Surface and top-of-atmosphere radiative feedback kernels for CESM-CAM5

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Abstract. Radiative kernels at the top of atmosphere are useful for decomposing changes in atmospheric radiative fluxes due to feedbacks from atmosphere and surface temperature, water vapor, and surface albedo. Here we describe and validate radiative kernels calculated with the large-ensemble version of CAM5, CESM 1.1.2, at the top-of-atmosphere and the surface. Estimates of the radiative forcing from greenhouse gases and aerosols in RCP8.5 in the CESM large ensemble simulations are also included diagnosed. As an application, feedbacks are calculated for the CESM large ensemble. The kernels are freely

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also included<u>diagnosed</u>. As an application, feedbacks are calculated for the CESM large ensemble. The kernels are freely available at https://zenodo.org/record/997902, and accompanying software can be downloaded from https://github.com/apendergrass/cam5-kernels.

1 Introduction

- A *radiative feedback kernel* is the radiative response to a small perturbation in, e.g., for example, temperature or water vapor.
 Radiative feedback kernels for the top-of-atmosphere (TOA) are useful for decomposing changes in atmospheric radiative fluxes due to feedbacks from atmosphere and surface temperature, water vapor, and surface albedo (Soden and Held, 2006). (Soden and Held, 2006). Radiative kernels at the surface or in the atmospheric column are useful for decomposingevaluating the changes inradiative effect on precipitation (Pendergrass and Hartmann, 2014; Previdi, 2010).
- 20 Widely used TOA radiative kernels were calculated with the GFDL model (Soden and Held, 2006). Other kernels include those from CAM3 (Shell et al., 2008) and more recently from the MPI-ESM-LR model (Block and Mauritsen, 2013). The only publicly available surface radiative kernels are from ECHAM5 (Previdi, 2010) and MPI-ESM-LR, which is a more recent version of the ECHAM model (discussed in Fläschner et al., 2016). Not all kernels have been validated to test the accuracy to which total radiative fluxes from a model simulation can be recovered with kernel calculations; examples that have been validated against model calculations of radiative flux due to doubling of carbon dioxide include Shell et al (2008) and Block and Mauritsen (2013).

Here we describe and validate radiative kernels calculated with CESM-CAM5 (Hurrell et al., 2013) for the top-of-atmosphere and the surface. These radiative feedback kernels were calculated with CESM version 1.1.2, the same which was used for the

40-member CESM large ensemble (Kay et al., 2015). The TOA kernels are an update from CAM3 (Shell et al., 2008). We also include estimates of radiative forcing due to greenhouse gases and aerosols in RCP8.5 in the CESM large ensemble simulations, which are necessary for calculating the cloud feedback using radiative kernels.

2 Calculations

5 In order to calculate the radiative feedback kernels, we make offline radiative transfer calculations following the methodology of Soden and Held (2006) with the Parallel Offline Radiative Transfer code (PORT; Conley et al., 2013), updated for compatibility with CAM5 microphysics. We re integrate the first member of the CESM large ensemble for one year to obtain temperature, mixing ratio, and other necessary fields to run offline radiative calculations, writing out instantaneous fields every 3 hours. All calculations were completed on NCAR's Yellowstone computer system (Computational and Information Systems Laboratory, 2012).

2.1 Radiative kernels

Together, all calculations consumed approximately 200,000 core hours on NCAR's Yellowstone supercomputer. The limiting factor for throughput is the size of PORT input data: three-hourly 3-D temperature, moisture, and cloud fields; about 7.5 TB

- 15 of disk space are needed to run one month of three hourly PORT calculations for each vertical level of each kernel, with 63 global radiative transfer computations per kernel month. The TOA radiative kernels are shown in Fig. 1, and surface kernels in Fig. 2. The atmospheric column kernel is the difference between these two kernels. The procedure to produce each kernel follows.
- Widely used TOA radiative kernels were calculated with the GFDL model (Soden and Held, 2006). Other kernels include those from CAM3 (Shell et al., 2008) and more recently from the MPI-ESM-LR model (Block and Mauritsen, 2013). The only publicly available model-based surface radiative kernels are from ECHAM5 (Previdi, 2010) and MPI-ESM-LR, which is a more recent version of the ECHAM model (discussed in Fläschner et al., 2016). Reanalysis-based kernels generated with ERA-Interim and RRTM are also available (Huang et al., 2017). Not all kernels have been validated to test the accuracy to which total radiative fluxes from a model simulation can be recovered with kernel calculations; examples that have been validated against model calculations of radiative flux due to doubling of carbon dioxide include Shell et al (2008), Block and Mauritsen

(2013), and (Huang et al., 2017).

Here we describe and validate radiative kernels calculated with CESM-CAM5 (Hurrell et al., 2013) for the top-of-atmosphere
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of Soden and Held (2006) with the Parallel Offline Radiative Transfer code (PORT; Conley et al., 2013), updated for 5 compatibility with CAM5 microphysics and RRTMG radiation (Iacono et al., 2008). We re-integrate the first member of the CESM large ensemble for one year to obtain the full instantaneous atmospheric model state, including temperature, mixing ratio, and clouds, to run offline radiative calculations, writing out instantaneous fields every 3 hours. All calculations were completed on NCAR's Yellowstone computer system (Computational and Information Systems Laboratory, 2012).

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2.1 Radiative kernels

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global radiative transfer computations per kernel-month (control, surface temperature, and albedo each require one kernel-15 month, and atmospheric temperature and moisture each require 30). The kernel calculation is run for one year. The TOA radiative kernels are shown in Fig. 1, and surface kernels in Fig. 2. The atmospheric column kernel is the difference between these two kernels. The procedure to produce each kernel follows below. To create these plots, the kernels are regridded to standard CMIP5 pressure levels in the troposphere, including pressure weighting (a vertical regridding script is available at https://github.com/apendergrass/cam5-kernels), and then the zonal and annual means are calculated. A description of the 20 physical drivers of the changes in radiative fluxes is available from Ingram (2010) for the TOA and Pendergrass and Hartmann

(2014) for the atmospheric column.

Atmospheric temperature kernel

- To calculate the atmosphere temperature kernel, we perturb the air temperature by 1 K in each hybrid sigma-pressure level at 25 a time, at each grid cell for each 3-hourly instantaneous field. Then we calculate the monthly mean, and take the difference of the TOA and surface radiative fluxes from the control in response to each perturbation. PORT is adjusted so that the hygroscopic growth of aerosols is not affected by the modified temperatures and water vapor concentrations. The calculations are carried out in CESM's hybrid sigma-pressure vertical coordinate and hashave units of W m⁻² K⁻¹ level⁻¹. These hybrid sigma-pressure radiative feedback kernels can be interpolated onto standard CMIP pressure levels (see the description of 30

example code in Section 5), as is done for display purposes here; the atmospheric temperature kernel is shown in Fig. 1a,c for the TOA and Fig. 2a,c for the surface.

Surface temperature kernel

5 In CESM, the upwelling longwave flux at the surface is indirectly related to the surface temperature. To calculate the surface contribution to the temperature kernel, we perturb upwelling surface longwave radiation by an amount consistent with 1 K warming at constant effective emissivity. The surface temperature kernels are shown in Figs. 1,2e.

Atmospheric moisture kernel

- 10 The atmospheric moisture kernel is constructed by perturbing the mixing ratio on each hybrid sigma-pressure level by the amount that would result in constant relative-humidity moistening if there were a warming of 1 K. Saturation mixing ratio is calculated for each 3-h instantaneous state using the mixhum_ptd function in NCL (UCAR/NCAR/CISL/TDD, 2015)(UCAR/NCAR/CISL/TDD, 2015), which calculates saturation with respect to liquid water following List (1951).List (1951). Code to closely approximate the perturbation with monthly-mean fields using this NCL calculation is provided. As with the temperature kernel, the mixing ratio does not change for the purpose of aerosol radiative properties (hygroscopic
- growth is held invariant). The moisture kernel is shown in Figs. 1,2 b,d,f,h.

Surface albedo kernel

The surface albedo kernel is the change in radiative flux for a 1 % change in surface albedo. The calculation is carried out by 20 perturbing the direct and diffuse shortwave albedos, asdir and asdif, simultaneously by 1 % each. The surface albedo kernel is shown in Figs. 1,2g.

2.2 Forcing

To estimate the radiative forcing, we re-integrate CESM for the year 2096, writing out the fields needed for PORT calculations every 3 hours. The baseline for the forcing calculations is the same 2006 control as the kernel calculations. The greenhouse gas and aerosol forcing are shown in Figure 3.

Greenhouse gas forcing

We use the greenhouse gas concentrations (carbon dioxide, methane, CFCs, N₂O, and ozone) from 2096 with the tropospheric temperature, mixing ratio, and other radiatively-relevant fields from 2006. To account for stratospheric adjustment, we use the 2096 stratospheric temperature and water vapor mixing ratio in the calculation. The tropopause is defined as 100 hPa at the equator and 300 hPa at the poles and varies by cosine of latitude in between, following (Soden and Held, 2006).(Soden and <u>Held, 2006</u>). The resulting estimate approximates the radiative forcing following the definition of Myhre et al., (2013), though it includes adjustment of water vapor as well as temperature in the stratosphere.

Aerosol forcing

5 To calculate the aerosol forcing, we apply black carbon, sulfate, secondary organic aerosol, primary organic matter, dust, sea salt, and aerosol temperature and mixing ratio from 2096, with temperature, mixing ratio, greenhouse gas and all other fields from 2006, with no adjustments to the stratosphere. The resulting estimate is the instantaneous radiative forcing.

3 Validation

Radiative kernels can create a useful but approximate decomposition the contributions to changes in radiative fluxes.
 Application of radiative kernels assumes that changes in radiative fluxes are linear in changes in constituents, and that the response to changes in temperature and moisture at different vertical levels are independent.

In order to quantify these sources of error associated with the kernel calculations, we calculate the radiative response to the changing surface albedo and temperature and tropospheric moisture and temperature from 2006 to 2096, holding all other

15 fields fixed (including clouds and forcing agents). The change in global, annual mean clear sky radiative fluxes is shown in Fig. 4 for the TOA and in Fig. 5 for the surface.

At the TOA, errors in LW and SW range from 14-26% of the total change in radiative flux. Because the LW and SW offset each other, net absolute flux changes are smaller than either LW or SW individually, and so the net relative errors are larger.

20 At the surface, LW errors range from 15-24%. The changes in absolute SW surface downwelling flux are small (because the clouds are fixed in the validating simulations), and so the relative error in all-sky surface flux is large.

4 Known issues

Because the kernel calculation is computationally intensive, it is based on just one year. We can estimate the effect of interannual variability—our choice of a single year for the kernel calculation—on the error by examining the spread in total radiative flux change across the 40 member large ensemble (Table 1). We make this estimate indirectly, based on changes in TOA radiation rather than feedback components to avoid additional computation. The standard deviation across the ensemble is 0.4—0.5 Wm⁻² for LW fluxes and 0.2—0.4 Wm⁻² for SW fluxes. The error due to interannual variability is smaller than the error due to nonlinearity at the TOA for both LW and SW and clear sky and all sky conditions (c.f. Fig. 4), and in the LW at

30 the surface (c.f. Fig. 5). For the surface SW response, the error due to interannual variability and nonlinearity are similar in magnitude (though the absolute response is small).

In standard applications that make use of experiments from models other than CESM(CAM5), errors will also arise due to differences in radiative transfer codes between models, (e.g., DeAngelis et al., 2015; Soden et al., 2008); we do not quantify these errors explicitly here, but we do compare feedback decompositions made with other radiative kernels from the literature in Section 5.

5 Application

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Next we show a sample application of the kernels to the CESM large ensemble simulations. In order to apply the kernels, one needs monthly, long term mean water vapor mixing ratios, as well as changes in temperature, mixing ratio, and surface albedo. To calculate the cloud feedback, change in cloud radiative effect is also required.

- 10 To calculate the cloud feedback, change in cloud radiative effect is also required. Radiative kernels enable a useful but approximate decomposition of the contributions to changes in radiative fluxes. Application of radiative kernels assumes that changes in radiative fluxes are linear with respect to changes in constituents, and that the response to changes in temperature and moisture at different vertical levels are independent. These assumptions are not exactly met, even for clear-sky fluxes (Feldl and Roe, 2013). We undertake a validation exercise focused on quantifying
- 15 the errors associated with these kernels compared to the climate model-simulated changes in radiative flux they are targeted at.

First, we quantify the error of the kernel-estimated change in radiative flux of the ensemble member from which the kernels are computed. The changes in radiative flux associated with the temperature, water vapor, and albedo feedbacks are calculated

- 20 <u>using the changes in monthly-mean model fields, and then the change in radiative forcing is added. The global mean modelled</u> and kernel-estimated changes in radiative flux as well as the error in global mean and global-mean absolute error are documented in Table 1. For the global-mean absolute error, the change in annual mean radiative fluxes are calculated, then the absolute value of the error for each ensemble member is calculated at each grid point, and finally the global mean of this quantity is calculated. These error estimates include errors due to sampling every 3 hours (instead of at each model timestep)
- 25 and due to the nonlinearity inherent in the kernel method. While we only document the changes in clear-sky radiative flux response in Table 1, the errors in all-sky radiative fluxes are exactly the same when cloud feedback is estimated using the adjusted cloud radiative effect method described in (Soden et al., 2008). Errors in global-mean radiative flux change range from $0.1 0.8 \text{ Wm}^{-2}$, while global-mean absolute errors range from $0.7-1.4 \text{ Wm}^{-2}$. Errors in SW fluxes are smaller than for LW fluxes.
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Because the kernel calculation is computationally intensive, it is based on just one year. Next, we quantify the error of the kernel-estimated radiative fluxes compared to members 2-40 of the CESM1 large ensemble. This error estimate includes the

effect of our choice of a single year, as well as nonlinearity and 3-hourly sampling. The global-mean error for each ensemble member is shown in Fig. 4. The global-mean absolute errors are not especially larger for the ensemble mean than for member 1. The change in TOA LW fluxes has more interannual variability than TOA SW and surface fluxes. The error of global mean change in radiative flux is similar to member 1 for SW fluxes but larger for LW fluxes (0.9 Wm⁻² at both the surface and TOA;

- not shown). The spatial pattern of ensemble-mean error is shown in Fig. 5. The LW errors, particularly for the surface, are 5 large in the tropics. For the TOA, there are also substantial errors at high latitudes of both hemispheres. The largest errors in the SW are associated with sea ice edges, the movement of which is not captured well by the kernel method. There are also regions of large error associated with tropical clouds, and at the TOA, there is a bias over Antarctica.
- In applications that make use of experiments from models other than CESM(CAM5), errors will also arise due to differences 10 in radiative transfer codes between models (e.g., DeAngelis et al., 2015; Soden et al., 2008); we do not quantify these errors explicitly here, but we do compare feedback decompositions made with other radiative kernels from the literature in Section <u>4.</u>

4 Application

- Next we show a sample application of the kernels to the CESM large-ensemble simulations. In order to apply the kernels, one 15 needs monthly changes in temperature, mixing ratio, and surface albedo, as well as long-term mean water vapor mixing ratios to calculate the logarithm of water vapor change (Soden et al., 2008). To calculate the cloud feedback, change in cloud radiative effect is also required. Then, the monthly-resolved kernels and changes in atmospheric state are convolved to obtain the changes in radiative flux components. Example code for applying the kernels is available at 20
- https://github.com/apendergrass/cam5-kernels.

We apply the radiative kernels to the CESM large ensemble integrations to diagnose the changes in top-of-atmosphere radiative feedbacks and surface radiative flux changes (Figure 6 and Table 2)., The changes in surface and tropospheric temperature, water vapor mixing ratio, surface albedo, and cloud radiative effect are calculated from 30-year averages for each month from each ensemble member, 1976-2005 and 2071-2100. The cloud feedback calculation follows Soden et al., (2008). The global, 25 annual mean change in radiative flux for each feedback is calculated and then normalized by the change in global-mean surface temperature for each ensemble member; then, the ensemble average is calculated. Results are shown in Table 2 and Fig. 6.

Table 2 shows a comparison between feedback values calculated here and those diagnosed with other kernels and model simulations. Soden et al., (2008) report radaitive feedbacks from 14 CMIP3 m(Pendergrass, 2017a)odelmodel simulations 30 using three different sets of radiative kernels from CAM3, GFDL, and CAWCR kernels. The Planck response agrees closely. Water vapor and albedo feedbacks are both within 0.2 Wm⁻²K⁻¹. The cloud feedback differs by only 0.1 Wm⁻²K⁻¹, despite the fact that Soden et al., (2008) do not account account for aerosol radiative forcing. The only notable disagreement is in the lapse rate feedback by 0.4 Wm⁻²K⁻¹. Because the Planck feedback agrees closely between the two calculations, the difference is probably not due to the temperature kernel. Instead, it <u>is-probablymay be</u> caused by differing upper tropospheric temperature amplification between the CMIP3 and CESM large ensemble simulations-<u>or due to underlying differences in the radiation</u>

- 5 codes. Block and Mauritsen (2013) report radiative feedbacks using MPI-ESM-LR kernels applied to abrupt carbon dioxide quadrupling experiments with the same model (they compare kernels calculated from different base states and <u>also apply them</u> to short transient response and more developed long timescalestimescale response; we compare with their control base state kernels and feedbacks evaluated onapplied to long timescalestimescale climate response because this is most similar to our calculations application). There is remarkably close agreement for all feedbacks, excepting only the water vapor feedback. This
- 10 could arise from the kernels or from the change in water vapor in the simulations.

The variability of global mean feedbacks across the CESM single model ensemble provides an estimate of the magnitude of internal variability on feedback magnitude. It is quite small. The largest standard deviation of any feedback is 0.02 W m⁻²K⁻¹, in contrast to multi-model ensembles (e.g., Soden et al., 2008), indicating that nearly all of the variability in feedbacks across multi-model ensemble is due to structural uncertainty (the differences in formulation of different climate models) rather than

internal variability.

65 Data and code

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The provided dataset includes the four <u>monthly-mean</u> radiative kernels, <u>atmospheric temperature</u>, <u>surface temperature</u>, <u>water</u> vapor, and the two-surface albedo, and radiative forcing files.from greenhouse gases and aerosols. Data are provided on the

- 20 CESM hybrid-sigma grid for comparison with CESM <u>calculationssimulations</u>. The datasets include net all-sky and clear-sky radiative fluxes; at both the top-of-atmosphere and surface. The sign convention is the same as CESM's: shortwave fluxes are positive downward, and longwave fluxes are positive upward. Sample temperature, moisture, surface radiative fluxes, and surface pressure are also included, as well as sample code to facilitate use of the kernels.
- 25 The data and code to calculate TOA temperature, water vapor, and albedo feedbacks are available for immediate download at https://zenodo.org/record/997902 (though without directory structure) and through ESGF at https://www.earthsystemgrid.org/dataset/ucar.cgd.ccsm4.cam5-kernels.html (Pendergrass, 2017b).(Pendergrass, 2017). The files included are listed in Table 3. Additional software tools – to regrid the kernels to pressure levels (including CMIP standard levels), calculate TOA Planck, lapse rate, and cloud feedbacks – are available at https://github.com/apendergrass/cam5-kernels.

6 Path forward

There is room to improve the accuracy of these and other radiative kernels. Future work could explore new sampling strategies to capture both the diurnal cycle and interannual variability (which would be particularly important for regional applications), directly compare different kernels, and quantify the radiative forcing in climate simulations.

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Table 1: Interannual variability in Validation. Top-of-atmosphere (TOA) and surface clear-sky radiative responses (Wm⁻²) for 2096-2006 from CESM1 large ensemble member 1 (from which the kernels are derived) and the estimated radiative fluxes. The standard deviation of global, annual mean radiative flux changes across the 40 members of the CESM large ensemble using the kernels and radiative forcing.

	ΤΟΑ		Surface	
	LW- Total-sky	0.46 <u>SW</u>	0.38<u>LW</u>	SW
Member 1 response	<u>-1.3</u>	<u>3.1</u>	<u>9.5</u>	<u>-1.4</u>
<u>LW Clear-skyKernel</u> <u>estimate</u>	_0. 38 7	0.40<u>3.4</u>	<u>10.3</u>	<u>-1.2</u>
SW Total-sky Error of global mean	0. <mark>31<u>6</u></mark>	0. 39<u>4</u>	<u>0.8</u>	<u>0.1</u>
SW Clear sky <u>Global</u> <u>mean abs. error</u>	0.17<u>1.4</u>	0. 21<u>7</u>	<u>1.4</u>	<u>1.3</u>

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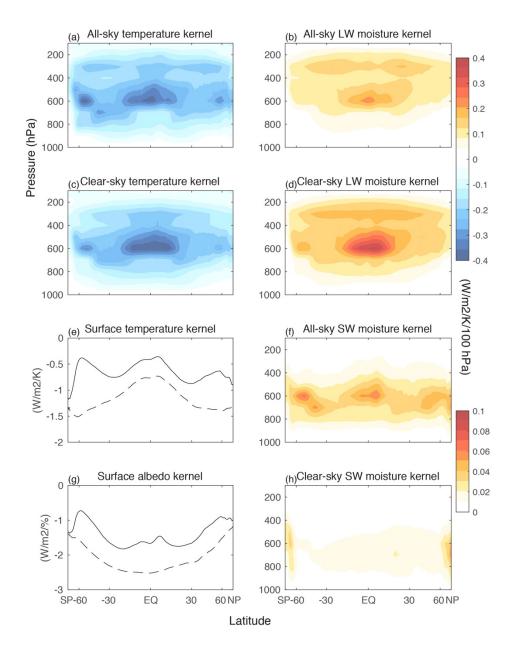
Table 2: Comparison of TOA radiative feedbacks. TOA radiative feedbacks ($Wm^{-2}K^{-1}$) averaged over 40 CESM large ensemble simulations diagnosed with CAM5 radiative kernels-here, compared against those from CMIP3 model simulations diagnosed with three different kernels as reported by Soden et al., (2008), and MPI-ESM-LR control state kernels and years 21-150 of abrupt carbon dioxide quadrupling simulations from the same model (Block and Mauritsen, 2013).(Block and Mauritsen, 2013).

Feedback	Here	Soden et al., (2008)	Block and Mauritsen (2013)
Planck	-3.2	-3.1 or -3.2	-3.19
Lapse rate	-0.58	-1	-0.64
Water vapor	2.1	1.9	1.79
Albedo	0.51	0.3	0.48
Cloud	0.66	0.77	0.62

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Table 3: Included data files. Data files	s comprising the dataset.
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Filename	Size	Units	Description	
alb.kernel.nc	20 MB	W m ⁻² % ⁻¹	Albedo kernel	
ts.kernel.nc	20 MB	W m ⁻² K ⁻¹	Surface temperature kernel	
t.kernel.nc	608 MB	W m ⁻² K ⁻¹ level ⁻¹	Air temperature kernel	
q.kernel.nc	1.2 GB	W m ⁻² K ⁻¹ level ⁻¹	Moisture kernel	
ghg.forcing.nc	41 MB	W m⁻²	Greenhouse gas forcing	
aerosol.forcing.nc	41 MB	W m ⁻²	Aerosol forcing	



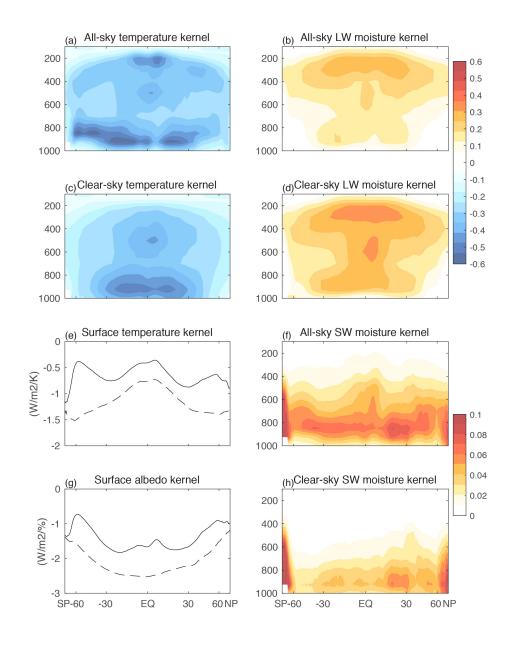
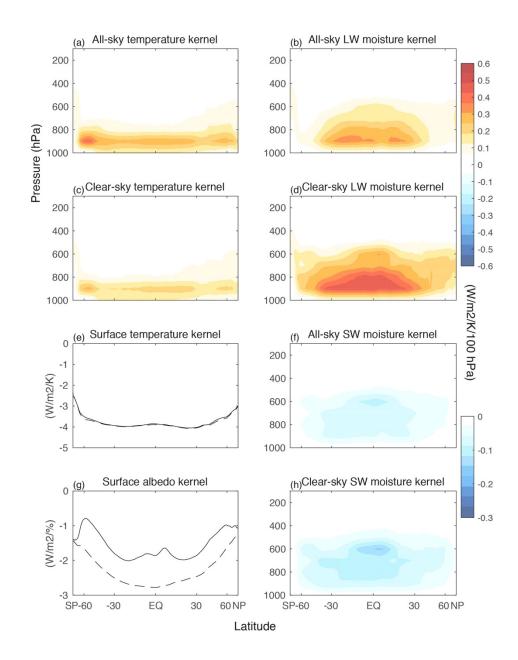


Figure 1: Top-of-atmosphere kernels from CESM1(CAM5). Zonal, annual mean temperature, longwave moisture and shortwave moisture kernels for all-sky and clear-sky. In panels (e) and (g) all-sky kernels are shown in solid and clear-sky dashed. The sign convention is positive downward. Solid lines are all-sky and dashed lines are clear-sky in (e) and (g).



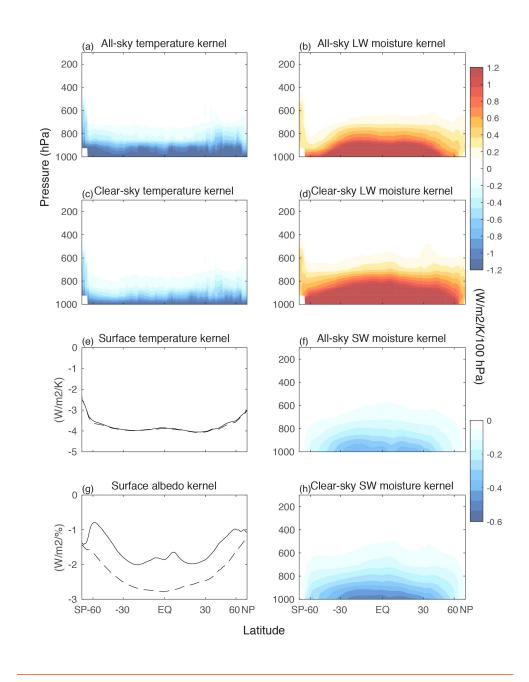
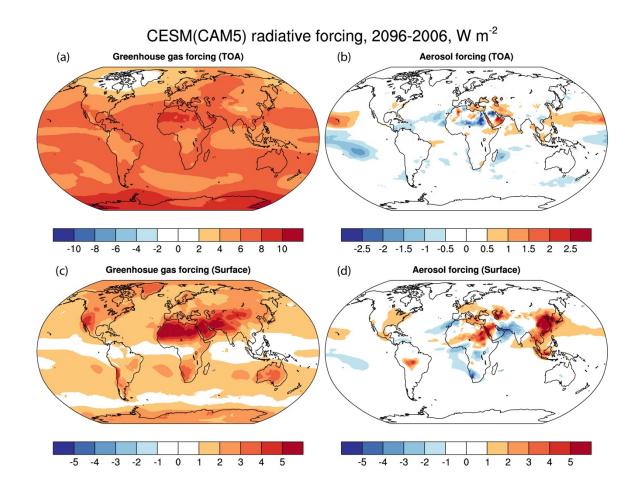


Figure 2: Surface kernels from CESM(CAM5). Zonal, annual mean temperature, longwave moisture and shortwave moisture kernels for all-sky and clear-sky. In panels (e) and (g) all-sky kernels are shown in solid and clear-sky dashed. The sign convention is positive downward.



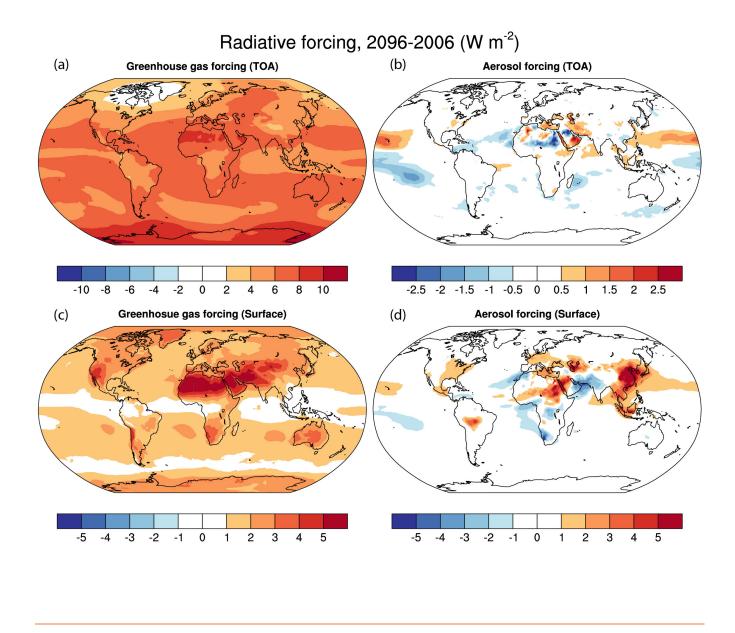


Figure 3: Radiative forcing. Net (LW+SW) radiative forcing under the RCP8.5 scenario diagnosed from CESM(CAM5) for greenhouse gases (left) and the direct aerosol radiative forcing (right) at the TOA (top) and surface (bottom).

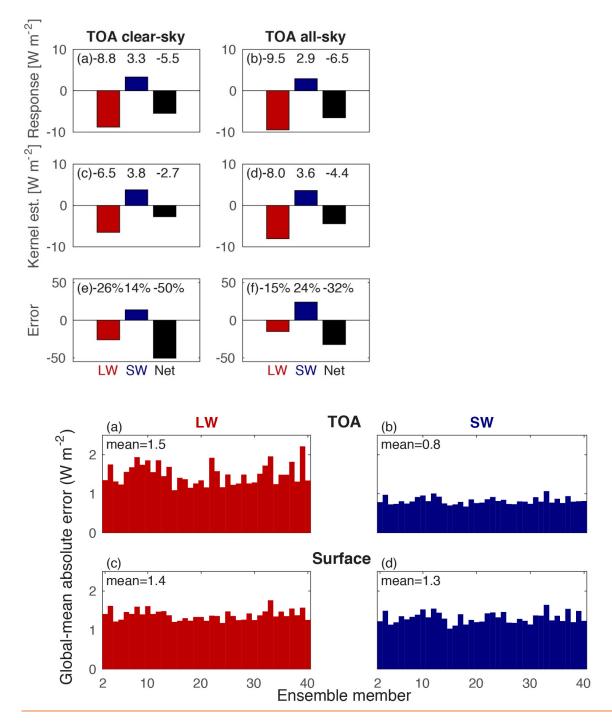
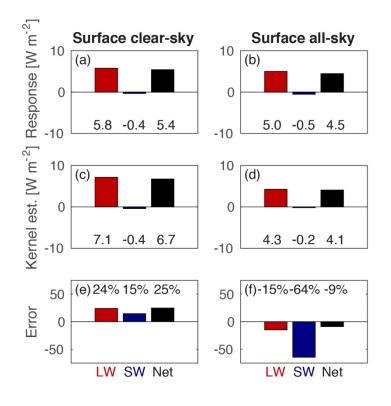


Figure 4: Validation across ensemble members. Global mean absolute error of TOA kernels. TOA kernel-estimated clear-sky and allsky-radiative field comparison (excluding cloud contributions). Errors are relative between flux change from 2006 to 2096 for members 2-40 of the kernel-estimateCESM1 large ensemble for LW (left) and SW (right) fluxes at the TOA (top) and total response-surface (bottom).

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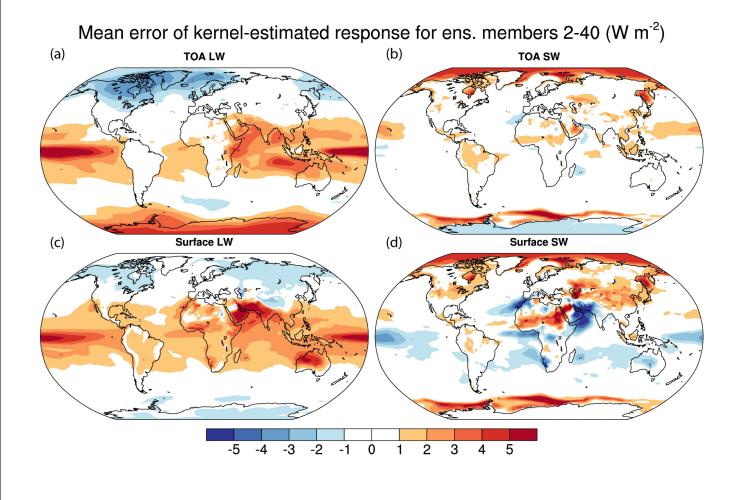


Figure 5: Spatial pattern of error. Mean error of kernel-estimated radiative flux change from 2006 to 2096 for members 2-40 of the CESM1 large ensemble for LW (left) and SW (right) fluxes at the TOA (top) and surface (bottom).

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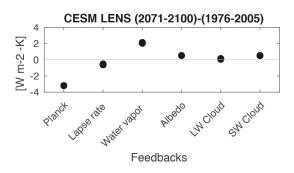


Figure 6: CESM Large Ensemble kernels. Feedback calculation for the CESM 40-member large ensemble using the TOA kernels.