

**Comments from the Editor:**

Thank you for using ESSD!

Small issue, can resolve at proof stage: The disputed Spratly Islands inset shows up occasionally: Fig 2f, Fig 4c, Fig 7d, Fig 8f, Fig 9d. Because this study includes no SWB from those regions, authors should omit those insets? If retained, those insets will trigger a standard Copernicus disclaimer attached to this manuscript, declaring the geography and political governance of those regions as under discussion.

**Response:**

Thank you very much for your comments on our manuscript. With regards to the Spratly Islands insets in the figures, we would like to keep them as they stand. We are okay to trigger a standard Copernicus disclaimer attached to this manuscript, if needed.