

Uncertainty in fire emission factors and the impact on modeled atmospheric CO and O₃

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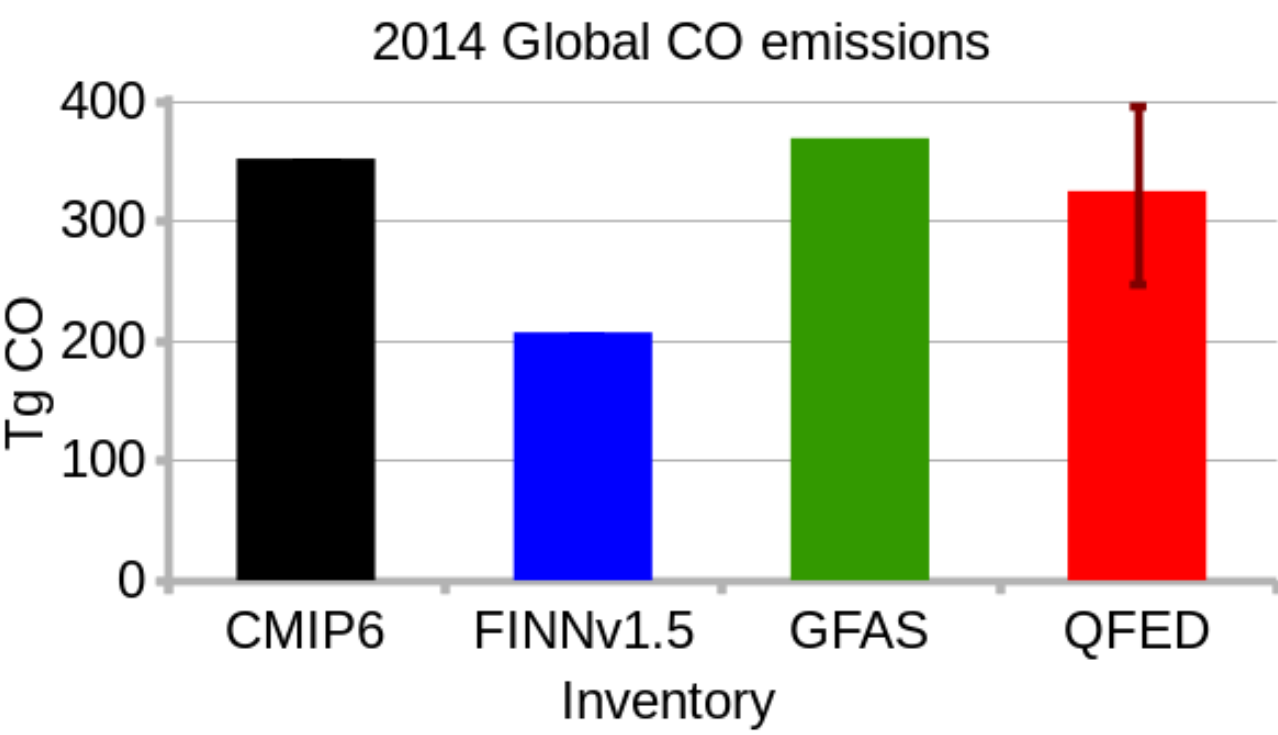
Introduction

Fire emissions are an important component of global models, which help to understand the influence of sources, transport and chemistry on atmospheric composition. Global fire emission inventories can vary substantially due to the assumptions made in the emission creation process, including the defined vegetation type, fire detection, fuel loading, fraction of vegetation burned and emissions factors [1, 2]. Here, we focus on the uncertainty in emission factors and the resulting impact on modeled composition.

Emissions and simulation set-up

Atmospheric chemistry sensitivity simulations (T1, [3]) are performed with the Community Atmosphere Model with chemistry (CAM-chem) a component of the Community Earth System Model version 2 (CESM2).

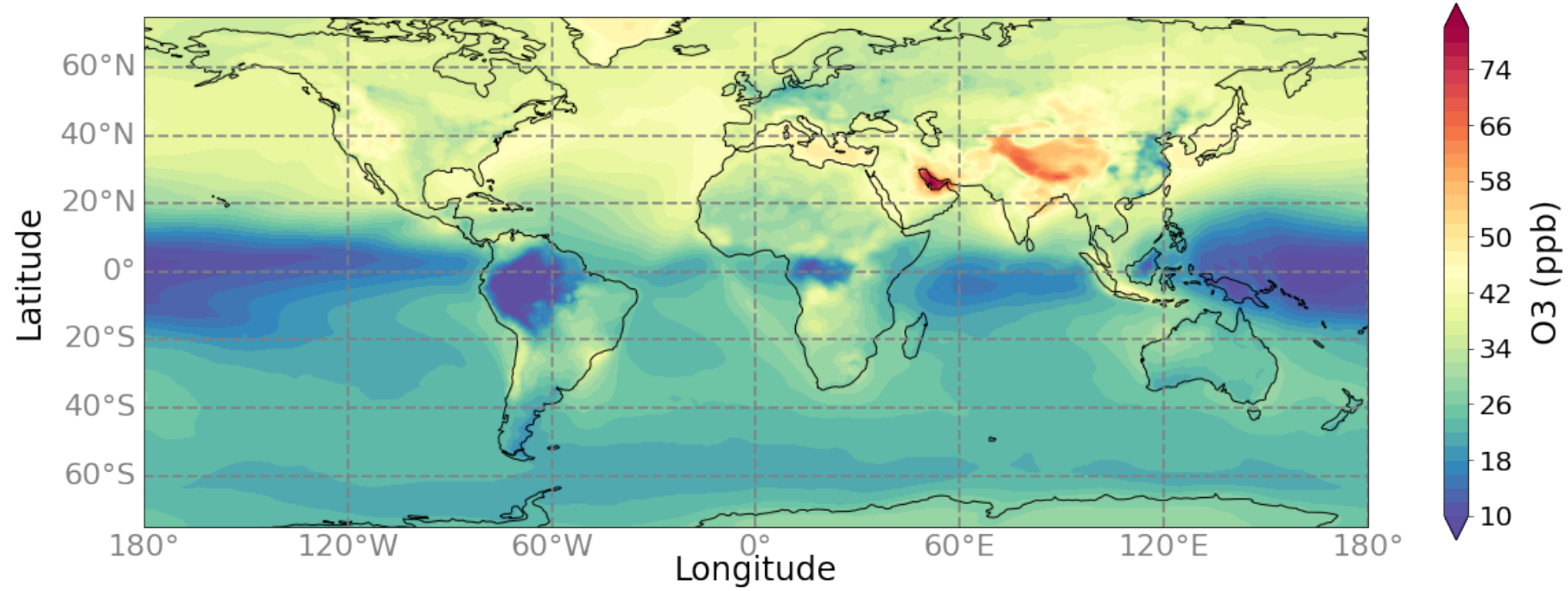
- ▶ 0.92 x 1.25 horizontal resolution, 32 levels
- ▶ Meteorology nudged to MERRA2 at 1%
- ▶ Emissions: Anthropogenic = CMIP6 [4], Biogenic = online MEGAN2.1 [5], Fire = defined below
- ▶ 2013 spin-up, 2014 simulation



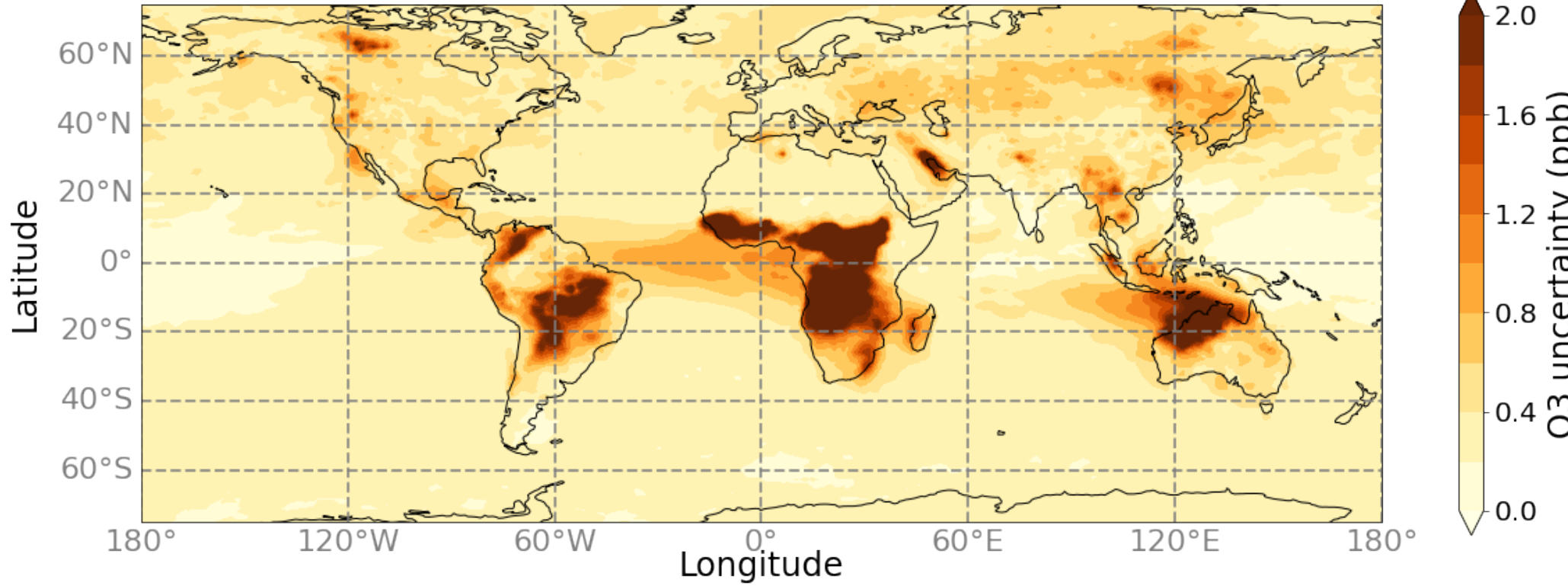
Simulations	Fire inventory used
CMIP6-monthly	Base case: CMIP6 [6] (a.k.a GFED4s) monthly emissions
FINN-CO	Base case with fire CO replaced by FINNv1.5 [7] daily CO
GFAS-CO	Base case with fire CO replaced by GFASv1.2 [8] daily CO
QFED-CO	Base case with fire CO replaced by QFEDv2.5 [9] daily CO
QFED-CO ±CO σ	Same as QFED-CO, with CO fire emissions increased (+) or decreased (-) by the CO emission uncertainty factor[10]
All-QFED	Base case with all fire emissions replaced by daily QFEDv2.5
All-QFED ±σ	Same as All-QFED, with all fire emissions increased (+) or decreased (-) by the respective emission uncertainty factors [10]

Modeled ozone response to emission factor uncertainty

CAM-chem average surface O₃, 2014



Absolute uncertainty in surface O₃, 2014

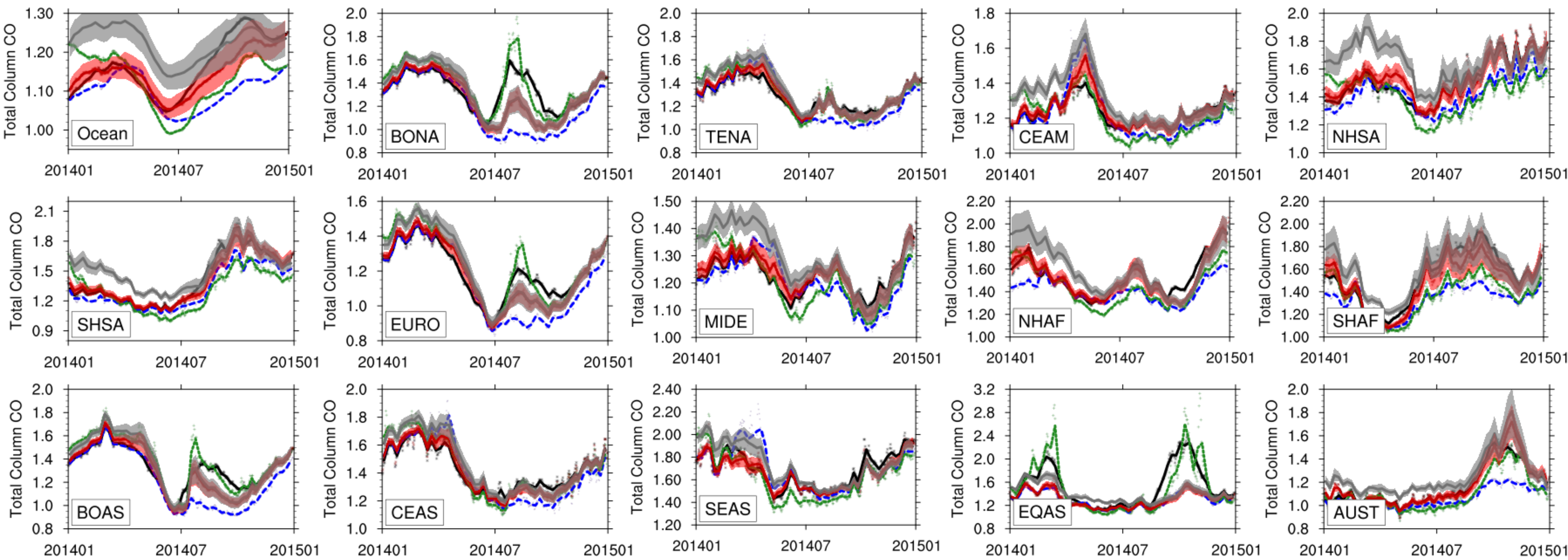


Ozone (O₃) is chemically produced in smoke plumes. We use modeled O₃ to investigate how emission factor uncertainty may influence the atmospheric oxidative environment.

In 2014, the Northern Hemisphere generally experiences under 2 ppb (~5%) change in ozone due to emission factor uncertainty. In contrast, large areas of the Southern Hemisphere experience above 2 ppb (~10%) change in O₃.

Modeled carbon monoxide response to emission factor uncertainty

Column CO (×10¹⁸ molec. cm²) for 2014



CMIP6
FINN-CO
GFAS-CO
QFED-CO
±CO σ
All-QFED
±σ

14 GFED basis regions defined by [11]

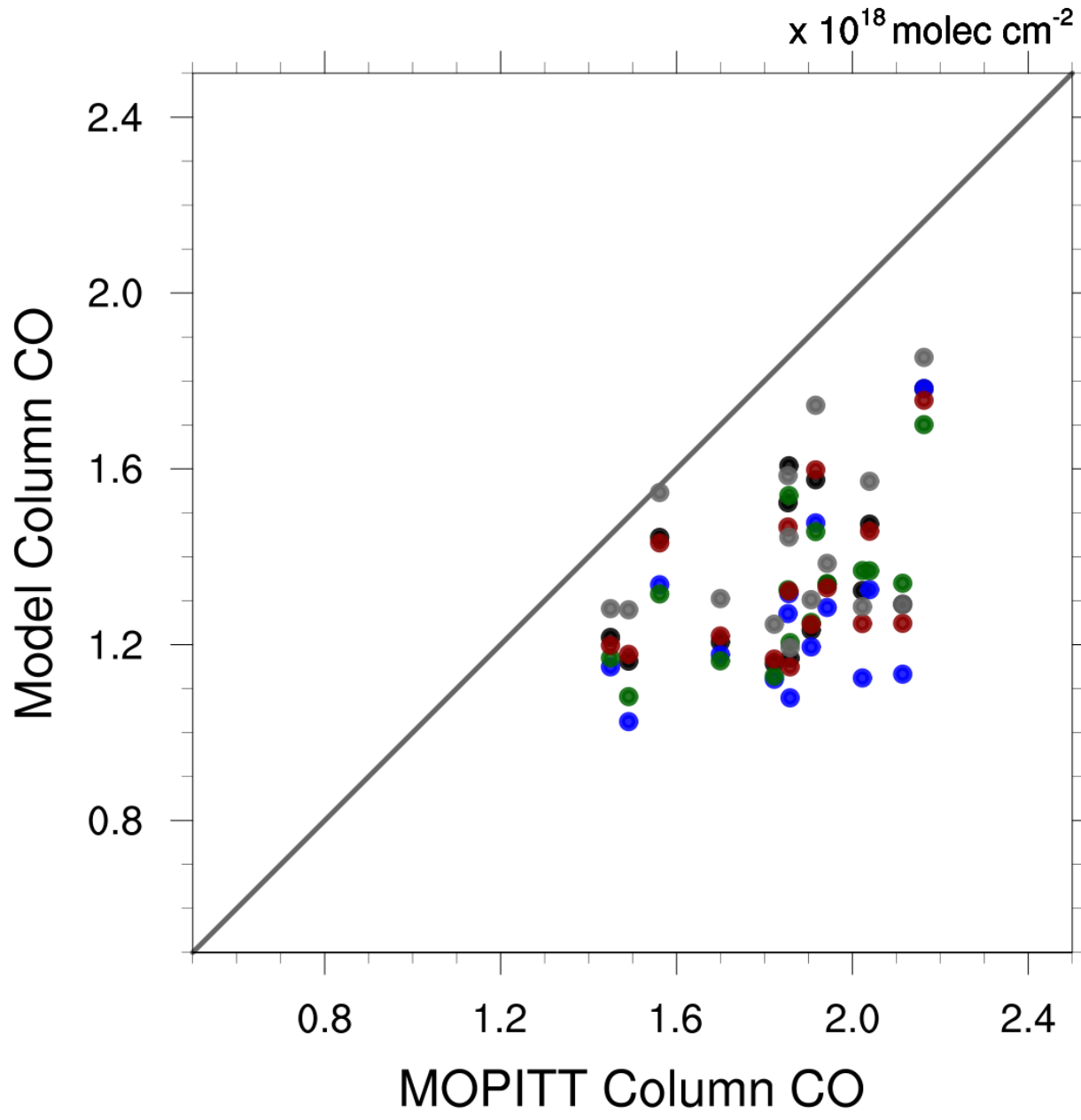


Carbon monoxide (CO) is a trace gas emitted from incomplete combustion and also produced from secondary oxidation of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

Depending on the region, larger differences can exist between inventories during the fire season, and are unexplained by emission factors.

We compare the model in the 14 regions (+ ocean) against CO observations from the Measurements of Pollution in the Troposphere (MOPITT) satellite-based instrument [12]. Model output is combined with observational a priori and averaging kernels before comparison. CAM-chem generally underestimates CO against MOPITT in all regions with all inventories. The optimal fire inventory depends on the region of interest.

Yearly regional CO comparisons in 2014



Summary and next steps

- Fire emission factor uncertainty can explain some differences between global inventories. Remaining differences are likely due to algorithm differences such as land cover used, fire detection and cloud handling.
- ▶ Fire emission uncertainty creates ~4.1% global average uncertainty in total modeled column CO, with 3/4 of that uncertainty originating from CO emissions alone.
 - ▶ In some regions that are dominated by fire sources, modeled CO uncertainty can reach over 20%.
 - ▶ Surface O₃ is impacted more in the Southern Hemisphere than the Northern Hemisphere by fire emission uncertainty.

Future comparison of ozone with observations (e.g. TROPES AIRS/OMI) will help evaluate emission inventories in the different regions. Overall, accounting for emission factor uncertainty when modeling atmospheric chemistry can lend a range of uncertainty to simulated results.

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