

# A Hitchhikers Guide to the Black Arts (of Earth system modelling)

## PART #0100: Fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> release and 'ocean acidification'

Relevant reading (and references therein):

Kleypas, J.A., Feely, R.A., Fabry, V.J., Langdon, C., Sabine C.L. and Robbins, L.L. (2006). Impacts of ocean acidification on coral reefs and other marine calcifiers: a guide for future research. Report of a workshop held 18–20 April 2005, St Petersburg, FL, sponsored by NSF, NOAA, and the US Geological Survey, 1-88.

[www.ucar.edu/communications/Final\\_acidification.pdf](http://www.ucar.edu/communications/Final_acidification.pdf)

Orr, J.C., K. Caldeira, V. Fabry, J.-P. Gattuso, P. Haugan, P. Lehodey, S. Pantoja, H.-O. Pörtner, U. Riebesell, T. Trull, M. Hood, E. Urban, and W. Broadgate (2009) Research Priorities for Ocean Acidification, report from the Second Symposium on the Ocean in a High-CO<sub>2</sub> World, Monaco, October 6-9, 2008, convened by SCOR, UNESCO-IOC, IAEA, and IGBP, 25 pp.

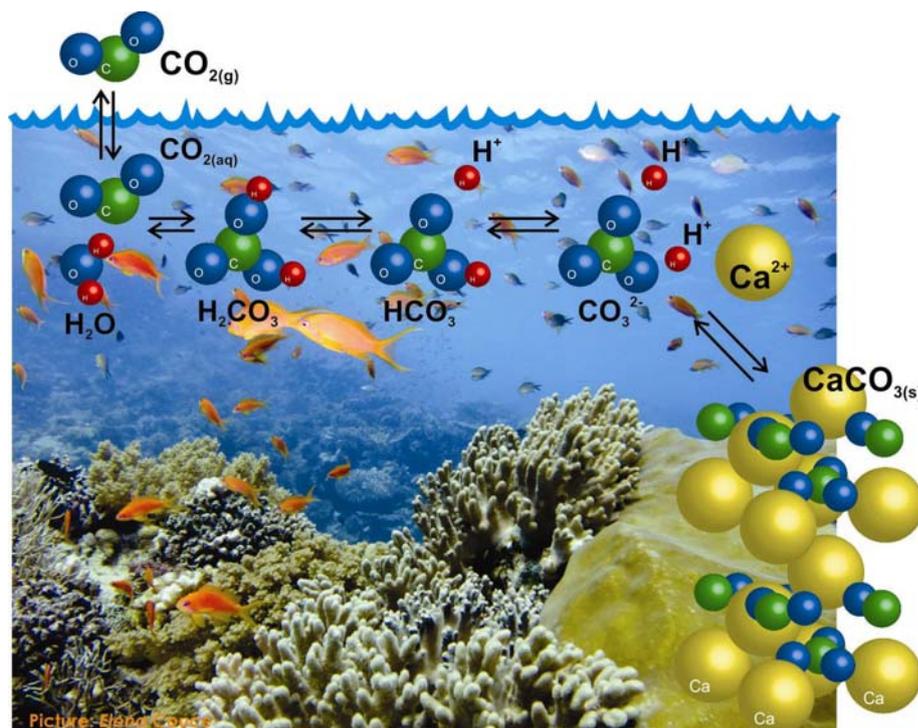
<http://ioc3.unesco.org/oanet/index.html>

Royal Society (2005) Ocean acidification due to increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide. Policy document 12/05 Royal Society, London.

<http://royalsociety.org/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=5709>

Turley, C., Findlay, H. S., Mangi, S., Ridgwell, A. and Schimdt, D. N., CO<sub>2</sub> and ocean acidification in Marine Climate Change Ecosystem Linkages Report Card 2009. (Eds. Baxter JM, Buckley PJ and Frost MT), Online science reviews, 25pp (2009).

<http://www.mccip.org.uk/elr/acidification/>



## 0. ReadMe

0.0 [none]

## 1. Exploring the consequences of fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

- 1.0 For the next experiment(s) you can chuck CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, just for the hell of it. As much as you want! Apparently, humans are actually doing this now. Imagine that!

The *user-config* for cGENIE, LAB.0100.CO2emissions is provided and configured with climate being responsive to CO<sub>2</sub> (i.e., it takes account of CO<sub>2</sub>-climate feedbacks):

```
# set CO2-climate feedback  
ea_36=y
```

as well as having a rate of calcification by plankton at the surface ocean that is responsive to ocean acidification and saturation state (i.e., it takes into account CO<sub>2</sub>-calcification feedbacks, which will additionally interact with climate – see *Ridgwell et al.* [2007b]). Anything could happen!!!

In the *user-config*, a release of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere is prescribed, which by default is set for 1000 PgC over an interval of a single year. (Releasing CO<sub>2</sub> just over a single year is obviously rather unrealistic, but represents a useful idealized experiment for assessing the time-scale(s) of fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> uptake by the ocean.) Additional netCDF output has also been prescribed (bg\_par\_data\_save\_level=10) so that more information relevant to assessing ocean acidification is saved.

- 1.1 Because ‘accidents can happen’ and the global environmental changes induced by the massive fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> release you are about to make, can obscure mistakes made in the experiment configuration (parameter values) and/or the *restart* used, you are strongly advised to first (or in parallel, as a job submitted to the cluster) set going a control experiment – identical to the CO<sub>2</sub> release experiment except with a zero flux of CO<sub>2</sub>:

```
$ ./runmuffin.sh cgenie.eb_go_gs_ac_bg.worjh2.BASEFe LABS  
LAB.0100.CONTROL 10 EXAMPLE.worjh2.PO4Fe.SPIN
```

If everything is OK, atmospheric pCO<sub>2</sub> (and climate) should be stable and there should be little (or no) drift in any of the output variables. Although 10 years is given here as an example duration, ideally, the control experiment is run for just as long as the actual experiment.

- 1.2 Run the experiment for e.g., 20 (or more if you like) years, starting from the *re-start* used previously, i.e.:

```
$ ./runmuffin.sh cgenie.eb_go_gs_ac_bg.worjh2.BASEFe LABS  
LAB.0100.CO2emissions 20 EXAMPLE.worjh2.PO4Fe.SPIN
```

and view the run-time output, particularly atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> (which decays away after the first year as fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> is progressively taken up by the ocean), ocean surface temperature (SST), sea-ice extent, and Atlantic Meridional Overturning (‘AMO’) strength (and/or other variables). Viewing the time-series results file *biogem\_series\_fexport\_CaCO3.res* will show how global carbonate production responds to the ensuing ocean acidification, which itself is recorded in the file: *biogem\_series\_misc\_surpH.res* for mean global surface pH, or *biogem\_series\_carb\_sur\_ohm\_cal.res* for surface saturation with respect to calcite, with a variety of other carbonate parameters also outputted. The calcification response is encoded in the model and described in *Ridgwell et al.* [2007a,b] (see: <http://pubs.seao2.org>) and may or may not reflect the real World.

In the 3-D netCDF time-slice file, ocean pH is a particularly relevant field to consider together with calcite and aragonite saturation – note that ocean surface waters in which aragonite becomes under-saturated ( $\Omega < 1.0$ ) is regarded as a critical threshold for organisms making aragonite shells and skeletons and spells TROUBLE for some poor calcifying marine organism somewhere. Temperature is also highly relevant to marine ecosystems under future global change as well as sea-ice extent.

In the 2-D netCDF time-slice file you are given water column integrals of dissolved things (e.g., DIC – *ocn\_DIC\_int*) (see: *Sabine et al.* [2004]; *Science* **305**). You can use this to create difference maps in Panoply assessing the geographical characteristics of CO<sub>2</sub> uptake by the ocean. Ideally, one would run a parallel experiment, identical except for zero CO<sub>2</sub> release being specified, to act

as a 'control' for the calculation of the differences. A difference map for the water-column integral of DIC (2D netCDF file), for instance, reveals where fossil fuel CO<sub>2</sub> is preferentially taken up by the ocean. See Figure (at end) for an example (plotted in MUTLAB in this case).

- 1.3 You can easily modify the experimental design to release more/less CO<sub>2</sub> very much as you did for the red dye tracer. In the *user-config* file, the lines:

```
bg_par_atm_force_scale_val_3=8.3333e+016
bg_par_atm_force_scale_val_4=-27.0
```

scale the CO<sub>2</sub> flux and its δ<sup>13</sup>C isotopic signature, respectively. The scaling values given to you produce a CO<sub>2</sub> release of 1000 PgC yr<sup>-1</sup> for just a single year (cGENIE uses units of mol yr<sup>-1</sup> for *forcings*, with 1 PgC being equal to 8.333×10<sup>13</sup> mol C) compared to current emissions are about 8 PgC yr<sup>-1</sup> at -27‰ (typical of fossil fuel carbon). Altering the value assigned to *bg\_par\_atm\_force\_scale\_val\_3* in the *user-config* file gives immediate control over emissions rate.

You can also adjust the emissions to have a time-varying rate by editing the file:

```
biogem_force_flux_atm_pCO2_sig.dat
```

which can be found in the directory:

```
cgenie.muffin/genie_forcings/worjh2_FeMahowald2006_FpCO2_Fp13CO2
```

The format of this file is:

```
-START-OF-DATA-
  0.0  1.0
  1.0  1.0
  1.0  0.0
999999.9  0.0
-END-OF-DATA-
```

and defines an emission of 1 mol C over the first 1 year of the model experiment but which in the example is then scaled in the *user-config* by 8.333×10<sup>16</sup> to give 1000 PgC yr<sup>-1</sup>. (Year 999999.9 has no special meaning and is simply just way in the future ...)

Pause ... and note briefly how the final CO<sub>2</sub> flux is arrived at. cGENIE calculates it by multiplying the value in the *forcing* file (1.0) by a modifying parameter in the *user config* file (8.3333e+016). The total flux is hence: 1.0 × 8.333×10<sup>16</sup> = 8.333×10<sup>16</sup> mol CO<sub>2</sub> yr<sup>-1</sup>.

Equally, we could have had 8.3333e+013 in the *forcing* file, which is the units conversion from mol C to PgC, and then 1000.0 as the value of *bg\_par\_atm\_force\_scale\_val\_3*, i.e. a total flux of: 8.333×10<sup>13</sup> × 1000.0 = 8.333×10<sup>16</sup> mol CO<sub>2</sub>. Doing it this way around is convenient because it 'hides' the units conversion to mol C in the *forcing* file, allowing a much simple value in units of PgC yr<sup>-1</sup> to be entered in the *user-config* file. It is entirely up to you which way around to do it.

- 1.4 Between the start and end 'tags', the data is in 2 columns: the first contains a series of tie-points for defining the timing of changes in emissions, and the 2nd contains the flux information (units of mol yr<sup>-1</sup>). At each time-step of the model the CO<sub>2</sub> flux is interpolated between these time points.

The purpose of:

```
0.0  1.0
1.0  1.0
1.0  0.0
```

is thus to effect a sharp turn-off of the flux at the end of first year. To extend the period of emissions – for example:

```
0.0  1.0
10.0  1.0
10.0  0.0
```

would result in a uniform 1000 PgC yr<sup>-1</sup> pulse lasting 10 years (i.e. 10,000 PgC total emissions). In contrast;

```
0.0  0.0
10.0  1.0
```

would result in a linear ramp, starting zero at the start of year 0.0 to  $8.3333e+016$  mol yr<sup>-1</sup> at year 10.0 (a total CO<sub>2</sub> emission of  $1000 \times 10 \times 0.5 = 5,000$  PgC over 10 years).

It is also possible to provide a simple scaling of the (default) unit duration of the pulse in the *user-config* file by adding the lines:

```
bg_par_atm_force_scale_time_3=10.0  
bg_par_atm_force_scale_time_4=10.0
```

which would scale the duration of the pulse (of CO<sub>2</sub> and its isotopic signature) by a factor to 10, i.e., to 10 years. (Remember, that without changing the default emissions rate, you will end up with 10,000 PgC total CO<sub>2</sub> emitted ... !)

- 1.5 By editing (and saving) the flux (and/or timing information) you can exert fine control on the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions trajectory and total fossil fuel burn. Explore different CO<sub>2</sub> release assumptions and note their impact on climate and ocean biogeochemistry. Much more realistic and appropriate to our current global experimenting is a lower rate (order of 10 or 20 PgC yr<sup>-1</sup>) released over a longer interval (order 100 years). Because the experiments are getting longer to run in real time ... remember to make appropriate use of the cluster queuing facility – i.e. think about whether you want to sit around staring at the screen for 15 minutes waiting for a new line of numbers appear – if not: submit to the cluster queue.

Possible questions you might have (or be persuaded to have) may include:

**How much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions does it take to significantly ‘collapse’ the AMOC and over what time-scale? (Or alternatively: what is the atmospheric pCO<sub>2</sub> threshold for collapse?)**

**What is the maximum total CO<sub>2</sub> release that can be made without inducing aragonite under-saturation at the ocean surface anywhere? How important is the time-scale (or ‘shape’) of the emissions trajectory in determining this? For total emissions above this: where in the ocean does the surface first become under-saturated? How large would the emissions have to be in order to induce under-saturation at the surface in the tropics (home to tropical corals and socio-economically important reef systems).** These are questions that are addressed with simple CO<sub>2</sub> release experiments in ocean carbon cycle models and everyone seems to get a GRL paper out of it each and every time! No names mentioned ...

Also: **How important are CO<sub>2</sub>-climate feedbacks in amplifying or diminishing future climate and ocean carbonate chemistry changes?** You can investigate this by contrasting an experiment made including CO<sub>2</sub>-climate feedback with one made without. The CO<sub>2</sub>-climate feedback can be turned off by the setting: `ea_36=n`.

- 1.6 Historical and future (SRES) emissions scenarios can also be prescribed explicitly. A historical emissions *forcing* (technically: a prescribed concentration profile of pCO<sub>2</sub> and other anthropogenic gases) can be specified by adding/substituting the following lines:

```
bg_par_forcing_name='worjh2_FeMahowald2006_historical2010'
```

Now, no additional scaling is needed because the *forcing* specification directly follows the observed change in atmospheric concentration with time (in atm CO<sub>2</sub>).

An additional line is needed in the *user-config* because the historical pCO<sub>2</sub> transient starts in the 1700s (for which a nominal date of 1765 is often used) rather than year zero. For example, to start from year 1700, the start year parameter must be set:

```
bg_par_misc_t_start=1765.0
```

Because the start year has changed, it is convenient to specify save points that are consistent with the historical period, e.g.:

```
bg_par_infile_slice_name='save_timeslice_historicalfuture.dat'  
bg_par_infile_sig_name='save_timeseries_historicalfuture.dat'
```

A user-config with these changes is provided for your convenience – `LAB.0100.historical`. A suitable experiment would then be one run for 245 years so that it reaches year 2010 (having started from year 1765):

```
$ ./runmuffin.sh cgenie.eb_go_gs_ac_bg.worjh2.BASEFe LABS  
LAB.0100.historical 245 EXAMPLE.worjh2.PO4Fe.SPIN
```

WARNING! Ignore the 'WARNING's at the start – these are simply telling you that more *tracer forcings* have been specified than you have selected tracers for in the *base-config* (`cgenie.eb_go_gs_ac_bg.worjh2.BASEFe`). (A different *base-config* with additional selected tracers could have been specified to make use of other historical changes in atmospheric composition, such as of radiocarbon ( $^{14}\text{C}$ ) and CFCs.) Also: from year 1765 onwards, changes in atmospheric  $\text{CO}_2$  only rise very slowly initially. Don't expect to see anything happen in 10 seconds flat(!) because relatively few people and countries in the 1800s could be bothered to burn much more than a little local coal. You could potentially start your experiment at year 1850, changing the value of `bg_par_misc_t_start` and specifying shorter experiment duration.

Don't forget to run a parallel control experiment just in case ...

- 1.7 Given that there is observationally-based information on the distribution of anthropogenic  $\text{CO}_2$  taken up by the ocean (e.g. *Sabine et al.* [2004]) and having run a historical transient experiment with the model driven by observed increases in atmospheric  $p\text{CO}_2$ , you are in a position to critically evaluate the model's ability (or lack of) to represent the future-critical process of oceanic fossil fuel  $\text{CO}_2$  uptake and transport by large scale ocean circulation.

In the 2D netCDF output, there is a variable for the water column integrated inventory of DIC – equivalent to the Sabine map except you will need to subtract the preindustrial background of DIC first, i.e. to create a DIC anomaly map representing only the added fossil fuel  $\text{CO}_2$  component of ocean DIC. The data in the Sabine paper clusters around 1994. A time-slice centered on this year (1994.5) has been configured in the model exactly for this purpose. Your baseline state can either be from prior to  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions commencing at any significant rate (e.g. 1750.5) or (better), from a control experiment. Note that similar comparisons could be (and are regularly) made with other tracers such as CFCs, which provide additional insights into the patterns and time-scales of trace gas uptake and ocean circulation. (See: *Cao et al.* [2009])

Observational data, re-gridded to the cGENIE grid and in netCDF format can be downloaded from the 'usual place' (<http://www.seao2.org/mucgenie.html>) under 'Observations on cGENIE grid'. You could for instance, compare horizontal or vertical slices (3D netCDF) and create difference (anomaly) maps. Somewhat more representative of the entire ocean is to compare (or calculate difference maps) of zonal average profiles. Unfortunately, the observations are not in the form of water column integrals and hence you cannot create difference maps of model as per the Sabine paper. You can, however, if you use the 3D BIOGEM MATLAB plotting scripts (`genie-matlab`). Examples of MATLAB plotting of the model vs. observed anthropogenic anomaly are show in the Figure.

Interesting (to me at least) and of paleo relevance is the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  anomaly in the ocean. Fossil fuel  $\text{CO}_2$  is isotopically much lighter than the modern atmosphere and ocean, and its gradual penetration into the ocean interior leaves a distinct geochemical signature.

- 1.8 Finally, and the closest to be interesting of all: rather than applying highly idealized pulses (or other artificial shapes) of  $\text{CO}_2$  emissions, IPCC SRES emissions scenarios can be used to make future projections by running on from the end of the historical transient. An example forcing of this sort is provided and can be selected by changing the name of the forcing selection parameter (`bg_par_forcing_name`) to:

```
worjh2_FeMahowald2006_FpCO2_Fp13CO2_A2_02180PgC
```

which gives you the IPCC 'A2' scenario, which has been extended beyond year 2010 in this case to give a total cumulative fossil fuel burn of 2018 PgC (and used in *Ridgwell and Schmidt* [2010]). As this *forcing* has units of  $\text{PgC yr}^{-1}$  in its time-series file, you will need to add a scaling parameter to the *user-config* file to turn into  $\text{mol yr}^{-1}$ , i.e.

```
bg_par_atm_force_scale_val_3=8.3333e+013
```

For complete 'realism' you will need to run this experiment starting from the end of the historical transient experiment (Section 1.5), e.g.

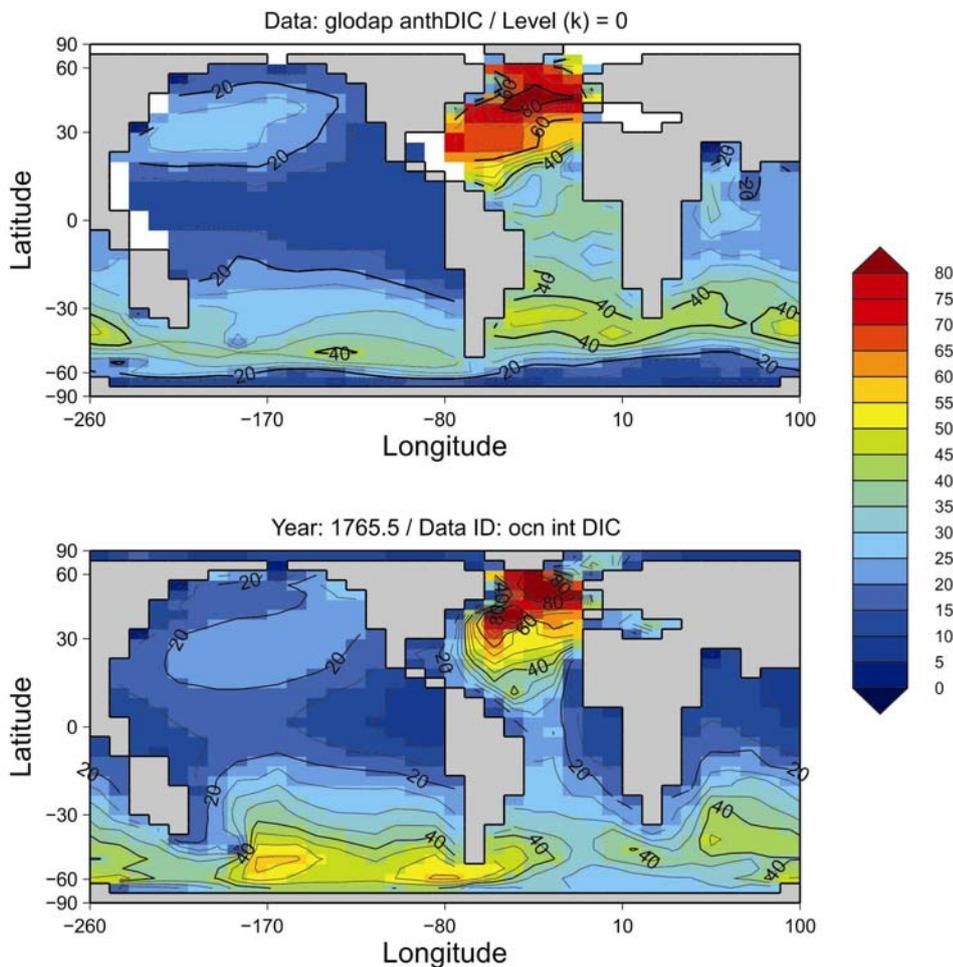
```
$ ./runmuffin.sh cgenie.eb_go_gs_ac_bg.worjh2.BASEFe LABS  
LAB.0100.future 90 LAB.0100.historical
```

and with the start from year now set to year 2010 (the end year of the historical transient):

```
bg_par_misc_t_start=2010.0
```

Note that the user-config `LAB.0100.future` is not provided for you – create this (or a file named however you like) for instance by copying `LAB.0100.historical` and making the parameter changes described above.

You can also easily replace the details of the emissions with other SRES scenarios – simply find the year vs. emissions rate information from the interweb (e.g. [http://sres.ciesin.columbia.edu/final\\_data.html](http://sres.ciesin.columbia.edu/final_data.html)) and edit (or copy-and-paste) the flux values for each decade into the file `biogem_force_flux_atm_pCO2_sig.dat` in the *forcing* directory. `cGENIE` will then automatically interpolate between these decadal tie-point to give a continuous change in emissions. Now you are able to make a rather more realistic/plausible assessment of when and where certain potential ecological impacts (vai assumed ocean chemistry criteria) might occur.



**Observed (top) vs. Model (bottom) anthropogenic CO<sub>2</sub> inventories.**

Data and model water column integrals in units of mol CO<sub>2</sub> m<sup>-2</sup> and are nominally with respect to year 1994.