Ocean Modeling I

Ocean Modeling Basics and Overview of CESM Ocean Models

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Outline

1) General ocean modelling considerations

- Challenges for ocean modeling
- Ocean properties
- Governing equations
- Boundary conditions
- Horizontal/vertical discretization

2) Parallel Ocean Program version 2 (POP2)

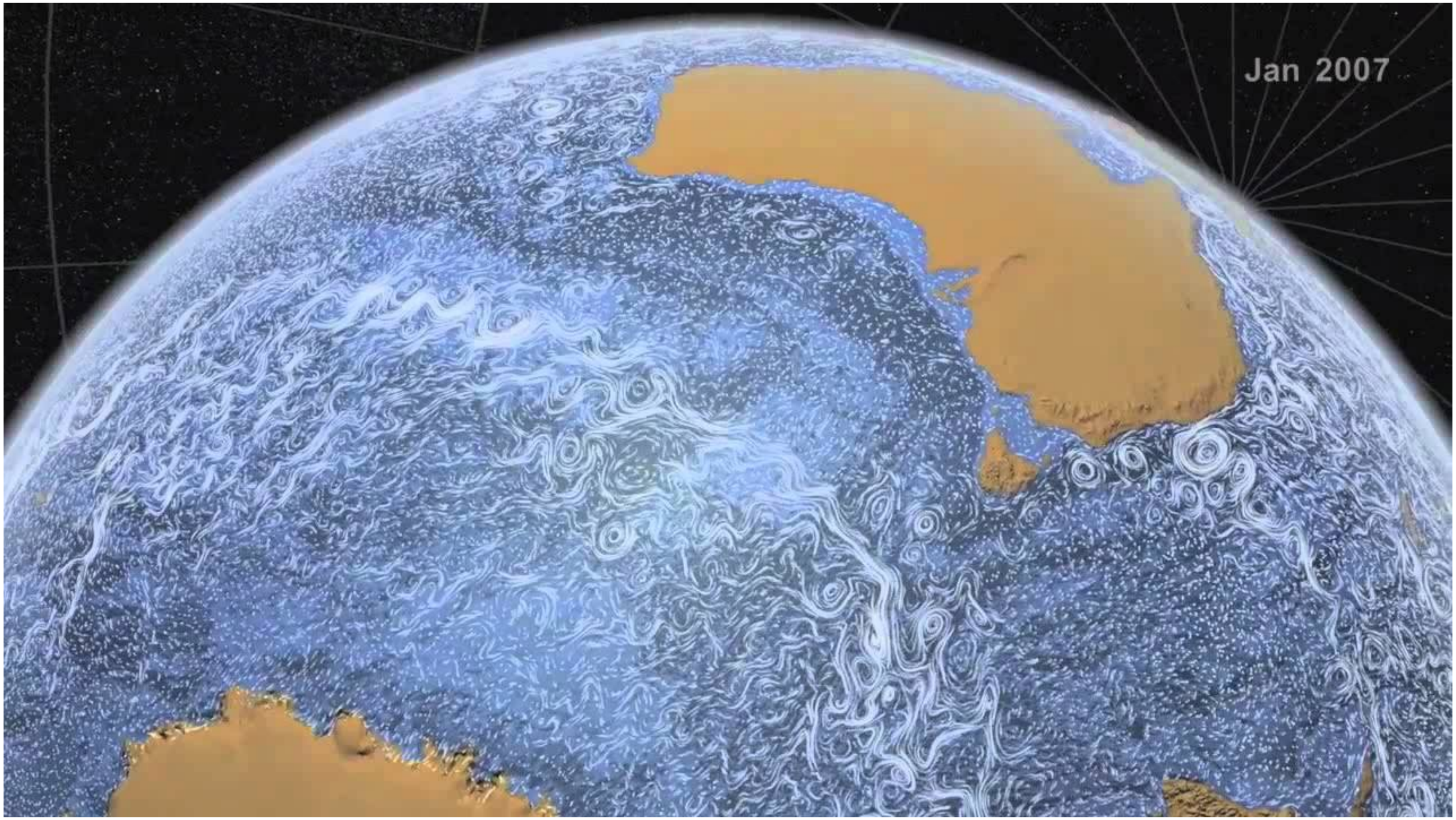
3) Modular Ocean Model version 6 (MOM6)

4) Helpful resources

Ocean Modeling Challenges: irregular domain

1st order challenges from a numerical perspective:

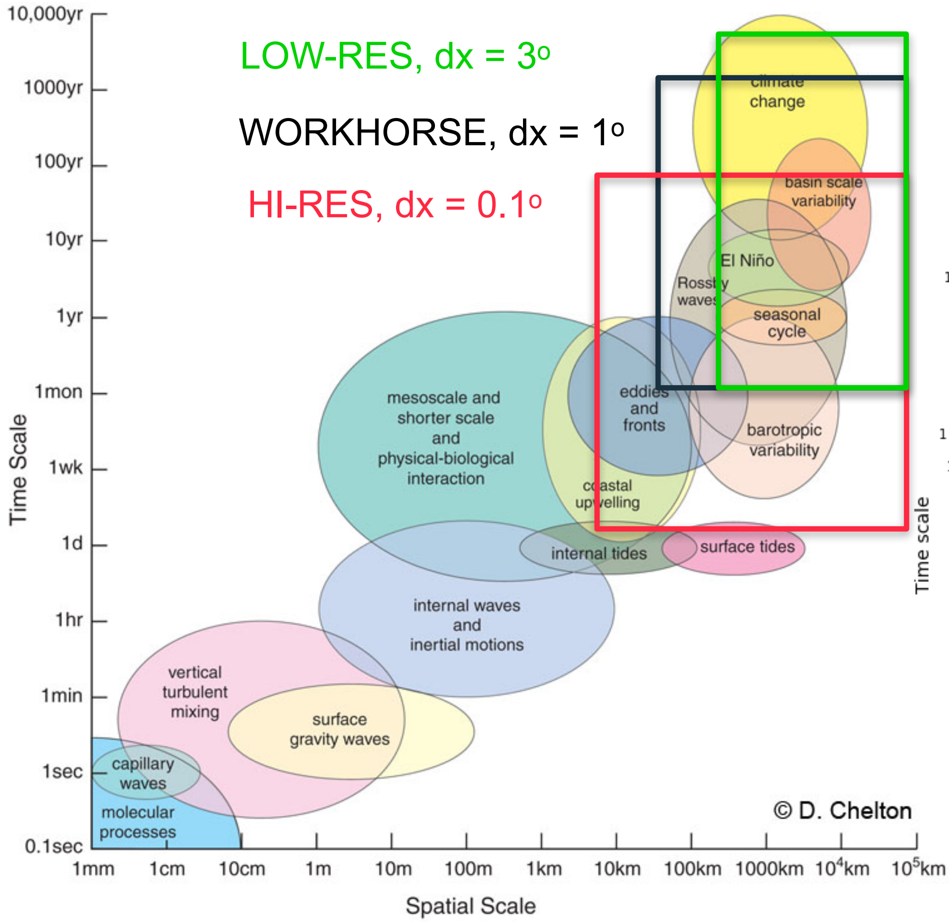
- Highly irregular domain; land boundary exerts strong control on ocean dynamics.



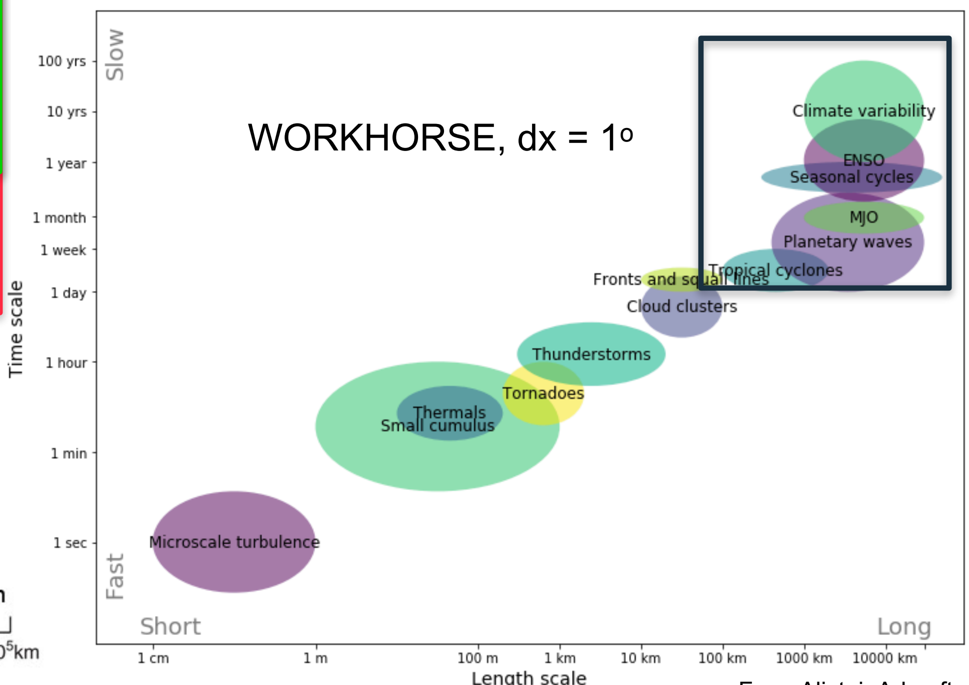
Perpetual Ocean; Credit: MIT/NASA-JPL ECCO2

Ocean Modeling Challenges: Spatial vs. Temporal Scales

Ocean



Atmosphere

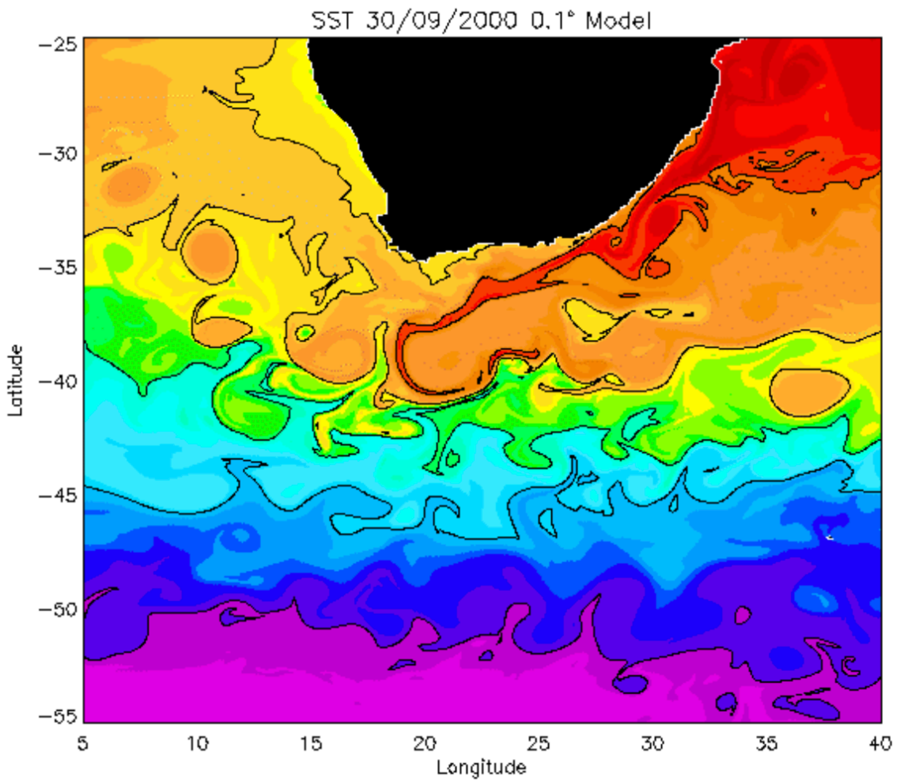


From Alistair Adcroft

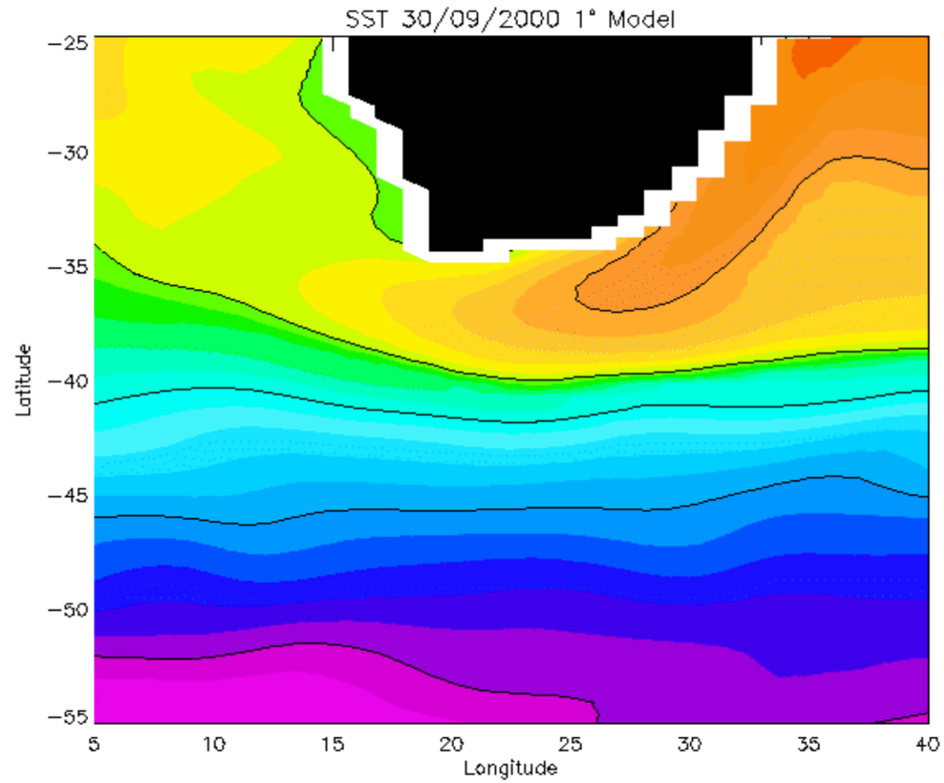
- Most global ocean models simulate the **climate**
- Most global atmospheric models simulate the **weather**

Ocean Modeling Challenges: Spatial Scales

Δx = 0.1 degree



Δx = 1.0 degree

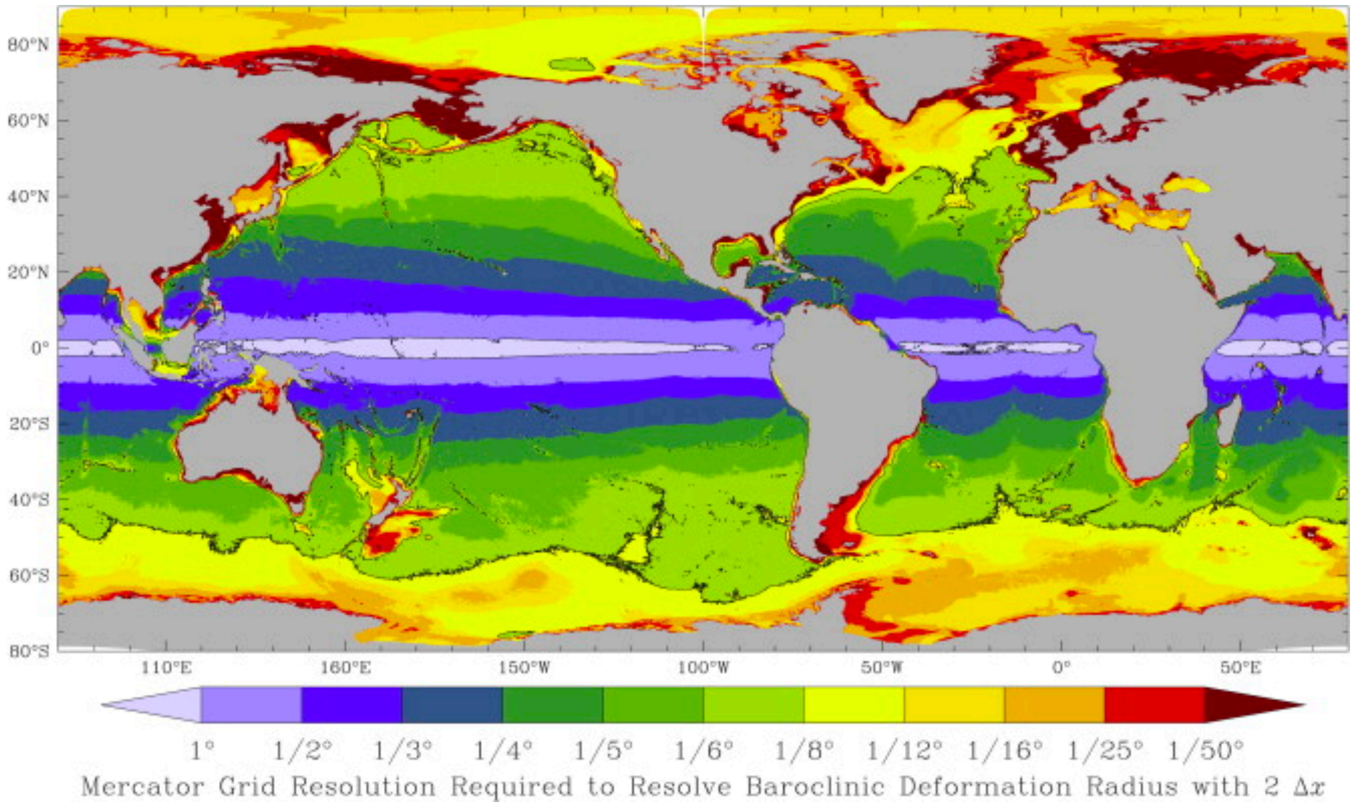


- Mixing associated with sub-gridscale turbulence must be parameterized.

Ocean Modeling Challenges: Eddy-Resolving Scales

- The density change from top to bottom is much smaller than the atmosphere. This makes the **Rossby radius (R_d)** much smaller – 100s to 10s km;

$$R_d = \frac{NH}{\pi f}$$



From Hallberg (2013)

Ocean Modeling Challenges: Equilibration Timescale

- Extremely small mixing across density surfaces once water masses are buried below the mixed layer base. This is why water masses can be named and followed around the ocean;
  - **Scaling argument for deep adjustment time:**

    $H^2/K_v = (4000\ m)^2 / (2 \times 10^{-5}\ m^2/s) = 20{,}000$ years

- **Dynamical adjustment timescale:**

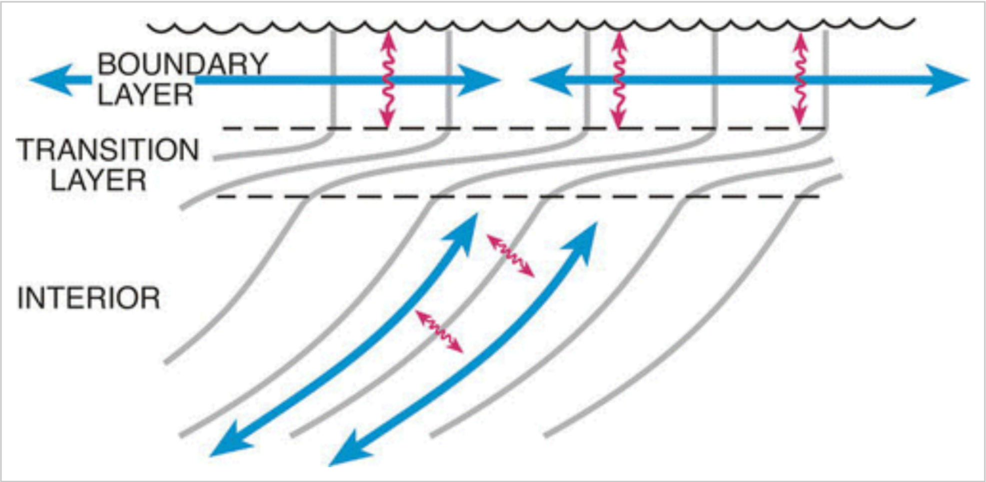
Phase speed of non-dispersive long Rossby waves, $C_R = -\beta R_d^2$

Approximate time taken to cross the Pacific Ocean at mid-latitudes:

$L/C_R = (15 \times 10^3\ km) / (20\ km/day) = 750$ days ~ 2 years.

Ocean Modeling Challenges: diabatic versus adiabatic regimes

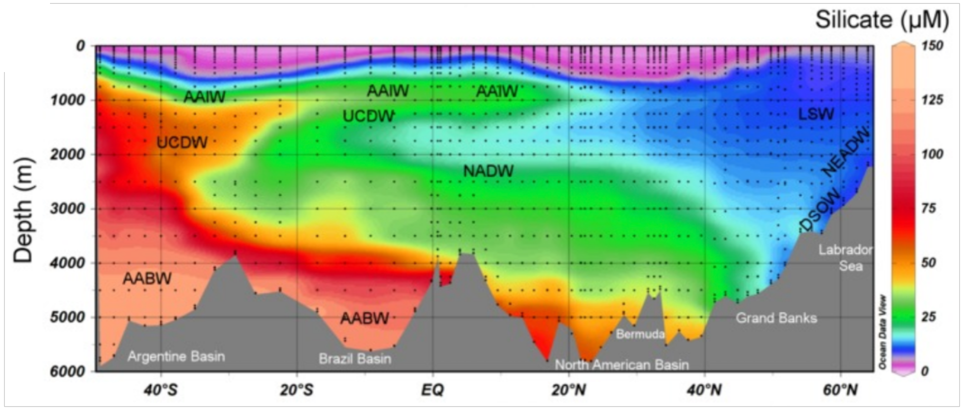
Conceptual model of mesoscale eddy fluxes in the upper ocean



From: Ferrari et al. (2008)

Difficult to represent these fluxes in ocean models. Important to minimize spurious (numerical) mixing due to truncation errors in the advection schemes.

Because of weak interior mixing, water masses can be named and followed around the ocean.



From: Rijkenberg et al. (2014)

Bottom line for climate studies

- Performing long (climate scale) simulations at eddy-resolving/permitting resolution are not practical;
- Must live with deep ocean not being at equilibrium in most simulations;
- Spurious mixing in the interior can significantly degrade the solution;
- The heat capacity of the ocean is much larger than the atmosphere. This makes it an important heat reservoir;
- The ocean contains the memory of the climate system → important implications for long-term prediction studies.

The equations solved by the ocean models

7 equations and 7 unknowns:

- 3 velocity components;
- Potential temperature;
- Density;
- Pressure;
- Salinity.

Plus: 1 equation for each passive tracer, e.g. CFCs, Ideal Age.

Approximations based on scaling considerations

1) **Hydrostatic** → when ocean becomes statically unstable (dρ>0) vertical overturning should occur, but cannot because vertical tendency has been excluded. This mixing is accomplished (i.e., parameterized) by a very large coefficient of vertical diffusion;

2) **Boussinesq** → $\rho = \rho_0 + \rho'$, $\rho' \ll \rho_0$; density variation is only important in the hydrostatic equation;

3) **Continuity (incompressible form)** → cannot deform seawater, so what flows into a control volume must flow out;

4) **Thin-shell** → the ocean depth is neglected compared to the earth's radius;

Together with horizontal motions >> vertical motions (traditional approximation), the thin-shell approximation of the Coriolis force results in retaining only the horizontal components due to horizontal motions.

Approximations based on scaling considerations (Cont.)

5) **Spherical Earth** → geopotential surfaces are assumed to be spheres;

6) **Turbulent closures** → subgrid scale processes can be parameterized in terms of the resolved large-scale fields / features.

Boussinesq hydrostatic eqs. in height coordinates

In Carthesian form

Horizontal momentum:

$$D_t \boldsymbol{u} + f\widehat{\boldsymbol{k}} \wedge \boldsymbol{u} + \frac{1}{\rho_o}\boldsymbol{\nabla}_z p = K_H \boldsymbol{\nabla}_z^2 \boldsymbol{u} + \partial_z (K_V \partial_z \boldsymbol{u}) \tag{1}$$

Vertical momentum (hydrostatic equation):

$$\partial_z p = -g\rho \tag{2}$$

Mass conservation / continuity equation:

$$\frac{\partial \rho}{\partial t} + \frac{\partial}{\partial x}(\rho u) + \frac{\partial}{\partial x}(\rho v)\frac{\partial}{\partial x}(\rho w) = 0 \tag{3a}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\nabla}_z \cdot \boldsymbol{u} + \partial_z w = 0, \qquad |\rho'| < < \rho_0 \tag{3b}$$

Boussinesq hydrostatic eqs. in height coordinates (cont.)

Potential temperature transport:

$$\partial_t \theta + \boldsymbol{\nabla}_z \cdot (\boldsymbol{u}\theta) + \partial_z (w\theta) = \boldsymbol{\nabla} \cdot \overline{\overline{A}} \boldsymbol{\nabla} \theta \tag{4}$$

Salinity transport:

$$\partial_t S + \boldsymbol{\nabla}_z \cdot (\boldsymbol{u}S) + \partial_z (wS) = \boldsymbol{\nabla} \cdot \overline{\overline{A}} \boldsymbol{\nabla} S \tag{5}$$

Equation of state (nonlinear):

$$\rho = \rho(S, \theta, p(z)) \tag{6}$$

Boundary conditions

Ocean surface:

- Flux exchanges at surface (momentum and tracers);
- In POP, no flux of fresh water, get equivalent of salt via virtual salt flux;

Ocean bottom:

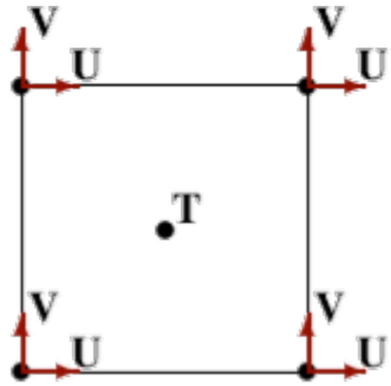
- No tracer fluxes (option to include geothermal heating in MOM6);
- Normal velocity is zero;
- Quadratic bottom drag (bottom boundary condition on viscosity term).

Lateral boundaries:

- No tracer fluxes;
- Flow normal to solid boundary is zero;
- No slip on lateral boundaries.

Horizontal grid staggering: Arakawa B grid

Arakawa B grid



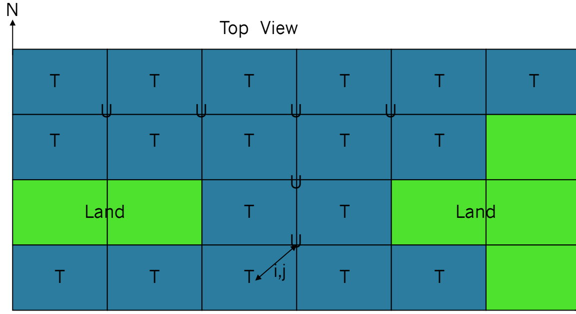
Top view

Advantages:

- Naturally fits no-slip boundary condition;
- Better dispersion for Rossby waves at very coarse resolution than C-grid;
- Smaller truncation errors in the computation of the Coriolis terms;

Disadvantages:

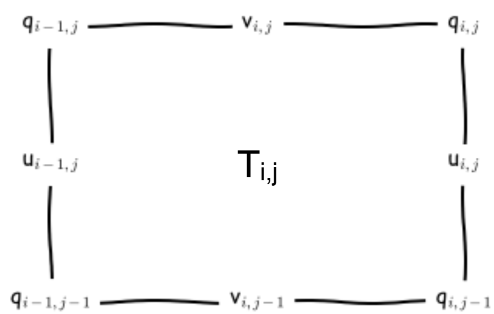
- Cannot represent single-point channels
- Larger truncation errors in the pressure gradient terms;



This is the staggering used in POP2

Horizontal grid staggering: Arakawa C grid

Arakawa C grid



Top view

Advantages:

- Allows single-point channels

Disadvantages:

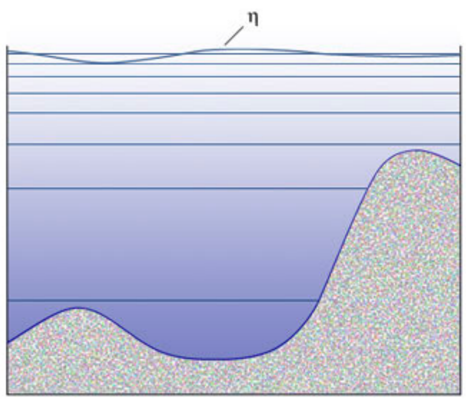
- The Coriolis acceleration terms requires horizontal averaging, making the inertia gravity waves (related with Coriolis force) less accurate;
- Poorer dispersion for Rossby waves at very coarse resolution than B-grid;

This is the staggering used in MOM6

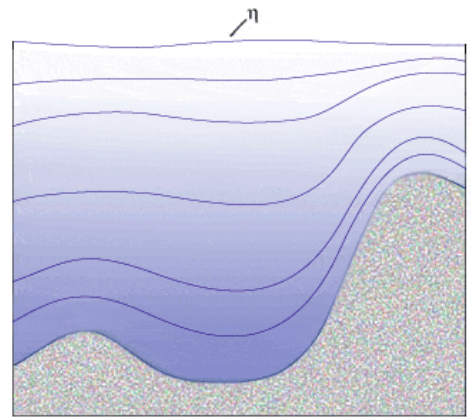
Vertical coordinate system in ocean models

The choice of a vertical coordinate system is **one of the most important** aspects of a model's design. There are 3 main vertical coordinate systems in use:

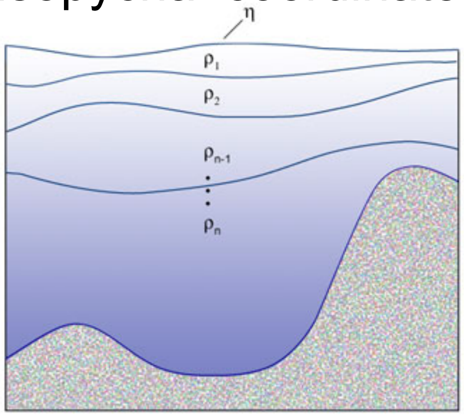
z-coordinates



σ-coordinates



isopycnal-coordinates



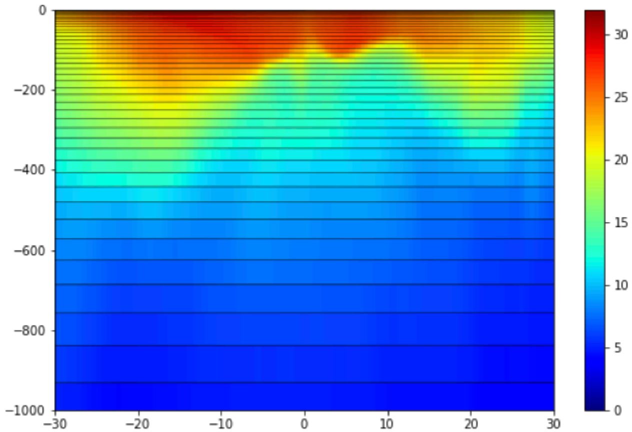
From: https://www.oc.nps.edu/nom/modeling/vertical_grids.html

- Each one has its advantages and disadvantages, which has led to the development of **hybrid** coordinate systems;

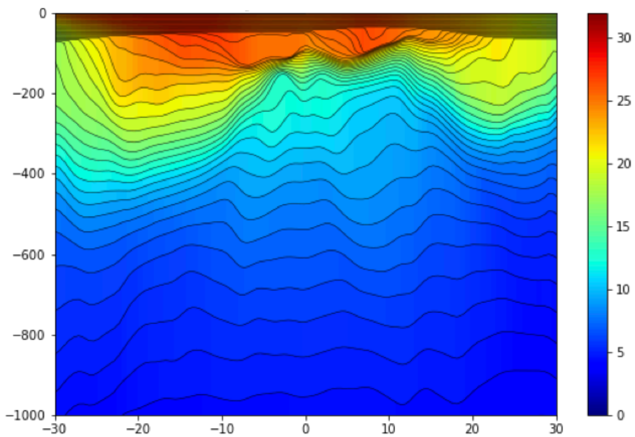
- This is an area of very active research and development in numerical ocean models.

MOM6 vertical grids

z*-coordinates, 65 levels

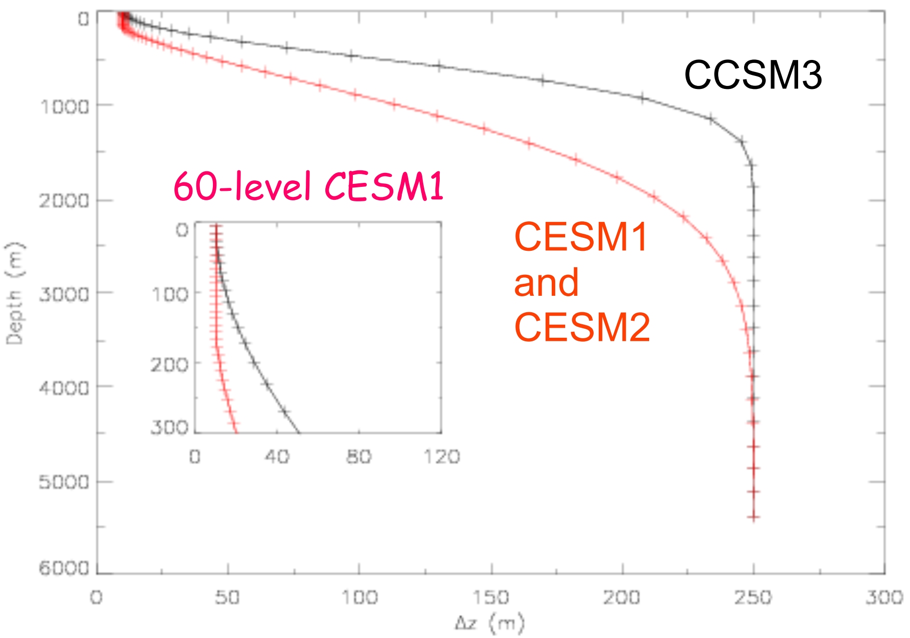


Hybrid (z*/rho), 75 levels



POP2 vertical grids

z-coordinates



Surface forcing options for ocean simulations with CESM

- Fully coupled mode (B compset);
- Forced ocean (C compset) or ocean – sea-ice coupled (G compset);

Coordinated Ocean-ice Reference Experiments (CORE)

- Inter-annual forcing (IAF; 1948-2009), http://data1.gfdl.noaa.gov/nomads/forms/mom4/CORE.html;
- Normal Year Forcing (NYF): synthetic year that repeats exactly; good for model testing and parameterization impact studies.

  Large and Yeager, NCAR Technical Note (2004)
  Large and Yeager, Climate Dynamics (2009)
  Danabasoglu et al., Ocean Modelling (2016)

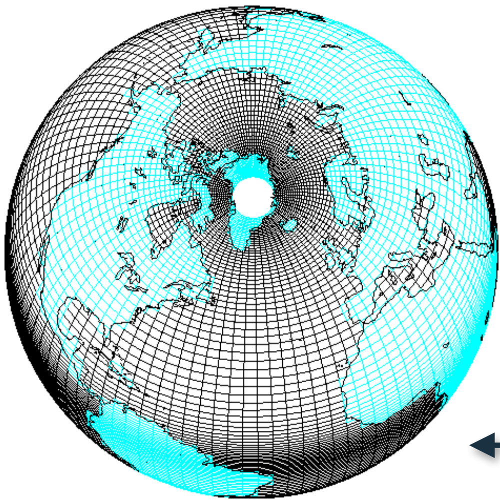
- JRA-55 (1958 to 2023), https://jra.kishou.go.jp/JRA-55/index_en.html, Tsujino et al., Ocean Modelling (2018)

The Parallel Ocean Program version 2 (POP2) dynamical core

- POP2 is a level- (z-) coordinate model developed at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (Smith et al. 2010);
- 3-D primitive equations, general orthogonal coordinates in the horizontal, solved with the **hydrostatic** and **Boussinesq** approximations;
- A linearized, implicit free-surface formulation is used for the barotropic equation for surface pressure (surface height);
- The global integral of the ocean volume remains constant because the freshwater fluxes are treated as **virtual salt fluxes**, using a constant reference salinity.

POP2: horizontal grids

Displaced pole → Removes singularity from the North Pole



- gx1: climate workhorse (nominal 1°)
- gx3: testing/paleo (nominal 3°)

← Equatorial refinement (0.3° / 0.9°)

Tripole

- tx0.1 (nominal 0.1°), eddy resolving almost everywhere;
- See Murray (1996) for details on the various types of grids.

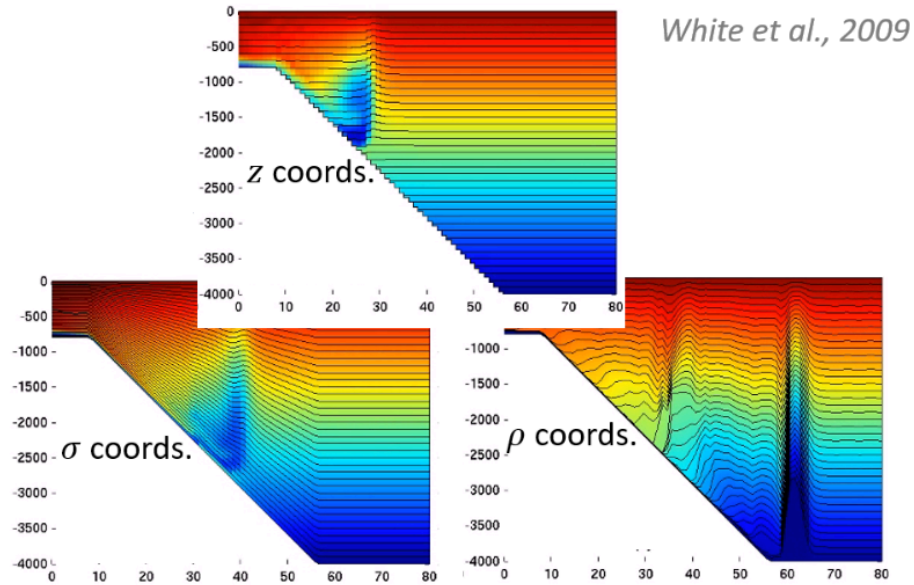
The Modular Ocean Model version 6 (MOM6) dynamical core

- **Finite volume solver**

- Hydrostatic Boussinesq or non-Boussinesq equations → Non-Boussinesq models contain all effects within the ocean acting on the sea level

- **Arbitrary-Lagrangian-Eulerian**

- Generalized vertical coordinates
- No vertical CFL limit → ultra-fine vertical resolution
- Sub-cycled gravity waves
- Built-in wetting and drying



Credit: Alistair Adcroft

MOM6 sub-grid scale parameterizations

- **Mesoscale eddies**
  - Many ways to prescribe diffusivities
    - MEKE, Jansen et al. (2015)
    - GEOMETRIC, Marshall et al. (2012)
  - Gent & McWilliams (1990)
    - Ferrari et al., 2010
  - Neutral diffusion (aka Redi tensor)
    - Shao et al., 2020; Marques et al. (2023)
  - Backscatter
    - MEKE, Jansen et al. (2015)
    - GM+E, Bachman et al. (2019)
- **Surface boundary layer**
  - KPP via Cvmix, Large et al. (1994)
  - ePBL, Reichl and Hallberg (2018)
  - Bulk mixed layer
- **Submesoscale eddies**
  - Fox-Kemper et al. (2008)
- **Shear-mixing**
  - Jackson et al. (2008)
  - CVmix (LMD94)
- **SW penetration**
  - Manizza et al. (2005)
  - Ohlmann (2003)
  - Morel (1988)
- **Bottom boundary layer**
- **Geothermal**
- **Internal tide-driven mixing**

Helpful resources for the POP model

Webpage for POP: http://www.cesm.ucar.edu/models/cesm2/ocean/

- CESM2.0 POP2 User Guide
- MARBL Documentation
- Ocean Ecosystem Model User Guide
- POP Reference Manual
- Port validation
- Post-processing Utilities
- CESM1 User Guides and FAQ

CESM/POP forum:

https://bb.cgd.ucar.edu/cesm/forums/pop.136/

Helpful resources for the MOM6 model

- **Webpage for CESM/MOM6**: quick start; overview; tutorials
  https://github.com/NCAR/MOM6/wiki

- **MOM6 webinar tutorial series** spring-summer 2020: theory, how-to, use-cases
  https://www.cesm.ucar.edu/events/2020/MOM6/

- Expanding **documentation** with community contributions
  https://mom6.readthedocs.io/

- Packages for **post-processing analysis**:
  mom6_tools: https://github.com/NCAR/mom6-tools
  om4labs: https://github.com/raphaeldussin/om4labs

- **MOM6 forum** is for technical and scientific questions related to MOM6, including but not limited to its use in CESM:

  https://bb.cgd.ucar.edu/cesm/forums/mom6.148/

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Thank you!

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