Response to reviewer 1 (response in red).

We thank Reviewer 1 for taking the time to review the paper. We agree that additional validation, of pCO2 would improve the paper, as well as some additional analysis of the causes for the discrepancy between our estimates of riverine FCO2 vs those of Borges et al (2019), such as gas transfer velocity and stream surface area. We respond in more detail (point by point) below (excerpts from the text are in quotation marks-in some longer experts we have highlighted particularly important sentences in bold).

The model validation step is very slim, as authors compare the model outputs of dissolved organic carbon (DOC) to a sub-set of published field data. DOC in tropical rivers is extremely refractory and provides little grasp on aquatic carbon cycling as the most labile DOC fraction is very rapidly mineralized (both in soils and in water). So DOC provides a poor validation of the carbon cycling in the river, and might be considered almost as a passive tracer and provide a rough validation of the hydrological connectivity between soils and rivers. Conversely, a convincing validation of the model would be to compare the model outputs of the dissolved CO2 concentration (or the corresponding partial pressure of CO2) with the extensive field data collected by Borges et al. (2019) that are publically available (Borges and Bouillon 2019). While a point by point comparison would not make sense, it could be useful to check if the model captures the overall range of spatial variations along the river and among the different stream sizes. Such validation would be extremely convincing because the CO2 evasion from the river to the atmosphere (the core topic of the paper) is computed from the dissolved CO2 concentration (the atmospheric CO2 is comparatively invariant) and the gas transfer velocity. So if the model does not represent correctly the dissolved CO2 concentration then this implies that the CO2 evasion rates are incorrect (as well as any conclusion based on past reconstruction and future projection from the model outputs).

Thank you for these suggestions. We have conducted some analysis (in line with your suggestions-including against observed pCO2) and added additional text.

Please see lines 387-414:

"In Figure 5, we compare simulated DOC concentrations at six locations (Fig. 1) along the Congo River and Oubangui tributary, against the observations of Borges at al. (2015[b]). We show that we can recreate the spatial variation in DOC concentration within the Congo basin relatively closely with an R^2 of 0.74 and an RMSE of 23% (Fig. 5). We are also able to simulate the broad spatial pattern of pCO_2 measured in Borges et al. (2019). During high flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of highest flow, 2009-2019) we simulate a mean pCO_2 of 3,373 ppm and 5,095 ppm at Kisangani and Kinshasa (Brazzaville) respectively, compared to the observed values of 2,424 ppm and 5,343 ppm during high water (measured in December 2013, Borges et al., 2019) (Table 3). Similarly, during low flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of lowest flow, 2009-2019) we simulate a mean pCO_2 of 1,563 ppm and 2,782 ppm at Kisangani and Kinshasa respectively, compared to the observed values of 1,670 ppm and 2,896 ppm during falling water (June 2014, Borges et al., 2019) (Table 3).

While we are able to recreate observed spatial differences in DOC and pCO_2, as well as broad seasonal variations, we are not able to correctly predict the exact timing of the simulated highs and lows, a reflection of not fully capturing the hydrological seasonality. For example, our mean June pCO_2 at Kinshasa (Brazzaville) is 4,470 ppm, while Borges et al measured a mean of 2,896 ppm (Table

3). However, our value for July of 2,621 ppm is much closer, and moreover our mean value for December of 5,154 ppm is relatively close to the observed value of 5,343 ppm. Similarly, we fail to predict the timing of the June falling water at Kisangani (Table 3).

In Figure 6, we compare simulated pCO_2 against the observed monthly time series at Bangui on the Oubangui River (Bouillon et al., 2012 & 2014), as far as we are aware the most complete time series of pCO_2 published from the Congo basin, spanning March 2010 to March 2012 (with only the single month of June 2010 missing). Again, while the model fails to correctly predict the precise timing of the peak as with the Kinshasa and Kisangani datasets the broad seasonal variation in pCO_2 is captured, with the observed and modelled times series ranging from 227- 4040 ppm and 415- 2928 ppm, respectively (Fig. 6)."

We have also added an additional Table (Table 3, see below) and Figure (Fig. 6, see below)

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Table 3: Observed (Borges et al., 2019) and modelled pCO_2 (in ppm) at Kinshasa (Brazzaville) and Kisangani on the Congo river at various water levels.

Location	Observed pCO_2 highwater (December 2013)	Modelled pCO_2 highwater (December Mean 2009-2019)	Modelled pCO_2 high flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of highest flow 2009-2019)	Observed pCO_2 falling water (June 2014)	Modelled pCO_2 falling water (June mean 2009-2019)	Modelled pCO_2 low flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of lowest flow 2009-2019)
Kinshasa (Brazzaville)	5,343	5,154	5,095	2,896	4,470	2,782
Kisangani	2,424	2,166	3,373	1,670	3,126	1,563

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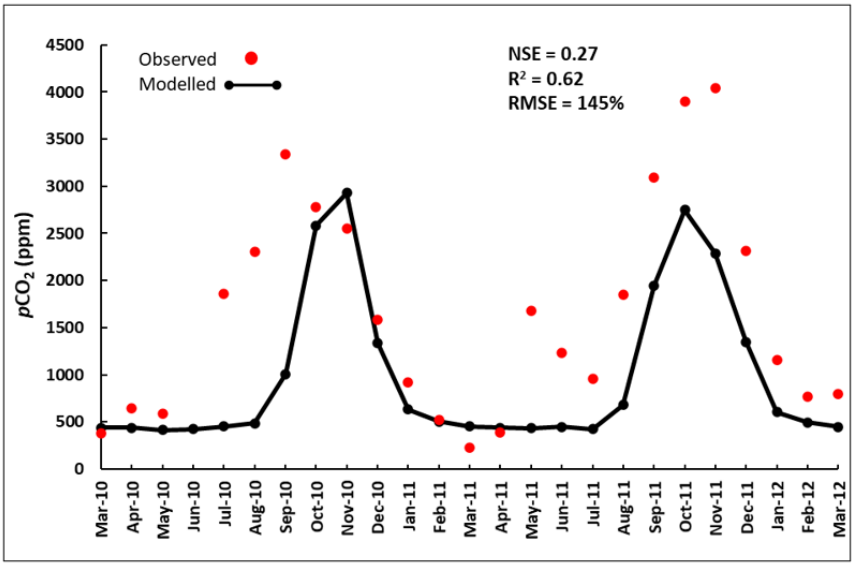

Figure 6: Time series of observed *versus* simulated pCO_2 at Bangui on the River Oubangui. Observed data is from Bouillon et al., 2012 and Bouillon et al., 2014.

The overall emission of CO2 from the fluvial component of the Congo Basin (TgC/yr) is based on the product of a CO2 flux density (mol/m2/yr) and a stream surface area; the areal CO2 flux is itself computed from the air-water CO2 concentration gradient, and the gas transfer velocity; the air-water CO2 concentration gradient in turn is mainly function of the dissolved CO2 concentration. So there are three quantities that could explain the difference between the 4 estimates of integrated CO2emissions discussed in section L-513-517: the CO2 dissolved concentration, the gas transfer velocity and the stream surface area. The evaluation of the model performance would be much more convincing if each of these three quantities was compared to available estimates.

In response to these comments we have added additional discussion (now lines 572-641):

"Our estimate of the integrated present-day aquatic CO_2 evasion from the river surface of the Congo basin (32 Tg C yr^{-1}) is the same as that estimated by Raymond et al. (2013) (also 32 Tg C yr^{-1}), downscaled over the same basin area, but smaller than the 59.7 Tg C yr^{-1} calculated by Lauerwald et al. (2015) and far smaller than that of Borges et al. (2015[a]), 133-177 Tg C yr^{-1} or Borges et al. (2019), 251±46 Tg C yr^{-1}. **The recent study of Borges et al. (2019) is based on by far and away the most extensive dataset of Congo basin pCO_2 measurements to date and thus suggests that we substantially underestimate total riverine CO_2 evasion**. As previously discussed, we simulate the broad spatial and temporal variation in observed DOC and pCO_2 (2015[a, b], Fig. 5, Table 3) relatively well. It is therefore somewhat surprising that our basin-wide estimate of riverine CO_2 evasion is so different. Below we discuss some possible explanations for this discrepancy related to methodological differences and limitations.

One potential cause for the differences could be the river gas exchange velocity *k*. However, we applied a mean riverine gas exchange velocity *k* of 3.5 m d^{-1} which is similar to the 2.9 m d^{-1} used by Borges et al. (2015[a]). Moreover, a sensitivity analysis was performed in Lauerwald et al. (2017) which showed that in the physical approach of ORCHILEAK, CO_2 evasion is not very sensitive to the *k* value, unlike data-driven models. Namely, Lauerwald et al (2017) showed that an increase or decrease of *k600* for rivers and swamps of 50% only led to 1% and -4% change in total CO_2 evasion, respectively. Therefore, we can discount *k* as a major source of the discrepancy.

Another potential reason for our smaller riverine CO_2 evasion could be river surface area. We simulate a mean present day (1980-2010) total river surface area of 25,900 km^2, compared to the value of 23,670 km^2 used in Borges et al (2019, supplementary information) and so similarly we think that this can be discounted as a major source of discrepancy."

The difference in our simulated riverine CO_2 evasion compared to the empirically derived estimate of Borges et al. (2019), could be caused by the lack of representation of aquatic plants in the ORCHILEAK model. Borges et al. (2019) used the stable isotope composition of δ^{13} C-DIC to determine the origin of dissolved CO_2 in the Congo River system and found that the values were consistent with a DIC input from the degradation of organic matter, in particular from C_4 plants. Crucially, they further found that the δ^{13} C-DIC values were unrelated to the contribution of *terra-firme* C_4 plants, rather that they were more consistent with the degradation of aquatic C_4 plants, namely macrophytes. ORCHILEAK does not represent aquatic plants, and the wider LSM ORCHIDEE does not have an aquatic macrophyte PFT either (though root respiration of floodplain plants for the PFTs represented, is accounted for as a C source). This could at the very least partly explain our conservative estimate of river CO_2 evasion, given that tropical macrophytes have relatively elevated NPPs. Rates as high as 3,500 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} have been measured on floodplains in the Amazon (Silva et al., 2009). While this value is higher than the values simulated in the Cuvette Centrale by ORCHILEAK (Figure 8), they are of the same order of magnitude and so this alone cannot fully explain the discrepancy compared to the results of Borges et al. (2019). In the Amazon basin it has been shown that wetlands export approximately half of their gross primary production (GPP) to the river network compared to upland (*terra-firme*) ecosystems which only export a few percent (Abril et al. 2013). More importantly, Abril et al. (2013) found that tropical aquatic macrophytes export 80% of their GPP compared to just 36% for flooded forest. Therefore, the lack of a bespoke macrophyte PFT is indeed likely to be one reason for the discrepancy between our results and those of Borges, but largely due to their particularly high export efficiency to the river-floodplain network as opposed to differences in NPP. While being a significant limitation, creating and incorporating a macrophyte PFT would be a substantial undertaking given that the authors are unaware of any published dataset which has systematically mapped their distribution and abundance. It is important to note that while ORCHILEAK does not include the export of C from aquatic macrophytes it also neglects their NPP. Moreover, most aquatic macrophytes described in the literature have short (<1 year) life-cycles (Mitchel & Rogers, 1985). As such, while this model limitation is likely one of the causes for our relatively low estimate of riverine CO_2 evasion, it will only have a limited net effect on our estimate of the overall annual C balance (NBP, NEP) of the Congo basin.

Finally, another cause for the difference in riverine CO_2 evasion could be that the resolution of ORCHILEAK (0.5 degree river network and 1° for C fluxes) is not sufficient to fully capture the dynamics of the smallest streams of the Congo Basin which have been shown to have the highest DOC and CO_2 concentrations (Borges et al., 2019). Indeed, ORCHILEAK typically does not simulate the highest observed pCO_2 measurements of the smallest tributaries (i.e. > 16,000 ppm). This is partly because for the fast reservoir (headwaters) in ORCHILEAK we assume full pCO_2 equilibrium

with the atmosphere over one full day, which prevents very high pCO_2 values from building in the water column.

Despite these limitations, it is important to note that in our simulations, the evasion flux from rivers only contributes 15% of total aquatic CO_2 evasion, and including the flux from wetlands/floodplains, we produce a total of 235 Tg C yr^{-1}. Moreover, the majority of this evasion occurs in the Cuvette Centrale (Fig. 8) which suggests that while ORHILEAK fails to attribute a large portion of this flux to small rivers (owing to the coarse resolution of the river network) we nonetheless do capture the source of carbon. In other words, in ORCHILEAK the majority of this carbon evades directly from the floodplain and wetlands of the Cuvette Centrale as opposed to the small rivers."

Final elements of validation and discussion that are missing are the contribution of HCO3- to the export of dissolved inorganic carbon (DIC) from the river to the ocean. The export of DIC from rivers to the ocean is mainly in the form of HCO3- including the Congo river (Wang et al. 2013). So ignoring HCO3- would lead to a very substantial under-estimation of DIC export to the ocean. This should be fairly easy to implement with a weathering model and GIS of lithology. This is of course of interest for the topic of paper as weathering intensity is a function of temperature and precipitation that are used by the authors to study the long-term (1861-2099) trends of aquatic carbon fluxes. Further, there are substantial data-sets of total alkalinity (that mainly corresponds to HCO3-) providing spatial (Borges et al. 2019) and seasonal (Wang et al. 2013; Bouillon et al. 2012; 2013) patterns of HCO3- variability. Additionally, dissolved CO2 is in thermodynamic equilibrium with HCO3-, so it is required to have some grasp on HCO3- variability to correctly model dissolved CO2 dynamics, hence, CO2 emissions to the atmosphere.

We appreciate these comments and suggestions and acknowledge that the lack of accounting for HCO3- is a limitation of the model. However, we would consider creating and implementing a weathering model outside the scope of our study and therefore as an alternative, we have added estimates from the literature and discuss these limitations.

Please see lines 642-658:

"Our simulated export of C to the coast of 15 (15.3) Tg C yr^{-1} is virtually identical to the TOC+DIC export estimated by Borges et al. (2015[a]) of 15.5 Tg C yr^{-1}, which is consistent with the fact that we simulate a similar spatial variation of DOC concentrations (Fig. 8 and Fig. 1 for locations). It is also relatively similar to the 19 Tg C yr^{-1} (DOC + DIC) estimated by Valentini et al. (2014) in their synthesis of the African carbon budget. Valentini et al. (2014) used the largely empirical based Global Nutrient Export from WaterSheds (NEWS) model framework and they point out that Africa was underrepresented in the training data used to develop the regression relationships which underpin the model, and thus this could explain the small disagreement.

Of the total 15 Tg C yr^{-1} exported to the coast, we simulate a 2.4 Tg C yr^{-1} component of dissolved CO_2, which is relatively similar to the empirically derived estimate of the total DIC export of 3.3 Tg C yr^{-1} calculated in Wang et al. (2013). According to Wang et al., dissolved CO_2 accounts for the majority (1.9 Tg C yr^{-1}) with the rest being the weathering derived flux of HCO_3^-. Thus, the discrepancy between the two estimates is likely to be largely caused by our lack of accounting for the weathering derived flux (HCO_3^-) which they estimate at 1.4 Tg C yr^{-1}. In summary, despite this

model limitation the results of Wang et al. (2013) suggest that we still capture the majority of the DIC flux."

L44 : In this section it's unclear what is meant by "increase" of "net primary productivity" and "storage in tree biomass". A recent study shows that African forests are sinks of carbon on yearly basis, and that the carbon sink is constant in time from the mid-1990's to present (Hubau et al. 2020). So, according to this study, there is no "increase" in NPP as stated but a constant sink. Please clarify.

In response to these comments, we have added additional lines in the introduction (now lines 64-66):

"Moreover, recent field data suggests that the above ground C sink in tropical Africa was relatively stable from 1985 to 2015 (Hubau et al., 2020)."

Please also see additional discussion (now lines 673-698):

"Up to a point, our results also concur with estimates based on the upscaling of biomass observations (Lewis et al., 2009; Hubau et al., 2019). Lewis et al. (2009) up-scaled forest plot measurements to calculate that intact tropical African forests represented a net uptake of approximately 300 Tg C yr^{-1} between 1968 and 2007 and this is consistent with our NEP estimate of 275 Tg C yr^{-1} over the same period. However, more recently an analysis based on an extension of the same dataset found that the above ground C sink in tropical Africa has been relatively stable from 1985 to 2015 (Hubau et al., 2020).

A major source of the uncertainty associated with future projections of NPP and NEP comes from our limited understanding and representation of the CO_2 fertilization effect. Recent analysis of data from some of the longest-running Free-Air CO_2 Enrichment (FACE) sites, consisting of early-successional temperate ecosystems, found a 29.1 ± 11.7% stimulation of biomass over a decade (Walker et al., 2019). A meta-analysis (Liu et al., 2019) of seven temperate FACE experiments combined with process-based modelling also found substantial sensitivity (0.64 ± 0.28 PgC yr^{-1} per hundred ppm) of biomass accumulation to atmospheric CO_2 increase, and the same study showed that ORCHIDEE model simulations were largely consistent with the experiments. However, other FACE experiments on mature temperate forests (Körner et al., 2005), as well as eucalyptus forests bring into question whether the fertilization effects observed in temperate FACE experiments can be extrapolated to other ecosystems. For example, the Swiss FACE study, a deciduous mature forest, found no significant biomass increase with enhanced CO_2 (Körner et al., 2005), while a FACE experiment on a mature eucalyptus forest in Australia found that while CO_2 stimulated an increase in C uptake through GPP, this did not carry to the ecosystem level, largely as a result of a concurrent increase in soil respiration (Jiang et al., 2020). Unfortunately, no results are yet available from any tropical FACE experiments, though the Amazon FACE experiment is underway and the eventual results will be crucial in developing our understanding of the CO_2 fertilization effect beyond the temperate zone."

L74 : The tropical region is also a hotspot of aquatic C cycling due to wetland productivity and wetland carbon inputs to rivers (Abril & Borges 2019), in addition to "terrestrial NPP". In the Amazon

river a large fraction of fluvial CO2 emissions to the atmosphere are sustained by wetland inputs (Abril et al. 2014). L74: The fact that the "tropical region is a hotspot area for inland water C cycling" (as stated) was authoritatively demonstrated by seminal papers such as Richey et al. (2002) and Melack et al. (2004), more than a decade before the recent Lauerwald et al. (2015) work. L 78-80: there are (at least) two additional elements of context that could be relevant for the introduction: 1) the Raymond et al. (2013) and the Lauerwald et al. (2015) estimates are in fact based on the same initial data-base of pCO2 computed from pH and alkalinity (GLORICH) that was extrapolated globally using two different approaches; this illustrates how uncertain these global estimates are, since the resulting values differ by a factor of 3; 2) While the conclusion of Lauerwald et al. (2015) that the majority of CO2 emissions from rivers comes from the tropics is probably correct, field data (used in the global extrapolation) is nearly absent in the tropics. For instance for the Congo River there is only one single data entry in the GLORICH data-set. Most of the data used to develop the statistical model of Lauerwald et al. (2015) come from non-tropical areas such as North America and Scandinavia.

We have changed the references to prioritise empirical estimates and also added additional context for the Lauerwald et al. (2015) and Raymond et al. (2013) estimates.

Please see lines 81-94:

"The tropical region is a hotspot area for inland water C cycling (Richey et al., 2002; Melack et al., 2004; Abril et al., 2014; Borges et al., 2015[a]; Lauerwald et al., 2015) due to high terrestrial NPP and precipitation, and a recent study used an upscaling approach based on observations to estimate present day CO_2 evasion from the rivers of the Congo basin at 251±46 Tg C yr^{-1} and the lateral C (TOC +DIC) export to the coast at 15.5 (13-18) Tg C yr^{-1} (Borges at al., 2015[a]; Borges et al., 2019). To put this into context, their estimate of aquatic CO_2 evasion represents 39% of the global value estimated by Lauerwald et al. (2015, 650 Tg C yr^{-1}) or 14% of the global estimate of Raymond et al. (2013, 1,800 Tg C yr^{-1}). **Note that while Lauerwald et al. (2015) and Raymond et al. (2013) relied largely on the same database of pCO_2 measurements (GloRiCh, Hartmann et al., 2014) as the basis for their estimates, they took different, albeit both empirically led approaches. Moreover, both approaches were limited by a relative paucity of data from the tropics, which also explains the high degree of uncertainty associated with our understanding of global riverine CO_2 evasion."**

L 244: Borges et al. (2019) report discharge data from the mainstem Congo at Kisangani. So there are additional data-sets to validate the model hydrology.

We performed the Hydrology validation before this paper was published. Moreover, we were unable to access this dataset.

L513: It could be useful to put into context how these different fluxes were computed. The Raymond et al. (2013) estimate is based on a single pCO2 value (apparently from pH and alkalinity measurements in Pool Malebo) that was extrapolated to the whole basin. The comparison of this single value of pCO2 with the extensive data set reported by Borges et al. (2019) shows that it is unrealistically low (refer to Supplemental Figure 18). Lauerwald et al. (2015) et al. estimate of pCO2 compares better to the Borges et al. (2019) data-set but still fails to represent the influence of the Cuvette Centrale (refer to Supplemental Figure 18). Please also note that the CO2 estimate for the Congo reported by Borges et al. (2015) was based on exactly the same stream surface area and gas

transfer velocity as those used by Raymond et al. (2013), and also showed that the Raymond et al. (2013) estimate was under-estimated (obviously, since the pCO2 value is unrealistically low). So there is some clear convergence that the present estimate of CO2 emission based on ORCHILEAK is under-estimated even if it is coincidentally close to the one reported by Raymond et al. (2013). The actual reasons of the under-estimation need to be explored as suggested in the above Major Comments.

We have added some additional explanation (now lines 572-582):

"Our estimate of the integrated present-day aquatic CO_2 evasion from the river surface of the Congo basin (32 Tg C yr^{-1}) is the same as that estimated by Raymond et al. (2013) (also 32 Tg C yr^{-1}), downscaled over the same basin area, but smaller than the 59.7 Tg C yr^{-1} calculated by Lauerwald et al. (2015) and far smaller than that of Borges et al. (2015[a]), 133-177 Tg C yr^{-1} or Borges et al. (2019), 251±46 Tg C yr^{-1}. **The recent study of Borges et al. (2019) is based on by far and away the most extensive dataset of Congo basin pCO_2 measurements to date and thus suggests that we substantially underestimate total riverine CO_2 evasion**. As previously discussed, we simulate the broad spatial and temporal variation in observed DOC and pCO_2 (2015[a, b], Fig. 5, Table 3) relatively well. It is therefore somewhat surprising that our basin-wide estimate of riverine CO_2 evasion is so different. Below we discuss some possible explanations for this discrepancy related to methodological differences and limitations."

Please also see the proceeding paragraphs for further discussion of the potential causes for our underestimation of the aquatic Co2 evasion from the river surface.

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Response to reviewer 2 (response in red).

We thank Reviewer 2 for taking the time to review the paper. We are confident that the comments and associated changes (outlined below) have helped to substantially improve the paper.

Point by point reply (excerpts from the text are in quotation marks-in some longer experts we have highlighted particularly important sentences in bold):

Introduction L44-58: Though based on published papers, the estimates of carbon stocks and fluxes in the forests and soils of the Congo would benefit from a more critical evaluation given the logistic difficulties and paucity of data for the region.

In response to this comment, we have modified the wording of the corresponding lines (now lines 47-51).

"As the world's second largest area of contiguous tropical rainforest and second largest river, the Congo basin has a significant role to play in the global carbon (C) cycle. Current estimates of its C stocks and fluxes are limited by a sparsity of field data and therefore have substantial uncertainties, both quantified and unquantified (Williams et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2009; Dargie et al., 2017)."

Further discussion is reserved for section 4.1.

L73-74: To support the statement that 'The tropical region is a hotspot area for inland water C cycling' it would be more appropriate to cite results from empirical studies, rather than modelled estimates.

In response to this comment we have modified the corresponding lines to cite empirical studies (now lines 81-86).

"The tropical region is a hotspot area for inland water C cycling (Richey et al., 2002; Melack et al., 2004; Abril et al., 2014; Borges et al., 2015[a]; Lauerwald et al., 2015) due to high terrestrial NPP and precipitation, and a recent study used an upscaling approach based on observations to estimate present day CO_2 evasion from the rivers of the Congo basin at 251±46 Tg C yr^{-1} and the lateral C (TOC +DIC) export to the coast at 15.5 (13-18) Tg C yr^{-1} (Borges at al., 2015[a]; Borges et al., 2019)."

L81-82: How well are the current fluxes known?

In response to this comment we have modified the corresponding lines.

Lines 48-51- "Current estimates of its C stocks and fluxes are limited by a sparsity of field data and therefore have substantial uncertainties, both quantified and unquantified (Williams et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2009; Dargie et al., 2017)."

Lines 89-94- "Note that while Lauerwald et al. (2015) and Raymond et al. (2013) relied largely on the same database of pCO_2 measurements (GloRiCh, Hartmann et al., 2014) as the basis for their estimates, they took different, albeit both empirically led approaches. Moreover, both approaches were limited by a relative paucity of data from the tropics, which also explains the high degree of uncertainty associated with our understanding of global riverine CO_2 evasion."

L86-92: These are rather ambitious goals, given the large uncertainties in current conditions and paucity of historical and current data.

We agree that these are ambitious goals given the uncertainties and paucity of data. However, we would argue that it is still better to present the full results, but with the caveats up front (including immediately in abstract). See for example lines 36-45.

Methods ORCHILEAK is a valuable modification to the land surface model, ORCHIDEE, and is well described in Lauerwald et al., 2017. Given that 'All of the processes represented in ORCHILEAK remain identical to those previously represented for the Amazon ORCHILEAK', the veracity of the model for the Amazon would need careful evaluation before accepting its use in the Congo. It is outside the scope of this review to revisit issues, some of which were noted by the authors, with regard the application to the Amazon. However, it is misleading to state that 'ORCHILEAK model . . . is capable of simulating both terrestrial and aquatic C fluxes in a consistent manner for the present day in the Amazon and Lena' without caveats and limitations acknowledged.

In response to this comment we have modified the corresponding lines. (now line 109-117)

"The ORCHILEAK model (Lauerwald et al., 2017), a new version of the land surface model ORCHIDEE (Krinner et al., 2005), is capable of simulating observed terrestrial and aquatic C fluxes in a consistent manner for the present day in the Amazon (Lauerwald et al., 2017) and Lena (Bowring et al., 2019[a]; Bowring et al., 2019[b]) basins, **albeit with limitations including a lack of explicit representation of POC fluxes and in-stream autotrophic production (see Lauerwald et al., 2017; Bowring et al., 2019[a]; Bowring et al., 2019[b] and Hastie et al., 2019 for further discussion).** Moreover, it was recently demonstrated that this model could recreate observed seasonal and interannual variation in Amazon aquatic and terrestrial C fluxes (Hastie et al., 2019)."

Moreover, the differences between the Congo and Amazon would seem to require thorough considerable before accepting identical application. As described in Borges et al. (2019): The Congo basin has a wide range of tributaries with differing lithology, soils, vegetation and rainfall in their catchments, has extensive peat deposits, and has large areas of year-round inundation. These conditions differ significantly from the Amazon basin.

We accept that the conditions in the Amazon and Congo are very different, though the Amazon also has been shown to contain significant peat deposits-(see for example Draper et al, 2014 and is expected to have larger 'undiscovered peatlands' Gumbricht et al., 2017), and also a wide range of tributaries with differing lithology soils etc, as well as a large east-west precipitation gradient. We would debate the term 'identical application' as we recalibrated the model as fully as we could with the available data, under the current model structure (admittedly with associated limitations and caveats).

L111: Camino Serrano 2015 is not listed in references. In Lauerwald et al., 2017 this reference is listed as - Camino Serrano, M.: Factors controlling dissolved organic carbon in soils: a database analysis and a model development, Universiteit Antwerpen, Belgium, 2015. This is not readily accessible.

Thanks for pointing out. Noted and change accordingly to:

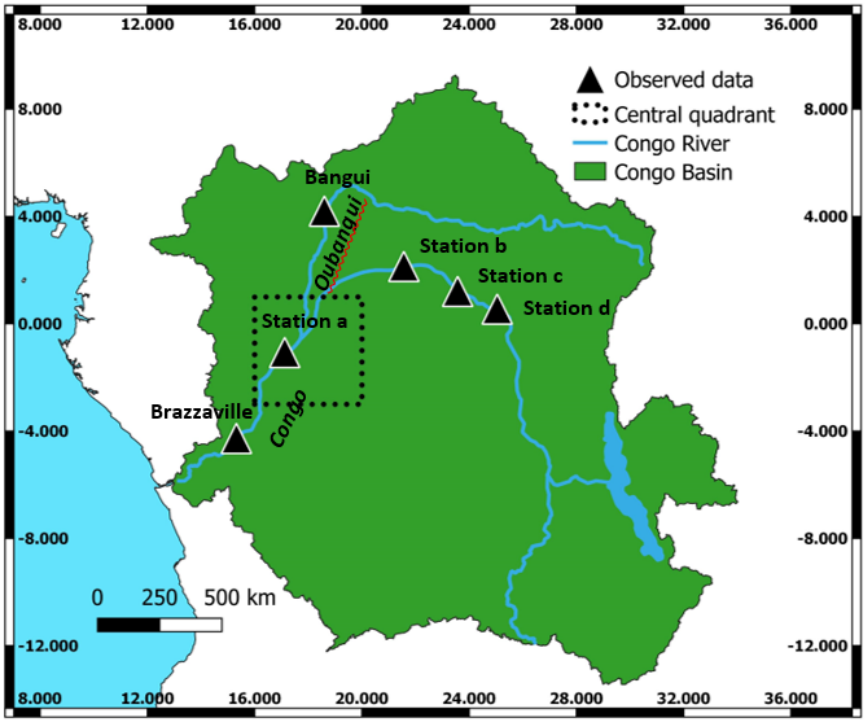
"Camino-Serrano, M., Guenet, B., Luyssaert, S., Ciais, P., Bastrikov, V., De Vos, B., Gielen, B., Gleixner, G., Jornet-Puig, A., Kaiser, K., Kothawala, D., Lauerwald, R., Peñuelas, J., Schrumpf, M., Vicca, S., Vuichard, N., Walmsley, D., and Janssens, I. A.: ORCHIDEE-SOM: modeling soil organic carbon (SOC) and dissolved organic carbon (DOC) dynamics along vertical soil profiles in Europe, Geosci. Model Dev., 11, 937–957, https://doi.org/10.5194/gmd-11-937-2018, 2018"

L124: Why is the water surface area varied diurnally?

This is the time step for the routing scheme of ORCHILEAK and the surface area varies with discharge.

Figure 1. The figure needs latitudes and longitudes indicated. Lake Tanganyika is drawn as if a loop of rivers; redraw as a lake.

This figure has been changed accordingly (line 165):



165
166 **Figure 1:Extent of the Congo Basin, central quadrant of the "Cuvette Centrale" and sampling**
167 **stations (for DOC and discharge) along the Congo and Oubangui Rivers (in italic).**
168

Figure 2 and associated text (L153-168) do not consider the veracity of these data. Though 13 plant functional groups (pft) are prescribed, how well are their ecophysiological characteristics in the conditions of the Congo known? 'Tropical broadleaved raingreen trees' is an odd phrase. Section 2.2: Given the importance of the wetlands to the modeling, further discussion of datasets used is warranted.

We take these points. While it is difficult to find directly comparable empirical estimates for the Congo Basin for which to compare the PFTs against, we have added a few sentences detailing a broader comparison (now lines 177-185):

"Most published estimates for land-cover follow national boundaries and so we can make broad comparisons with published estimates for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). For example, our value for total forest cover for the DRC (65%), is close to the 67% and 68% values estimated by the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP, 2009), and Potapov et al. (2012), respectively. Agriculture covers only a small proportion of the basin according to the LUH dataset that is based on FAO cropland area statistics, with C3 (PFT12, Fig. 2 g) and C_4 (PFT13, Fig. 2 h) agriculture making up a maximum basin area of 0.5 and 2% respectively. In reality, a larger fraction of the basin is composed of small scale and rotational agriculture (Tyukavina et al., 2018)."

L177: What is the definition of swamps versus floodplains and how are they distinguished in the Congo?

In terms of determining the maximum extent of swamps and floodplains forcing files, these are taken from the dataset of Gumbricht et al. (2017) and therefore follow his definitions. His definition of swamps can be found in Table 1 of his paper but the main characteristics are as follows: "Usually bound to valleys and plains; planar surfaces. Wet all year around, but not necessarily inundated. Usually tree covered."

The max floodplain is defined by aggregating all of the wetland categories in the Gumbricht dataset (including swamps).

In terms of the representation in ORCHILEAK, the difference between swamps and floodplains is outlined in section 2.2. See Lauerwald et al. (2017) for further details.

In response to these comments we have also modified the corresponding paragraph (now lines 199-217):

"In grids where swamps exist, a constant proportion of river discharge is fed into the base of the soil column; **ORCHILEAK does not explicitly represent a groundwater reservoir and so this imitates the hydrological coupling of swamps and rivers through the groundwater table.** The maximal proportions of each grid which can be covered by floodplains and swamps are prescribed by the maximal fraction of floodplains (MFF) and the maximal fraction of swamps (MFS) forcing files respectively (Guimberteau et al., 2012). See also Lauerwald et al. (2017) and Hastie et al. (2019) for further details. We created an MFF forcing file for the Congo basin, derived from the Global Wetlands^{v3} database; the 232 m resolution tropical wetland map of Gumbricht et al. (2017) (Fig. 3 a and b). We firstly amalgamated all the categories of wetland (which include floodplains and swamps) before aggregating them to a resolution of 0.5° (the resolution at which the floodplain/swamp forcing files are read by ORCHILEAK), assuming that this represents the maximum extent of inundation in the basin. This results in a mean MFF of 10%, i.e. a maximum of 10% of the surface area of the Congo basin can be inundated with water. This is identical to the mean MFF value of 10% produced with the Global Lakes and Wetlands Database, GLWD (Lehner, & Döll, P.,2004; Borges et al., 2015[b]). We also created an MFS forcing file from the same dataset (Fig. 3 c and d), merging the 'swamps' and 'fens' wetland categories (although note that there are virtually no fens in the Congo basin) from Global Wetlands^{v3} database (Gumbricht et al., 2017) and again aggregating them to a 0.5° resolution. Please see Table 1 of Gumbricht et al. (2017) for further details."

L178: Does inundation of the floodplains require exceedance of 'bank-full discharge'? See comment about section 2.3.

Yes, it does, and bank-full discharge is defined as the median stream flow over the period 1990 to 2005.

In response to these comments we have also modified the corresponding text to make it clearer (now lines- 255-258):

"As in previous studies on the Amazon basin (Lauerwald et al. 2017, Hastie et al., 2019) we defined bank-full discharge, i.e. the threshold discharge at which floodplain inundation starts (i.e. overtopping of banks), as the median discharge (50^{th} percentile i.e. $streamr_{50th}$) of the present-day climate forcing period (1990 to 2005)."

L179-180: It is unclear why 'a constant proportion of river discharge is fed into the base of the soil column'.

ORCHILEAK does not yet explicitly represent a groundwater reservoir. This imitates how rivers and swamps are hydrologically coupled through the groundwater table.

In response to these comments we have also modified the corresponding text to make it clearer (now lines- 199-201):

"In grids where swamps exist, a constant proportion of river discharge is fed into the base of the soil column; ORCHILEAK does not explicitly represent a groundwater reservoir and so this imitates the hydrological coupling of swamps and rivers through the groundwater table."

Please see section 2.1.2 and Figure 3 of Lauerwald et al. (2017) for a more detailed explanation.

L188-190: Round the MFF to 10%. Is this value the maximum MFF or the mean maximum?

Done (rounded to 10%)

Mean maximum

L193: How are 'fens' different from swamps in the Congo?

We have merged the swamps and fens categories from Gumbricht et al. (2017) so effectively they are not different in our study. Irrespectively, according to the Gumbicht dataset there are virtually no fens in the Congo.

See modified lines 213-217:

"We also created an MFS forcing file from the same dataset (Fig. 3 c and d), merging the 'swamps' and 'fens' wetland categories (although note that there are virtually no fens in the Congo basin) from Global Wetlands^{v3} database (Gumbricht et al., 2017) and again aggregating them to a 0.5° resolution. Please see Table 1 of Gumbricht et al. (2017) for further details."

Section 2.3: Indeed, simulating the hydrology well is critical. The description of the calibration steps is somewhat confusing. For example, line 217 states 'Without calibration, the majority of the different climate forcing model runs performed poorly .'. However, key hydrological parameters needed calibration. Hence, it would seem issues with both forcings and model parameters are confounded.

Virtually all hydrological models require calibration through the modification of model parameters. Admittedly, the forcing datasets generally do not perform as well for the Congo as for the Amazon for example (likely a result of more climate data being available for the gridded climate forcing fields in the Amazon), which is why we tested several different climate forcing data to estimate uncertainties. The performance without calibration would not have been acceptable/ reasonable, and we feel that we stuck the right balance between improving river flow simulation and over-calibration of parameters, keeping in mind the limitations of climate forcing datasets, and that we are calibrating/ validating for 3 quite different situations (the main stem of the Congo, a much smaller tributary, and overall inundation area).

L233-240: The concept of bank-full discharge as a threshold for initiation of inundation of floodplains is questionable as applied to tropical floodplain such as those in the Amazon or Congo. Studies inundation dynamics in the Amazon with detailed measurements or modeling indicate that inundation occurs more or less continuously as the rivers rise and that the water comes from both the rivers and uplands (e.g., Lesack and Melack 1995 Water Resources Res 31:329–334; Bonnet et al. 2017 Hydrol. Processes 31: 1702–1718; Rudorff et al 2014 Water Resources Res 31:329–349; Ji et al. 2019 Water Resources Res 54).

While we appreciate this point, we would respectfully debate some of your conclusions. For example, in their paper Bonnet et al. (2017) conclude that "The mainstream was the main input of water to the flooded area, accounting on average for 93% of total water inputs by the end of the water year. Direct precipitation and runoff from uplands contributed less than or equal to 5% and 10%, respectively. The seepage contribution was less than 1%". They go on to explain that in their model "Diffusive overbank flows occur where the mainstream water level is above levee crests."

Similarly, Rudorff et al. (2014) conclude that "Diffuse overbank flows represent 93% of total river to floodplain discharge"

It is true that Lesack and Melack (1995) find a much higher percentage of inflow coming from runoff (57%) but this is the results from a single case study of a small lake in the central Amazon basin.

Moreover, the majority of the wetlands which we represent in the Congo in ORCHILEAK are swamps, and so do not rely on overtopping at bank-full discharge.

L248-249: The algorithms used to generate the GIEMS vary in their effectiveness depending the density and extent of the inundated vegetation. Section 2.4.1: How well do the soil processes derived for Europe (Camino Serrano et al. 2018) apply to the Congo, how were the passive, slow and active pools determined and how were the decomposition rates in the flooded and non-flooded soil derived?

One of the main limitations which Camino Serrano et al. (2018) identified with the potential application of ORCHIDEE-SOM to the tropics was the lack of representation of DOC coming from throughfall, which is incorporated into ORCHILEAK (Lauerwald et al., 2017). The other main limitation in applying it to the Congo is the lack of an explicit representation of peatlands which we discuss in detail (see lines 735 to 760).

The active passive and slow pools are explained in detail on page 3832 of Lauerwald et al. (2017) but the main part of the text is as follows " The soil carbon module distinguishes 3 different pools of DOC depending on the source material: active, slow and passive (Camino Serrano et al, 2018 - GMD). The DOC derived from the active SOC pool and metabolic litter is assigned to the active DOC pool, while the DOC derived from the slow and passive SOC pools are assigned to the slow and passive DOC pools, respectively (Eqs. 43–45). A part of DOC derived from structural plant litter, which is related to the lignin structure of the litter pool (Krinner et al., 2005), is allocated to the slow DOC pool, while the remainder feeds the active DOC pool. The proportion of the decomposed litter and SOC that is transformed into DOC instead of CO2 depends on the carbon use efficiency (CUE), set here to a value of 0.5 (Manzoni et al., 2012). Taken that the same residence time for the slow and passive DOC pools is used in ORCHIDEE-SOM (Camino Serrano, 2015), we merge these two pools when computing throughfall and lateral transport of DOC. Thus, the labile pool is identical to the active pool of the soil carbon module, while the refractory pool combines the slow and passive pools. The labile (FTF,DOClab) and refractory (FTF,DOCref) proportions of throughfall DOC are added to the active and slow DOC pools of the first soil layer, respectively" We acknowledge the fact that these modelled SOC pools are not measurable, as in any land surface model, and there is no sufficient radiocarbon age data in Congo to accurately calibrate SOC turnovers in the model.

Moreover, note that in ORCHILEAK decomposition rates of SOC, DOC and litter in flooded soils are 3x lower that of those in non- flooded soils. This is based on the findings by Rueda-Delgado et al., (2006) but also supported by additional research such as Dos Santos & Nelson., (2013).

Section 2.4.2: What were the projected land use changes? These would seem rather difficult to prescribe, as noted in the text. The exclusion of shifting cultivation would seem a serious omission.

The main land-use changes are detailed in Figure A2 of the Appendix. We acknowledge the fact that exclusion of shifting cultivation is a major limitation, though one which would be difficult to incorporate in view of the lack of a spatially explicit dataset. The LUH1 reconstruction indicates for instance shifting cultivation affecting all the tropics with a residence time of agriculture of 15 years, whereas the review from Heininan et al. 2017 (Plos one) revised downwards the area of this type of agriculture, with generally low values in Congo, except in the North east and South East, but suggested a shorter turnover of agriculture of two years only. In view of such uncertainties, we did not include shifting agriculture in the model. But added in the discussion the possibility to improve this situation using new remote sensing datasets on high resolution land cover change (Tyukavina et al. 2018, Sci. Adv)

In response to these comments we have also added to the corresponding text.

Lines 304-311:

"In the paper which describes the development of the future land use change scenarios under RCP 6.0 (Hurtt et al., 2011), it is shown that land use change is highly sensitive to land use model assumptions, such as whether or not shifting cultivation is included. The LUH1 reconstruction for

instance indicates shifting cultivation affecting all of the tropics with a residence time of agriculture of 15 years, whereas the review from Heinimann et al. (2017) revised downwards the area of this type of agriculture, with generally low values in Congo, except in the North East and South East, but suggested a shorter turnover of agriculture of two years only. In view of such uncertainties, we did not include shifting agriculture in the model."

Lines 769-771:

"Finally, the issue of shifting cultivation demands further attention; at least for the present day a shifting cultivation forcing file could be developed based on remote sensing data (Tyukavina et al., 2018)."

Results Section 3.1: In general, simulations of mean monthly discharge for large tropical river systems without large dams at downstream stations has been demonstrated as feasible with several models. Hydrological simulations can become increasingly difficult as the scale decreases, as indicated by the less successful simulations of the Ubangi River. Though the text comparing the GIEMS and simulated inundated areas makes sense, the issue of topography as a factor influencing simulated inundated area deserves mention. L358-362: These judgments should be left to the reader to make.

We accept these points and have removed these sentences accordingly.

Section 3.2: What is the basis for the calculated standard deviations for the fluxes? Figure 5 would be clearer if redrafted larger with simpler graphics. Given all the uncertainties in the modeling and underlying data, Figure 6 would seem quite questionable.

The standard deviation represents the interannual variation across the relevant period (for example 1981-2010. We have made Figure 5 (now Figure 7) larger and simpler (note that a high definition version will be submitted at a later stage). While we note and indeed discuss the uncertainties in detail, we feel that Fig 6 (now Fig. 8) is still interesting and illustrates the fact that the Cuvette Centrale is a hotspot region of exchange between the terrestrial and aquatic realms.

Section 3.3: These results seem premature without a thorough, rigorous evaluation of the model's output under current conditions. Section 3.4: 'The dramatic increase in the concentration of atmospheric CO2 (Fig. 8 g) and subsequent fertilization effect on terrestrial NPP has the greatest overall impact on all of the fluxes across the simulation period' is a critical point and raises a fundamental question about the veracity of the projected changes. As illustrated in a recent paper (Jiang et al. 2020 Nature 580:227-231), the possible CO2 enrichment effects on mature forests are not well captured by current models and need considerably more work to be understood and properly incorporated into models. Figure 9 would be clearer if redrafted larger with simpler graphics. The colors and simple depictions of habitats are distractions.

In response to these comments we have added substantial additional discussion.

Lines 661-698:

"There is relatively sparse observed data available on the long-term trends of terrestrial C fluxes in the Congo. Yin et al. (2017) used MODIS data to estimate NPP between 2001 and 2013 across central Africa. They found that NPP increased on average by 10 g C m^{-2} per year, while we simulate

an average annual increase of 4 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} over the same period across the Congo Basin. The two values are not directly comparable as they do not cover precisely the same geographic area but it is encouraging that our simulations exhibit a similar trend to remote sensing data. As previously noted, MODIS derived estimates of NPP do not fully include the effect of CO_2 fertilization (de Kauwe et al., 2016) whereas ORCHILEAK does. Thus, the MODIS NPP product may underestimate the increasing trend in NPP, which would bring our modeled trend further away from this dataset. On the other hand, forest degradation effects and recent droughts have been associated with a decrease of greenness (Zhou et al., 2014) and above ground biomass loss (Qie et al., 2019) in tropical forests.

Up to a point, our results also concur with estimates based on the upscaling of biomass observations (Lewis et al., 2009; Hubau et al., 2019). Lewis et al. (2009) up-scaled forest plot measurements to calculate that intact tropical African forests represented a net uptake of approximately 300 Tg C yr^{-1} between 1968 and 2007 and this is consistent with our NEP estimate of 275 Tg C yr^{-1} over the same period. However, more recently an analysis based on an extension of the same dataset found that the above ground C sink in tropical Africa has been relatively stable for the three decades leading to 2015 (Hubau et al., 2020).

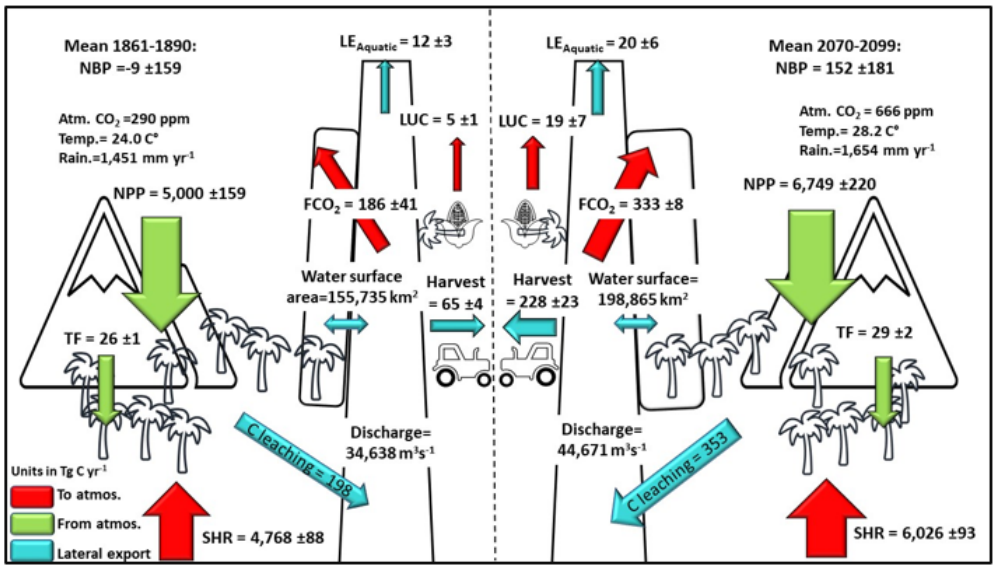
A major source of the uncertainty associated with future projections of NPP and NEP comes from our limited understanding and representation of the CO_2 fertilization effect. Recent analysis of data from some of the longest-running Free-Air CO_2 Enrichment (FACE) sites, consisting of early-successional temperate ecosystems, found a 29.1 ± 11.7% stimulation of biomass over a decade (Walker et al., 2019). A meta-analysis (Liu et al., 2019) of seven temperate FACE experiments combined with process-based modelling also found substantial sensitivity (0.64 ± 0.28 PgC yr^{-1} per hundred ppm) of biomass accumulation to atmospheric CO_2 increase, and the same study showed that ORCHIDEE model simulations were largely consistent with the experiments. However, other FACE experiments on mature temperate forests (Körner et al., 2005), as well as eucalyptus forests bring into question whether the fertilization effects observed in temperate FACE experiments can be extrapolated to other ecosystems. For example, the Swiss FACE study, a deciduous mature forest, found no significant biomass increase with enhanced CO_2 (Körner et al., 2005), while a FACE experiment on a mature eucalyptus forest in Australia found that while CO_2 stimulated an increase in C uptake through GPP, this did not carry to the ecosystem level, largely as a result of a concurrent increase in soil respiration (Jiang et al., 2020). Unfortunately, no results are yet available from any tropical FACE experiments, though the Amazon FACE experiment is underway and the eventual results will be crucial in developing our understanding of the CO_2 fertilization effect beyond the temperate zone."

Lines 728-732:

"There are also considerable uncertainties associated with future climate projections in the Congo basin (Haensler et al., 2013). Nutrient limitation on growth and a better representation of effect of enhanced CO_2, particularly with regards to soil respiration (Jiang et al., 2020) and tree mortality (Hubau et al., 2020), are two crucial aspects which need to be further developed."

We have also made wording more tentative throughout (see Abstract for example and conclusion for example).

Figure 9 (now figure 10) has been simplified. As has the corresponding figure for the present day (now figure 7).



526

527 **Figure 10: Annual C budget (NBP) for the Congo basin for; left, the Year 1861 and right, the**
528 **Year 2099, simulated with ORCHILEAK. NPP is terrestrial net primary productivity, TF is**
529 **throughfall, SHR is soil heterotrophic respiration, FCO_2 is aquatic CO2 evasion, LOAC is C**
530 **leakage to the land-ocean aquatic continuum (FCO_2 + $LE_{Aquatic}$), LUC is flux from Land-use**
531 **change, and $LE_{Aquatic}$ is the export C flux to the coast. Range represents the standard deviation**

Discussion Section 4.1: It is not clear that CO2 enrichment effects on photosynthesis results in enhancement of NPP. Though the comparisons of modeled results with regional estimates of biomass and soil C stocks seem reasonable, the empirical estimates have considerable methodological and sampling uncertainty. L500-502: That the CO2 evasion from the water surfaces is sustained by leaching of dissolved CO2 and DOC from soils is not established. In situ C fixation by wetlands and subsequent decomposition of this material could be a significant source of the CO2 evaded as suggested by Borges, and Abril for the Amazon. Indeed, in lines 530-555, the authors discuss the likely contribution of aquatic macrophytes to the available C, and duly note the difficulty of incorporating these plants into their model. However, it is therefore odd that this possible contribution is then discounted in lines 555 to 560.

We think that the tentative language used (now lines L559-561) “Our results suggest”, in combination with the extensive discussion which you refer to appropriately reflect the limitations in our conclusions.

We would debate the conclusion that we have “discounted” the effect of macrophytes or at least that was not our intention. We fully acknowledge the important role that macrophytes are likely to play in sustaining CO_2 evasion from the water surface. However, we take the point that the language could be changed to make this clearer and have modified the text accordingly.

Note also, that that ORCHILEAK represents floodplains as sources of CO_2 to the inland water network, from the decomposition of litter and SOC, but also though root respiration of plants in that area. Hence, carbon is not only coming from upland soils, but also from wetland soils and vegetation.

Please see modified paragraph (now lines 595-625):

"The difference in our simulated riverine CO_2 evasion compared to the empirically derived estimate of Borges et al. (2019), could be caused by the lack of representation of aquatic plants in the ORCHILEAK model. Borges et al. (2019) used the stable isotope composition of δ^{13} C-DIC to determine the origin of dissolved CO_2 in the Congo River system and found that the values were consistent with a DIC input from the degradation of organic matter, in particular from C_4 plants. Crucially, they further found that the δ^{13} C-DIC values were unrelated to the contribution of *terra-firme* C_4 plants, rather that they were more consistent with the degradation of aquatic C_4 plants, namely macrophytes. ORCHILEAK does not represent aquatic plants, and the wider LSM ORCHIDEE does not have an aquatic macrophyte PFT either (though root respiration of floodplain plants for the PFTs represented, is accounted for as a C source). This could at the very least partly explain our conservative estimate of river CO_2 evasion, given that tropical macrophytes have relatively elevated NPPs. Rates as high as 3,500 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} have been measured on floodplains in the Amazon (Silva et al., 2009). While this value is higher than the values simulated in the Cuvette Centrale by ORCHILEAK (Figure 8), they are of the same order of magnitude and so this alone cannot fully explain the discrepancy compared to the results of Borges et al. (2019). In the Amazon basin it has been shown that wetlands export approximately half of their gross primary production (GPP) to the river network compared to upland (*terra-firme*) ecosystems which only export a few percent (Abril et al. 2013). More importantly, Abril et al. (2013) found that tropical aquatic macrophytes export 80% of their GPP compared to just 36% for flooded forest. Therefore, the lack of a bespoke macrophyte PFT is indeed likely to be one reason for the discrepancy between our results and those of Borges, but largely due to their particularly high export efficiency to the river-floodplain network as opposed to differences in NPP. While being a significant limitation, creating and incorporating a macrophyte PFT would be a substantial undertaking given that the authors are unaware of any published dataset which has systematically mapped their distribution and abundance. It is important to note that while ORCHILEAK does not include the export of C from aquatic macrophytes it also neglects their NPP. Moreover, most aquatic macrophytes described in the literature have short (<1 year) life-cycles (Mitchel & Rogers, 1985). As such, while this model limitation is likely one of the causes for our relatively low estimate of riverine CO_2 evasion, it will only have a limited net effect on our estimate of the overall annual C balance (NBP, NEP) of the Congo basin."

L537-539: It is not correct that strong currents limit the abundance of aquatic macrophytes in the Amazon since most of their growth occurs on floodplains where they can cover large areas.

Ok. This is taken from previous literature (Borges et al., 2015, Scientific Reports) but we have removed this.

L570-572: Both these estimates of the % of NPP per year transferred to inland waters are based on the same model. What are the estimates for the Amazon based on empirical data? L572-582: This discussion of differences between the Amazon and Congo is too simplistic and not representative of the relevant conditions in either system. It would best be deleted unless considerable more information is added. Section 4.2: As noted above, it seems a real stretch to be projecting through the 21st century. L610-625: As this section is written as a comparison with Lauerwald et al. (submitted), it does seem suitable to include until Lauerwald et al is available. Also, there are publications that project hydrological and land use changes in the Amazon.

L570-582 have been removed.

Lauerwald et al (2020) has now been accepted for publication and so we have retained the comparison of the future projections for the Amazon and the Congo.

L626-624: This paragraph does not seem necessary since these systems are quite different from the Congo and other examples could be selected. Section 4.3: Lines 636-645 re-enforce the issues raised above regarding the projections through the 21st century and the question of whether their inclusion in this paper is warranted.

Conclusion L692-696: Is it likely that an increase in DOC from 9.5 to 11.5 mg C/L will cause ecologically meaningful changes in pH?

It is unclear so we have removed these sentences.

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Historical and future contributions of inland waters to the Congo basin carbon balance

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Abstract

As the second largest area of contiguous tropical rainforest and second largest river basin in the world, the Congo basin has a significant role to play in the global carbon (C) cycle. ~~Inventories suggest that terrestrial net primary productivity (NPP) and C storage in tree biomass has increased in recent decades in intact forests of tropical Africa, due in large part to a combination of increasing atmospheric CO_2 concentrations and climate change, while rotational agriculture and logging have caused C losses.~~ For the present day, it has been shown that a significant proportion of global terrestrial net primary productivity (NPP) is transferred laterally to the land-ocean aquatic continuum (LOAC) as dissolved CO_2, dissolved organic carbon (DOC) and particulate organic carbon (POC). Whilst the importance of LOAC fluxes in the Congo basin has been demonstrated for the present day, it is not known to what extent

these fluxes have been perturbed historically, how they are likely to change under future climate change and land use scenarios, and in turn what impact these changes might have on the overall C cycle of the basin. Here we apply the ORCHILEAK model to the Congo basin and ~~show~~ estimate that 4% of terrestrial NPP (NPP = 5,800 ±166 Tg C yr^{-1}) is currently exported from soils and vegetation to inland waters. Further, our results suggest~~we found~~ that aquatic C fluxes may have undergone considerable perturbation since 1861 to the present day, with aquatic CO_2 evasion and C export to the coast increasing by 26% (186 ±41 Tg C yr^{-1} to 235 ±54 Tg C yr^{-1}) and 25% (12 ±3 Tg C yr^{-1} to 15 ±4 Tg C yr^{-1}) respectively, largely because of rising atmospheric CO_2 concentrations. Moreover, under climate scenario RCP 6.0 we predict that this perturbation ~~will~~ could continue; over the full simulation period (1861-2099), we estimate that aquatic CO_2 evasion and C export to the coast ~~will~~ could increase by 79% and 67% respectively. Finally, we show that the proportion of terrestrial NPP lost to the LOAC could increase ~~also increases~~ from approximately 3% to 5% from 1861-2099 as a result of increasing atmospheric CO_2 concentrations and climate change. However, our future projections of the Congo basin C fluxes in particular need to be interpreted with some caution due to model limitations. We discuss these limitations, including the wider limitations associated with applying the current generation of land surface models that ignore nutrient dynamics to make future projections of the tropical C cycle, along with potential next steps.

~~.~~

~~2.~~1. Introduction

As the world's second largest area of contiguous tropical rainforest and second largest river, the Congo basin has a significant role to play in the global carbon (C) cycle. Current estimates of its C stocks and fluxes are limited by a sparsity of field data and therefore have substantial uncertainties, both quantified and unquantified (Williams et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2009; Dargie et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it has been estimated that there is a~~A~~pproximately 50 Pg C

is stored in its above ground biomass (Verhegghen et al., 2012), and up to 100 Pg C contained within its soils (Williams et al., 2007). Moreover, a recent study estimated that around 30 (6.3–46.8) Pg C is stored in the peats of the Congo alone (Dargie at al., 2017). Field data suggest that storage in tree biomass increased by 0.34 (0.15- 0.43) Pg C yr^{-1} in intact African tropical forests between 1968-2007 (Lewis et al., 2009) due in large part to a combination of increasing atmospheric CO_2 concentrations and climate change (Ciais et al., 2009; Pan et al., 2015), while satellite data indicates that terrestrial net primary productivity (NPP) has increased by an average of 10 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} per year between 2001 and 2013 in tropical Africa (Yin et al., 2017).

At the same time, forest degradation, clearing for rotational agriculture and logging are causing C losses to the atmosphere (Zhuravleva et al., 2013; Tyukavina et al., 2018) while droughts have reduced vegetation greenness and water storage over the last decade (Zhou et al., 2014). A recent estimate of above ground C stocks of tropical African forests, mainly in the Congo, indicates a minor net C loss from 2010 to 2017 (Fan et al., 2019). Moreover, recent field data suggests that the above ground C sink in tropical Africa was relatively stable from 1985 to 2015 (Hubau et al., 2020).

There are large uncertainties associated with projecting future trends in the Congo basin terrestrial C cycle, firstly related to predicting which trajectories of future CO_2 levels and land use changes will occur, and secondly to our ability to fully understand and simulate these changes and in turn their impacts. Future model projections for the 21st century agree that temperature will significantly increase under both low and high emission scenarios (Haensler et al., 2013), while precipitation is only projected to substantially increase under high emission scenarios, the basin mean remaining more or less unchanged under low emission scenarios (Haensler et al., 2013). Uncertainties in future land-use change projections for Africa are among the highest for any continent (Hurtt et al., 2011).

For the present day at the global scale, it has been estimated that between 1 and 5 Pg C yr^{-1} is transferred laterally to the land-ocean aquatic continuum (LOAC) as dissolved CO_2, dissolved organic carbon (DOC) and particulate organic carbon (POC) (Cole at al., 2007; Battin et al., 2009; Regnier et al., 2013; Drake et al., 2018; Ciais et al. ~~in review~~2020). This C can subsequently be evaded back to the atmosphere as CO_2, undergo sedimentation in wetlands and inland waters, or be transported to estuaries or the coast. The tropical region is a hotspot area for inland water C cycling (Richey et al., 2002; Melack et al., 2004; Abril et al., 2014; Borges et al., 2015[a]; Lauerwald et al., 2015) due to high terrestrial NPP and precipitation, and a recent study used an upscaling approach based on observations to estimate present day CO_2 evasion from the rivers of the Congo basin at 251±46 Tg C yr^{-1} and the lateral C (TOC +DIC) export to the coast at 15.5 (13-18) Tg C yr^{-1} (Borges at al., 2015[a]; Borges et al., 2019). To put this into context, their estimate of aquatic CO_2 evasion represents 39% of the global value estimated by Lauerwald et al. (2015, 650 Tg C yr^{-1}) or 14% of the global estimate of Raymond et al. (2013, 1,800 Tg C yr^{-1}). Note that while Lauerwald et al. (2015) and Raymond et al. (2013) relied largely on the same database of partial pressure of CO_2 (pCO_2) measurements (GloRiCh, Hartmann et al., 2014) as the basis for their estimates, they took different, albeit both empirically led approaches. Moreover, both approaches were limited by a relative paucity of data from the tropics, which also explains the high degree of uncertainty associated with our understanding of global riverine CO_2 evasion.

Whilst the importance of LOAC fluxes in the Congo basin has been demonstrated for the present day, it is not known to what extent these fluxes have been perturbed historically, how they are likely to change under future climate change and land use scenarios, and in turn what impact these changes might have on the overall C balance of the Congo. In light of these knowledge gaps, we address the following research questions:

- What is the relative contribution of LOAC fluxes (CO_2 evasion and C export to the coast) to the present-day C balance of the basin?
- To what extent have LOAC fluxes changed from 1860 to the present day and what are the primary drivers of this change?
- How will these fluxes change under future climate and land use change scenarios (RCP 6.0 which represents the "no mitigation scenario") and what are the implications of this change?

Understanding and quantifying these long-term changes requires a complex and integrated mass-conservation modelling approach. The ORCHILEAK model (Lauerwald et al., 2017), a new version of the land surface model ORCHIDEE (Krinner et al., 2005), is capable of simulating ~~both~~ observed terrestrial and aquatic C fluxes in a consistent manner for the present day in the Amazon (Lauerwald et al., 2017) and Lena (Bowring et al., 2019[a]; Bowring et al., 2019[b]) basins, albeit with limitations including a lack of explicit representation of POC fluxes and in-stream autotrophic production (see Lauerwald et al., 2017; Bowring et al., 2019[a]; Bowring et al., 2019[b] and Hastie et al., 2019 for further discussion). Moreover, it was recently demonstrated that this model could recreate observed seasonal and interannual variation in Amazon aquatic and terrestrial C fluxes (Hastie et al., 2019).

In order to accurately simulate aquatic C fluxes, it is crucial to provide a realistic representation of the hydrological dynamics of the Congo River, including its wetlands. Here, we develop new wetland forcing files for the ORCHILEAK model from the high-resolution dataset of Gumbricht et al. (2017) and apply the model to the Congo basin. After validating the model against observations of discharge, flooded area and DOC concentrations for the present day, we then use the model to understand and quantify the long- term (1861-2099) temporal trends in both the terrestrial and aquatic C fluxes of the Congo Basin.

~~3.~~2. Methods

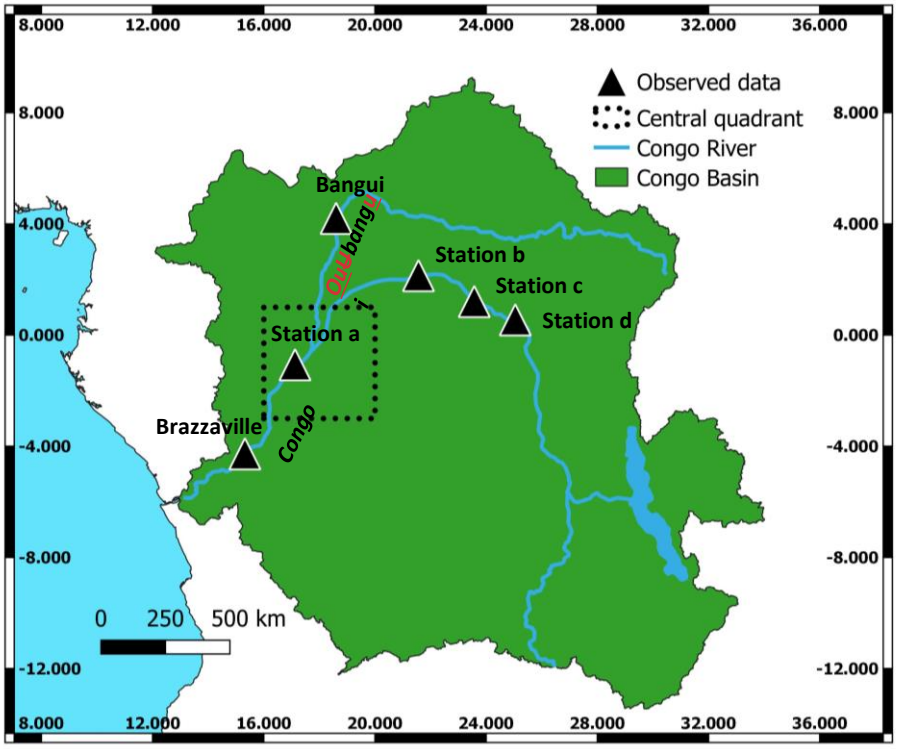
ORCHILEAK (Lauerwald et al., 2017) is a branch of the ORCHIDEE land surface model (LSM), building on past model developments such as ORCHIDEE-SOM (Camino Serrano, 201~~85~~), and represents one of the first LSM-based approaches which fully integrates the aquatic C cycle within the terrestrial domain. ORCHILEAK simulates DOC production in the canopy and soils, the leaching of dissolved CO_2 and DOC to the river from the soil, the mineralization of DOC, and in turn the evasion of CO_2 to the atmosphere from the water surface. Moreover, it represents the transfer of C between litter, soils and water within floodplains and swamps (see section 2.2). Once within the river routing scheme, ORCHILEAK assumes that the lateral transfer of CO_2 and DOC are proportional to the volume of water. DOC is divided into a refractory and labile pool within the river, with half-lives of 80 and 2 days respectively. The refractory pool corresponds to the combined slow and passive DOC pools of the soil C scheme, and the labile pool corresponds to the active soil pool (see section 2.4.1). The concentration of dissolved CO_2 and the temperature-dependent solubility of CO_2 are used to calculate ~~the partial pressure of CO_2 (pCO_2)~~ in the water column. In turn, CO_2 evasion is calculated based on pCO_2, along with a diurnally variable water surface area and a gas exchange velocity. Fixed gas exchange velocities of 3.5 m d^{-1} and 0.65 m d^{-1} respectively are used for rivers (including open floodplains) and forested floodplains.

In this study, as in previous studies (Lauerwald et al., 2017, Hastie et al. 2019, Bowring et al., 2019[a,b]), we run the model at a spatial resolution of 1° and use the default time step of 30 min for all vertical transfers of water, energy and C between vegetation, soil and the atmosphere, and the daily time-step for the lateral routing of water. Until now, in the Tropics, ORCHILEAK has been parameterized and calibrated only for the Amazon River basin (Lauerwald et al., 2017, Hastie et al. 2019). To adapt and apply ORCHILEAK to the specific characteristics of the Congo River basin (2.1), we had to establish new forcing files representing the maximal

fraction of floodplains (MFF) and the maximal fraction of swamps (MFS) (2.2) and to recalibrate the river routing module of ORCHILEAK (2.3). All of the processes represented in ORCHILEAK remain identical to those previously represented for the Amazon ORCHILEAK (Lauerwald et al., 2017; Hastie et al., 2019). In the following methodology sections, we describe; 2.1- Congo basin description, 2.2- Development of floodplains and swamps forcing files, 2.3- Calibration of hydrology, 2.4- Simulation set-up, 2.5- Evaluation and analysis of simulated fluvial C fluxes, and 2.6- Calculating the net carbon balance of the Congo Basin. For a full description of the ORCHILEAK model please see Lauerwald et al. (2017).

2.1 Congo basin description

The Congo Basin is the world's second largest area of contiguous tropical rainforest and second largest river basin in the world (Fig. 1), covering an area of 3.7 $x10^6$ km^2, with a mean discharge of around 42,000 m^{-3} s^{-1} (O'Loughlin et al., 2013) and a variation between 24,700–75,500 m^{-3} s^{-1} across months (Coynel et al., 2005).


8.000
12.000
16.000
20.000
24.000
28.000
32.000
36.000
8.000
4.000
0.000
-4.000
-8.000
-12.000
Observed data
Central quadrant
Congo River
Congo Basin
Bangui
Oubangui
Station b
Station c
Station d
Station a
Brazzaville
Congo
0 250 500 km

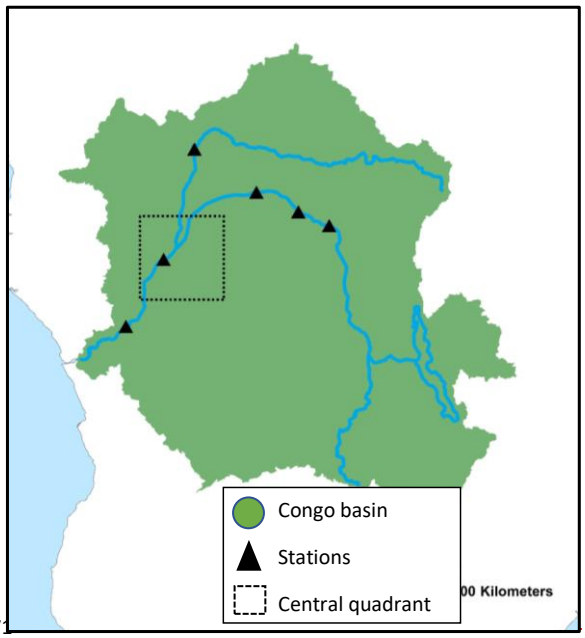
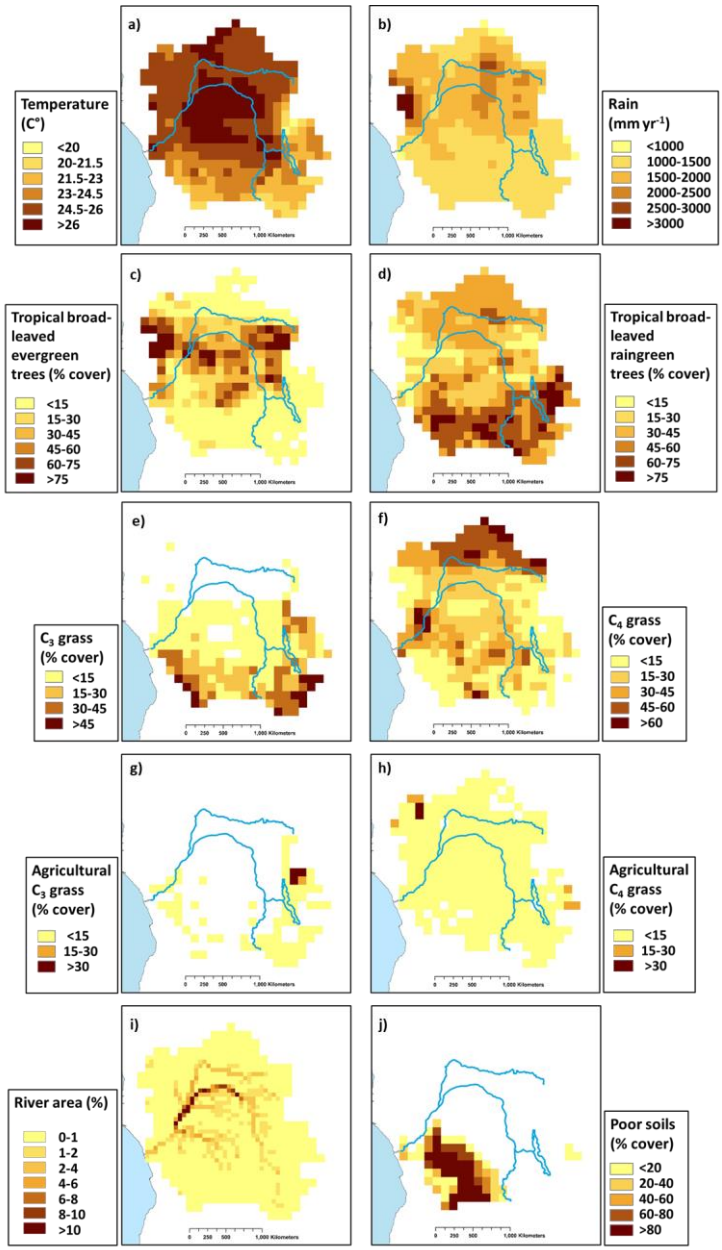


Figure 1:Extent of the Congo Basin, central quadrant of the "Cuvette Centrale" and sampling stations (for DOC and discharge) along the Congo and ~~Ubangi~~Oubangui Rivers (in italic).

The major climate (ISMSIP2b, Frieler et al., 2017; Lang et al., 2017) and land-cover (LUH-CMIP5) characteristics of the Congo Basin for the present day (1981-2010) are shown in Figure 2. The mean annual temperature is 25.2 °C but with considerable spatial variation from a low of 18.4°C to a high of 27.2°C (Fig. 2 a), while mean annual rainfall is 1520mm, varying from 733 mm to 4087 mm (Fig. 2 b). ORCHILEAK prescribes 13 different plant functional types (PFTs). Land-use is mixed with tropical broad-leaved evergreen (PFT2, Fig. 1 c), tropical broad-leaved rain green (PFT3, Fig. 1 d), C_3 grass (PFT10, Fig. 2 e) and C_4 grass (PFT11, Fig. 2 f) covering a maximum of 26%, 35%, 8% and 25% of the basin area respectively (Table A3). Most published estimates for land-cover follow national boundaries and so we can make broad comparisons with published estimates for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). For example, our value for total forest cover for the DRC (65%), is close to the 67% and 68% values estimated by the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP, 2009), and Potapov et al.

(2012), respectively. Agriculture covers only a small proportion of the basin according to the LUH dataset that is based on FAO cropland area statistics, with C3 (PFT12, Fig. 2 g) and C_4 (PFT13, Fig. 2 h) agriculture making up a maximum basin area of 0.5 and 2% respectively (Table A3). In reality, a larger fraction of the basin is composed of small scale and rotational agriculture (Tyukavina et al., 2018). The ORCHILEAK model also has a "poor soils" forcing file (Fig. 2 j) which prescribes reduced decomposition rates in soils with low nutrient and pH soils such as Podzols and Arenosols (Lauerwald et al., 2017). This file is developed from the Harmonized World Soil Database (FAO/IIASA/ISRIC/ISS-CAS/JRC, 2009).



195

196 **Figure 2: Present day (1981-2010) spatial distribution of the principal climate and land-use**
197 **drivers used in ORCHILEAK, across the Congo Basin; a) mean annual temperature in °C, b)**
198 **mean annual rainfall in mm yr^{-1}, c)-h) mean annual maximum vegetated fraction for PFTs 2,3,**

10,11,12 and 13, i) river area, and j) Poor soils. All at a resolution of 1° except for river area (0.5°).

2.2 Development of floodplains and swamps forcing files

In ORCHILEAK, water in the river network can be diverted to two types of wetlands, floodplains and swamps. In each grid where a floodplain exists, a temporary waterbody can be formed adjacent to the river and is fed by the river once bank-full discharge (see section 2.3) is exceeded. In grids where swamps exist, a constant proportion of river discharge is fed into the base of the soil column; ORCHILEAK does not explicitly represent a groundwater reservoir and so this imitates the hydrological coupling of swamps and rivers through the groundwater table. The maximal proportions of each grid which can be covered by floodplains and swamps are prescribed by the maximal fraction of floodplains (MFF) and the maximal fraction of swamps (MFS) forcing files respectively (Guimberteau et al., 2012). See also Lauerwald et al. (2017) and Hastie et al. (2019) for further details. We created an MFF forcing file for the Congo basin, derived from the Global Wetlands^{v3} database; the 232 m resolution tropical wetland map of Gumbricht et al. (2017) (Fig. 3 a and b). We firstly amalgamated all the categories of wetland (which include floodplains and swamps) before aggregating them to a resolution of 0.5° (the resolution at which the floodplain/swamp forcing files are read by ORCHILEAK), assuming that this represents the maximum extent of inundation in the basin. This results in a mean MFF of 10.3%, i.e. a maximum of 10.3% of the surface area of the Congo basin can be inundated with water. This is ~~v~~identical to the~~ery similar to the~~ mean MFF value of 10% produced with the Global Lakes and Wetlands Database, GLWD (Lehner, & Döll, P.,2004; Borges et al., 2015[b]). We also created an MFS forcing file from the same dataset (Fig. 3 c and d), merging the 'swamps' and 'fens' wetland categories (although note that there are virtually no fens in the Congo basin) from Global Wetlands^{v3} database (Gumbricht et al., 2017) and again aggregating them to a 0.5° resolution. Please see Table 1 of Gumbricht et al. (2017) for further details.

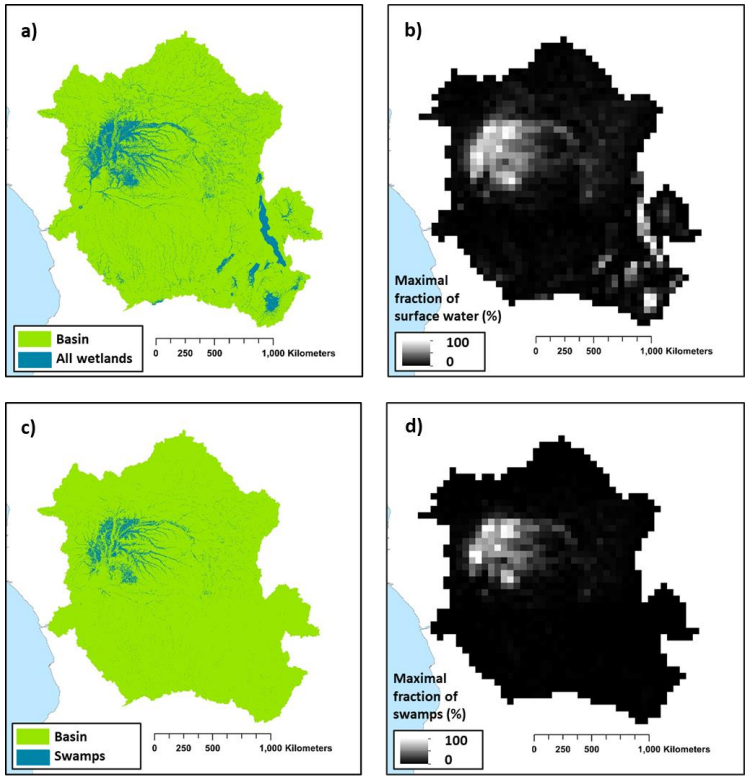


Figure 3: a) Wetland extent (from Gumbricht et al., 2017). b) The new maximal fraction of floodplain (MFF) forcing file developed from a). c) Swamps (including fens) category within Congo basin from Gumbricht et al (2017). d) the new maximal fraction of swamps (MFS) forcing file developed from c). Panels a) and b) are at the same resolution as the Gumbricht dataset (232m) while b) and d) are at a resolution of 0.5°. Note that 0.5° is the resolution of the sub unit basins in ORCHILEAK (Lauerwald et al., 2015), with each 1° grid containing four sub basins.

2.3 Calibration of hydrology

As the main driver of the export of C from the terrestrial to aquatic system, it is crucial that the model can represent present-day hydrological dynamics, at the very least on the main stem of the Congo. As this study is primarily concerned with decadal- centennial timescales our priority

was to ensure that the model can accurately recreate observed mean annual discharge at the most downstream gauging station Brazzaville. We also tested the model's ability to simulate observed discharge seasonality, as well as flood dynamics. Moreover, no data is available with which to directly evaluate the simulation of DOC and CO_2 leaching from the soil to the river network, and thus we tested the model's ability to recreate the spatial variation of observed riverine DOC ~~and pCO_2~~ concentrations and pCO_2 at specific stations where measurements are available (Borges at al., 2015[b]; Bouillon et al., 2012 & 2014, locations ~~and~~ shown in Fig. 1), river DOC and CO_2 concentration ~~and pCO_2~~ being regarded as an integrator of the C transport at the terrestrial-aquatic interface.

We first ran the model for the present-day period, defined as from 1990 to 2005/2010 depending on which climate forcing data was applied, using four climate forcing datasets; namely ISIMIP2b (Frieler et al., 2017), Princeton GPCC (Sheffield et al., 2006), GSWP3 (Kim, 2017) and CRUNCEP (Viovy, 2018). We used ISIMIP2b for the historical and future simulations as it is the only climate forcing dataset to cover the full period (1861-2099). However, we compared it to other climate forcing datasets for the present day in order to gauge its ability to simulate observed discharge on the Congo River at Brazzaville (Table A1). Without calibration, the majority of the different climate forcing model runs performed poorly, unable to accurately represent the seasonality and mean monthly discharge at Brazzaville (Table A1). The best performing climate forcing dataset was ISIMIP2b followed by Princeton GPCC with root mean square errors (RMSE) of 29% and 40% and Nash Sutcliffe efficiencies (NSE) of 0.20 and -0.25, respectively. NSE is a statistical coefficient specifically used to test the predictive skill of hydrological models (Nash & Sutcliffe, 1970).

For ISIMIP2b we further calibrated key hydrological model parameters, namely the constants which dictate the water residence time of the groundwater (=slow reservoir), headwaters (= fast reservoir) and floodplain reservoirs in order to improve the simulation of observed

discharge at Brazzaville (Table 2). To do so, we tested different combinations of water residence times for the three reservoirs, eventually settling on 1, 0.5 and 0.5 (days) for the slow, fast and floodplain reservoirs respectively, all three being reduced compared to those values used in the original ORCHILEAK calibration for the Amazon (Lauerwald at al., 2017).

In order to calibrate the simulated discharge against observations, we first modified the flood dynamics of ORCHILEAK in the Congo Basin for the present day by adjusting bank-full discharge ($streamr_{50th}$, Lauerwald et al., 2017) and 95th percentile of water level heights ($floodh_{95th}$). As in previous studies on the Amazon basin (Lauerwald et al. 2017, Hastie et al., 2019) we defined bank-full discharge, i.e. the threshold discharge at which floodplain inundation starts (i.e. overtopping of banks), as the median discharge (50th percentile i.e. $streamr_{50th}$) of the present-day climate forcing period (1990 to 2005). After re-running each model parametrization (different water residence times) to obtain those bank-full discharge values, we calculated $floodh_{95th}$ over the simulation period for each grid cell (Table 1). This value is assumed to represent the water level over the river banks at which the maximum horizontal extent of floodplain inundation is reached. We then ran the model for a final time and validated the outputs against discharge data at Brazzaville (Cochonneau et al., 2006, Fig. 1). This procedure was repeated iteratively with the ISIMIP2b climate forcing, modifying the water residence times of each reservoir in order to find the best performing parametrization.

We firstly ~~Limited observed discharge data is available for the Congo basin, with the majority concentrated on the main stem of the Congo, at Brazzaville station. After~~ compar~~ed~~ing simulated versus~~vs~~ observed discharge at Brazzaville (NSE, RMSE, Table 2), before~~we~~ us~~inged~~ the data of Bouillon et al. (2014) to further validate discharge at Bangui (Fig. 1) on the main tributary ~~Ubangi~~Oubangui. In addition, we compared the simulated seasonality of flooded area against the satellite derived dataset GIEMS (Prigent et al., 2007; Becker et al., 2018), within the Cuvette Centrale wetlands (Fig. 1).

2.4 Simulation set-up

A list of the main forcing files used, along with data sources, is presented in Table 1. The derivation of the floodplains and swamp (MFF & MFS) is described in section 2.2 while the calculation of "bankfull discharge" ($streamr_{50th}$) and "95th percentile of water table height over flood plain" ($floodh_{95th}$) (Table 1) is described in section 2.3.

2.4.1 Soil carbon spin up

ORCHILEAK includes a soil module, primarily derived from ORCHIDEE-SOM (Camino Serrano, 2018). The soil module has 3 different pools of soil DOC; the passive, slow and active pool and these are defined by their source material and residence times (τ_{carbon}). ORCHILEAK also differentiates between flooded and non-flooded soils; decomposition rates of DOC, SOC and litter being reduced (3 times lower) in flooded soils. In order for the soil C pools to reach steady state, we spun-up the model for around 9,000 years, with fixed land-use representative of 1861, and looping over the first 30 years of the ISMSIP2b climate forcing data (1861-1890). During the first 2,000 years of spin-up, we ran the model with an atmospheric CO_2 concentration of 350 µatm and default soil C residence times (τ_{carbon}) halved, which allowed it to approach steady-state more rapidly. Following this, we ran the model for a further 7,000 years reverting to the default τ_{carbon} values. At the end of this process, the soil C pools had reached approximately steady state; <0.02% change in each pool over the final century of the spin-up.

2.4.2 Transient simulations

After the spin-up, we ran a historical simulation from 1861 until the present day, 2005 in the case of the ISIMIP2b climate forcing data. We then ran a future simulation until 2099, using the final year of the historical simulation as a restart file. In both of these simulations, climate, atmospheric CO_2 and land-cover change were prescribed as fully transient forcings according to the RCP6.0 scenario. For climate variables, we used the IPSL-CM5A-LR model outputs for

RCP 6.0, bias corrected by the ISIMIP2b procedure (Frieler et al., 2017; Lange et al., 2017), while land-use change was taken from the 5th Coupled Model Intercomparison Project (CMIP5). As our aim is to investigate long-term trends, we calculated 30-years running means of simulated C flux outputs in order to smooth interannual variations. RCP 6.0 is an emissions pathway that leads to a "stabilization of radiative forcing at 6.0 Watts per square meter (Wm^{-2}) in the year 2100 without exceeding that value in prior years" (Masui et al., 2011). It is characterised by intermediate energy intensity, substantial population growth, mid-high C emissions, increasing cropland area to 2100 and decreasing natural grassland area (van Vuuren et al., 2011). In the paper which describes the development of the future land use change scenarios under RCP 6.0 (Hurtt et al., 2011), it is shown that land use change is highly sensitive to land use model assumptions, such as whether or not shifting cultivation is included. The LUH1 reconstruction for instance indicates shifting cultivation affecting all of the tropics with a residence time of agriculture of 15 years, whereas the review from Heinimann et al. (2017) revised downwards the area of this type of agriculture, with generally low values in Congo, except in the North eEast and South East, but suggested a shorter turnover of agriculture of two years only. In view of such uncertainties, we did not include shifting agriculture in the model. ~~In our simulations, shifting cultivation is not included.~~ Moreover, ~~Africa is one the regions with the largest uncertainty range, and thus,~~ there is considerable uncertainty associated with the effect of future land-use change in Africa (Hurtt et al., 2011). We chose RCP 6.0 as it represents a no mitigation (mid-high emissions) scenario. ~~and because it was the scenario applied in the recent paper of Lauerwald et al. (submitted) to examine the long-term LOAC fluxes in the Amazon basin. Therefore, we can directly compare our results for the Congo to those for the Amazon.~~ Moreover, the ISIMIP2b data only provided two RCPs at the time we performed the simulations; RCP 2.6 (low emission) and RCP 6.0.

With the purpose of evaluating separately the effects of land-use change, climate change, and rising atmospheric CO_2, we ran a series of factorial simulations. In each simulation, one of these factors was fixed at its 1861 level (the first year of the simulation), or in the case of fixed climate change, we looped over the years 1861-1890. The outputs of these simulations (also 30-year running means) were then subtracted from the outputs of the main simulation (original run with all factors varied) so that we could determine the contribution of each driver (Fig. 10, Table 1).

Table 1:Main forcing files used for simulations

Variable	Spatial resolution	Temporal resolution	Data source
Rainfall, snowfall, incoming shortwave and longwave radiation, air temperature, relative humidity and air pressure (close to surface), wind speed (10 m above surface)	1°	1 day	ISIMIP2b, IPSL-CM5A-LR model outputs for RCP6.0 (Frieler et al., 2017)
Land cover (and change)	0.5°	annual	LUH-CMIP5
Poor soils	0.5°	annual	Derived from HWSD v 1.1 (FAO/IIASA/ISRIC/ISS-CAS/JRC, 2009)
Stream flow directions	0.5°	annual	STN-30p (Vörösmarty et al., 2000)
Floodplains and swamps fraction in each grid (MFF & MFS)	0.5°	annual	derived from the wetland high resolution data of Gumbricht et al. (2017)
River surface areas	0.5°	annual	Lauerwald et al. (2015)
Bankfull discharge ($streamr_{50th}$)	1°	annual	derived from calibration with ORCHILEAK (see section 2,3)
95th percentile of water table height over flood plain ($floodh_{95th}$)	1°	annual	derived from calibration with ORCHILEAK (see section 2.3)

2.5 Evaluation and analysis of simulated fluvial C fluxes

We first evaluated DOC concentrations and pCO_2 at several locations along the Congo mainstem (Fig. 1), and on the ~~Ubangi~~Oubangui river against the data of Borges at al. (2015[b]) and Bouillon et al. (2012, 2014)~~.~~ We also compared the various simulated components of the net C balance (e.g. NPP) of the Congo against values described in the literature (Williams et al., 2007; Lewis et al., 2009; Verhegghen et al., 2012; Valentini et al., 2014; Yin et al., 2017). In addition, we assessed the relationship between the interannual variation in present day

(1981-2010) C fluxes of the Congo basin and variation in temperature and rainfall. This was done through linear regression using STATISTICA^{TM}. We found trends in several of the fluxes over the 30-year period (1981-2010) and thus detrended the time series with the "Detrend" function, part of the "SpecsVerification" package in R (R Core Team 2013), before undertaking the statistical analysis focused on the climate drivers of inter-annual variability.

2.6 Calculating the net carbon balance of the Congo basin

We calculated Net Ecosystem Production (NEP) by summing the terrestrial and aquatic C fluxes of the Congo basin (Eq. 1), while we incorporated disturbance fluxes (Land-use change flux and harvest flux) to calculate Net Biome Production (NBP) (Eq. 2). Positive values of NBP and NEP equate to a net terrestrial C sink.

NEP is defined as follows:

$$NEP = NPP + TF - SHR - FCO_2 - LE_{\text{Aquatic}} \quad (1)$$

Where *NPP* is terrestrial net primary production, *TF* is the throughfall flux of DOC from the canopy to the ground, *SHR* is soil heterotrophic respiration (only that evading from the *terra-firme* soil surface); FCO_2 is CO_2 evasion from the water surface and $LE_{Aquatic}$ is the lateral export flux of C (DOC + dissolved CO_2) to the coast. NBP is equal to NEP except with the inclusion of the C lost (or possibly gained) via land use change (*LUC*) and crop harvest (*HAR*). Wood harvest is not included for logging and forestry practices, but during deforestation LUC, a fraction of the forest biomass is harvested and channelled to wood product pools with different decay constants. *LUC* includes land conversion fluxes and the lateral export of wood products biomass, that is, assuming that wood products from deforestation are not consumed and released as CO_2 over the Congo, but in other regions:

$$NBP = NEP - (LUC + HAR) \quad (2)$$

~~4.~~3. Results

3.1 Simulation of h~~H~~ydrology and aquatic carbon fluxes

The final model configuration is able to closely reproduce the mean monthly discharge at Brazzaville (Fig. 4 a), Table 2) and captures the seasonality moderately well (Fig. 4 a, Table 2, RMSE =23%, R^2 =0.84 versus RMSE= 29% and R^2 =0.23 without calibration, Table A1). At Bangui on the ~~Ubangi~~Oubangui River (Fig. 1), the model is able to closely recreate observed seasonality (Fig. 4 b), RMSE =59%, R^2 =0.88) but substantially underestimates the mean monthly discharge, our value being only 50% of the observed. We produce reasonable NSE values of 0.66 and 0.31 for Brazzaville and Bangui respectively, indicating that the model is moderately accurate in its simulation of seasonality.

We also evaluated the simulated seasonal change in flooded area in the central (approx. 200,000 km^2, Fig. 1) part of the Cuvette Centrale wetlands against the GIEMS inundation dataset (1993-2007, maximum inundation minus minimum or permanent water bodies, Prigent et al., 2007; Becker et al., 2018). While our model is able to represent the seasonality in flooded area relatively well (R^2 =0.75 Fig. 4 c), it considerably overestimates the magnitude of flooded area relative to GIEMS (Fig. 4 c, Table 2). However, the dataset that we used to define the MFF and MFS forcing files (Gumbricht et al., 2017) is produced at a higher resolution than GIEMS and will capture smaller wetlands than the GIEMS dataset, and thus the greater flooded area is to be expected. GIEMS is also known to underestimate inundation under vegetated areas (Prigent et al., 2007, Papa et al., 2010) and has difficulties to capture small inundated areas (Prigent et al., 2007; Lauerwald et al., 2017). Indeed, with the GIEMS data we produce an overall flooded area for the Congo Basin of just 3%, less than one-third of that produced with the Gumbricht dataset (Gumbricht et al., 2017) or the GLWD (Lehner, & Döll, P.,2004). As such, it is to be expected that there is a large RMSE (272%, Table 2) between simulated flooded

area and GIEMS; more importantly, the seasonality of the two is highly correlated (R^2 = 0.67, Table 2). ~~Overall, the hydrological performance of the model against those datasets is satisfactory as the main purpose of this study is to estimate the long-term changes of aquatic C fluxes. In particular, it can closely recreate the mean monthly/annual discharge at Brazzaville (Table 2), the most downstream gauging station on the Congo (Fig. 1). As such, we consider the hydrological performance to be sufficiently good for our aims.~~

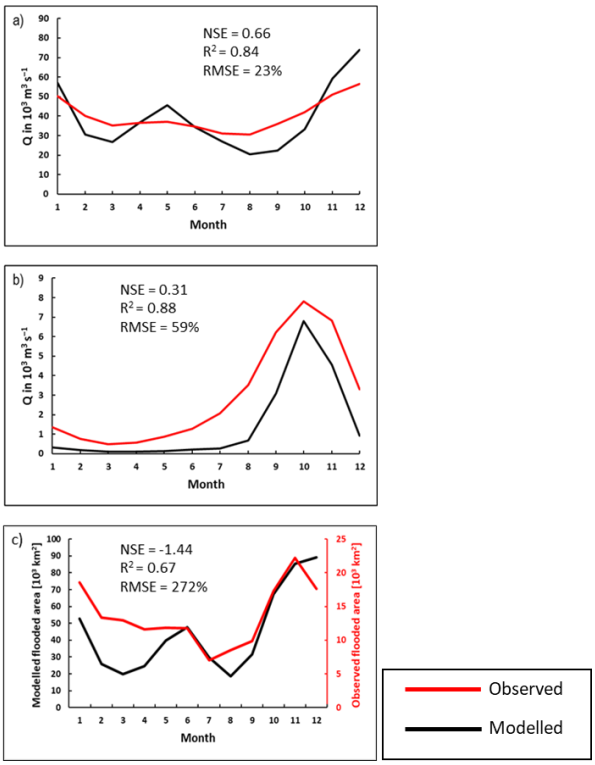


Figure 4: Seasonality of simulated versus observed discharge at a) Brazzaville on the Congo (Cochonneau et al., 2006), b) Bangui on the ~~Ubangi~~ Oubangui (Bouillon et al., 2014) 1990-2005 monthly mean and c) flooded area in the ~~the~~ central (approx. 200,000 km^2) area of the Cuvette Centrale wetlands versus GIEMS (1993-2007, Becker et al., 2018). The observed flooded area data represents the maximum minus minimum (permanent water bodies such as rivers) GIEMS inundation. See Figure 1 for locations.

404

Table 2: Performance statistics for modelled versus observed seasonality of discharge and flooded area in Cuvette Centrale

Station	RSME	NSE	R^2	Simulated mean monthly discharge (m^3 s^{-1})	Observed mean monthly discharge (m^3 s^{-1})
Brazzaville	23%	0.66	0.84	38,944	40,080
Bangui	59%	0.31	0.88	1,448	2,923
				Simulated mean monthly flooded area (10^3 km^2)	Observed mean monthly flooded area (10^3 km^2)
Flooded area (Cuvette Centrale)	272%	-1.44	0.67	44	14

405

406 In Figure 5, we compare simulated DOC concentrations at six locations (Fig. 1) along the
407 Congo River and Oubangui tributary, against the observations of Borges at al. (2015[b]). We
408 show that we can recreate the spatial variation in DOC concentration within the Congo basin
409 relatively closely with an R^2 of 0.74 and an RMSE of 24% (Fig. 5).

410 We are also able to simulate the broad spatial pattern of pCO_2 measured in Borges et al.
411 (2019). During high flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of highest flow, 2009-2019)
412 we simulate a mean pCO_2 of 3,373 ppm and 5,095 ppm at Kisangani and Kinshasa
413 (Brazzaville) respectively, compared to the observed values of 2,424 ppm and 5,343 ppm
414 during high water (measured in December 2013, Borges et al., 2019) (Table 3). Similarly,
415 during low flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of lowest flow, 2009-2019) we
416 simulate a mean pCO_2 of 1,563 ppm and 2,782 ppm at Kisangani and Kinshasa respectively,

compared to the observed values of 1,670 ppm and 2,896 ppm during falling water (June 2014, Borges et al., 2019) (Table 3).

While we are able to recreate observed spatial differences in DOC and pCO_2, as well as broad seasonal variations, we are not able to correctly predict the exact timing of the simulated highs and lows, a reflection of not fully capturing the hydrological seasonality. For example, our mean June pCO_2 at Kinshasa (~~Brazaville~~Brazzaville) is 4,470 ppm, while Borges et al measured a mean of 2,896 ppm (Table 3). However, our value for July of 2,621 ppm is much closer, and moreover our mean value for December of 5,154 ppm is relatively close to the observed value of 5,343 ppm. Similarly, we fail to predict the timing of the June falling water at ~~Kinsangani~~Kisangani (Table 3).

In Figure 6, we compare simulated pCO_2 against the observed monthly time series at Bangui on the Oubangui River (Bouillon et al., 2012 & 2014), as far as we are aware the most complete time series of pCO_2 published from the Congo basin, spanning March 2010 to March 2012 (with only the single month of June 2010 missing).- Again, while the model fails to correctly predict the precise timing of the peak as with the Kinshasa and Kisangani datasets the broad seasonal variation in pCO_2 is captured, with the observed and modelled times series ranging from 227- 4040 ppm and 415- 2928 ppm, respectively (Fig. 6).

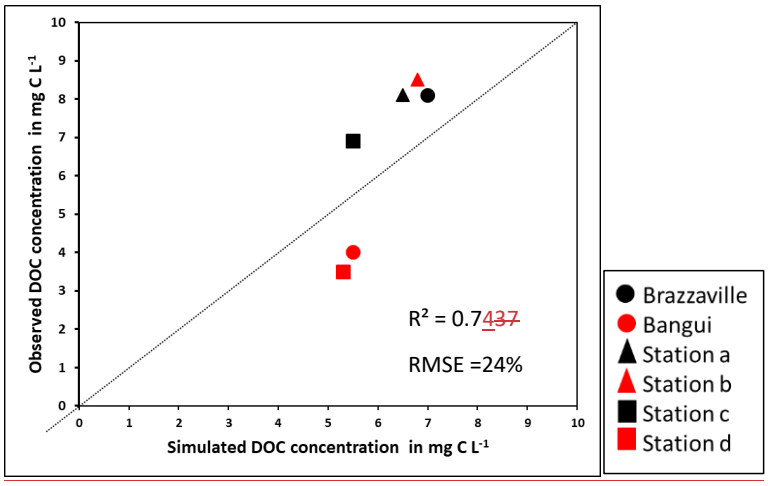


Figure 75: Observed (Borges et al., 2015[a]) versus simulated DOC concentrations at several sites along the Congo and OuUbangui rivers. See Fig. 1 for locations. The simulated and observed DOC concentrations represent the mean median values across the particular sampling period at each site location detailed in Borges et al. (2015[a]).

Table 3: Observed (Borges et al., 2019) and modelled pCO_2 (in ppm) at Kinshasa (BrazavilleBrazzaville) and KinsanganiKisangani on the Congo river at various water levels.

Location	Observed pCO_2 highwater (December 2013)	Modelled pCO_2 highwater (December Mean 2009-2019)	Modelled pCO_2 high flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of highest flow 2009-2019)	Observed pCO_2 falling water (June 2014)	Modelled pCO_2 falling water (June mean 2009-2019)	Modelled pCO_2 low flow season (mean of 6 consecutive months of lowest flow 2009-2019)
Kinshasa (BrazavilleBrazzaville)	5,343	5,154	5,095	2,896	4,470	2,782

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~~Kinsangani~~Kisangani	2,424	2,166	3,373	1,670	3,126	1,56~~3~~

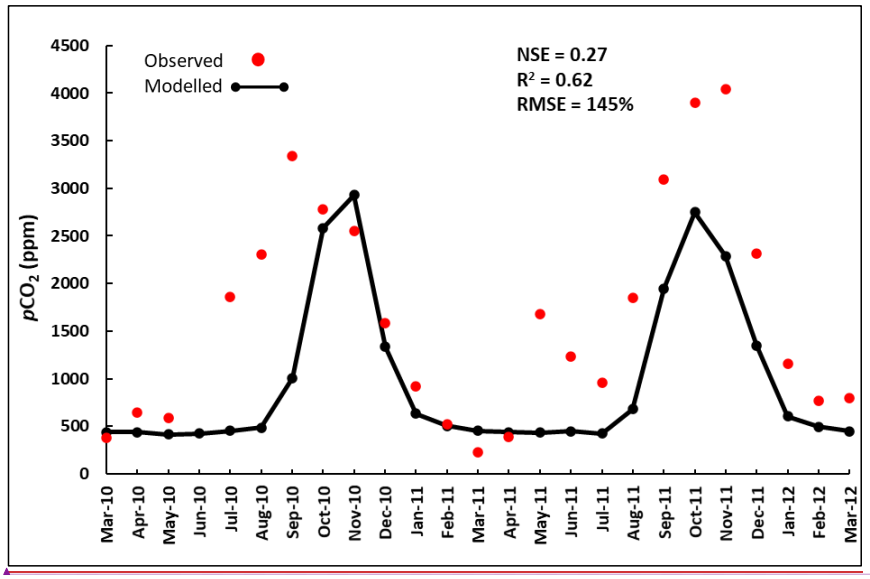

Figure ~~7~~6: Time series of observed *versus* simulated pCO_2 at Bangui on the River Oubangui. Observed data is from Bouillon et al., 2012 and Bouillon et al., 2014.

3.2 Carbon fluxes along the Congo basin for the present day

For the present day (1981-2010) we estimate a mean annual terrestrial net primary production (NPP) of 5,800 ±166 (standard deviation, SD) Tg C yr^{-1} (Fig. ~~7~~5), corresponding to a mean areal C fixation rate of approximately 1,500 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} (Fig. ~~8~~6 a). We find a significant positive correlation between the interannual variation of NPP and rainfall (detrended R^2= 0.41, $p<0.001$, Table A2) and a negative correlation between annual NPP and temperature (detrended

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453 R^2= 0.32, p<0.01, Table A2). We also see considerable spatial variation in NPP across the
454 Congo Basin (Fig.~~8~~6 a).

455 We simulate a mean soil heterotrophic respiration (SHR) of 5,300 ±99 Tg C yr^{-1} across the
456 Congo basin (Fig. ~~7~~5). Contrary to NPP, interannual variation in annual SHR is positively
457 correlated with temperature (detrended R^2= 0.57, p<0.0001, Table A2) and inversely correlated
458 with rainfall (detrended R^2= 0.10), though the latter relationship is not significant (p>0.05).
459 We estimate a mean annual aquatic CO_2 evasion ~~of~~ rate of 1,363 ±83 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1}, amounting
460 to a total of 235±54 Tg C yr^{-1} across the total water surfaces of the Congo basin (Fig. ~~7~~5) and
461 attribute 85% of this flux to flooded areas, meaning that only 32 Tg C yr^{-1} is evaded directly
462 from the river surface. Interannual variation in aquatic CO_2 evasion (1981-2010) shows a
463 strong positive correlation with rainfall (detrended R^2= 0.75, p<0.0001, Table A2) and a weak
464 negative correlation with temperature (detrended R^2=0.09, not significant, p>0.05). Aquatic
465 CO_2 evasion also exhibits substantial spatial variation (Fig.~~8~~6, d), displaying a similar pattern
466 to both terrestrial DOC leaching (DOC_{inp}) (R^2= 0.81, p<0.0001, Fig.~~8~~6, b) as well as terrestrial
467 CO_2 leaching (CO_{2inp}) (R^2= 0.96, p<0.0001, Fig.~~8~~6, c) into the aquatic system, but not
468 terrestrial NPP (R^2= 0.01, p<0.05, Fig.~~8~~6, a). We simulate a mean annual flux of DOC
469 throughfall from the canopy of 27 ±1 Tg C yr^{-1} and~~.~~

470 ~~We estimate a mean annual~~ C (DOC + dissolved CO_2) export flux to the coast of 15 ±4 Tg C
471 yr^{-1} (Fig. ~~7~~5). ~~In Figure 7, we compare simulated DOC concentrations at six locations (Fig. 1)~~
472 ~~along the Congo River and Ubangi tributary, against the observations of Borges at al. (2015[b]).~~
473 ~~We show that we can recreate the spatial variation in DOC concentration within the Congo~~
474 ~~basin relatively closely with an R^2 of 0.82 and an RMSE of 19% (Fig. 7).~~

475 For the present day (1981-2010) we estimate a mean annual net ecosystem production (NEP)
476 of 277 ±137 Tg C yr^{-1} and a net biome production (NBP) of 107 ±133 Tg C yr^{-1} (Fig. ~~7~~5).

Interannually, both NEP and NBP exhibit a strong inverse correlation with temperature (detrended NEP R^2=0.55, p<0.0001, detrended NBP R^2=0.54, p<0.0001) and weak positive relationship with rainfall (detrended NEP R^2=0.16, p<0.05, detrended NBP R^2=0.14, p<0.05). Furthermore, we simulate a present day (1981-2010) living biomass of 41 ±1 Pg C and a total soil C stock of 109 ±1 Pg C.

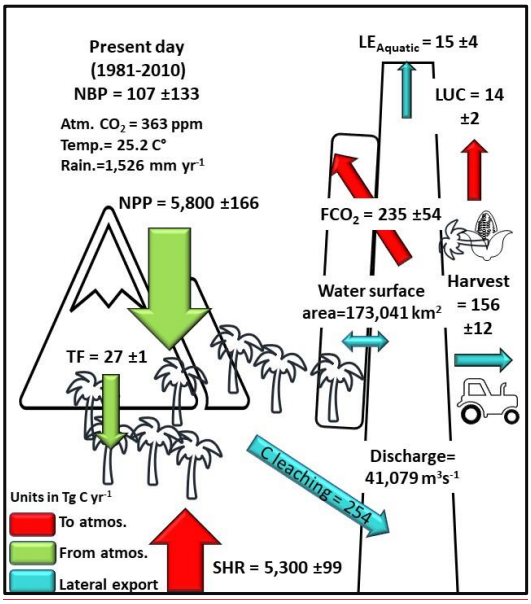
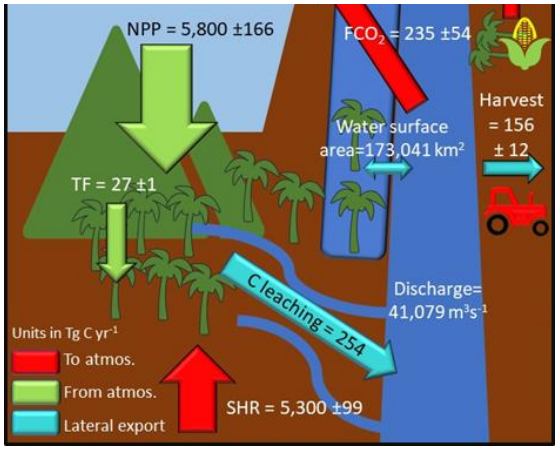


Figure 57: Annual C budget (NBP) for the Congo basin for the present day (1981-2010) simulated with ORCHILEAK, where NPP is terrestrial net primary productivity, TF is throughfall, SHR is soil heterotrophic respiration, FCO_2 is aquatic CO_2 evasion, LOAC is C leakage to the land-ocean aquatic continuum (FCO_2 + $LE_{Aquatic}$), LUC is flux from Land-use change, and $LE_{Aquatic}$ is the export C flux to the coast. Range represents the standard deviation (SD) from 1981-2010.



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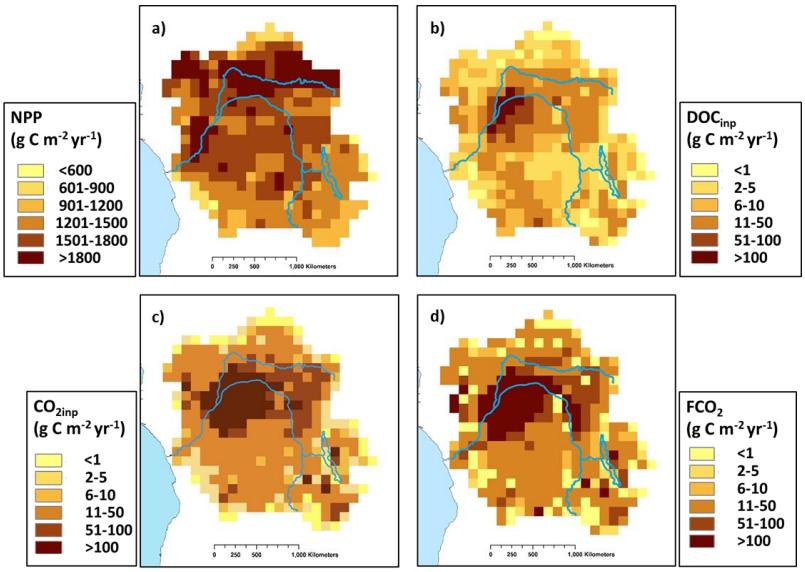

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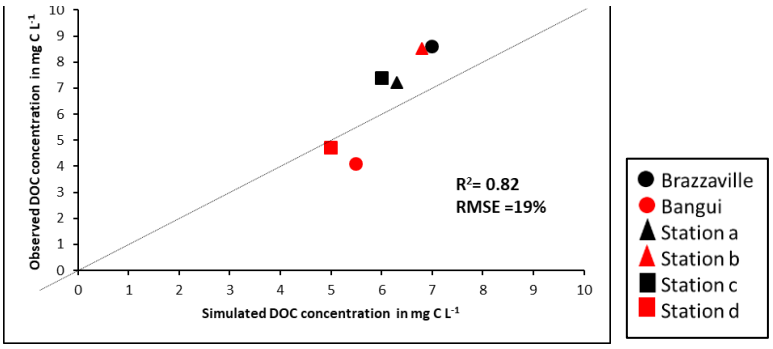
Figure 68:Present day (1981-2010) spatial distribution of a) terrestrial net primary productivity (NPP), b) dissolved organic carbon ~~leaching~~ export from soils and floodplain vegetation into the aquatic system (DOC_{inp}), c) CO_2 leaching from soils and floodplain vegetation into the aquatic system (CO_{2inp}) and d) aquatic CO_2 evasion (FCO_2). Main rivers in blue. All at a resolution of 1°



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3.3 Long-term temporal trends in carbon fluxes

We find an increasing trend in aquatic CO_2 evasion (Fig. ~~9~~8 a) throughout the simulation period, rising slowly at first until the 1960s when the rate of increase accelerates. In total CO_2 evasion rose by 79% from 186 Tg C yr^{-1} at the start of the simulation (1861-1890 mean) (Fig.

109)) to 333 Tg C yr^{-1} at the end of this century (2070-2099 mean, Fig. 109), while the increase until the present day (1981-2010 mean) is of +26 % (to 235 Tg C yr^{-1}), though these trends are not uniform across the basin (Fig A1). The lateral export flux of C to the coast ($LE_{Aquatic}$) follows a similar relative change (Fig. 98b), rising by 67% in total, from 12 Tg C yr^{-1} (Fig. 109) to 15 Tg C yr^{-1} for the present day, and finally to 20 Tg C yr^{-1} (2070-2099 mean, Fig. 109). This is greater than the equivalent increase in DOC concentration (24%, Fig. 98b) due to the concurrent rise in rainfall (by 14%, Fig 98h) and in turn discharge (by 29%, Fig. 98h).

Terrestrial NPP and SHR also exhibit substantial increases of 35% and 26% respectively across the simulation period and similarly rise rapidly after 1960 (Fig. 98 c). NEP, NBP (Fig. 98 d) and living biomass (Fig. 98 e) follow roughly the same trend as NPP, but NEP and NBP begin to slow down or even level-off around 2030 and in the case of NBP, we actually simulate a decreasing trend over approximately the final 50 years. Interestingly, the proportion of NPP lost to the LOAC also increases from approximately 3% to 5% (Fig. 98c). We also find that living biomass stock increases by a total of 53% from 1861 to 2099. Total soil C also increases over the simulation but only by 3% from 107 to 110 Pg C yr^{-1} (Fig. 98 e). Emissions from land-use change (LUC) show considerable decadal fluctuation increasing rapidly in the second half of the 20th century and decreasing in the mid-21st century before rising again towards the end of the simulation (Fig. 98 f). The harvest flux (Fig. 98 f) rises throughout the simulation with the exception of a period in the mid-21st century during which it stalls for several decades. This is reflected in the change in land-use areas from 1861- 2099 (Fig. A2, Table A3) during which the natural forest and grassland PFTs marginally decrease while both C_3 and C_4 agricultural grassland PFTs increase.

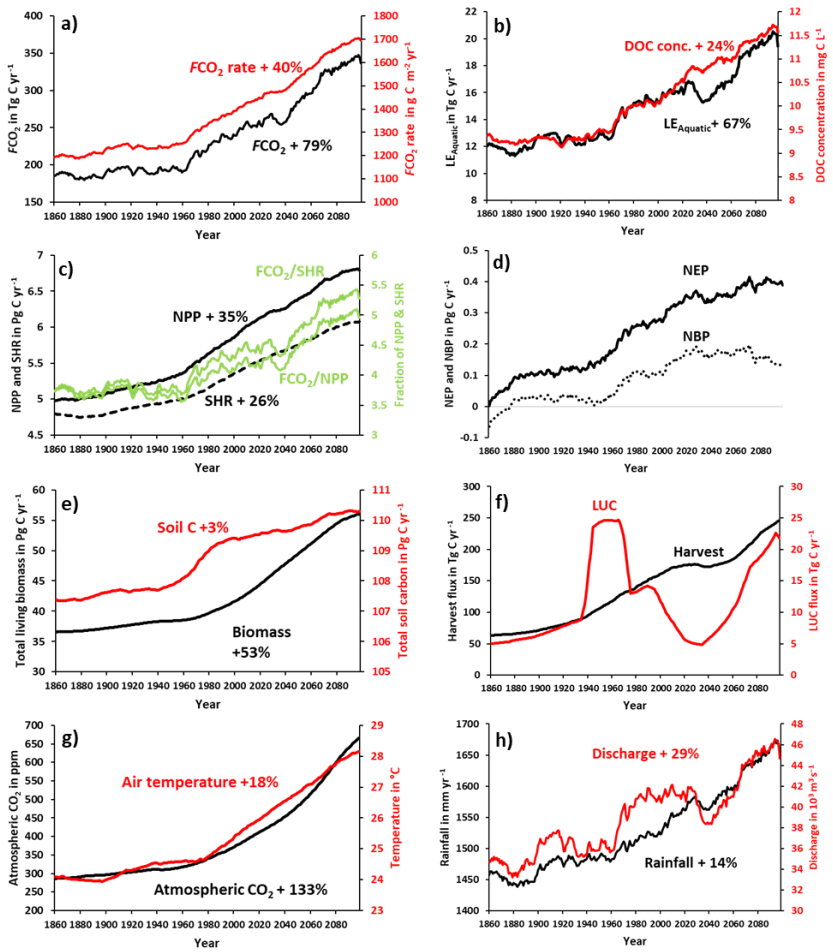


Figure ~~8~~9: Simulation results for various C fluxes and stocks from 1861-2099, using IPSL-CM5A-LR model outputs for RCP 6.0 (Frieler et al., 2017). All panels except for atmospheric CO_2, biomass and soil C correspond to 30-year running means of simulation outputs. This was done in order to suppress interannual variation, as we are interested in longer-term trends.

3.4 Drivers of simulated trends in carbon fluxes

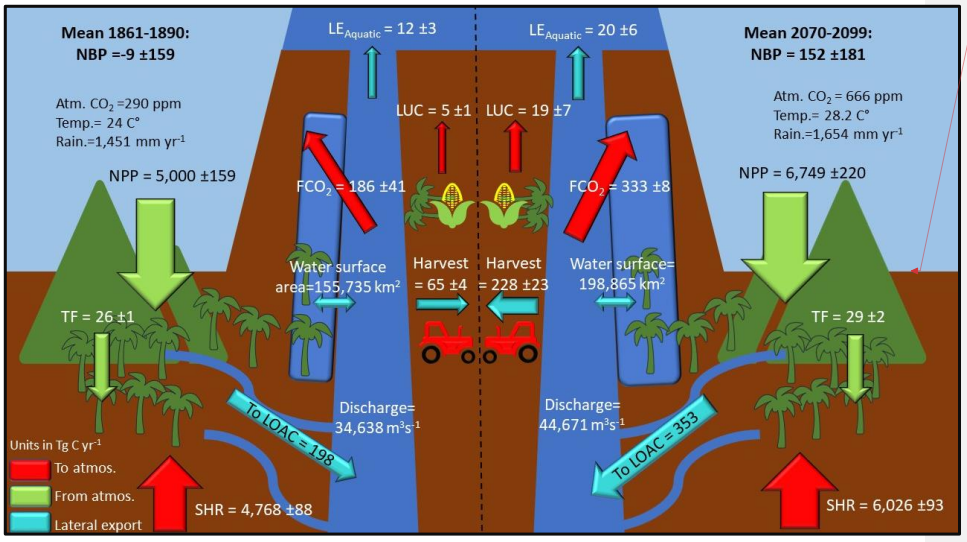
The dramatic increase in the concentration of atmospheric CO_2 (Fig. ~~9~~8 g) and subsequent fertilization effect on terrestrial NPP has the greatest overall impact on all of the fluxes across

the simulation period (Fig. 11~~0~~). It is responsible for the vast majority of the growth in NPP, SHR, aquatic CO_2 evasion and flux of C to the coast (Fig. 11~~0~~ a, b, c & d). ~~-~~The effect of LUC on these four fluxes is more or less neutral, while the impact of climate change is more varied. The aquatic fluxes (Fig. 11~~0~~ c, d) respond positively to an acceleration in the increase of both rainfall (and in turn discharge, Fig. 9~~8~~ h) and temperature (Fig. 9~~8~~ g) starting around 1970. From around 2020, the impact of climate change on the lateral flux of C to the coast (Fig 11~~0~~ d) reverts to being effectively neutral, likely a response to a slowdown in the rise of rainfall and indeed a decrease in discharge (Fig 9~~8~~ h), as well as perhaps the effect of temperature crossing a threshold. The response of the overall loss of terrestrial C to the LOAC (i.e. the ratio of LOAC/NPP, Fig. 11~~0~~ e) is relatively similar to the response of the individual aquatic fluxes but crucially, climate change exerts a much greater impact, contributing substantially to an increase in the loss of terrestrial NPP to the LOAC in the 1960s, and again in the second half of the 21st century. These changes closely coincide with the pattern of rainfall and in particular with changes in discharge (Fig. 9~~8~~ h).

Overall temperature and rainfall increase by 18% and 14% from 24°C to 28°C and 1457mm to 1654mm respectively, but in Fig. A2 one can see that this increase is non-uniform across the basin. Generally speaking, the greatest increase in temperature occurs in the south of the basin while it is the east that sees the largest rise in rainfall (Fig. A2). Land-use changes are similarly non-uniform (Fig. A2).

The response of NBP and in NEP (Fig.11~~0~~ f, g) to anthropogenic drivers is more complex. The simulated decrease in NBP towards the end of the run is influenced by a variety of factors; LUC and climate begin to have a negative effect on NBP (contributing to a decrease in NBP) at a similar time while the positive impact (contributing to an increase in NBP) of atmospheric CO_2 begins to slow down and eventually level-off (Fig.11~~1~~1~~0~~ g). LUC continues to have a positive effect on NEP (Fig.11~~0~~ f) due to the fact that the expanding C_4 crops have a higher

NPP than forests, while it has an overall negative effect on NBP at the end of the simulation due to the inclusion of emissions from crop harvest.



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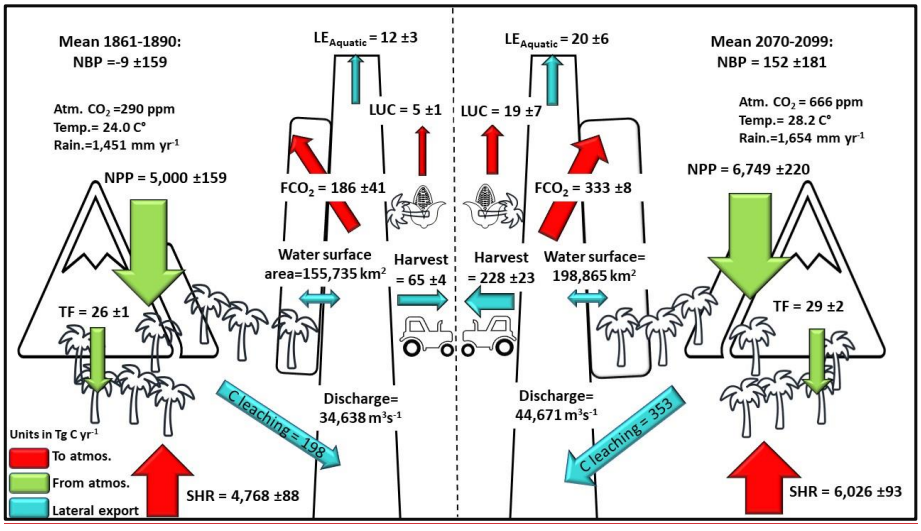

552

553 **Figure 910: Annual C budget (NBP) for the Congo basin for; left, the Year 1861 and right, the**
554 **Year 2099, simulated with ORCHILEAK. NPP is terrestrial net primary productivity, TF is**
555 **throughfall, SHR is soil heterotrophic respiration, FCO_2 is aquatic CO2 evasion, LOAC is C**
556 **leakage to the land-ocean aquatic continuum (FCO_2 + $LE_{Aquatic}$), LUC is flux from Land-use**

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change, and $LE_{Aquatic}$ is the export C flux to the coast. Range represents the standard deviation (SD).

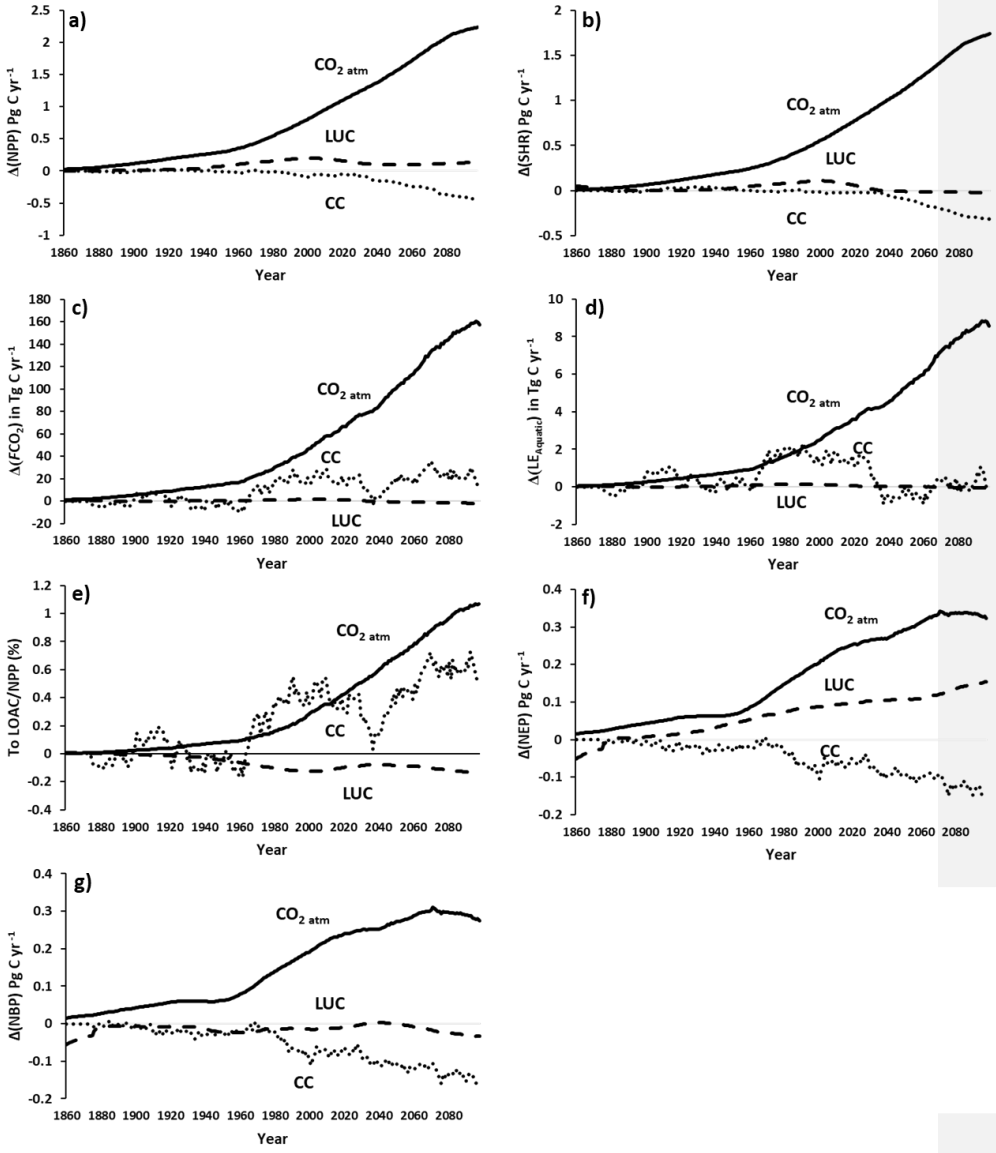

Figure ~~10~~11: Contribution of anthropogenic drivers; atmospheric CO_2 concentration ($CO_{2\ atm}$), climate change (CC) and land use change (LUC) to changes in the various carbon fluxes along the Congo Basin, under IPSL-CM5A-LR model outputs for RCP 6.0 (Frieler et al., 2017).

~~5.~~4. Discussion

4.1 Congo basin carbon balance

We simulate a mean present-day terrestrial NPP of approximately 1,500 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} (Fig. 6), substantially larger than the MODIS derived value of around 1,000 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} from Yin et al. (2017) across central Africa, though it is important to note that satellite derived estimates of NPP can underestimate the impact of CO_2 fertilization, namely its positive effect on photosynthesis (De Kauwe et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2019). Our stock of the present-day living biomass of 41.1 Pg C is relatively close to the total Congo vegetation biomass of 49.3 Pg C estimated by Verhegghen et al. (2012) based on the analysis of MERIS satellite data. Moreover, our simulated Congo Basin soil C stock of 109 ±1.1 Pg C is consistent with the approximately 120-130 Pg C across Africa between the latitudes 10°S to 10°N in the review of Williams et al. (2007), between which the Congo represents roughly 70% of the land area. Therefore, their estimate of soil C stocks across the Congo only would likely be marginally smaller than ours. It is also important to note that neither estimate of soil C stocks explicitly take into account the newly discovered peat store of 30 Pg C (Dargie et al., 2017) and therefore both are likely to represent conservative values. In addition, Williams et al. (2007) estimate the combined fluxes from conversion to agriculture and cultivation to be around 100 Tg C yr^{-1} in tropical Africa (largely synonymous with the Congo Basin), which is relatively close to our present day estimate of harvesting + land-use change flux of 170 Tg C yr^{-1}.

Our results suggest that CO_2 evasion from the water surfaces of the Congo is sustained by ~~leaching~~ the transfer of dissolved CO_2 and DOC with 226 Tg C and 73 Tg C, respectively, from wetland soils and vegetation to the aquatic system each year (1980-2010, Fig. ~~8~~6). Moreover, we find that a disproportionate amount of this transfer occurs ~~(Fig. 6)~~ within the Cuvette Centrale wetland (Fig. 1, Fig. ~~8~~6) in the centre of the basin, in agreement with a recent study by Borges et al. (2019). In our study, this is due to the large areal proportion of inundated land,

facilitating the exchange between soils and aquatic systems. Borges et al. (2019) conducted ~~extensive~~ measurements of DOC and pCO_2, amongst other chemical variables, along the Congo mainstem and its tributaries from Kinshasa in the West of the basin (beside Brazzaville, Fig. 1) through the Cuvette Centrale to Kisangani in the East (close to station d in Fig. 1). They found that both DOC and pCO_2 approximately doubled from Kisangani downstream to Kinshasa (Table 3), and demonstrated that this variation is overwhelmingly driven by fluvial-wetland connectivity, highlighting the importance of the vast Cuvette Centrale wetland in the aquatic C budget of the Congo basin.

Our estimate of the integrated present-day aquatic CO_2 evasion from the river surface of the Congo basin (32 Tg C yr^{-1}) is the same as that estimated by Raymond et al. (2013) (also 32 Tg C yr^{-1}), downscaled over the same basin area, but smaller than the 59.7 Tg C yr^{-1} calculated by Lauerwald et al. (2015) and far smaller than that of Borges et al. (2015[a]), 133-177 Tg C yr^{-1} or Borges et al. (2019), 251±46 Tg C yr^{-1}. The recent study of Borges et al. (2019) is based on by far and away the most extensive dataset of Congo basin pCO_2 measurements to date and thus suggests that we substantially underestimate total riverine CO_2 evasion. As previously discussed, we simulate the broad spatial and temporal variation in observed DOC ~~concentrations~~and pCO_2 ~~measured by Borges et al.~~ (2015[a, b], Fig. 5, Table 3~~7~~) relatively well~~closely and our mean riverine gas exchange velocity *k* of 3.5 m d^{-1} is similar to the 2.9 m d^{-1} used by Borges et al. (2015[a])~~. It is therefore somewhat surprising that our basin-wide estimate of riverine CO_2 evasion is so different.~~,~~ ~~and likely to be related to ORCHILEAK underestimating dissolved CO_2 inputs into the river network.~~ Below we discuss some possible explanations for this discrepancy related to methodological differences and limitations.

One potential cause for the differences could be the river gas exchange velocity *k*. However, we ~~used~~applied a mean riverine gas exchange velocity *k* of 3.5 m d^{-1} which is similar to the 2.9 m d^{-1} used by Borges et al. (2015[a]). Moreover, a sensitivity analysis was performed in

Lauerwald et al. (2017) which showed that in the physical approach of ORCHILEAK, CO_2 evasion is not very sensitive to the *k* value, unlike data-driven models. Namely, Lauerwald et al (2017) showed that an increase or decrease of *k600* for rivers and swamps of 50% only led to 1% and -4% change in total CO_2 evasion, respectively. Therefore, we can discount *k* as a major source of the discrepancy.

Another potential reason for our smaller riverine CO_2 evasion could be river surface area. We simulate a mean present day (1980-2010) total river surface area of 25,900 km^2, compared to the value of 23,670 km^2 used in Borges et al (2019, supplementary information) and so similarly we think that this can be discounted as a major ~~cause~~source of discrepancy.

The difference in our simulated riverine CO_2 evasion compared to the empirically derived estimate of Borges et al. (2019), could be caused by the lack of representation of aquatic plants in the ORCHILEAK model. Borges et al. (2019) used the stable isotope composition of δ^{13}C-DIC to determine the origin of dissolved CO_2 in the Congo River system and found that the values were consistent with a DIC input from the degradation of organic matter, in particular from C_4 plants. Crucially, they further found that the δ^{13}C-DIC values were unrelated to the contribution of *terra-firme* C_4 plants, rather that they were more consistent with the degradation of aquatic C_4 plants, namely macrophytes. ~~The~~ ORCHILEAK ~~model~~ does not represent aquatic plants, and the wider LSM ORCHIDEE does not have an aquatic macrophyte PFT either (though root respiration of floodplain plants for the PFTs represented, is accounted for as a C source). This could at the very least partly explain our conservative estimate of river CO_2 evasion, given that tropical macrophytes have relatively elevated NPPs. Rates as high as 3,500 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} have been measured on floodplains in the Amazon (Silva et al., 2009). While this value is higher than the values ~~represented in~~simulated in the Cuvette Centrale by ORCHILEAK (Figure 8), they are of the same order of magnitude and so this alone cannot fully explain the discrepancy compared to the results of Borges et al. (2019). In the Amazon

basin it has been shown that wetlands export approximately half of their gross primary production (GPP) to the river network compared to upland (*terra-firme*) ecosystems which only export a few percent (Abril et al. 2013). More importantly, Abril et al. (2013) found that tropical aquatic macrophytes export~~ed~~ 80% of their GPP compared to just 36% for flooded forest. Therefore, the lack of a bespoke macrophyte PFT is indeed likely to be one reason for the discrepancy between our results and those of Borges, but largely due to their particularly high export efficiency to the river-floodplain network as opposed to differences in NPP. While being a significant limitation, creating and incorporating a macrophyte PFT would be a substantial undertaking given that the authors are unaware of any published dataset which has systematically mapped their distribution and abundance. It is important to note that while ORCHILEAK does not include the export of C from aquatic macrophytes it also neglects their NPP. Moreover, most aquatic macrophytes described in the literature have short (<1 year) life-cycles (Mitchel & Rogers~~.~~, 1985). As such, while this model limitation is likely one of the causes for our relatively low estimate of riverine CO_2 evasion, it will only have a limited net effect on our estimate of the overall annual C balance (NBP, NEP) of the Congo basin.

Finally, another cause~~One reason~~ for the difference in riverine CO_2 evasion could be that the resolution of ORCHILEAK (0.5 degree river network and 1° for C fluxes) is not sufficient to fully capture the dynamics of the smallest streams of the Congo Basin which have been shown to have the highest DOC and CO_2 concentrations (Borges et al., 2019). Indeed, ORCHILEAK typically does~~n't~~ not simulate the highest observed pCO_2 measurements of the smallest tributaries (i.e. > 16,000 ppm). This is partly because for the fast reservoir (headwaters) in ORCHILEAK we assume full pCO_2 equilibrium with the atmosphere over one full day, which prevents very high pCO_2 values from building in the water column.

~~However~~Despite these limitations, it is important to note that in our simulations, the evasion flux from rivers only contributes 15% of total aquatic CO_2 evasion, and including the flux from

wetlands/floodplains, we produce a total of 235 Tg C yr^{-1}. Moreover, the majority of this ~~flux~~evasion ~~comes from~~occurs in the Cuvette Centrale (Fig. 8) which suggests that while ORHILEAK fails to attribute ~~the majority~~a large portion of this flux to small rivers (owing to the coarse resolution of the river network) we nonetheless do capture the source of carbon. In other words, in ORCHILEAK the majority of this carbon evades directly from the floodplain and wetlands of the Cuvette Centrale as opposed to the small rivers.

~~Another limitation of the ORCHILEAK model is the lack of representation of aquatic plants. Borges et al. (2019) used the stable isotope composition of δ^{13}C-DIC to determine the origin of dissolved CO_2 in the Congo River system and found that the values were consistent with the degradation of organic matter, in particular from C_4 plants. Crucially, they further found that the δ^{13}C-DIC values were unrelated to the contribution of *terra-firme* C_4 plants, rather that they were more consistent with the degradation of aquatic C_4 plants, namely macrophytes. This also concurs with the wider conclusions of a previous paper comparing the Congo and the Amazon (Borges et al., 2015b), which highlighted that aquatic macrophytes are more prevalent in the Congo river and its tributaries compared to the Amazon where strong water currents limit their abundance. The ORCHILEAK model does not represent aquatic plants, and the wider LSM ORCHIDEE does not have an aquatic macrophyte PFT either. This could at least partly explain our conservative estimate of river CO_2 evasion, given that tropical macrophytes have relatively NPP. Rates as high as 3,500 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} have been measured on floodplains in the Amazon (Silva et al., 2009). While this value is higher than the values represented in the Cuvette Centrale by ORCHILEAK (Figure 6), they are of the same order of magnitude and so this cannot fully explain the discrepancy compared to the results of Borges et al. (2019). In the Amazon basin it has been shown that wetlands export approximately half of their gross primary production (GPP) to the river network compared to upland (*terra-firme*) ecosystems which~~

~~only export a few percent (Abril et al. 2013). More importantly, Abril et al. (2013) found that tropical aquatic macrophytes exported 80% of their GPP compared to just 36% for flooded forest. Therefore, the lack of a bespoke macrophyte PFT may indeed be one reason for the discrepancy between our results and those of Borges, but largely due to their particularly high export efficiency to the river-floodplain network as opposed to differences in NPP. While being a significant limitation, creating and incorporating a macrophyte PFT would be a substantial undertaking given that the authors are unaware of any published dataset which has systematically mapped their distribution and abundance. It is important to that while ORCHILEAK does not include the export of C from aquatic macrophytes it also neglects their NPP. Moreover, most aquatic macrophytes described in the literature have short (<1 year) life-cycles (Mitchel & Rogers., 1985). As such, this model limitation will only have a very limited net effect on our estimate of the overall annual C balance (NBP, NEP) of the Congo basin, and indeed the other components of NBP.~~

Our simulated export of C to the coast of 15 (15.3) Tg C yr^{-1} is virtually identical to the TOC+DIC export estimated by Borges et al. (2015[a]) of 15.5 Tg C yr^{-1}, which is consistent with the fact that we simulate a similar spatial variation of DOC concentrations (Fig. 8~~7~~ and Fig. 1 for locations). It is also relatively similar to the 19 Tg C yr^{-1} (DOC + DIC) estimated by Valentini et al. (2014) in their synthesis of the African carbon budget. Valentini et al. (2014) used the largely empirical based Global Nutrient Export from WaterSheds (NEWS) model framework and they point out that Africa was underrepresented in the training data used to develop the regression relationships which underpin the model, and thus this could explain the small disagreement.

Of the total 15 Tg C yr^{-1} exported to the coast, we simulate a 2.4 Tg C yr^{-1} component of dissolved CO_2, which is relatively similar to the empirically derived estimate of the total DIC export of 3.3 Tg C yr^{-1} calculated in Wang et al. (2013). According to Wang et al., dissolved

716 CO_2 accounts for the majority (1.9 Tg C yr^{-1}) with the rest being the weathering derived flux
717 of HCO_3^-. Thus, the discrepancy between the two estimates is likely to be largely caused by
718 our lack of accounting for the weathering derived flux (HCO_3^-) which they estimate at 1.4 Tg
719 C yr^{-1}. In summary, despite this model limitation the results of Wang et al., (2013) suggest that
720 we still capture the majority of the DIC flux.

721

722 ~~Our estimate of 4% of NPP per year being transferred to inland waters is substantially lower~~
723 ~~than that estimated for the Amazon, where around 12% of NPP is lost to the aquatic system~~
724 ~~each year (Hastie et al., 2019). There are a number of differences between the drivers in the~~
725 ~~two basins, which could explain this. Mean annual rainfall is 44% greater in the Amazon, and~~
726 ~~mean annual discharge is 4 times higher, while a maximum of approximately 14% of the~~
727 ~~surface of the Amazon Basin is covered by water compared to 10% of the Congo (Borges et~~
728 ~~al., 2015[b]; Hastie et al., 2019). Moreover, upland runoff is the main source of water in the~~
729 ~~wetlands of the Congo as opposed to the Amazon where exchanges between the river and~~
730 ~~floodplain dominate (Lee et al., 2011; Borges et al., 2015[b]). Indeed, the water levels of wetlands~~
731 ~~in the Congo have been shown to be consistently higher than adjacent river levels (Lee et al.,~~
732 ~~2011). This also partly explains why for the Congo we find that only 15% of aquatic CO_2~~
733 ~~evasion comes from the river water surface compared to 25% for the Amazon (Hastie et al.,~~
734 ~~2019).~~

735

736 **4.2 Trends in terrestrial and aquatic carbon fluxes**

737 There is relatively sparse observed data available on the long-term trends of terrestrial C fluxes
738 in the Congo. Yin et al. (2017) used MODIS data to estimate NPP between 2001 and 2013
739 across central Africa. They found that NPP increased on average by 10 g C m^{-2} per year, while

we simulate an average annual increase of 4 g C m^{-2} yr^{-1} over the same period across the Congo Basin. The two values are not directly comparable as they do not cover precisely the same geographic area but it is encouraging that our simulations exhibit a similar trend to remote sensing data. As previously noted, MODIS derived estimates of NPP do not fully include the effect of CO_2 fertilization (de Kauwe et al., 2016) whereas ORCHILEAK does. Thus, the MODIS NPP product may underestimate the increasing trend in NPP, which would bring our modeled trend further away from this dataset. On the other hand, forest degradation effects and recent droughts have been associated with a decrease of greenness (Zhou et al., 2014) and above ground biomass loss (Qie et al., 2019) in tropical forests.

Up to a point, our results also concur with estimates based on the upscaling of biomass observations (Lewis et al., 2009; Hubau et al., 2019). Lewis et al. (2009) up-scaled forest plot measurements to calculate that intact tropical African forests represented a net uptake of approximately 300 Tg C yr^{-1} between 1968 and 2007 and this is consistent with our NEP estimate of 275 Tg C yr^{-1} over the same period. However, more recently an analysis based on an extension of the same dataset found that the above ground ~~carbon~~C sink in tropical Africa was relatively stable from 1985 to 2015 (Hubau et al., 2020).

A major source of the uncertainty associated with future projections of NPP and NEP comes from our limited understanding and representation of the CO_2 fertilization effect. Recent analysis of data from some of the longest-running Free-Air CO_2 Enrichment (FACE) sites, consisting of early-successional temperate ecosystems, found a $29.1 \pm 11.7\%$ stimulation of biomass over a decade (Walker et al., 2019). A meta-analysis (Liu et al., 2019) of seven temperate FACE experiments combined with process-based modelling also found substantial sensitivity (0.64 ± 0.28 PgC yr^{-1} per hundred ppm) of biomass accumulation to atmospheric CO_2 increase,~~,~~ and ~~moreover it~~the same study showed that ORCHIDEE model simulations were largely consistent with the experiments. However, other FACE experiments on mature

765 temperate forests (Körner et al., 2005), as well as eucalyptus forests bring into question whether
766 the fertilization effects observed in temperate FACE experiments can be extrapolated to other
767 ecosystems. For example, the Swiss FACE study, a deciduous mature forest, found no
768 significant biomass increase with enhanced CO_2 (Körner et al., 2005), while a FACE
769 experiment on a mature eucalyptus forest in Australia found that while CO_2 stimulated an
770 increase in C uptake through GPP, this did not carry to the ecosystem level, largely as a result
771 of a concurrent increase in soil respiration (Jiang et al., 2020). Unfortunately, no results are yet
772 available from any tropical FACE experiments, though the Amazon FACE experiment is
773 underway and the eventual results will be crucial in developing our understanding of the CO_2
774 fertilization effect beyond the temperate zone.

775 With these limitations in our understanding of tropical forest ecosystems in mind, ~~Our results~~
776 ~~of the historic trend in NEP (not including LUC and harvest fluxes) also generally concur with~~
777 ~~other modelling studies of tropical Africa (Fisher et al., 2013). Fisher et al. (2013) used nine~~
778 ~~different land surface models to show that the African tropical biome already represented a~~
779 ~~natural (i.e. no disturbance, but also neglecting LOAC fluxes) net uptake of around 50 Tg C~~
780 ~~yr^{-1} in 1901 and that this uptake more than doubled by 2010. We find a similar trend though~~
781 ~~we simulate higher absolute NEP. Indeed, one of the models used in Fisher was ORCHIDEE~~
782 ~~and using this model alone, they calculate a virtually identical estimate of net uptake of 277 Tg~~
783 ~~C yr^{-1} for the present day, though this estimate neglects the transfers of C along the LOAC and~~
784 ~~would therefore be reduced with their inclusion. Our results also generally concur with~~
785 ~~estimates based on the upscaling of biomass observations (Lewis et al., 2009). Lewis et al.~~
786 ~~(2009) up-scaled forest plot measurements to calculate that intact tropical African forests~~
787 ~~represented a net uptake of approximately 300 Tg C yr^{-1} between 1968 and 2007 and this is~~
788 ~~consistent with our NEP estimate 275 Tg C yr^{-1} over the same period.~~

oOver the entire simulation period (1861-2099), we estimate that aquatic CO_2 evasion will increase by 79% and the export of C to the coast by 67%. This increase is considerably higher than the 235% and 27~~30~~% rise in outgassing and export predicted for the Amazon basin (Lauerwald et al., ~~submitted~~2020), over the same period and under the same scenario. This is largely due to the fact climate change is predicted to have a substantial negative impact on the aquatic C fluxes in the Amazon, something that we do not find for the Congo where rainfall is projected to substantially increase over the 21st century (RCP 6.0). In the Amazon, Lauerwald et al. (~~submitted~~2020) show that while there are decadal fluctuations in precipitation and discharge, total values across the basin remain unchanged in 2099 compared to 1861. However, changes in the spatial distribution of precipitation mean that the total water surface area actually decreases in the Amazon. Indeed, while we find an increase in the ratio of C exports to the LOAC/NPP from 3 to 5%, Lauerwald et al. (~~submitted~~2020) find a comparative decrease. ~~The increase in the proportion of NPP lost to the aquatic system (Fig. 8, 9) as well as in the concentration of DOC (by 24% at Brazzaville) that we find in the Congo, could have important secondary effects, not least the potential for greater DOC concentrations to cause a reduction in pH levels (Laudon & Buffam, 2008) with implications for the wider ecology (Weiss et al., 2018).~~

Our simulated increase in DOC export to the coast up to the present day is smaller than findings recently published for the Mississippi River using the Dynamic Land Ecosystem Model (DLEM, Ren at al., 2016). In addition, the Mississippi study identified LUC including land management practices (e.g. irrigation and fertilization), followed by change in atmospheric CO_2, as the biggest factors in the 40% increase in DOC export to the Gulf of Mexico (Ren et al., 2016). Another recent study (Tian et al., 2015), found an increase in DIC export from eastern North America to the Atlantic Ocean from 1901-2008 but no significant trend in DOC.

They demonstrated that climate change and increasing atmospheric CO_2 had a significant positive effect on long-term C export while land-use change had a substantial negative impact.

4.3 Limitations and further model developments

It is important to note that we can have greater confidence in the historic trend (until present-day), as the future changes are more reliant on the skill of Earth System model predictions and of course on the accuracy of the RCP 6.0 scenario. ~~There are for example, large uncertainties associated with the future CO_2 fertilization effect (Schimel et al., 2015)~~As discussed above, our understanding and representation of CO_2 fertilization, especially in the tropics, is a major limitation. Moreover, ~~and~~ the majority of land surface models, ORCHILEAK included in its current iteration, do not represent the effect of nutrient limitation on plant growth meaning that estimates of land C uptake may be too large (Goll et al., 2017). There are also considerable uncertainties associated with future climate projections in the Congo basin (Haensler et al., 2013). Nutrient limitation on growth and a better representation of effect of enhanced CO_2, particularly with regards to soil respiration (Jiang et al., 2020) and tree mortality (Hubau et al., 2020), are two crucial aspects which need to be further developed. ~~However, in most cases the future trends that we find are more or less continuations of the historic trends, which already represent substantial changes to the magnitude of many fluxes.~~

~~Moreover~~Additionally, we do not account for methane fluxes from Congo wetlands, estimated at 1.6 to 3.2 Tg (CH_4) per year (Tathy et al., 1992), and instead assume that all C is evaded in the form of CO_2. Another limitation is the lack of accounting for bespoke peatland dynamics in the ORCHILEAK model. ORCHILEAK is able to represent the general reduction in C decomposition in water-logged soils and indeed Hastie et al. (2019) demonstrated that increasing the maximum floodplain extent in the Amazon Basin led to an increase in NEP despite fueling aquatic CO_2 evasion because of the effect of reducing soil heterotrophic

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837 respiration. Furthermore, ORCHILEAK uses a "poor soils" mask forcing file (Fig. 2 j) based
838 on the Harmonized World Soil Database (FAO/IIASA/ISRIC/ISS-CAS/JRC, 2009), which
839 prescribes reduced decomposition rates in low nutrient and pH soils (e.g. Podzols and
840 Arenosols). The effect of the "poor soils" forcing can clearly be seen in the spatial distribution
841 of the soil C stock in Fig. A3, where the highest C storage coincides with the highest proportion
842 of poor soils. Interestingly, this does not include the Cuvette Centrale wetlands (Fig. 1), an area
843 which was recently identified as containing the world's largest intact tropical peatland and a
844 stock of around 30 Pg C (Dargie at al., 2017). One potential improvement that could be made
845 to ORCHILEAK would be the development of a new tailored "poor soils" forcing file for the
846 Congo Basin which explicitly includes Histosols, perhaps informed by the Soil Grids database
847 (Hengl et al., 2014), to better represent the Cuvette Centrale. This could in turn, be validated
848 and/or calibrated against the observations of Dargie et al. (2017). A more long-term aim could
849 be the integration/ coupling of the ORCHIDEE-PEAT module with ORCHILEAK.
850 ORCHIDEE–PEAT (Qiu et al., 2019) represents peat as an independent sub-grid hydrological
851 soil unit in which peatland soils are characterized by peat-specific hydrological properties and
852 multi-layered transport of C and water. Thus far, it has only been applied to northern peatlands,
853 and calibrating it to tropical peatlands, along with integrating it within ORCHILEAK would
854 require considerable further model development, but would certainly be a valuable longer-term
855 aspiration. This could also be applied across the tropical region and would allow us to
856 comprehensively explore the implications of climate change and land-use change for tropical
857 peatlands. In addition, ORCHILEAK does not simulate the erosion and subsequent burial of
858 POC within river and floodplain sediments. Although it does not represent the lateral transfer
859 of POC, it does incorporate the decomposition of inundated litter as an important source of
860 DOC and dissolved CO_2 to the aquatic system; i.e. it is assumed that POC from submerged
861 litter decomposes locally in ORCHILEAK. Moreover, previous studies have found that DOC

as opposed to POC (Spencer et al., 2016; Bouillon et al., 2012) overwhelmingly dominates the total load of C in the Congo.

TAs previously noted, the representation of the rapid C loop of aquatic macrophytes should also be made a priority in terms of improving models such as ORCHILEAK, particularly in the tropics. As previously discussed, ORCHILEAK also fails to account for the weathering derived flux (HCO_3^-). Finally, as discussed earlier the issue of shifting cultivation demands further attention; at least for the present day a shifting cultivation forcing file could be developed based on remote sensing data (Tyukavina et al., 2018). For further additonaladditional discussion of the limitations of ORCHILEAK, please also see Lauerwald et al. (2017) and Hastie et al. (2019).

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6.5. Conclusions

For the present day, we show that aquatic C fluxes, and in particular CO_2 evasion, are important components of the Congo Basin C balance, larger than for example the combined fluxes from LUC and harvesting, with around 4% of terrestrial NPP being exported to the aquatic system each year. Our simulations showWe find that these fluxes may have undergone considerable perturbation since 1861 to the present day, and that under RCP 6.0 this perturbation will could continue; over the entire simulation period (1861-2099), we estimate that aquatic CO_2 evasion will increase by 79% and the export of C to the coast by 67%. We further find that the ratio of C exports to the LOAC/NPP increases could increase from 3 to 5%, driven by both rising atmospheric CO_2 concentrations and climate change. The increase in the proportion of NPP transferred to the aquatic system (Fig. 8, 9), as well as in the concentration of DOC (by 24% at Brazzaville), could also have important secondary effects, not least the potential for greater DOC concentrations to cause a reduction in pH levels (Laudon & Buffam, 2008) with implications for the wider ecology (Weiss et al., 2018). This calls for long-term monitoring of

C levels and fluxes in the rivers of the Congo basin, and further investigation of the potential impacts of such change. Our results also highlight the limitations of the current generation of land surface models and call for investment into further model development., ~~including additional model developments.~~

Code availability. A description of the general ORCHIDEE code can be found here: http://forge.ipsl.jussieu.fr/orchidee/browser#tags/ORCHIDEE_1_9_6/ORCHIDEE.

The main part of the ORCHIDEE code was written by Krinner et al. (2005). See d'Orgeval et al. (2008) for a general description of the river routing scheme. For the updated soil C module please see Camino Serrano (2015). For the source code of ORCHILEAK see Lauerwald et al. (2017)- https://doi.org/10.5194/gmd-10-3821-2017-supplement

For details on how to install ORCHIDEE and its various branches, please see the user guide: http://forge.ipsl.jussieu.fr/orchidee/ wiki/Documentation/UserGuide

Author contribution. AH, RL, PR and PC all contributed to the conceptualization of the study. RL developed the model code, AH developed the novel forcing files for Congo, and AH performed the simulations. FP provided the GIEMS dataset for model validation. AH prepared the manuscript with contributions from all co-authors. RL and PR provided supervision and guidance to AH throughout the research. PR acquired the primary financial support that supported this research.

Competing interests. The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Financial support. Financial support was received from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Sklodowska- Curie grant agreement No. 643052 (C-CASCADES project). PR acknowledges funding from the European Union's

Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement 776810 (project VERIFY). RL acknowledges funding from the ANR ISIPEDIA ERA4CS project.

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Appendix A

Table A 1: Performance statistics for modelled versus observed seasonality of discharge on the Congo at Brazzaville

Climate forcing	RSME	NSE	R^2	Mean monthly discharge (m^3 s^{-1})
ISIMIP	29%	0.20	0.23	38,944
Princeton GPCC	40%	-0.25	0.20	49,784
GSWP3	46%	-4.13	0.04	24,880
CRUNCEP	65%	-15.94	0.01	16,394
Observed (HYBAM)				40,080

Table A 2: Pearson correlation coefficient (r) between detrended carbon fluxes and detrended climate variables

	SHR	Aquatic CO_2 evasion	Lateral C	NEP	Rain	Temp.	MEI
NPP	-0.48	0.68	0.72	0.90	0.64	-0.57	-0.09
SHR		-0.41	-0.48	-0.71	-0.32	0.76	0.04
Aquatic CO_2 evasion			0.92	0.41	0.87	-0.30	-0.21
Lateral C				0.52	0.81	-0.38	-0.15
NEP					0.40	-0.74	-0.01
Rain						-0.31	-0.26
Temp.							0.03

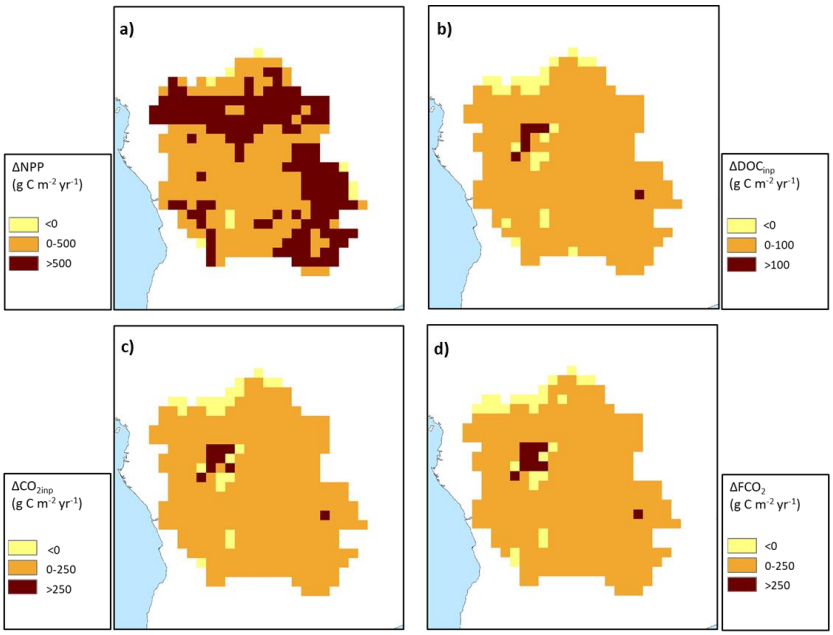

Figure A 1:Change (Δ, 2099 minus 1861) in the spatial distribution of a) terrestrial NPP, b) DOC leaching into the aquatic system, c) CO_2 leaching into the aquatic system and d) aquatic CO_2 evasion. All at a resolution of 1°

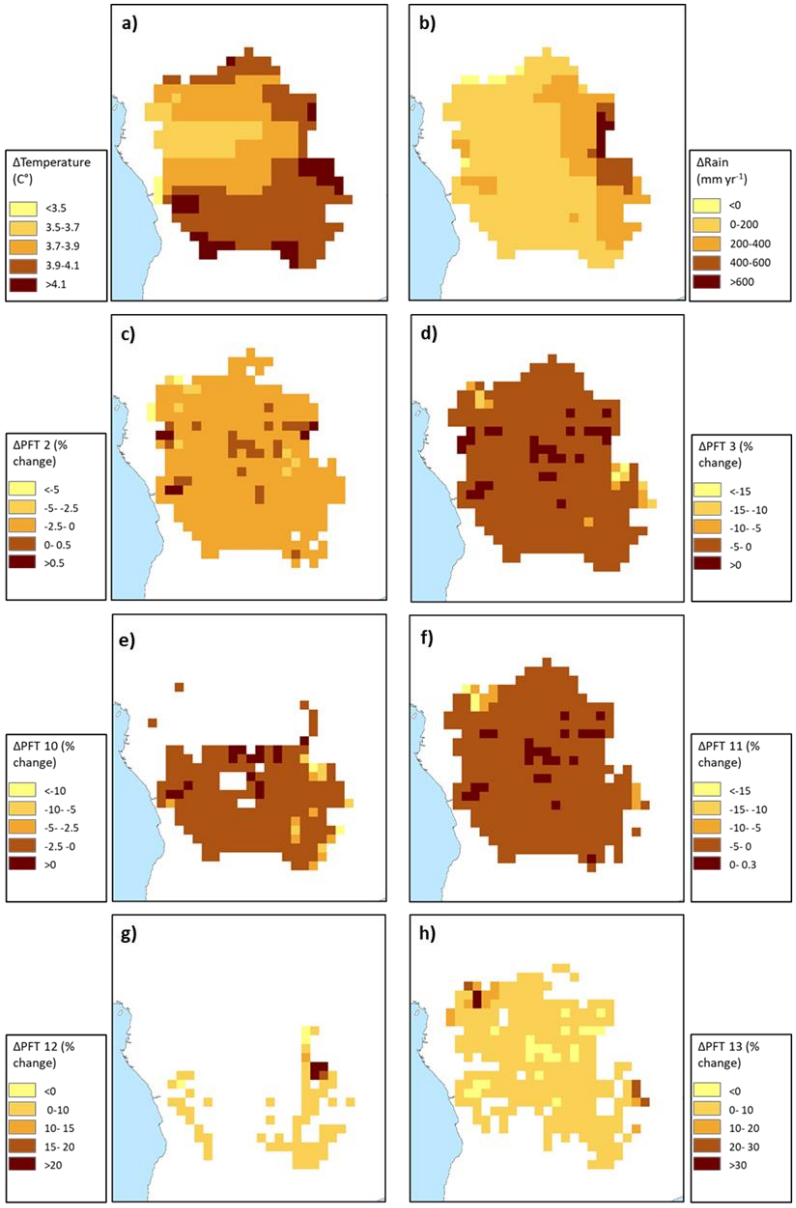

Figure A 2: Change (Δ, 2099 minus 1861) in the spatial distribution of the principal climate and land-use drivers across the Congo Basin; a) mean annual temperature in °C, b) mean annual rainfall in mm yr^{-1}, c)-h) mean annual maximum vegetated fraction for PFTs 2,3, 10,11,12 and 13. All at a resolution of 1°.

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Table A 3: Past (1861-1890), present-day (1981-2010) and future (2070-2099) mean values for important climate and land-use drivers across the Congo basin								
Period	Temp.	Rain.	PFT2	PFT3	PFT10	PFT11	PFT12	PFT13
1861-1890	24.0	1451	0.263	0.375	0.154	0.254	0.015	0.014
1981-2010	25.2	1526	0.255	0.359	0.154	0.255	0.038	0.030
2070-2099	28.2	1654	0.258	0.362	0.147	0.245	0.039	0.037

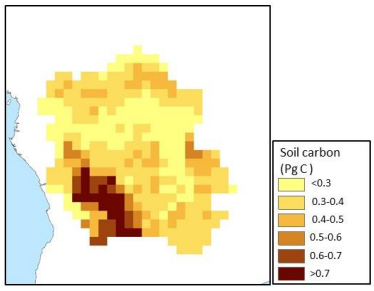

Figure A 3: Spatial distribution of simulated total carbon stored in soils for the present day (1981-2020).

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