_x > 0, & & (\text{A8}) \\ \mathcal{C}_{ext} &= u_j^{ext} \Delta t / \Delta x & \text{if } r_x < 0, u_j^{ext} > 0 & \\ \mathcal{C}_{ext} &= u^{bnd} \Delta t / \Delta x & \text{if } r_x < 0, u_j^{ext} < 0 & \end{aligned}$$

446 Where  $\Delta t$ , and  $\Delta x$  are the time step size and the local grid spacing respectively.  $u^{bnd}$   
 447 is a parameter to the system and we are using  $u^{bnd} = 0.1 \text{ m/s}$  for all experiments shown.  
 448 These nudging coefficients are equivalent to using a nudging time scale  $\tau$  that is based  
 449 on an advective scaling using  $\tau = \Delta x / u$ . When the discretely computed phase speed  
 450 is out of the domain, no nudging towards the external value is applied ( $r_x > 0$ ).

For the normal velocity components at the boundaries, the boundary conditions are formulated as follows. As an example, we show the boundary conditions for the normal velocity  $u$  at the left boundary, with similar versions for normal velocities at the other 3 lateral boundaries.

$$u_{bnd} = \frac{1}{1 + r_x} \left[ u_{1,j,k}^n + r_x u_{2,j,k}^{n+1} - r_y \Delta u_y(1) \right] \quad \text{if } r_x > 0, \quad (\text{A9})$$

$$u_{1,j,k}^{n+1} = u_{bnd} \quad \text{if } r_x > 0, \quad (\text{A10})$$

$$u_{1,j,k}^{n+1} = (1 - \mathcal{C}_{ext}) u_{bnd} + \mathcal{C}_{ext} u^{ext} \quad \text{if } r_x < 0. \quad (\text{A11})$$

With:

$$r_x = -\frac{\Delta u_t \Delta u_x}{\Delta u_x^2 + \Delta u_y^2}, \quad r_y = -\frac{\Delta u_t \Delta u_y(2)}{\Delta u_x^2 + \Delta u_y^2}, \quad (\text{A12})$$

$$\Delta u_t = u_{2,j,k}^{n+1} - u_{2,j,k}^n, \quad \Delta u_x = u_{2,j,k}^{n+1} - u_{3,j,k}^{n+1}, \quad (\text{A13})$$

$$\Delta u_y(i) = u_{i,j+1,k}^n - u_{i,j,k}^n, \quad \text{if } r_y > 0, \quad (\text{A14})$$

$$\Delta u_y(i) = u_{i,j,k}^n - u_{i,j-1,k}^n, \quad \text{if } r_y < 0. \quad (\text{A15})$$

451 The value of  $r_y$  is limited to the range  $[-1, 1]$ .

In the system of equations above, a radiation condition is applied when the discretely computed phase speed is out of the domain (see equation A10). Otherwise, a nudging condition is used on the normal velocity boundary value (eq. A11). The nudging coefficients are:

$$c_{ext} = u^{ext} \Delta t / \Delta x \quad \text{if } u^{ext} > 0, \quad (\text{A16})$$

$$c_{ext} = u^{bind} \Delta t / \Delta x \quad \text{if } u^{ext} < 0. \quad (\text{A17})$$

452 Where  $\Delta t$ , and  $\Delta x$  are the time step size and the local grid spacing respectively.  $u^{bind}$   
453 is a parameter to the system and we are using  $u^{bind} = 0.1m/s$  for all experiments shown.  
454 These nudging coefficients are equivalent to using a nudging time scale  $\tau$  that is based  
455 on an advective scaling using  $\tau = \Delta x / u$ .

For tracers and tangential momentum terms, the boundary conditions are as follows. Following the above approach we will show the equations for a variable  $\phi$  at the  $i = 0$  boundary. In the definition of the c-grid that is used, the location of the first  $\phi$  value is at  $i = -1/2$ , in the virtual buffer just outside the domain boundary (see Fig. 1)

$$\phi_{-1/2,j}^{n+1} = (1 - c_x) \left[ \phi_{-1/2,j}^n - c_y \Delta \phi_y(-1/2) \right] + c_x \left[ \phi_{1/2,j}^n - c_y \Delta \phi_y(1/2) \right] \quad \text{if } c_x > 0, \quad (\text{A18})$$

$$\phi_{-1/2,j}^{n+1} = (1 - C_{ext}) \left[ \phi_{-1/2,j}^n - c_y \Delta \phi_y(-1/2) \right] + C_{ext} \phi^{ext} \quad \text{if } c_x < 0, \quad (\text{A19})$$

Where now  $C_{ext} = -c_x$  and the local Courant numbers  $c_x, c_y$  are:

$$c_x = u_{1,j,k} \Delta t / \Delta x, \quad c_y = 0.5(v_{0,j,k} + v_{0,j+1,k}) \Delta t / \Delta y, \quad (\text{A20})$$

And

$$\Delta \phi_y(i) = \phi_{i,j+1,k}^n - \phi_{i,j,k}^n, \quad \text{if } c_y < 0, \quad (\text{A21})$$

$$\Delta \phi_y(i) = \phi_{i,j,k}^n - \phi_{i,j-1,k}^n, \quad \text{if } c_y > 0. \quad (\text{A22})$$

## 456 **A2 Prescribed**

The prescribed boundary conditions override values at the boundaries with external data:

$$u_{1,j,k}^{n+1} = u^{ext}, \quad \phi_{0,j,k}^{n+1} = \phi^{ext} \quad (\text{A23})$$

457 For velocity components normal to the boundary and tangential components and trac-  
458 ers, respectively. Note that eqs. (A11, A19) revert to prescribed boundary conditions for  
459  $c_{ext} = 1$  and  $c_x = 1$ .

460

### A3 Dynamic Orlanski

The novel approach that is presented in this paper, is a dynamical switching between the two different types of boundary conditions above. Whereas the adaptive Orlanski condition is found to be insufficiently forcing high frequency baroclinic signals, the prescribed boundary condition is found to be too reflective. This realization suggests a hybrid approach between the two types of conditions. Using external data of the incoming high frequency baroclinic energy fluxes, the computed fluxes near the open boundaries are used to match the parent and child high frequency fluxes. Whenever the diagnosed flux into the domain is too small, the model will dynamically switch towards a prescribed boundary condition, whenever the incoming energy flux is too large, it will move more towards adaptive Orlanski as follows:

$$\mathcal{C}_{ext} = \max(\mathcal{C}_{ext}, \mathcal{C}_{dyn}) \quad (\text{A24})$$

With:

$$\mathcal{C}_{dyn}^{n+1} = \mathcal{C}_{dyn}^n + \frac{1}{\tau}(F_{ext} - F) \quad (\text{A25})$$

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In this context,  $F_{ext}$  and  $F$  are the HF baroclinic energy fluxes as defined in 12, normal to the boundary for the parent and the child domain respectively. It is important to remark that the coefficients  $\mathcal{C}_{dyn}$  are a function of the along boundary coordinate, so the incoming flux in the child is tuned to match the fluxes from the parent independently for each location at the boundaries. This makes it possible to deal with varying conditions of incoming, outgoing and reflecting fluxes at all locations. It is easy to see that for  $c_{dyn} = 0$ , we regain the adaptive Orlanski conditions, whereas for  $c_{dyn} = 1$ , the prescribed conditions are used.

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### Open Research Section

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The code of UCLA-ROMS is publicly available at <https://github.com/CESR-lab/uclaroms>.

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