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Ocean Science Discussions

Interactive comment on "CAMCAT: an oil spill forecasting system for the Catalan-Balearic Sea based on the MFS products" *by* E. Comerma et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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General Comments

This paper is about the installation of an oil spill forecasting system in the Catalan - Balearic Sea, called CAMCAT. As mentioned in the introduction of the paper, the authors' goal was to present an overview of the scientific and technical activities that were related to the implementation of the CAMCAT System. In this framework, the authors took the chance to address also a number of issues related with the operational oceanography applications, such as the availability and the accuracy of the forecasting data, the redundancy of sources, as well as the comprehensive way that the end products are presented (taking into account that in many cases the use of these products is done by not scientific personnel). The authors described in this paper their effort to produce a reliable system within the current limitations of data availability and accuracy.

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Interactive Discussion
Discussion Paper

The steps for the implementation of CAMCAT as well as the problems faced during this procedure are presented in a well and organized way. Furthermore, as already mentioned, main issues regarding operational oceanography problems addressed and discussed adequately. The work should be accepted for publication taking into account the following comments/remarks

Specific comments

I think that the authors should provide further justifications about the reasons that they led them to the selection of a 2-D oil spill model. It should be mentioned though, that the authors recognize the need for the use of a 3-D oil spill model (both in the description of the model and in the conclusions) that will take in to account the already available 3-D oceanographic information. Furthermore, it is quite surprising that for a public supported effort such as CAMCAT, a 2-D oil spill model was chosen to be implemented.

It is also mentioned (p.1805) that currently CAMCAT is using the combination of SMC-MFSTEP1671 to produce its forecasts. The reasons that led the authors in this choice are not well justified, even if there is a reference to the relevant work. I think that should be mentioned also in this paper the main results from the comparisons made with the use of different combinations

It is referenced in page 1798 that “the user can see the results as evolution of the spill within +24h and +48h after the spill release”. Does that mean that the end user cannot see the forecasting results for the first 24 hours after the release of the oil in the marine environment (which is very crucial information for efficient reaction to the event)? The authors should provide more information on that.

Technical corrections

Typing or syntax errors: In page 1805, the sentence that begins with “From those listed in Table 1Ĕ.” ends with the following phrase in parenthesis: (more details). It seems

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that this phrase remained in this position form a possible rephrasing of the sentence. Therefore, it should be eliminated.

Comments regarding the figures: In the print version of the paper that I downloaded, the figures sizes are rather small and in some of them critical information is difficult to be addressed, such as in figures 4 and 7. The size of the latter image should be increased so that the labels could be read more clearly. In figure 4, besides the small font's size, the labels regarding the black part of the dispersion cannot be read at all, as they are black letters in black background. For this part of the oil spill dispersion, another color should be used in order the labels could be read.

Interactive comment on Ocean Sci. Discuss., 3, 1791, 2006.