

November 19, 2018

Piers Chapman

Editor

Ocean Science

An interactive open-access journal of the European Geosciences Union

Re: Ocean Science paper os-2018-91

Dear Prof. Chapman,

Thank you for your October 1 e-mail letter regarding our manuscript originally entitled The Temporal Variability of Oxygen Inventory in the NE Black Sea Slope Water that was submitted for consideration of publication in Ocean Science.

We appreciate the comments the reviewers made on our manuscript. After considering all the suggestions, we rewrote the section Introduction, restructured the section Results and inserted the new data and results of the analyses.

We paid particular attention to the second review and reworked the manuscript, responding to each comment and streamlining the content as much as possible.

We went through the comments of the other three referees and made many other modifications in the paper. In particular, we applied the spectral analysis to justify the inertial variations of the oxygen stratification. The references were expanded. The figures and the figure captions were updated to comply with the requests of the referees.

Then we decided to show the satellite imagery that indicates typical space structures over the study area that is important for identifying the dynamical processes at ocean mesoscale and submesoscale that are responsible for oxygen dynamics at timescales of several days. Our fellow researcher, Dr. Dmitry Soloviev, processed the satellite imagery and we invited him to be a co-author of this manuscript.

The manuscript title was slightly changed to be more specific: The Short Timescale Variability of the Oxygen Inventory in the NE Black Sea Slope Water.

Finally the manuscript was submitted to Wiley Editing Service for advanced editing.

Herewith we attach the revised manuscript for your judgement. We hope you find it appropriate for Ocean Science. The replies to the referees will be posted at the Ocean Science web site later today.

Below you can find response to each of the reviews, please, notice our answers in bold font.

On behalf of the authors,
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Response to Review #1

We thank the reviewer for the suggestions that helped to improve the manuscript. In the revised manuscript, we try to reform its structure. In particular, we introduced two subsections in the section Results, which aim at more clear presentation of the main findings such as the periodic inertial oscillations in the distribution of oxygen.

We also submitted the manuscript for advanced editing at Wiley Editing Services that is among the best language services, as far as we know.

Below are our answers (in bold font) to the specific comments.

Consider to change the title for “The oxygen dynamics at the shelf edge of the Black Sea on the timescale of hours-to-days”.

The title of the ms was modified to emphasize the timescales of the oxygen variability.

Consider to delete the last sentence in the abstract because it is hardly the major and final result of this work.

The last sentence in the abstract was deleted.

Page 1, line 15: Unless I have missed it, any explanation or justification of the chosen depth of 30 meters has not been suggested in the text.

The profiler Aqualog operates below the subsurface floatation. Another instrument would be needed for observations in the top sea layer near the air-sea interface. We worked on such instrumentation recently and tested it in the Black Sea last month. Anyway, the explanation you requested is added into the section Methods.

Page 2, lines 1-2: This sentence comes from nowhere. Suggest a reference or some justification.

The reference is added.

Page 2, lines 5-6: CIL and other specific for the Black Sea features need an explanation or references.

The CIL and other important features of the stratification are defined in Introduction.

Page 2, line 11: The referenced publication by Oguz et al. is good but it is about modeling. Look for the recent publication by Kubryakov and Stanichniy or recently published data by Yunev et al., Mikaelyan et al. based on observations.

We decided to streamline the text as the second reviewer suggested. Hence we omitted these lines.

Page 3, line 5: I do not see any reason for discussions of global warming in this manuscript.

We want to mention a general context for the warming of the CIL.

Page 5, lines 20-24: More explanations are needed.

We added the satellite image showing the mesoscale and submesoscale eddies in one of the days during the survey.

Page 5, line 31: If I understand it correctly, the currents are of opposite directions in the layers above sigma-theta 14.5 and below it. If it is true, it requires an extended discussion on the influence of this feature on the oxygen distribution.

This issue certainly needs special attention. But it is beyond the scope of our ms. We hope to publish relevant findings elsewhere.

Page 6, lines 8-17: This paragraph is very hard to understand for English. For example, I believe the first sentence should be “the oxygen distribution versus depth is exceptionally dynamic”. The other sentences are equally vague in the present form.

The text is edited.

Page 6, lines 23-26: This justification for hypoxia should be somewhere in Introduction section.
Done.

Page 8, lines 5-8: I do not see any reason for this paragraph here.

The lines 1-8 are deleted.

Page 9, References: I believe there are too many references for publications by the authors of this manuscript. There usually should be up to 25% of them, but not more.

We added several new references so the number of self-citations falls below 25%.

Figure 1. This figure is mentioned once and has never been discussed. Consider deleting it.

We modified the figure and mentioned it several times in the revised ms.

Figure 3. This figure is very complicated and hard to understand or follow.

This figure shows complexity of the current structure over the continental slope. The upper figure shows the along-shore current profile vs time, the lower figure shows the cross-shore current also in the depth-time plane. The positive directions are Northwestward and Northeastward (shown in red). The reversal currents are shown in blue. The isopycnals are superimposed. The figure clearly shows that the currents and the density variations and therefore the oxygen dynamics are coherent.

Figure 5. This figure is mentioned once and only for the sharp oxycline. I do not see any reason to plot several profiles and to apply 20 μM shift.

We deleted 3 of 5 profiles and showed the rest 2 profiles without the shift in the revised figure.

Response to Review #2

We thank you for many judicious comments and fruitful suggestions. The points you made helped us to realize the weaknesses of the text which we tried to improve as much as possible. Certain parts of the manuscript were rewritten and restructured. Many edits were made to further improve the flow and readability of the text. Some sentences were restructured to address the overly complex structure or to revise potentially unclear phrasing. In cases where the meaning of the text was not clear, revisions were made to convey the information with increased clarity and reduced ambiguity. Some edits were made to improve conciseness by trimming unnecessary words and streamlining the flow of the manuscript. The manuscript was edited by Wiley Editing Service for grammar, phrasing, and punctuation.

Please, see below the answers (in bold font) to your comments.

1. Abstract: it needs to be streamlined to better convey the importance of the work and its results (there are several good resources online on how to write a good scientific abstract). For instance, it should start with the big picture – the posing of the problem you are studying and its importance (rather than mentioning the importance of the methods) – and end with the main conclusions and broader implications. Furthermore, in its current form, the abstract has too many details about the sensors used. In the abstract and the main text: authors say that their study looks at time scales from hours to months. However, they have data for two months, so it would be more appropriate to say “from hours to weeks” instead.

The abstract was modified. In particular, the details about the sensors are omitted. The definition of the short timescale as “from hours to weeks” is used throughout the revised ms.

2. Introduction: The first few paragraphs, where the Black Sea is described, should also include a thorough description of the horizontal and vertical structure. That information is needed later on, and sometimes it is scattered in the text or assumed to be known by the reader. In addition, all the terminology needs to be properly defined in this section (e.g. suboxic layer, hydrogen sulfide boundary, oxygen penetration layer, hypoxia onset) and used consistently in the rest of the paper.

The section Introduction was rewritten to address the reviewer concern. The definitions of important features of the oxygen stratification as well as the Cold Intermediate Layer are presented.

3. Results, Discussion: there are some results in the Discussion section and some discussion in the Results section. Make sure each section contains only results and only discussion, or consider merging both into a “Results and Discussion” section

The material of these sections is rearranged (see also below). The revised section Results has 2 subsections 3.1 Background observations and 3.2 Oxygen dynamics

4. Everywhere: There are many paragraphs that are one- or two-sentence long, which should be avoided. Furthermore, many citations are within parenthesis, when they should read instead “Lastname et al. (year)”

The Copernicus Publications Word template is used to prepare the ms including the citations.

5. Figures: some captions tend to have a lot of information that should be presented instead (or as well) in the main text.

Information of certain figure captions is also presented in the revised ms.

6. Specific comments:

Page2.Line1: “resistance”: probably the word you are looking for is resilience? Anyways, the sentence does not read well and should be rewritten.

Corrected

P2.L8-9: “This memory affects the distribution...”: you should explain better why phytoplankton is sensitive to the properties below the seasonal thermocline. The next sentence explains it (it is a source of nutrients), but the sentence is presented as a separate concept (by starting with “In addition”).

Corrected

P2.L21: suboxic layer needs to be defined.

Defined

P3.L6: hydrogen sulfide boundary has to be defined

Defined

P3.L10-21: this paragraph is a weird way of posing the rationale for the setup of the mooring. It needs to be rewritten and bullets should be removed.

Rewritten

P3.L26: I don’t think that “relief” is the word you are looking for. Topography? Roughness?

Rewritten

P3.L29: “on” the shelf or “over” the shelf

Corrected

P3.L30-33: this is an example of a sentence that is too long. Aim for sentences up to 2 lines-long

P4.8-9: unless some description is added for each section, this sentence should be removed.

Removed

P4.10: Odd heading. Maybe just “Methods” or “Observations”?

The heading “Methods” is used.

P4.17: if profiles occur every 2 hours, how can you obtain 24 profiles in a day? Did you mean 12 profiles per day? Otherwise, please explain better

The explanation is given.

P5.17: “seasonal”: talking about seasonality with two months of data is a bit of a stretch.

Remove “seasonal”. Furthermore, the trend is hard to see in figure 2, maybe a different color scale would help.

This sentence is rewritten.

P5.18: refer to Fig 3 at the end of the sentence

Done

P5.rest of the page: the authors start with the conclusion (temporal variability linked to meandering jet and eddies, line 19-20) but present some kind of evidence later on (lines 28-30). The logic and flow here need to be streamlined.

The material of the Section is rearranged to address this point.

P6.L5 and rest of the manuscript: instead of a long dash “—“ we see a “ \tilde{A}° u”

Corrected

P6.L6-7: Please explain more explicitly how you get to the Itotal number of 33 – 34 mol m⁻²

Corrected

P6.L12-15: Please explain here the chosen vertical axes for figures 6 and 7, otherwise the reader starts to wonder why the authors did not choose just depth. Also, introduce in the main text the same notation as used in the figures and their caption (or remove said notation from the figures).

The explanation is given at the end of Section 2.

P6.L17: shouldn't Fig 2 be cited at the end of the sentence?

The figure is cited here.

P6.L18: About the 89%: there is information explaining this number in the caption of figure 7 that should be moved here.

This information is moved to the main text.

P6.L22: suggest removing seasonal or replacing by something more appropriate

“Seasonal” is deleted.

P6.L23: remove “follows:”

“Follows:” deleted. The definition of hypoxia is moved to Introduction.

P6.L29-30: belongs to Discussion rather than Results

That sentence was omitted.

P6.L30: “as a result of horizontal advection”! this statement seems like a reasonable assumption, but it should be better justified. Or even better, would it be possible to prove it using your velocity data and/or knowledge of surrounding water masses?

We are working on justification of the cold intermediate water advection by using the profiler data since 2012. The analysis would take more time and the results will be published later on.

P7.L8: replace “is” by “was”

Done.

P7.L26: remove “layer of”

Done.

P7.L30-34: belongs to Results rather than Discussion

This paragraph is moved to Results.

P8.L1-8: How do the studies mentioned here relate to this work?

These lines are deleted.

P8.L11-12: merge both paragraphs.

The text is modified.

P8.L29-33: some of these summarized results were not mentioned in the Results section (e.g. “11% of profiles” part – I found it in Fig 6 caption, but not in the main text).

In addition, why is the winter of 2016 warm? The “warm winter” statement in line 20 should be described early on (in the Results if it can be proved with the profiler data or in the Introduction if other references are used to describe it) – note that it should be proven specifically for 2016, not just generically claiming that global warming has warmed the Black Sea

Data of the weather station on the air temperature are added into the section 3.1.

P9.L8-9: “water in this new CIL is rather warm” – I find this confusing, because earlier you mentioned that it was colder than the old CIL. Is the new CIL warm or cold?

Corrected.

P9.L10: what essential changes in plankton migration may occur? Please expand

Done

P9.L19: Show Kerch Strait on map in fig 1

Done

Fig 1: As mentioned above, show Kerch Strait if you are mentioning in the main text. It would be beneficial to have an inset showing the whole Black Sea and a little box showing the location of the map in the figure.

Done

Fig 3: along –shore axis is 50deg and cross-shore axis 310deg ! why are they not perpendicular? (Also, this information belongs also to the main text)

The mistake is corrected.

Fig 4, 8: If possible, always try to choose colors that are color-blind safe (i.e., avoid red and green in the same figure).

We changed the colors at certain figures in some cases we could not change the colors because it made the figures unclear.

Fig 6, 7, 10: I already mentioned the Y axes and that its description should be properly given in the main text. Also, there is info if Fig 6 that belongs to the main text.

Modified.

Response to review #3

Thank you very much for careful reading of our manuscript. We revised it in line with your comments. Below we list your comments together with our responses (in bold font).

This is a clear study presenting an interesting observational material and providing interpretations of findings. Results are convincing, however the presentation needs some improvements. I hope that below comments can help authors provide improved revision.

1. English grammar needs substantial improvement by native English speaking oceanographer.

The paper was rewritten and polished by the Wiley Language Service.

2. Explain more clearly concepts and literature review (see further some specific comments).

The definitions of the important features of the sea stratification were put into Introduction. The literature cited was expanded.

3. I do not find a clear prove that “the new CIL emerged by horizontal advection above the pycnocline only at the end of the observational survey”. This is mentioned in the abstract and in p. 5, 6 where authors mention Fig. 9. They should explain how they deduce this from the figure.
At the end of the survey, the temperature profile showed two minimums. The lower one was located at the same depth range below the pycnocline core where the temperature was above 8.55C. The upper colder minimum emerged on March 3 above the pycnocline core.

4. When talking about time scales authors could make spectral analysis to quantify the relevant periods: “the hypoxia boundary depth fluctuated on two time scales: ~17 h due to the inertial oscillations and approximately 5 days due to the current meanders and eddies.

The spectral analysis is carried out for the data ensemble of the hypoxia onset depth of January 2016 when there was no gap in the data. The spectrum is plotted and inserted in Results as a new figure.

5. Stanev et al., 1995 is cited but not added in the reference list.

The missing reference is added.

6. When you say “In general, factors that provide the resistance of the Black Sea ecosystem to anthropogenic and climatic effects are weaker than those in other marginal seas adjacent to the European continent” cite the origin of this statement or provide evidence.

The reference to the paper by A. E. Kideys (Fall and rise of the Black Sea ecosystem. Science, 297, 1482-1484, doi:10.1126/science.1073002, 2002) is added.

7. The statement “In the wintertime, intensive cooling and vertical convective mixing are known to occur in the Black Sea, which enables the top layer to achieve its maximum thickness and

minimum temperature (refer to Piotukh et al., 2011 and corresponding references).“ is too general. It is not Piotukh et al. (2011), who first came to this conclusion. Authors should cite relevant papers. Perhaps stress that Piotukh et al. (2011) came to this conclusion or areas subject to the present research. When describing the formation of CIL take in discussion Stanev, E. V., M. J. Bowman, E. L. Peneva, and J. V. Staneva (2003b) Control of Black Sea intermediate water mass formation by dynamics and topography: comparisons of numerical simulations, survey and satellite data. *J. Mar. Res.*, 61, 59-99.

Proper references are added

8. Rephrase “However, the ARGO buoys profiled the water column at five-day intervals. Therefore, their data could not be used to evaluate typical time scales of short-time fluctuations in the oxygen inventory.”. Some Argo floats in the Black Sea are programmed to measure with finer sampling rate. Re-programming can be done during the operations.

The text was modified to take this into account.

9. The phrase “In the center of the western cyclonic gyre, the depth of the top mixed layer was limited by 40 m also in an anomalously cold winter (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005).” has to be specified in the context of present paper. Is what happens in the western gyre relevant to the eastern part, the latter being the subject of this study. If yes, prove it.

These lines were deleted.

10. p. 8, l. 5, In the paper of Gregg and Yakushev there is no a word “hypoxia”. They talk about SOL. To my knowledge suboxia is more used when describing shelf processes. Please check with hydrochemisists.

These lines were deleted.

11. Authors could consider studying the relevance of following papers Stanev, E. V., S. Grayek, H. Claustre, C. Schmechtig, and A. Poteau (2017) Water intrusions and particle signatures in the Black Sea: a Biogeochemical-Argo float investigation. *Ocean Dynamics*, 67, 1119–1136, doi: 10.1007/s10236-017-1077-9

Stanev, E. V., Poulain, P.-M., Grayek, S., Johnson, K. S., Claustre, H., & Murray, J. W. (2018). Understanding the dynamics of the oxic-anoxic interface in the Black Sea. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 45. <https://doi.org/10.1002/2017GL076206> to their study

The reference was added to the ms.

Response to review #4

We are very grateful to the Reviewer for a very careful reading of the manuscript and useful comments and suggestions. Below we list the comments together with our responses to them (in bold font).

General Comments

In this manuscript the authors present and analyze a extremely valuable dataset gathered from a moored profiler equipped with Doppler and oxygen sensors on the edge of the Black Sea North Eastern shelf. Based on this datasets, they address the issue of the short time-scales of variations for vertical

horizons characterizing the density and oxygenation structure. Several recent publication have shown the timeliness of this study, in the context of Black Sea deoxygenation, as such detailed experimental data set provides the means to evidence diapycnal ventilation processes and to quantify the variability of bottom oxygen conditions on the narrow eastern shelf. As discussed extensively by other reviewers, the manuscript would gain a lot by revising the structure and language, and therefore requires substantial revision. However, we encourage the authors in tackling this effort since the materials and results absolutely deserves publication. Here follow some additional suggestions, and comments.

1. A major object of the manuscript (and a strong asset of the sampling approach) ' regards the characterization of the temporal scales of vertical oscillations. In particular, it is very interesting to perceive phenomena acting at time scales shorter than those typical of current sampling in the open sea sampling frequency (eg. Argo). I would suggest, as I think this is accessible , to analyze those time scales more robustly with spectral analysis tools, applied, for instance on the time series of SOL, onset depth of hypoxia, velocity components a certain depth, etc.. This could feed the discussion by putting processes in relation with (ranges of) time scales more clearly.

The inertial scale oscillations of the hypoxia onset depth were verified by using D. Thomson's multitaper method that became a conventional tool for time series analysis in Matlab. When used with Matlab's sptool the MTM also delivers the confidence intervals if the power spectrum estimate. In the revised ms, the spectral analysis is carried out for the data ensemble of the hypoxia onset depth of January 2016 when there was no gap in the data. The spectrum is plotted and inserted in Results as a new figure.

2. The discussion on oxygen inventory is somewhat confusing, since it may give, at ' a fast read, the impression that the observed variations in oxygen inventory are to be related to oxygen sinks/sources terms. It later appears that the variations in this oxygen inventory (integrated over depth) is mostly due to widening/thickening of isopycnals intervals, meaning that oxygen waters enter and leaves this particular water column laterally as waves displaces the isopycnal surfaces vertically. I believe this should be clarified earlier. Maybe (suggestion) the wording "local oxygen inventory" may serve this clarification.

We agree about the term "local" and inserted it at proper parts of the text.

If our next research grant would be approved by Russian Fund for Basic Research, we hope to deploy two profiler moorings to get the data about the horizontal advection of dissolved oxygen. Perhaps, under international cooperation we can deploy at least 3 profilers to approach this problem more comprehensively.

3. Reporting on velocities :

1) I think there is a confusion in the directions given ' as referential for the velocities. 1a) cross and along-shore directions are switched in legend of Fig 3. 1b) the two direction given are not perpendicular ?

This mistake is corrected.

2) Could the authors consider the option to report velocities with intensity (magnitude) on one panel, and direction on a second panel (using a cyclic color scale).

We wanted to focus on the oxygen dynamics rather than the current variability although the latter is very interesting on its own right. The along-shore current component was much stronger than the cross-shore component. This could be shown by using angle histogram. Actually, we are analyzing the current meter data at companion moorings also operated in 2016, which unfortunately were not equipped with the oxygen sensors. The results will be published elsewhere.

Specific comments

P1L9 : How the fact that the benthic habitat is small compared to the total Black Sea area does aggravate the stress of the ecosystem? Could you clarify this statement ?

The reference to the paper by A. E. Kideys (Fall and rise of the Black Sea ecosystem. Science, 297, 1482-1484, doi:10.1126/science.1073002, 2002) is added.

P2L1-2 replace "resistance" with "resilience". '

This sentence should be detailed and referenced.

The "resistance" is substituted for "resilience".

P2L3-26 Please rephrase this paragraph, the reading is somewhat unclear. (eg. 'downwelling in the coastal part and upwelling in the central part', or refer to curvature of isopycnal surfaces)

The style is improved.

P3L25 the term "minimum" is unclear here.

"minimum" is replaced by "more than"

P3L28 "Wind-induced upwellings, although .." (add "-" and ",")

The style is improved.

P4L13 ".. deployed at a depth of approximately .." (add "a depth of")

The style is improved.

P4L22 "smoothly worked" -> "worked smoothly"

P5L26 week -> weak

Corrected

P7L24-26 -> a part of this sentence should go to methods

Done

Fig 6,7 I suggest to define the vertical referential used here in the methods (for instance referring to

"normalized depth" or some similar wordings) , and to use this definition in the figures and captions. In addition, I'd indicate an horizontal mark at the mean depth of maximum density gradient, that is used as a reference. On the same topic: was a shift of vertical coordinates also operated for fig 11? if yes, please indicate so, if no, could you explain why ?

The estimates of the mean depth of the maximum density gradient re inserted in the ms (P.7 L.17, 26)

In Fig. 11, the Richardson numbers are plotted vs depth.

Fig 10: To support the discussion on this figure, it would be useful to get a ' similar picture for the cases $Is_{14} > 3.5$.

The figure is added.

References

P1L25 Reference Stanev et al 1995 does not appear in the bibliography.

The missing reference is added.

P1L28 Capet et al 2004 does not appear in the bibliography, P1L28 Capet et al 2014 does not appear in the bibliography.

The missing reference is added.

P6L24 Middelburg & Levin 2009 does not appear in the bibliography.

The missing reference is added.

P7L19 Zatsepin et al 2011 does not appear in the bibliography.

The missing reference is added.

The short timescaletemporal variability of the oxygen inventory in the NE Black Sea slope water

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Abstract. ~~The time series of vertical profiles of hydrophysical parameters and dissolved oxygen are critical for identifying trends in water column stratification, mixing and ventilation in the Black Sea. Due to global warming, warm winters have recently become common over the Black Sea, leading to the risk of shoaling oxygen penetration, and the temperature in the cold intermediate layer (CIL) is increasing. However, there is a lack of data on the temporal variations in oxygen throughout the water column over short timescales of hours to weeks. In this paper, new observations over the upper part of the NE Black Sea continental slope are presented. Regular, frequent measurements that are as frequent as every 2 h were performed using a moored profiler near the shelf break at a depth of 220 m in the northeastern Black Sea from January to early March 2016, to assess the temporal dynamics of the oxygen inventory over the upper part of the continental slope on timescales from hours to months. The moored profiler was equipped with a sensor suit that included the CTD 52-MP CTD with the fast oxygen sensor SBE43F and the acoustic Doppler current meter Nortek Aquadopp 2 MHz, which. The profiling allowed for direct observations of of the temperature in the cold intermediate layer (CIL), the CIL temperature, the pycnocline structure, the current velocity and the oxygen stratification and, in particular, the depths of the hypoxia onset. The average oxygen inventory below a depth of 30 m was 24.9 mol m⁻². Relatively high/low oxygen inventory cases were related to the thin/thick main pycnocline, which was associated with the onshore that was associated with the inshore/offshore location of the Black Sea Rim Current. The pycnocline hindered the vertical transport of oxygenated water to the CIL. The new CIL emerged by horizontal advection above the pycnocline only at the end of the observational survey. The vertical displacements of the hypoxia onset depth ranged from 97-170 m, while the shelf edge depth in this region usually ranges ranged from 90-100 m. Intermittently, the hypoxia boundary depth fluctuated on two time scales: ~17 h due to the inertial oscillations and approximately 5-3-7 days due to the current meanders and eddies. Further efforts are urgently needed for monitoring the rise of hypoxia onset depth above the shelf break in the Black Sea.~~

1 Introduction

The Black Sea is a semienclosed basin with very limited water exchange with the Aegean Sea through the Turkish Straits (the Bosphorus and Dardanelles). In the Black Sea, the permanent pycnocline separates the saline waters of

Mediterranean origin from the upper layer diluted with fresh water due to precipitation and river discharge (for most recent research on Black Sea thermohaline properties, the long-term trends and variations, see Miladinova et al., 2017). The upper layer of the Black Sea is sensitive to climatic fluctuations and global warming. ~~The Black Sea is a semienclosed sea basin with a very limited water exchange with the Mediterranean Sea; thus, its stratification and circulation are remarkably sensitive to climatic fluctuations and global warming~~ (for example, refer to Stanev et al., 1995, Belokopytov, 2011, Capet et al., 2012, Dorofeev et al., 2013, Dorofeev, Sukhikh, 2016, ~~and Miladinova et al., 2017~~).

The Black Sea is prone to natural hydrogen sulfide contamination, and oxygen-dependent life forms only exist in its top layer, which has a thickness less than 200 m and is the most susceptible to atmospheric impacts (Oguz et al., 2003, Capet et al., 2004, Mikaelyan et al., 2013, Capet et al., 2014, Stanev et al., 2014). In the eastern Black Sea, the ecosystem stress is aggravated by the fact that the shelf is narrow (Fig. 1); thus, the benthic habitat is smaller than the total area of the eastern Black Sea. In general, factors that provide Black Sea ecosystem resilience to anthropogenic and climatic effects are weaker than those in other marginal seas adjacent to the European continent (Kideys, 2002). ~~The stress of the ecosystem is aggravated by the fact that the shelf is narrow, with the exception of the NW part; thus, the benthic habitat is small compared to the total area of the Black Sea. In general, factors that provide the resistance of the Black Sea ecosystem to anthropogenic and climatic effects are weaker than those in other marginal seas adjacent to the European continent.~~

The sea is ventilated in the winter when convection and vertical turbulent mixing move the cold surface water deeper into the pycnocline (refer to Ivanov et al., 2001 and corresponding references). The vertical mixing enables the top layer to achieve the maximum thickness and minimum temperature (Stanev et al., 2003). After the winter, a seasonal thermocline is formed above the least heated layer termed the cold intermediate layer (CIL). The seasonal thermocline blocks vertical turbulent mixing and to a considerable extent, isolates the CIL from atmospheric forcings. For this reason, the thermohaline properties below the seasonal thermocline retain the “memory” of wintertime cooling. Originally, the CIL was defined by a temperature of less than 8°C (Ovchinnikov, Popov, 1987; Konovalov et al., 2005) and a temperature range of 8-8.6°C due to warming (Stanev et al., 2013). The CIL contains most of the thermocline over the Black Sea (Oguz et al., 1991). In the NE Black Sea, the CIL core defines the top of the strong halocline (Yakushev et al., 2005; Ostrovskii, Zatsepin, 2016). In this region, the upper part of the permanent pycnocline is partly supported by the vertical temperature gradient, while the lower part of the pycnocline is supported by only the halocline.

Cooling and convective mixing processes that occur in winter in the Black Sea supply oxygen to the top part of the permanent pycnocline, where turbulence rapidly decays (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005; Zatsepin et al., 2007). Gregg and Yakushev (2005) stressed that understanding the origin of the CIL has been hampered by the scarcity of winter observations. Detailed comprehensive studies, including the microstructure measurements and sampling in the center of the cyclonic gyre in anomalously cold winter conditions, were completed in March 2003 (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005). The freezing air outbreaks drove convection that cooled the surface mixed layer to 6.1°C and deepened the layer to 40 m, which directly ventilated the upper 80% of the CIL. The concentrations of dissolved oxygen were ~350 $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ in the mixed layer and rapidly decreased

to $70 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ at the base of the CIL, which is 9 m below the mixed layer. These observations are unique, and we assume that observations such as these have not been repeated.

During the winter in the NE Black Sea, the levels of dissolved oxygen, $[\text{O}_2]$, are relatively high at the CIL upper boundary, e.g., Yakushev et al. (2005) presented profiles that indicated $[\text{O}_2] \approx 250 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ at a depth of 80 m where the temperature dropped below 8°C . The dissolved oxygen decreased with depth in the CIL. The oxycline extended from $\sigma_\theta \approx 14.5 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ to $\sigma_\theta \approx 15.75 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$, where levels of $[\text{O}_2]$ become undetectable ($<5 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$). This region was termed the suboxic layer (SOL) by Murray et al. (1989). For instrumental observations using dissolved oxygen sensors, a more appropriate definition of SOL would be the layer in which $[\text{O}_2] < 10 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ (Stunzhas et al., 2013). According to Glazer et al. (2006), the SOL is 15-30 m thick in the eastern Black Sea. Hydrogen sulfide, $[\text{H}_2\text{S}]$, remains undetectable ($<1 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$) below the SOL boundary unless the water density σ_θ exceeds $16.02\text{-}16.06 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ (Glazer et al., 2006).

Since 2010, data from the ARGO floats equipped with oxygen sensors became available for the Black Sea. The studies based on these data enabled quantitative assessments of the differences between the vertical structure in the central part of the Black Sea and the vertical structure in the periphery of the sea (Stanev et al., 2013). The oxygenated layer in the upper ocean in the central basin was approximately two times thinner than that in the coastal zone, and the temporal variations in thickness were very small (approximately 20 m). Conversely, the depth of the dissolved oxygen isoline $5 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ underwent changes of more than 75 m within several weeks of the ARGO float travel time. Numerous strong, upward bursts of the low oxygen layer that reach 50 m in the deep basin and 75 m in the coastal zone were observed, most likely due to mesoscale processes (Stanev et al., 2013). The long-term trends assessed with the ARGO float data and the old archive data that pertained to marine and laboratory measurements demonstrated that the oxygen inventory had been decreasing in the Black Sea since the second half of the 20th century (Capet et al., 2016). These trends were apparently exacerbated by global warming, which can contribute to the elevation of the hydrogen sulfide boundary.

Capet et al. (2016) emphasized that the following objectives are important in the present stage of Black Sea research: determining the extent to which the shoaling of the oxygen penetration layer may entrain the shoaling of the hydrogen sulfide onset depth, establishing a system for the continuous monitoring of the oxygen inventory and CIL ventilation, clarifying and quantifying the diapycnic and isopycnic ventilation processes at the periphery of the basin, including mesoscale dynamic structures, and understanding how the intensity of mixing is related to the Rim Current dynamics.. To achieve these goals, Capet et al. (2016) proposed using an observation network of moored and drifting profilers equipped with oxygen and hydrogen sulfide sensors.

Unfortunately, ship-based monitoring alone cannot address low oxygen dynamics on short timescales or during episodic low oxygen events (Friedrich et al., 2014). Additionally, most of the ARGO floats profile the water column at five or ten-day intervals, and such data could not be used to evaluate the typical time scales of hours-to-days of oxygen inventory fluctuations. Even if the ARGO floats are programmed to perform profiling once per day (e.g., Stanev et al., 2017), this timing would not be sufficient for observing daily changes. Since the Black Sea ecosystem responses depend on the frequency, duration, and severity of hypoxia events, more frequent sampling of oxygen is required. For the onset of hypoxia

at the Black Sea Crimean shelf, Jessen et al. (2017) used a threshold value $[O_2] = 63 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ (Middelburg, Levin, 2009), which indicates the low oxygen content conditions that begin affecting the fauna, the structures of animal communities, and the functions of the marine ecosystem.

To study oxygen dynamics over short timescales, we deployed a mooring with a profiler Aqualog (Ostrovskii and Zatsëpin, 2016) with a high-accuracy oxygen sensor at the NE Black Sea periphery from January to March 2016 (Fig. 1). The mooring site was located in the top part of the continental slope near Gelendzhik Bay. The NE Black Sea region near Gelendzhik is far from the influence of the Bosphorus Strait's input and major river inflows. The vertical hydrological and hydrochemical structures in this region reflect "integrated" changes at timescales longer than the seasonal scale (Yakushev et al., 2005). Data from regular sampling expeditions into the NE Black Sea from 1989 to 2005 have been used to study the hydrochemical structure of the water column during winter and summer (Yakushev et al., 2005). However, the short timescale processes in the NE Black Sea slope water and in particular, the variability in the oxygen stratification at timescales of hours to weeks were poorly known because of the lack of observational data until the deployment of our profiler mooring.

The Aqualog profiler mooring site was located near the Rim Current, which encircles the entire Black Sea basin. In this region, the ventilation processes in the top layer are much more diversified than those that occur in the open sea. In particular, the meanders of the Rim Current and the mesoscale eddies cause a high amplitude (> 50 meters) and relatively rapid (on the scale of several days) vertical oscillations in the pycnocline and oxycline (Ostrovskii et al. 2010; Zatsëpin et al. 2013). Near-bottom Ekman currents are also generated (Ostrovskii and Zatsëpin, 2016; Elkin et al., 2017). Wind-induced upwellings (Zatsëpin et al., 2016) sometimes initiate a local, short-term redistribution of the oxygen concentration over the shelf and continental slope.

The local processes in the NE Black Sea edge are of limited duration. The impact of local processes on oxygen dynamics as well as the temporal scales of the oxygen inventory fluctuations must be described more thoroughly, typical vertical distributions of oxygen must be identified, observed vertical distributions must be explained, and any gaps in our understanding of the effects of oxygen fluctuations on the sea ecosystem must be identified. These problems can be addressed by analyzing the time series of vertical high-resolution, multivariable datasets. The time resolution of the profiling data must be sufficiently high to capture any transient processes that may have a long-term effect on the ecosystem (Jessen et al., 2017).

Below, we consider these issues by analyzing a unique dataset that describes the vertical profiles of the oxygen content, temperature and salinity of water, and the speed and direction of currents, as well as the acoustic backscattering of suspended matter. These profiles were obtained during winter, when the maximum amount of the oxygen inventory in water is achieved by the frequent cycling of the Aqualog profiler between the near-surface sea layer and the near-bottom layer below the hydrogen sulfide boundary.

~~In the wintertime, intensive cooling and vertical convective mixing are known to occur in the Black Sea, which enables the top layer to achieve its maximum thickness and minimum temperature (refer to Piotukh et al., 2011 and~~

corresponding references). In summer, a seasonal thermocline is formed above the least heated layer termed as the cold intermediate layer (CIL). This seasonal thermocline blocks vertical turbulent mixing, and to a considerable extent, isolates the CIL from atmospheric forcing. For this reason, the thermohaline properties below the seasonal thermocline retain the “memory” of the wintertime cooling. This memory affects the distribution and bioproductivity of phytoplankton, which is sensitive to density stratification. In addition, the intensity of wintertime convective mixing governs the degree to which the top sea layer is enriched by biogenic substances from its underlying layers, which affects the intensity of the succeeding development of plankton communities (Oguz et al., 2003).

Cooling and convective mixing processes that occur in winter supply oxygen to the top part of the main pycnocline, where turbulence rapidly decays (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005, Zatsepin et al., 2007).

The wintertime measurements of oxygen in Black Sea waters have been very irregular. Gregg and Yakushev (2005) stressed that understanding the origin of the CIL has been hampered by the scarcity of winter observations. Detailed comprehensive studies, including the microstructure measurements and probing in the center of the cyclonic gyre in anomalously cold winter conditions, were completed only in March, 2003 (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005). We assume that they were never repeated. According to the obtained data, freezing air outbreaks drove convection that cooled the surface mixed layer to 6.1°C and deepened it to 40 m, which directly ventilated the upper 80% of the CIL. The concentrations of dissolved oxygen were $350 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ in the mixed layer and rapidly decreased to $70 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ at the base of the CIL, 9 m below the mixed layer. The turbulent fluxes were too weak to reach the suboxic layer (SOL), whose top was 4 m below the bottom of the CIL and well removed from direct surface replenishment (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005).

The vertical exchange processes in the deep sea area and its continental slope region differ in the Black Sea (refer to, e.g., Zatsepin et al., 2003, Stanev et al., 2013) because the total cyclonic circulation is characterized by substantial coastal downwelling and upwelling in the central part of the Black Sea, which leads to the redistribution of the top layer waters (including the CIL water) between the central zone and coastal zone.

Since 2010, the data from ARGO buoys equipped with oxygen sensors became available for the Black Sea. The studies based on these data enabled quantitative assessments of the differences between the vertical structure in the central part of the Black Sea and the vertical structure in its periphery (Stanev et al., 2013). The oxygenated layer in the upper ocean in the central basin was approximately two times thinner than that in the coastal zone, and the temporal variations of its thickness were very small (approximately 20 m). Conversely, the depth of the dissolved oxygen isoline $5 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$, which indicates the oxic-anoxic interface around the continental slope, underwent changes of more than 75 m in only several weeks of the ARGO float travel time. Numerous strong upward bursts of the low oxygen layer that reach 50 m in the deep basin and 75 m in the coastal zone were observed, which manifest the importance of the mesoscale processes (Stanev et al., 2013). However, the ARGO buoys profiled the water column at five day intervals. Therefore, their data could not be used to evaluate typical time scales of short time fluctuations in the oxygen inventory.

The long-term trends assessed with the ARGO buoy data and the old archive data that pertained to marine and laboratory measurements demonstrated that the oxygen inventory had been decreasing in the Black Sea since the second half

of the 20th century (Capet et al., 2016). These trends were apparently exacerbated by global warming, which can contribute to the elevation of the hydrogen sulfide boundary.

As stressed in (Friedrich et al., 2014), ship-based monitoring cannot address the temporal dynamics of a low oxygen environment on shorter timescales and episodic low oxygen events. Because the Black Sea ecosystem responses depend on the frequency, duration, and severity of hypoxia events, continuous monitoring of oxygen is required.

The article (Capet et al., 2016) emphasized that the following objectives are important in the present stage of Black Sea research:

- determining the extent that the shoaling of the oxygen penetration layer may entrain the shoaling of the hydrogen sulfide onset depth;

- establishing a system for continuous monitoring of the oxygen inventory and ventilation of the CIL;

- clarifying and quantifying the diapycnic and isopycnic ventilation processes at the periphery of the basin, including mesoscale dynamic structures, and understanding how the intensity of mixing is related to the Rim Current dynamics.

The article (Capet et al., 2016) suggests that these tasks should be approached by using an observation network of moored and drifting profilers equipped with oxygen and hydrogen sulfide sensors. Reasoned by this statement of the problem, we mounted the moored Aqualog profiler equipped with a high accuracy oxygen sensor (refer to (Ostrovskii and Zatsepin, 2016) for the detailed description of the instrumentation) at the NE Black Sea periphery, namely, in the top part of the continental slope near the Gelendzhik Bay, from January to March 2016.

The mooring site was located near the boundary Rim Current, which encircles the entire Black Sea basin. In this region the ventilation processes in the top layer are much more diversified than those that occur in the open sea. In particular, the Rim Current that meanders and the formation of mesoscale eddies in the NE part (Zatsepin et al. 2003) cause a high amplitude (minimum of 50 meters) and relatively rapid (on the scale of several days) vertical oscillations of the pycnocline and oxycline (Ostrovskii et al. 2010, Zatsepin et al. 2013). The Rim Current interaction with the bottom relief creates near-bottom Ekman currents and water flows in the direction normal to the edge of the continental shelf (Ostrovskii and Zatsepin, 2016, Elkin et al., 2017). Wind induced upwellings although they are not frequent in the NE zone (Zatsepin et al., 2016) initiate locally a short time redistribution of the oxygen concentration in the shelf and slope waters of the Black Sea.

Due to the high short term variability at the NE Black Sea periphery, the temporal scales of the oxygen inventory fluctuations and the oxygen redistribution over depth in these fluctuations must be described more thoroughly, typical vertical distributions of oxygen concentration must be identified, the observed vertical distributions must be explained, and any gaps in our understanding of the effect of oxygen fluctuations on the sea ecosystem must be identified. These tasks can only be solved by analyzing the time series of vertical profiles for both hydrophysical and hydrochemical parameters. The time resolution of the measured data must be sufficiently high to address any transient processes that may have a long term effect on the ecosystem (Jessen et al., 2017). These data were not available to Black Sea oceanographers until recently.

This paper considers these issues by analyzing a unique data set that describes the vertical profiles of oxygen content, temperature and salinity of water, and speed and direction of currents, as well as acoustic backscattering on suspended

matter. These profiles were obtained in winter, when the maximum amount of oxygen inventory in water is achieved, by frequent cycling of the Aqualog profiler between the near surface sea layer and the near bottom layer below the hydrogen sulfide boundary.

This paper is organized rather plainly: the observational methods are presented in Sections 2, data processing results and a discussion are provided in Sections 3 and 4, conclusions are brought into Section 5.

2 Measurement methods

Local oxygen inventory measurements were obtained ~~The oxygen inventory measurements were taken~~ on the moored buoy station at 44°32.372'N 37°54.868'E near Gelendzhik Bay in the NE Black Sea (Fig. 1). The shelf is normally shallow, at less than 100 m deep, with less than 100 m deep with a maximum width of 4 km in this region. The mooring was deployed at approximately 220 m and operated from January 1 to March 6, 2016.

The mooring was equipped with the Aqualog profiler

(Ostrovskii, Zatsepin, 2016). The Aqualog was programmed to cycle up and down every 2 hours to obtain 12 depth profiles on ascending tracks and 12 depth profiles on descending tracks, for a total of 24 profiles of daily multivariable data. The parking depth of the profiler was 205 m, and the upper profiling depth was 25 m. Each profiling cycle began from the parking depth at an exact UTC hour. After ascending to the upper profiling depth in approximately 14 min, the profiler stopped for 20 min and then descended to the parking depth for approximately 13 min. Several profiler faults occurred at the beginning of the observations, which resulted in data loss for a total of four days. Beginning on January 9, the profiler worked smoothly until it was recovered. Sometimes when the mooring line was inclined due to a particularly strong ocean current, the mooring line was below 25 m while climbing up the upper stopper, and consequently, the profiler stopped in that location. Hence, for the oxygen inventory calculations below, the upper depth limit was chosen as 30 m.

The Aqualog sensor suite included the CTD 52-MP CTD temperature, conductivity and pressure probe with an SBE43F fast oxygen sensor and an acoustic Doppler current meter Nortek Aquadopp 2 MHz. The CTD and dissolved oxygen data were obtained every 2 s. Soon after recovery, the SBE 52-MP CTD probe with the SBE43F sensor was sent to the manufacturer for calibration. All sensors were in very good condition and demonstrated the smallest possible drift. The modified calibration coefficients were considered during the processing of the measurement data. The data employed in our studies of currents comprised the data obtained during the ascent of the profiler. The Aquadopp acoustic current meter was mounted in the top part of the apparatus, and the current measurements in the ascending sections were obtained in undisturbed waters. The current meter sampling frequency was 4 Hz. To suppress the measurement noise, the current meter data were smoothed by the running mean using a fixed window length of 51 samples, which corresponds to a vertical scale of approximately 2.5 m. After data recovery, we obtained 1490 sets of high-resolution multivariable profiles. ~~(Ostrovsky et al., 2013) and featured an SBE 52 MP CTD temperature, conductivity and pressure probe with a SBE43F fast oxygen sensor and an acoustic Doppler current meter Nortek Aquadopp 2 MHz. The equipment set was described in (Ostrovskii, Zatsepin, 2016).~~

The Aqualog was programmed for profiling every 2 hours to obtain 24 depth profiles of seawater parameters each day. The parking depth of the profiler was 205 m, and the upper profiling depth was 25 m. Each profiling cycle was started at an exact UTC hour from the parking depth. After ascending to the upper depth limit in approximately 14 min, the profiler would stop for 20 min and then descend for approximately 13 min.

Several profiler faults occurred at the beginning of the observations, which resulted in data loss for a total of four days. Starting January 9, the profiler smoothly worked until it was recovered after taking approximately 1490 multiparameter profiles.

Soon after recovery, the SBE 52 MP CTD probe with the SBE43F sensor was sent to the manufacturer for calibration. All sensors were in very good condition and demonstrated the smallest possible drift. The modified calibration coefficients were considered during the processing of the measurement data.

The data employed in our studies of currents comprised the data obtained during the ascent of the profiler. The Aquadopp acoustic current meter was mounted in the top part of the apparatus, and the current measurements in the ascending sections were taken in undisturbed waters.

The CTD and dissolved oxygen data were obtained every 2 s. The current meter sampling frequency was 4 Hz. To suppress the measurement noise, the current meter data were smoothed by the running mean using a fixed window length of 51 samples, which corresponds to a vertical scale of approximately 2.5 m.

To assess the favorable conditions for developing turbulent mixing, Richardson number Ri estimates are applied. The linear theory predicts the development of the shear instability of stratified fluid when the Ri is less than the critical value, which is equal to $Ri = 0.25$. To assess the conditions that are favorable for developing turbulent mixing, the estimates of the Richardson number Ri are applied. The linear theory predicts the development of the shear instability of stratified fluid when Ri is less than the critical value, which is equal to $Ri = 0.25$. The value $Ri < 1$ indicates the possibility of flow instability (Orlanski and Bryan 1969).

The gradient Richardson number was computed as follows:

$$Ri = N^2 / |\Delta U / \Delta z|^2 \quad (1)$$

where $N^2 = g/\rho_0 (\Delta\sigma_\theta/\Delta z)$ is the Brunt–Väisälä frequency, $\Delta\sigma_\theta$ and ΔU denote the difference in the water density and the difference in the horizontal current velocity, respectively, between adjacent depth bins with the thickness $\Delta z = 4$ m.

The turbulence rapidly decays in the pycnocline (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005, Zatsepin et al., 2007) so that the vertical mixing usually cannot bring a substantial amount of the oxygenated water deeper into the pycnocline. Hence, for average vertical distribution computations of Ri as well as dissolved oxygen, the pycnocline core depth is worth using as a reference depth. In such a case, the modified depth is defined as follows:

$$\zeta = z - D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta}^j + \langle D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta} \rangle, \quad (2)$$

where z is the original depth, $D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta}^j$ is the depth of the maximum density gradient $\nabla_z \sigma_\theta = \Delta \sigma_\theta / \Delta z$ in the pycnocline for profile number j , and the angle brackets denote the time average. Notably, the time average $\langle D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta} \rangle$ is added in (2) simply to ensure that the modified depth ζ is positive.

To justify the vertical displacement time scales of the oxygen concentration isolines, the power spectrum estimation was employed by using the multitaper method (MTM). According to the MTM approach, the statistically independent spectral estimates of a signal are obtained using the set of orthogonal weight sequences. The MTM method advantages were discussed in detail by Thomson (1982) and Wunsch (1999).

3 Results

3.1 Background observations

During the survey, the flow variability could be described as that due to a meandering near-coastal jet and propagating mesoscale and submesoscale eddies. Notably, the profiler mooring was located in the Rim Current zone on the periphery of the basin-wide cyclonic gyre, where the NW direction flow prevailed. The filaments and patches of suspended particles along the Caucasus coast of the Black Sea were observed using data from the Suomi National Polar-orbiting Partnership satellite visible infrared imaging radiometer (Fig. 2). The filaments traced the current meanders and mesoscale eddies. In January-February 2016, the anticyclonic eddies were 30-40 km in diameter, i.e., approximately 2 times the local Rossby radius of baroclinic deformation. These eddies were long lived (approximately 1 month or more), and therefore, the eddies were quasi geostrophic in nature. The eddies moved northwestward, producing a water exchange between the shelf and deep sea. The narrow continental slope and shelf region was a dissipation zone for the dynamic structures and flows. Between the anticyclones and coast, there were submesoscale cyclonic eddies of smaller space-time scales up to several kilometers and several days. According to the Aqualog current meter data, the strengthening events of the NW transport (shown by the red color in upper Fig. 3) persisted for up to 7 days with the current speed occasionally reaching 45 cm/s in the upper sea layer.

The cross-shelf component of the flow velocity was much weaker than that directed along the shelf (lower Fig. 3). The flows toward the deep basin were intermittent and weak in the upper sea layer. During the survey, there were no upwelling events that would lead to a significant increase in the water exchange between the sea shelf zone and deep sea.

Occasionally, over the mooring site in the upper sea layer, the SE flow appeared for 1-2 days, but the speed of the flow did not exceed 20 cm/s. In such cases, the station was on the eastern periphery of the anticyclonic vortices, where the orbital velocity was southeastward (shown by the blue color in upper Fig. 3). During the second half of the survey, southeastward transport was observed more often. The SE current was noticeable in the pycnocline between isopycnals σ_θ from 14.5 to 16 kg m⁻³.

On a shorter timescale, near-inertial motions emerged. The inertial period at the latitude of the Aqualog mooring site is approximately 17.06 hours. The inertial signal was strong from January 16 to 25 and from February 1 to 10. The inertial oscillations could be induced by a local forcing or could arrive as internal-gravity waves to the sea edge from the deep sea. The nature of the inertial oscillations observed by using the Aqualog profiler mooring is beyond the scope of this study.

Finally, as background observations, the weather conditions should be briefly mentioned here. According to the Gelendzhik weather station of the Russian Hydromet Service, the weather was warm in January-March 2016 (Melnikov et al., 2018). Several cold days occurred from January 1-4 and January 23-26 when the air temperature was freezing. The monthly average air temperature was 4.08°C in January, 8.27°C in February, and 9.19°C in March.

3.2 Oxygen dynamics

Direct measurements showed that the vertical distribution of oxygen underwent significant fluctuations from January-March 2016 (Fig. 4). Noticeably, the temporal variations of the dissolved oxygen were usually locked to the vertical displacements of the isopycnal surfaces. The upper sea layer above the isopycnal $\sigma_\theta = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ was usually well-mixed. The dissolved oxygen in the uppermost part of the water column was from 280 $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ in January to 310 $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ at the beginning of March (Fig. 4).

From January to March 2016, the average oxygen inventory I in the Aqualog station region below 30 m in the sea was $\bar{I}_{30} = 24.9 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$. The value of I fluctuated highly on two scales: the near-inertial scale and over three to five days (refer to Fig. 5). The standard deviation of the I_{30} time series was 3.5 mol m^{-2} .

To evaluate the total average oxygen inventory estimate, the average oxygen content in the 30-m-thick near-surface sea layer is assumed to be equal to the value $[\text{O}_2] = 270\text{-}300 \text{ } \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ observed at a depth of 30 m, where the Aqualog profiler instrumental measurements were obtained. Then, the total average oxygen inventory for the entire water column would be the value \bar{I}_{30} increased by approximately 8-9 mol m^{-2} , where $\bar{I}_{total} = 32.9\text{-}33.9 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$.

The oxygen inventory distribution with depth varied substantially with time. In particular, the distribution was extremely small ($I_{\sigma_{14}} \leq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$) for approximately 11% of all profiles in the layer below the $\sigma_\theta = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ isopycnal (Fig. 5). In these cases, the oxygen-rich and deep upper layer was separated by a narrow oxycline from the underlying waters, which were subjected to the lower oxygen content conditions (Fig. 6). The thermohaline stratification was characterized by a very sharp pycnocline (Fig. 7): the sample-averaged Brunt-Väisälä frequency in the region of the maximum density gradient amounted to $\langle N \rangle = 0.041 \text{ s}^{-1}$ with the median value $\text{med}(N)$ equal to 0.037 s^{-1} . The average vertical distribution of the oxygen inventory for $I_{\sigma_{14}} \leq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ had a two-layered structure and a single-step profile (Fig. 8); the oxygen content decreased from approximately 280 to 10 $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ across the oxycline with a maximum thickness of 40 m. Note that in mid-January 2016, the distance between the oxygen-rich zone and upper boundary of the suboxic zone, where $[\text{O}_2] < 10 \text{ } \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$, was occasionally less than 20 m (Fig. 4).

The presence of a well-mixed, deep top layer is confirmed by the acoustic backscatter distribution data, which was measured by the acoustic Doppler current meter Nortek operated at 2 MHz. According to the estimated cross-correlation amplitudes of acoustic backscatter (not shown here), the suspended matter coherently fluctuated throughout the entire top layer. Under the pycnocline, the suspended matter slowly subsided at an average rate of 3.5 mm/s.

The profiles where $I_{\sigma_{14}} \geq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ comprised approximately 89% of all profiles. In such cases, the oxygen slowly decreased with depth in the oxycline to a typical thickness of ~100 m (Fig. 8). In the second half of February, the thickness of the oxycline began to increase, and the oxygen inventory below 30 m in the sea decreased from the peak values of $I_{30} = 30\text{-}35 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ in late January or early February to $I_{30} = 21\text{-}25 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ in early March (Fig. 5).

As the changes evolved, the depths of the hypoxia onset, SOL, CIL and pycnocline fluctuated with large amplitudes with a period of near-inertial oscillation (Fig. 9). The 3-7 day fluctuations were mainly observed in the layer deeper than the $\sigma_{\theta} = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ isopycnal. In the second half of January and the first half of February, these fluctuations were slightly modulated by near-inertial oscillations with a period of approximately 17 hours. Intermittently, at timescales of 3-7 days, the depth of hypoxia onset fluctuated with an amplitude of ~50 m. The periods of such fluctuations were interleaved by several days of quiet. The fluctuations were observed in the 100-150 m layer, i.e., too deep to be directly associated with storms on the sea surface.

The inertial oscillations of the hypoxia upper boundary vertical displacements were verified by the power spectrum estimates. The spectral density was calculated for the hypoxia onset depth time series of January 4-27 when there were no missing data (Fig. 10). The obtained spectrum has a large peak in the inertial frequency band, which is significant with a 95% probability. Most of the energy belongs to the lower-frequency variability; the spectrum rapidly grows and then flattens at timescales longer than 3.5 days. Admittedly, the time series with no missing data is slightly short for spectral density estimations on several day timescales.

According to our data, the hypoxia onset often appeared in the region of maximum density gradients in the pycnocline and occurred above the minimum temperature depth in the CIL until March 3. The CIL gradually eroded while remaining unventilated all winter in this region. The temperature increased from 8.45°C in early January to 8.6°C between late February and the beginning of March, when a new CIL emerged as a result of horizontal advection in the 40 m layer above the old CIL (Fig. 11). In this new CIL, a temperature of 8.35°C was recorded, which was the absolute minimum temperature for the entire duration of our observations. The new CIL was located above the hypoxia zone.

Direct measurements showed that the vertical distribution of oxygen underwent significant fluctuations in January-March 2016 (Fig. 2). The fluctuations of 3-7 days were observed mainly in the layer deeper than $\sigma_{\theta} = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ isopycnal. In the second half of January and in the first half of February, these fluctuations were slightly modulated by near inertial oscillations with a period of about 17 hours. Noticeably the temporal variations of the dissolved oxygen were usually locked to the vertical displacements of the isopycnal surfaces. The upper layer of the sea above isopycnal $\sigma_{\theta} = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ was usually well mixed. There was a seasonal trend of the dissolved oxygen from 280 to 310 $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ in the upper mixed layer.

The fluctuations of dissolved oxygen content and water density were correlated with the current velocity. Basically, the temporal variability of the flow could be described as that due to a meandering near coastal jet and propagating mesoscale and submesoscale eddies. Notice that the profiler mooring was located in the Rim Current zone on the periphery of the basin-wide cyclonic gyre, where the flow of the NW direction prevailed. The events of strengthening of the NW transport persisted for up to 7 days with the current speed occasionally reaching 45 cm/s in the upper layer of the sea (Fig. 3). At times, the near inertial motions emerged and the relevant reversals in the direction of the flow velocity could be observed, such as from 16 to 25 of January.

The cross-shelf component of the flow velocity was much weaker than that directed along the shelf (Fig. 3). The flows towards the deep basin were intermittent and rather weak in the upper layer of the sea. During the survey, there were no upwelling events that would lead to a significant increase in water exchange between the sea shelf zone and the deep sea.

Sometimes over the mooring site in the upper layer of the sea, the SE flow appeared for 1–2 days, but its speed did not exceed 20 cm/s. In such cases, apparently, the station was on the eastern periphery of the anticyclonic vortices, where the orbital velocity was southeastward. During the second half of the survey, the southeastward transport was observed more often. The SE current was noticeable in the pycnocline between isopycnals σ_θ from 14.5 to 16 kg m⁻³.

From January to March 2016, the average oxygen inventory I in the region of the Aqualog station in the sea below 30 m was $\bar{I}_{30} = 24.9 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$. The value of I highly fluctuated on two scales: near inertial scale and of three to five days (refer to Fig. 4). The standard deviation of the I_{30} -time series was 3.5 mol m⁻².

To evaluate the total average oxygen inventory estimate one may assume that the average oxygen content in the 30 m thick near surface sea layer may be equal to the value $[\text{O}_2] = 270 \div 300 \text{ } \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ observed at a depth of 30 m, where the instrumental measurements with the Aqualog profiler were obtained. Then the total average oxygen inventory for the entire water column would be the value \bar{I}_{30} increased by approximately 8–9 mol m⁻² as follows $\bar{I}_{\text{total}} = 33 \div 34 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$.

The oxygen inventory distribution with depth substantially varied with time. In particular, the distribution was extremely small ($I_{e14} \leq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$) for approximately 10% of all profiles in the layer below the $\sigma_\theta = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ isopycnal (Fig. 4). In these cases, the oxygen-rich and deep upper layer was separated by a narrow oxycline from the underlying waters that were subjected to the lower oxygen content conditions (Fig. 5). The thermohaline stratification was characterized by a very sharp pycnocline (Fig. 6): the sample averaged Brunt–Väisälä frequency in the region of the maximum density gradient amounted to $\langle N \rangle = 0.041 \text{ s}^{-1}$ with the median value $\text{med}(N)$ equal to 0.037 s^{-1} . The average vertical distribution of the oxygen inventory for $I_{e14} \leq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ had a two-layered structure and a single step profile (Fig. 7); the oxygen content decreased from approximately 280 to 10 $\mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ across the oxycline with a maximum thickness of 40 m. Note that in mid-January 2016, the distance between the oxygen-rich zone and the upper boundary of the suboxic zone, where $[\text{O}_2] < 10 \text{ } \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$, was sometimes less than 20 m.

In 89% of the cases, the oxygen slowly decreased with the depth in the oxycline of a typical thickness ~100 m (Fig. 7). In the second half of February, the thickness of the oxycline began to increase, and the oxygen inventory in the sea below

30 m decreased from its peak values $I_{30} = 30 \div 35 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ beginning late January or early February to $I_{30} = 21 \div 25 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ in early March (Fig. 4).

As the seasonal changes evolved, the depths of hypoxia onset, SOL, CIL and pycnocline fluctuated with large amplitudes with a period of the near-inertial oscillation (Fig. 8). The onset of hypoxia was defined as follows: $[\text{O}_2] = 63 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$. This criterion for hypoxia conditions was introduced in (Middelburg, Levin, 2009) and employed for the Black Sea-Crimean shelf data (Jessen et al., 2017) as a threshold value, where the low oxygen content in water starts affecting the fauna, the structure of animal communities, and functions of the marine ecosystem.

Intermittently, the depth of hypoxia onset fluctuated with an amplitude of ~50 m. These fluctuations can last 3-7 days interleaved by quiet periods of several days. They were observed in the layer of 100-150 m, i.e., too deep to be directly associated with the storms on the sea surface. The atmospheric effects in this layer may be indirectly traced to meandering and temporary intensification of the Rim Current or propagation of inertia-gravity wave packets from the deep basin.

According to our data, the onset of hypoxia often appeared in the region of maximum density gradients in the pycnocline and occurred above the depth of the minimum temperature in the CIL until March 3. The CIL gradually eroded while remaining to be unventilated all winter in this region. The temperature increased from 8.45 in early January to 8.6°C in late February and as late as the beginning of March, when a new CIL emerged as a result of horizontal advection in the layer 40 m above the old CIL (Fig. 9). In this new CIL, the temperature of 8.35°C was recorded: the absolute minimum temperature for the entire duration of our observations. The new CIL was located above the hypoxia zone.

4 Discussion

Few studies of the oxygen distribution in the Black Sea periphery have mentioned short-term oxygen content fluctuations in the top sea layer that extends down to the ~~top boundary of the~~ main pycnocline. The observations using drifting ARGO buoys provided insight into the important role of mesoscale processes ~~both~~ in both the central part of the basin and the Rim Current zone (Stanev et al., 2013). However, quantitative data on the short-term variability of the hypoxia layer depth and the suboxic zone depth ~~is-are~~ lacking. Mesoscale and submesoscale eddies, subsurface waves and upwelling events were known to interact in the shelf and slope zone at time scales of less than 10 days (Zatsepin et al., 2013).

The results obtained in this study highlight the basic time scales of the oxygen inventory changes in the NE Black Sea: the inertial period, and the scale of ~~approximately five~~ 3-7 days. The ~~short-short~~-term variations are superimposed on the intraseasonal change-cycle. The maximum total oxygen inventory can be as large as $42 \div 43 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ in February 2016, with ~~the~~ a winter average of $33 \div 34 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$. The latter value ~~shows agreement~~ agrees with the annual average for this region (refer to Fig. 4 in (Capet et al., 2016)).

What were the hydrophysical conditions when both the pycnocline and ~~the~~ oxycline became so thin ~~in~~ during wintertime? Based on our data, these conditions can be described by strong NW currents (Fig. ~~40~~ 12) in the top layer above the pycnocline. The maximum NW current speed ~~of the NW current~~ sometimes exceeded 0.4 m/s. The ~~boost of the current~~

speed boost may occur when the Rim Current axis shifts toward the shelf in the region. When the Rim Current is pressed against the continental slope, the isopycnals are usually lowered by 40-60 m (Zatsepin et al., 2011).

A countercurrent ~~of in~~ the SE direction was observed in the narrow pycnocline. ~~Its-The~~ maximum speed (sometimes as high as 0.3 m/s) of the countercurrent was in the layer where the vertical density gradient attained ~~its-the~~ maximum values. This countercurrent was observed in 2007 during an experiment with a moored profiler in the Black Sea (Ostrovskii et al., 2010).

While the oxygen inventory was limited in the layer of $I_{\sigma 14} < 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ in the ~~region of the~~ mooring station region, the vertical oxygen distribution in the top layer was uniform, and the stratification was ~~almost-nearly~~ neutral. The median of the Richardson numbers $\text{med}(Ri)$ (~~Fig. 11~~) calculated by binning the data for each profile at 4-meter layers indicated that the condition $Ri < 0.25$ wich was required for vertical turbulent mixing may often develop in the top layer of 100 m (Fig. 13).

In the pycnocline, the median values of Ri abruptly increased to $2 \div 6$. Under the pycnocline (down to ~~the~~ 200 m depth), conditions for turbulent mixing at the 4 m vertical scale ~~of 4 m~~ usually do not occur considering the estimated Ri values. ~~But-However~~ we cannot exclude that they do occur at smaller vertical scales.

~~The presence of a well-mixed deep top layer is confirmed by the data on the distribution of acoustic backscatter, which was measured by the acoustic Doppler current meter Nortek operated at 2 MHz. According to the estimated cross-correlation amplitudes of acoustic backscatter (not shown here), the suspended matter coherently fluctuated throughout the entire top layer. Under the pycnocline, the suspended matter slowly subsided at an average rate of 3.5 mm/s.~~

~~As mentioned in the Introduction, the dynamic processes in the Rim Current zone, which is predominantly localized near the continental slope, differ from the conditions in a dynamically less active deep sea basin of the Black Sea. In the continental slope area in the NE part of the Black Sea during the very cold winter, the convection may penetrate to a depth of 120-130 m (Ostrovskii, Zatsepin, 2016).~~

~~In the center of the western cyclonic gyre, the depth of the top mixed layer was limited by 40 m also in an anomalously cold winter (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005). The concentrations of dissolved oxygen in the mixed layer were $350 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$. The remaining thin stratified part of the CIL was cooled by turbulence accompanying the cold wind outbreak. The bottom of the CIL was approximately located at the same depth ~50 m as the onset of hypoxia (Gregg, Yakushev, 2005).~~

In the deep basin ~~Shortthe short-term~~ fluctuations of the hypoxia onset ~~of hypoxia in the deep basin~~ do not seriously endanger the ecosystem because the plankton floating at the isopycnic surfaces coherently fluctuates ~~over-with~~ the depth ~~with the isopycnic surfaces~~ and the oxygen isolines almost always move in accordance with the isopycnals. Along the NE Black Sea edge, the vertical displacements of the hypoxia zone pose a risk for the ecosystem over the continental slope.

~~However, t~~he pycnocline shrinkage to a thickness of 15-20 m near the shelf edge for several hours may create favorable conditions for entraining biota into the suboxic zone when an internal wave breaks near the sea bottom ~~of the sea~~. This wave breaking is common when the vertical current shear considerably increases after ~~shift of speed considerably increases after~~ the internal wave runs onto the continental slope or shelf. In the NE Black Sea, the maximum amplitude of short-term (7-8 minutes) subsurface waves on the shelf may be as high as 16 m (Bondur et al., 2018 (to be published)). In the

NW Black Sea, intensive subsurface waves in the lower part of the pycnocline in the halocline were primarily observed in the continental slope area in autumn, winter and summer (Morozov et al., 2017). During these measurements in the main pycnocline in December 2012, vertical current profiles of the large internal waves were observed with ~~a~~-vertical lengths of 50-60 m ~~were observed~~.

5 An abruptly fluctuating ~~onset of~~ hypoxia onset in the shelf and slope sea zone may considerably affect the benthos. Note that the shelf edge in the NE Black Sea predominantly occurs in the depth range of 90-100 m; thus, the extensive shoaling ~~in at~~ the hypoxia onset depth should cause enable penetration of low oxygen water into the outer shelf. The hypoxia events near the shelf edge can be observed based on our data for January 1-3, 2016. Ground species living at the top part of the continental slope adapt to oxygen fluctuations ~~of the oxygen~~ because these species should experience ~~the~~ hypoxica
10 conditions at regular intervals of ~17 hours.

5 ~~Concluding remarks~~ Conclusion

15 A higher total content of oxygen that exceeds 34 mol m^{-2} and sometimes exceeds 40 mol m^{-2} in the NE Black Sea slope water column was observed in approximately 11% of the profiles collected during a warm winter ~~in between~~ January to early March 2016. An oxygen inventory increases when the Rim Current axis is shifted closer to the shelf edge. ~~In Under~~ these conditions, the top mixed layer is deep (110-130 m) and oxygen-rich ($270\text{-}300 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ of oxygen on ~~the~~ average), whereas both the thickness of the pycnocline and ~~the~~ oxycline decrease to ~~approximately~~ less than approximately 40 m.

20 Weakening of the Rim Current jet or ~~its the~~ shift toward the open sea causes an expansion of the pycnocline, and ~~as a consequence~~ consequently, a decrease in the total oxygen inventory (less than 33 mol m^{-2}). In the latter case, stable stratification in the thick pycnocline tends to suppress vertical turbulent mixing from a depth of 30-40 m.

25 The Rim Current that flows in the NW direction occupies the upper sea layer to the top of the pycnocline. The current speed vertical shear ~~of the current speed~~ in the lower part of the current is too small to overcome stable stratification in the pycnocline, and therefore, ~~disables~~ turbulent mixing cannot reach the CIL. ~~In the conditions of~~ During a ~~relatively~~ warm winter, the maximum gradient in the pycnocline is located above the CIL core; thus, the CIL cannot be ~~ventilated~~ more or less intensively ventilated. By the end of the warm winter, a new CIL may be formed due to the horizontal advection of the water above the old CIL. Water in this new CIL is ~~rather warm ($8.3\text{--}8.4^\circ\text{C}$) more oxygen-rich at but may be oxygen richer~~ [O₂] = $240\text{--}270 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ and colder ($8.3\text{--}8.4^\circ\text{C}$) than in the old CIL. - Considering that the new CIL is located above the hypoxia zone, essential changes in plankton migrations may occur. Some preliminary results on how the physical-chemical and behavioral properties drive the vertical structure of mesozooplankton distribution in the NE Black Sea were presented by Arashkevich et al. (2013). A more detailed study is currently underway.

30 In the wintertime, when the top layer of the Black Sea is intensively ventilated, the ~~depth of the~~ hypoxia onset depth may be as shallow as 97 m near the boundary of the sea shelf and ~~the~~ continental slope, i.e., almost nearly above the shelf edge in the study area. Probably Most likely, the life cycles of the near-bottom-layer species that live ~~at in~~ the outer shelf

deeper than ~95 m had to adapt to significant oxygen fluctuations ~~of oxygen contents~~ in the water at two time scales of approximately 17 hours and 3-7-5 days. Studies of the biota in the boundary area of the Black Sea ecosystem are currently underway (Jessen et al., 2017).

A key question is how the oxygen stratification will change ~~in the under~~ conditions of continued global warming. Will ~~the climatic climate~~ change cause the $63 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ hypoxia zone to persist above the sea shelf edge and cause the benthos at the NE Black Sea shelf to enter hibernation ~~in associated association~~ with the low oxygen content ~~in of~~ the near-bottom layer? In the worst case scenario, the broad shelf region south of the Kerch Strait with ~~its~~ fishing grounds ~~in just only~~ 100 km to the north-west of our observational site would become the next environmental risk area.

Acknowledgements. Authors are thankful to P.A. Stunzhas for discussions about measurements of the dissolved oxygen in the Black Sea. This research was performed in the framework of Program of the Presidium of Russian Academy of Sciences No. 1-2-50 (0149-2018-0022) and supported in part by Russian Fund for Basic Research (project No. 17-05-00381).

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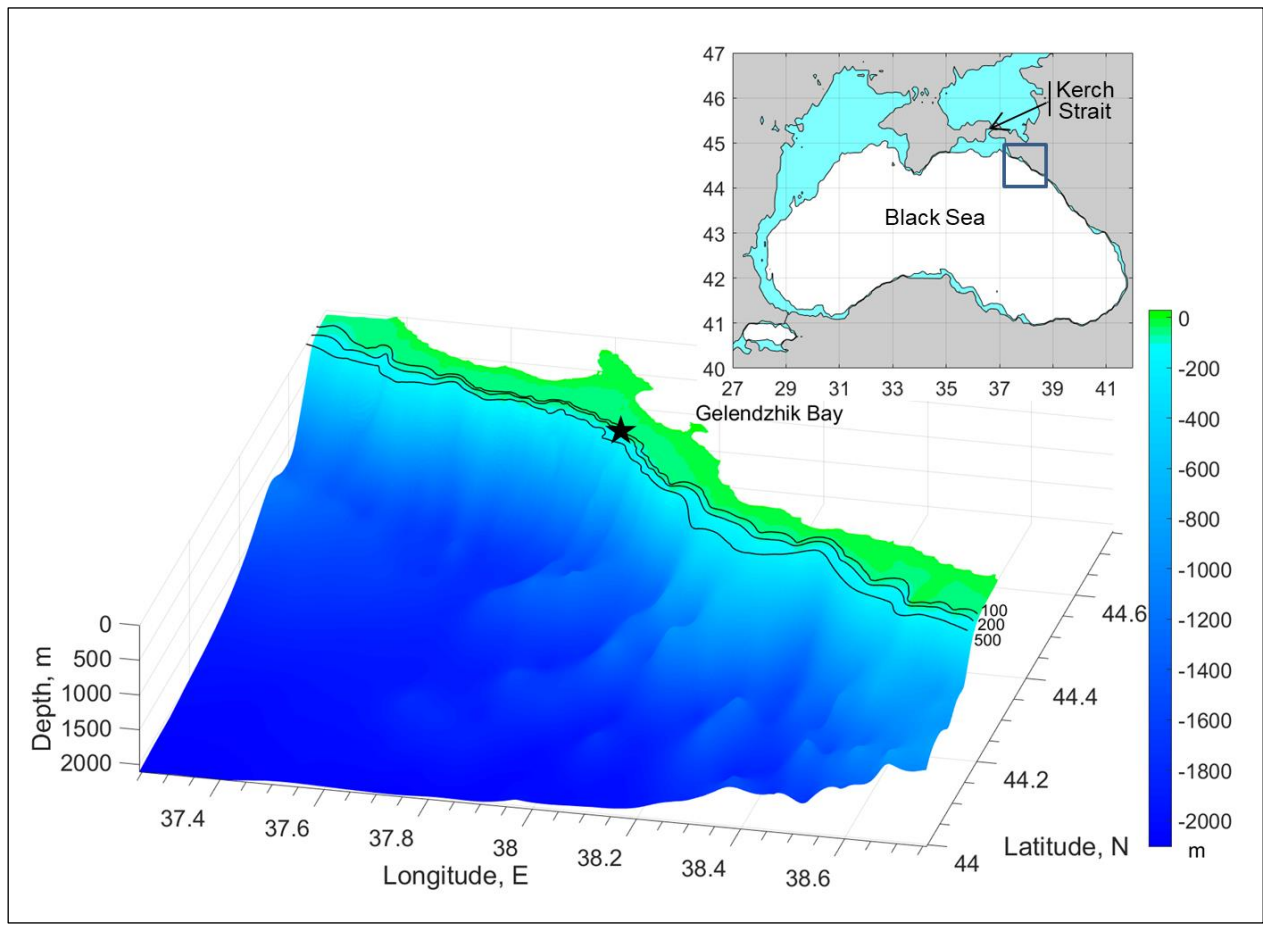
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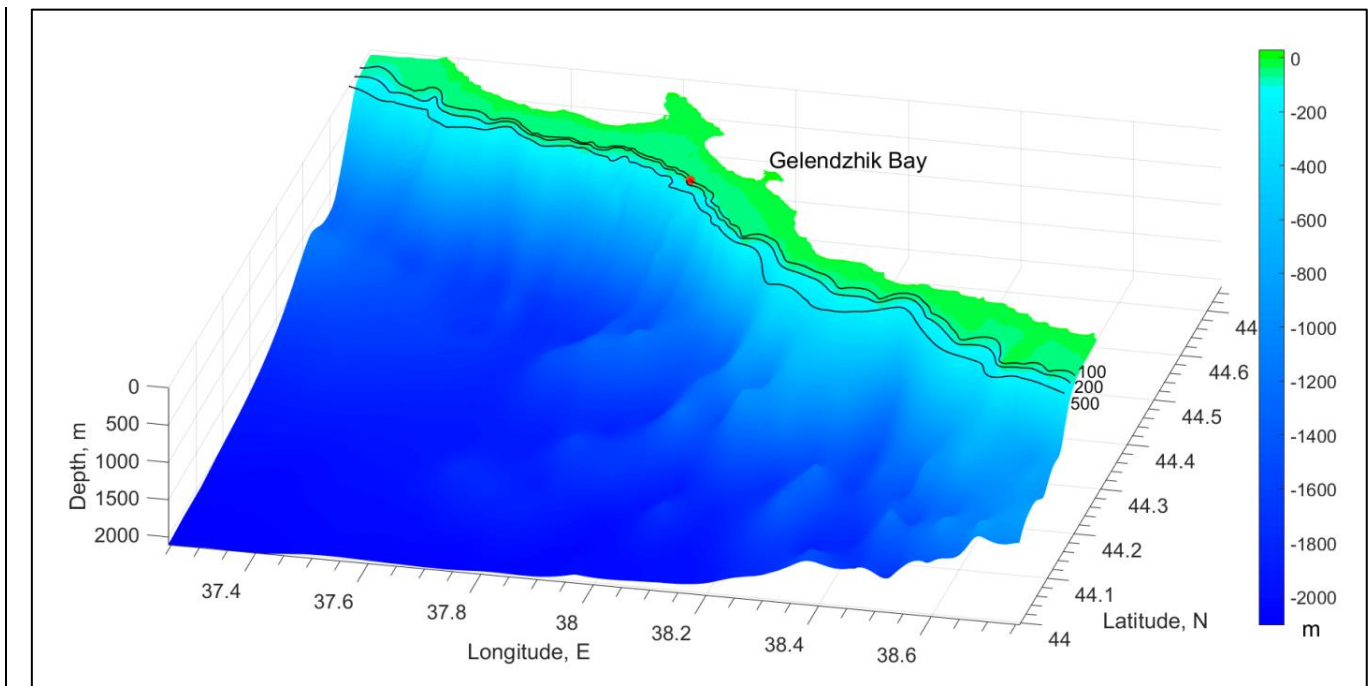


Figure 1: Bottom topography in the NE Black Sea (based on European Marine Observation and Data Network bathymetry; <http://www.emodnet-hydrography.eu/>). Red mark indicates location of the Aqualog profiler mooring. Notice the narrow (width of only a few kilometers) and shallow (depth less than 100 m) sea shelf.

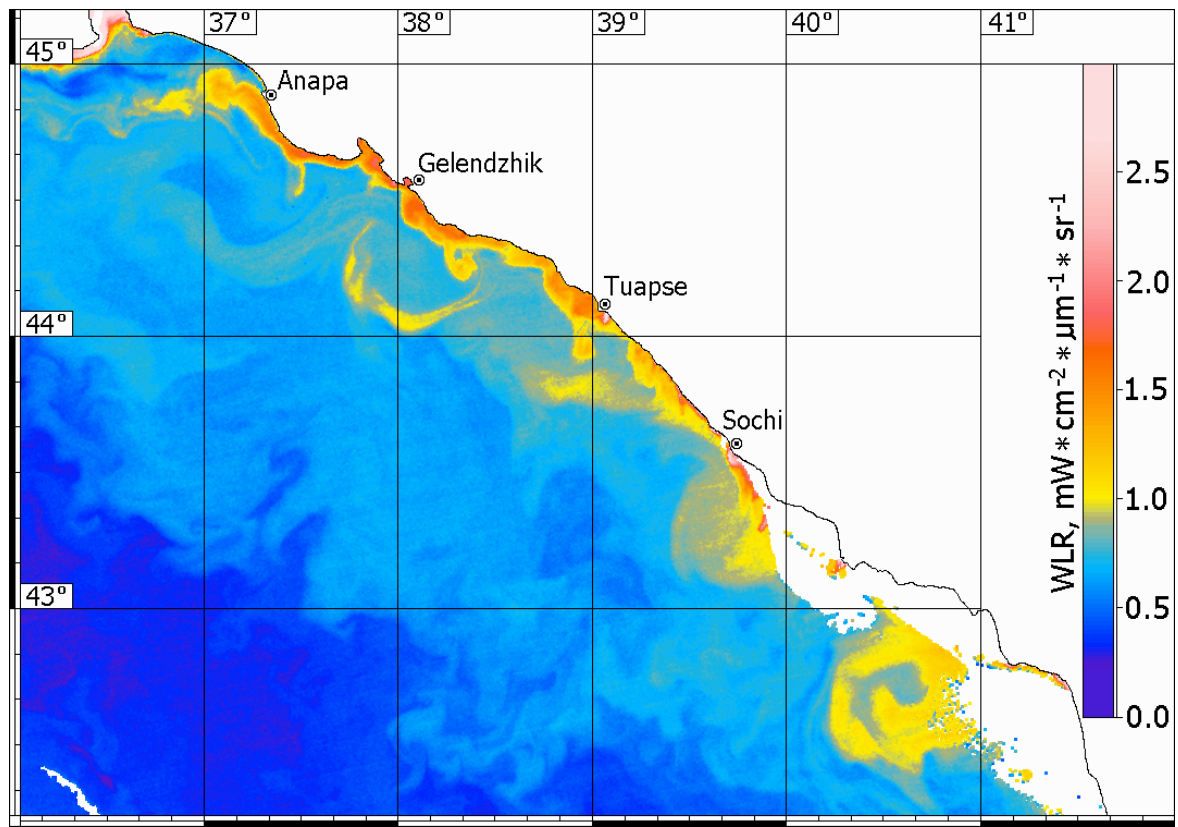


Fig. 2: The Suomi NPP Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite image of the water leaving radiance (WLR) at a wavelength of 0.551 mm over the NE Black Sea at 10:18 GMT on February 18, 2016.

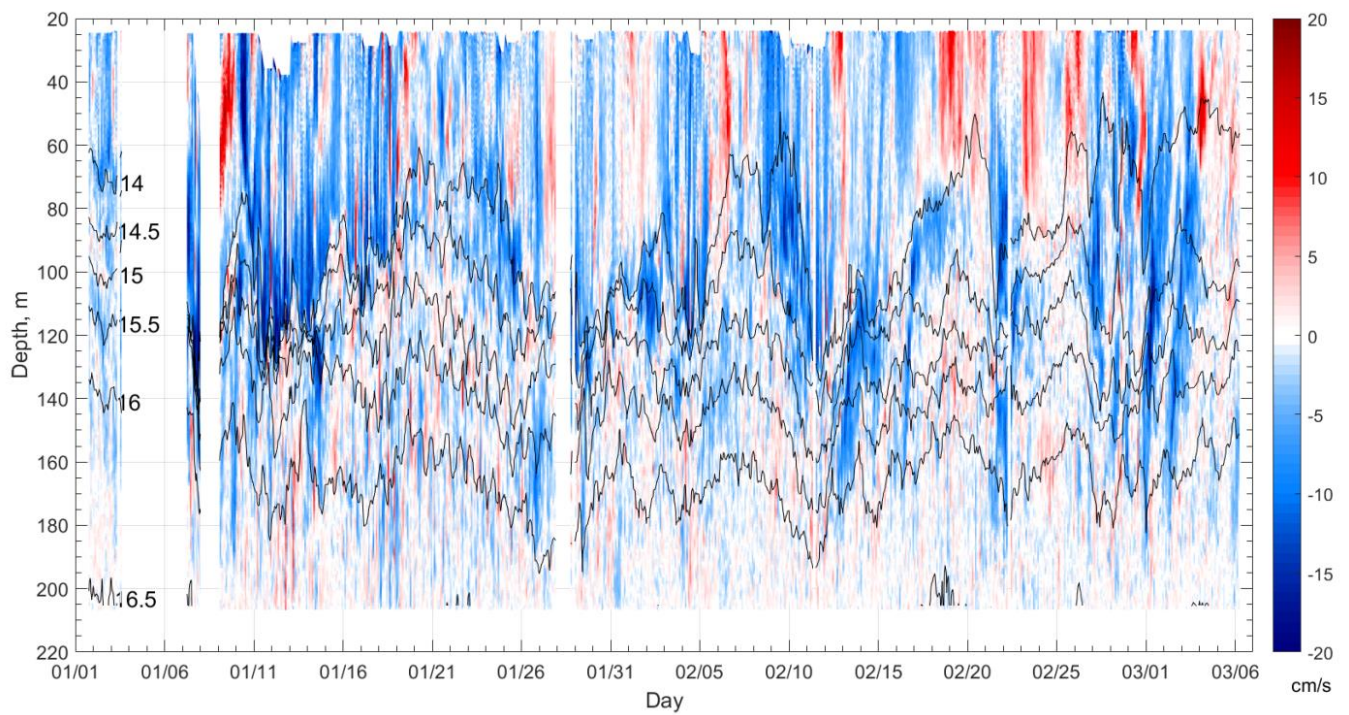


Figure 3: Profiles of along-shore (upper panel) and cross-shore (lower panel) components of the current velocity, depicted as colored contours. The isopycnals σ_θ are superimposed (black lines). Note that the positive direction of the along-shore axis is 50° , and the positive direction of the cross-shore axis is 320° .

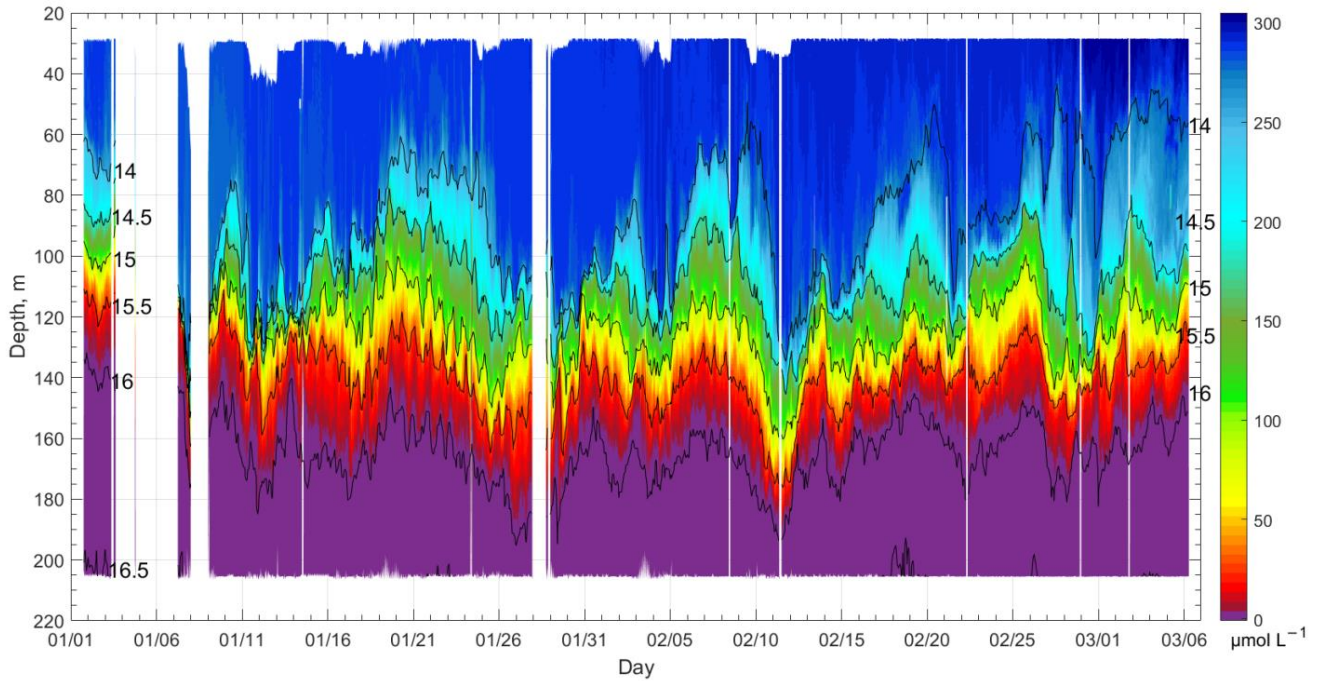


Figure 24: Temporal evolution of the dissolved oxygen vertical distribution. The measurements were obtained using an SBE 43F sensor housed in an Aqualog moored profiler in the NE Black Sea (see Figure 1 for location). The black lines indicate isopycnals σ_θ .

Temporal evolution of the vertical distribution of the dissolved oxygen. The measurements were carried out by using a SBE 43F sensor housed in an Aqualog moored profiler in the NE Black Sea (see Figure 1 for location). The black lines indicate isopycnals σ_θ .

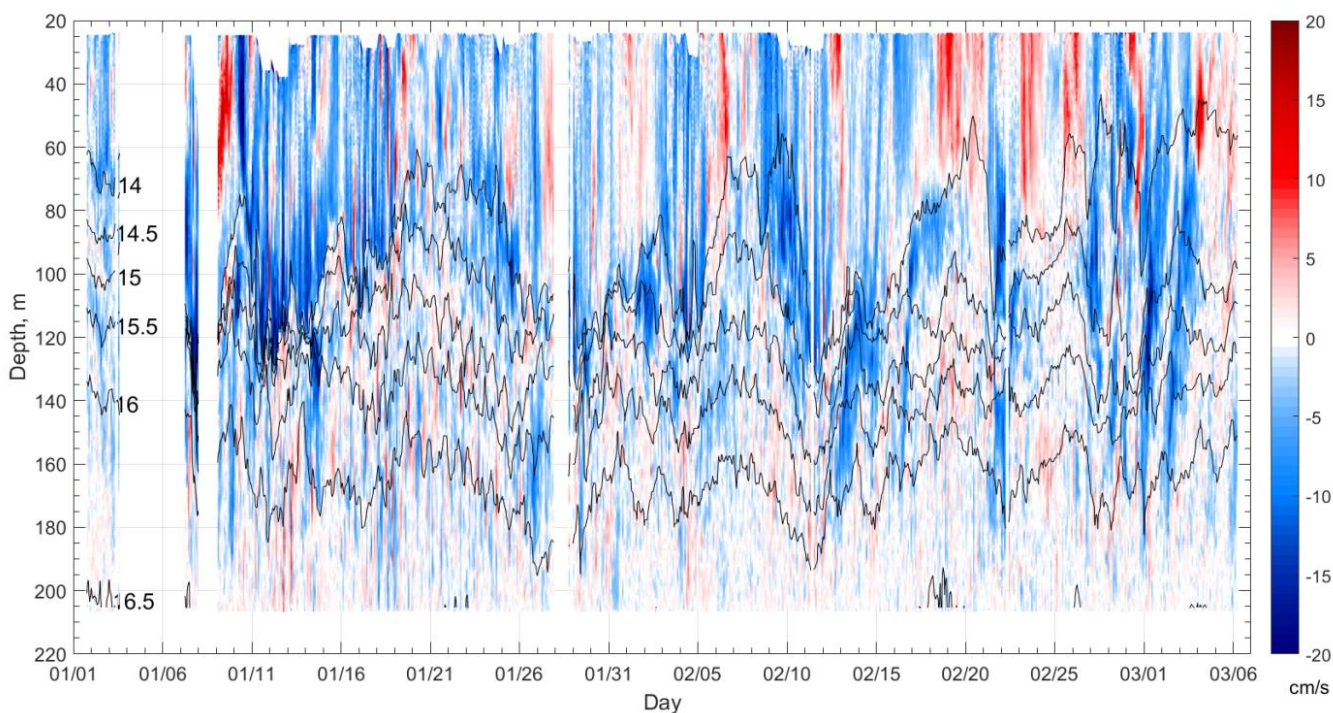
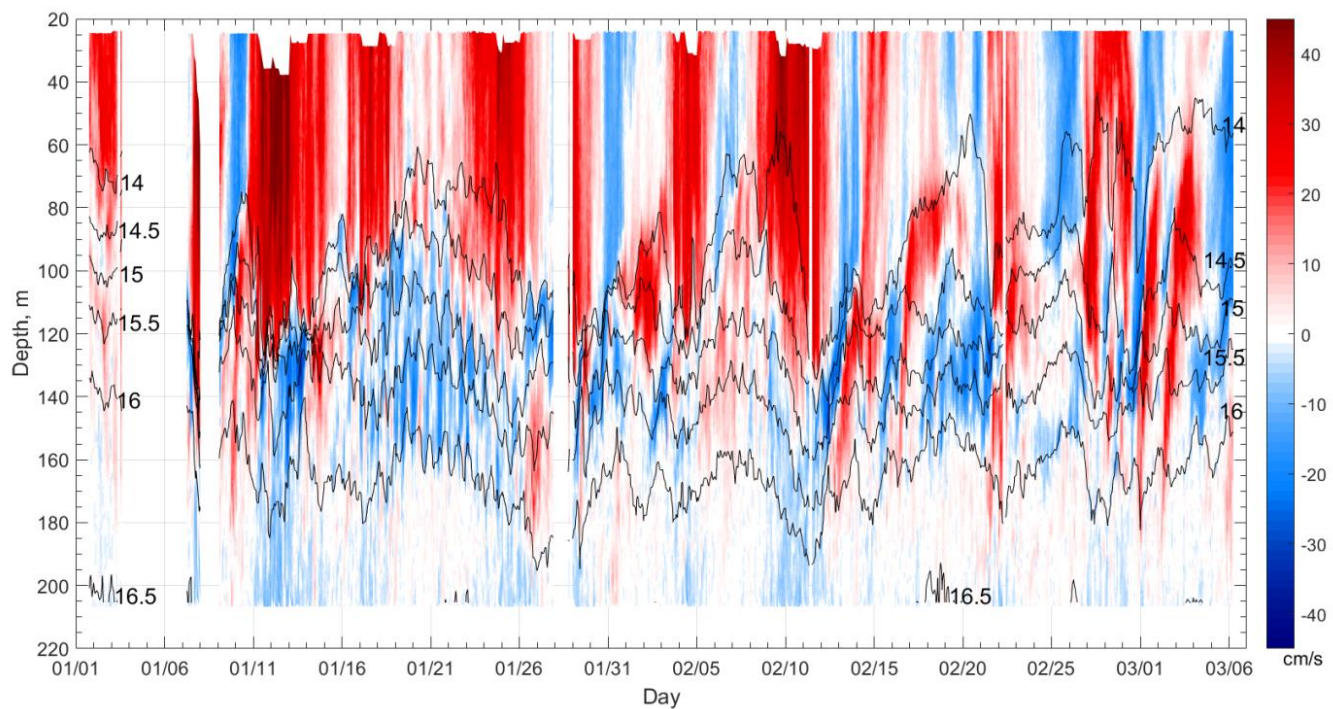


Figure 3: Profiles of along shore (upper panel) and cross shore components of the current velocity (lower panel), depicted as colored contours. The isopycnals σ_θ are superimposed (black lines). Note the positive direction of the along shore axis is 50° , and the positive direction of the cross shore axis is 320° .

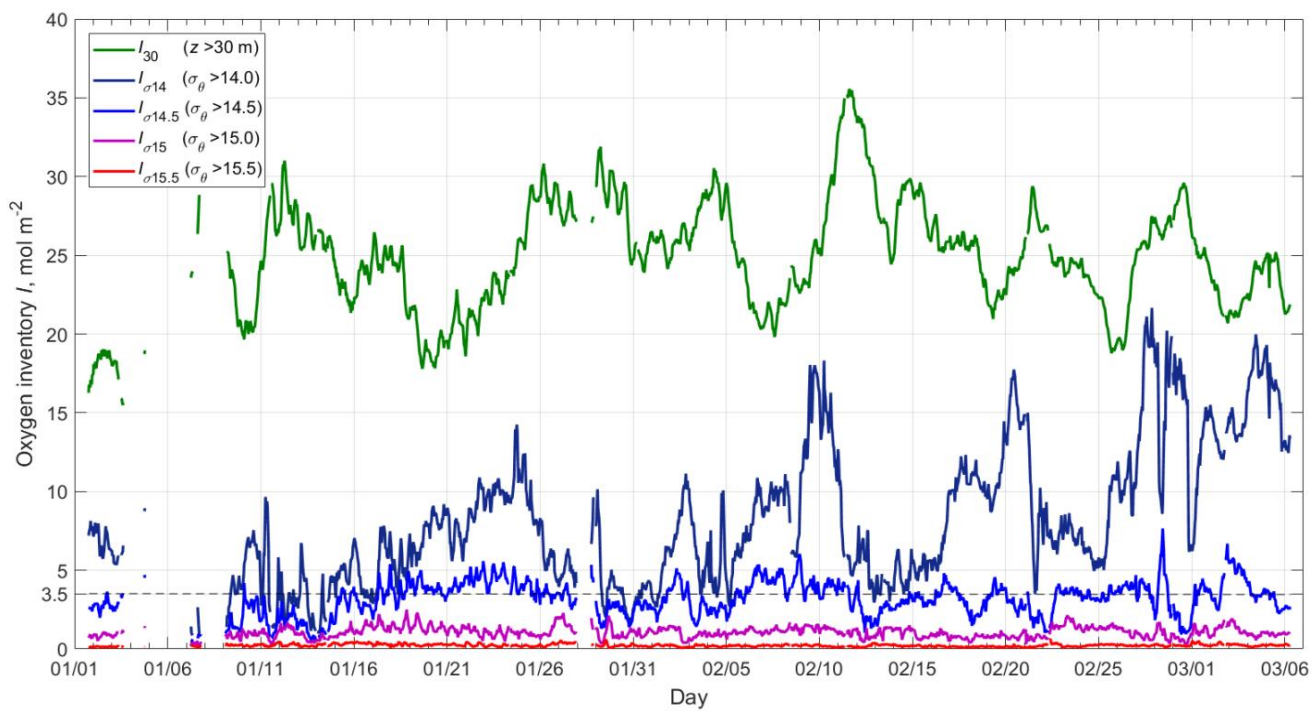
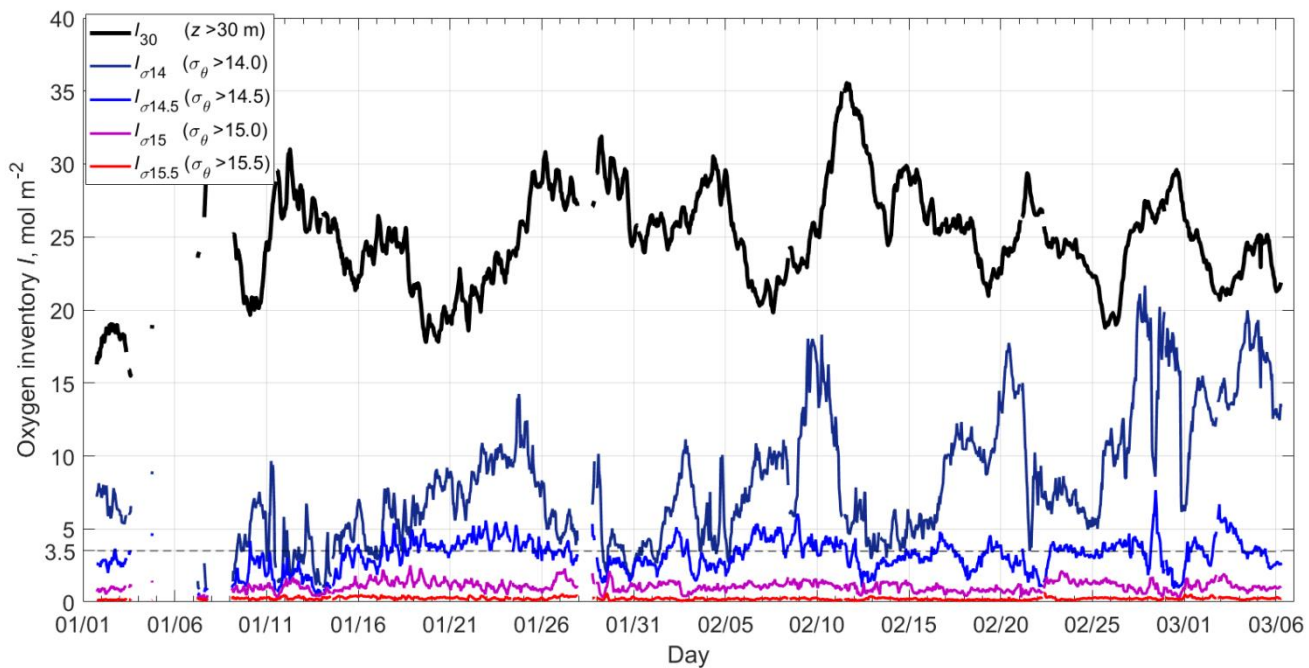
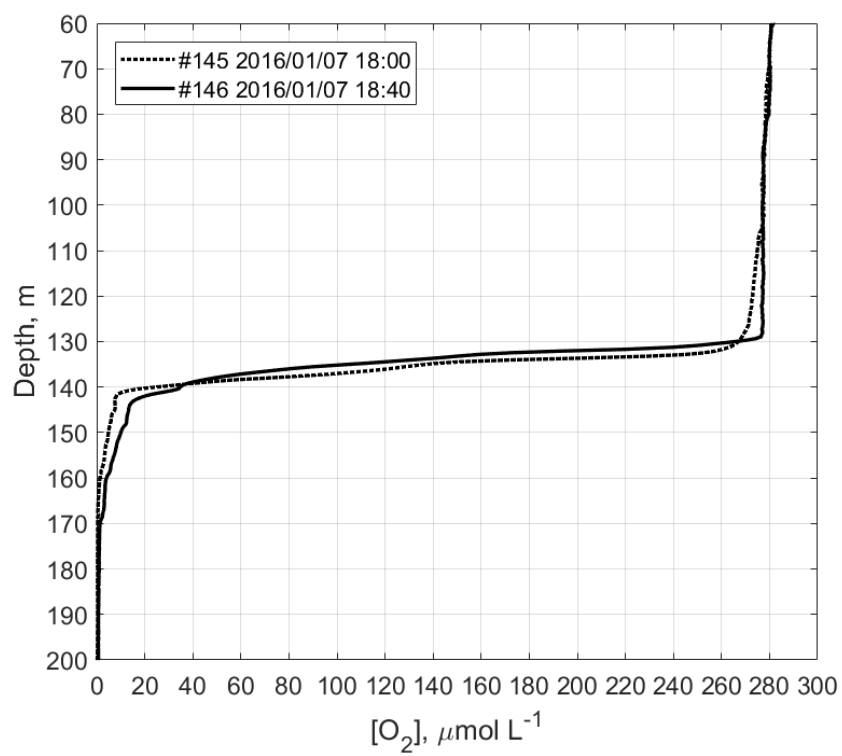


Figure 45: The oxygen inventory I per the Aqualog profiler data acquired from January to March 2016. The green line is the oxygen inventory I_{30} below 30 m in the sea. The oxygen inventory I per the Aqualog profiler data taken from January to March 2016. The green line is the oxygen inventory I_{30} in the sea below 30 m. Other colored lines denote the oxygen inventories $I_{\sigma_{14}}, \dots, \sigma_{15.5}$ in the layers below the respective isopycnal depths, as specified in the top left corner of the figure.



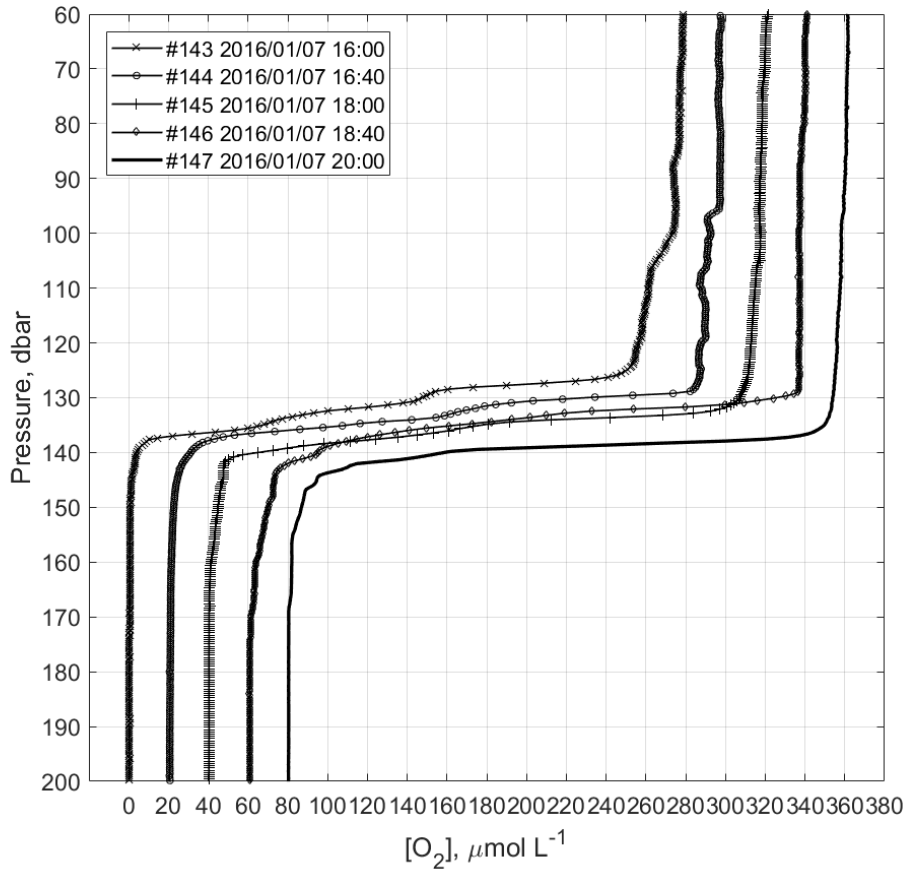


Figure 56: Example series of five profiles $[O_2]^j(z)$, where z is the depth and j is the profile number, $j = 145$ and 146 , when the oxygen inventory below $\sigma_\theta = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ isopycnal was extremely low $I_{\sigma 14} \leq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$. The profile numbers, dates and times are shown in the top left corner.
Example series of five profiles $[O_2]^j(z)$, where z is the depth and j is the profile number, $j = 143, \dots, 147$, when the oxygen inventory below the $\sigma_\theta = 14 \text{ kg m}^{-3}$ isopycnal was extremely low $I_{\sigma 14} \leq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$. The profile numbers, dates and times are shown in the top left corner. The profiles are separately shifted to the right by $20 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$ along the horizontal axis. The odd-numbered profiles were taken when the profiling probe was moving up, and the even-numbered profiles were taken when the profiling probe was moving down. Due to the time-lag of the oxygen sensor, a profile obtained during the descent has slightly different curvatures compared with that obtained during the ascent, particularly at the upper and lower boundaries of the oxycline.

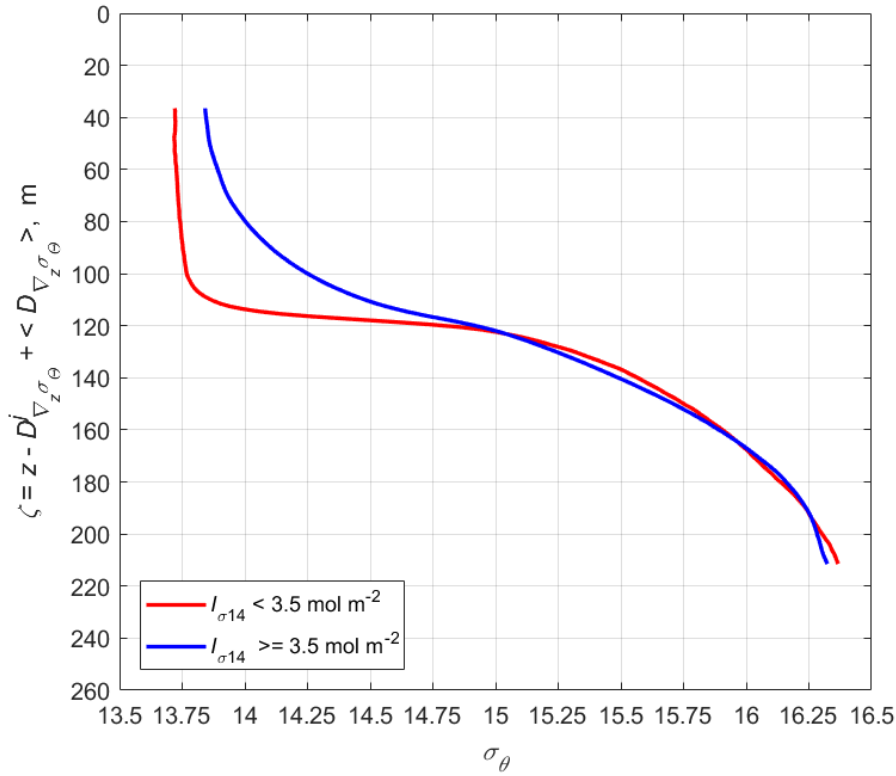


Figure 67: Mean vertical profiles of potential density versus distance from the depth of the maximum density gradient in the pycnocline. Mean vertical profiles of potential density versus distance from the depth of the maximum density gradient in the pycnocline. The mean values were calculated for an ensemble that consists of M individual profiles $\sigma_\theta^j(z)$, where z is the depth and $j = 1, \dots, M$; each are vertically displaced from the depth of the maximum density gradient in the pycnocline $D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta}^j: \zeta = z - D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta}^j + \langle D_{\nabla_z \sigma_\theta} \rangle$, where $\nabla_z \sigma_\theta = \Delta \sigma_\theta / \Delta z$ and the angle brackets denote the time average. The red curve represents the mean profile for the cases where $I_{\sigma_{14}} < 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$. The number of profiles in this ensemble was $M = 145$, i.e., 11% of all profiles. The blue curve is the mean profile for the cases where $I_{\sigma_{14}} \geq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ ($M = 1248$, 89% of the data).

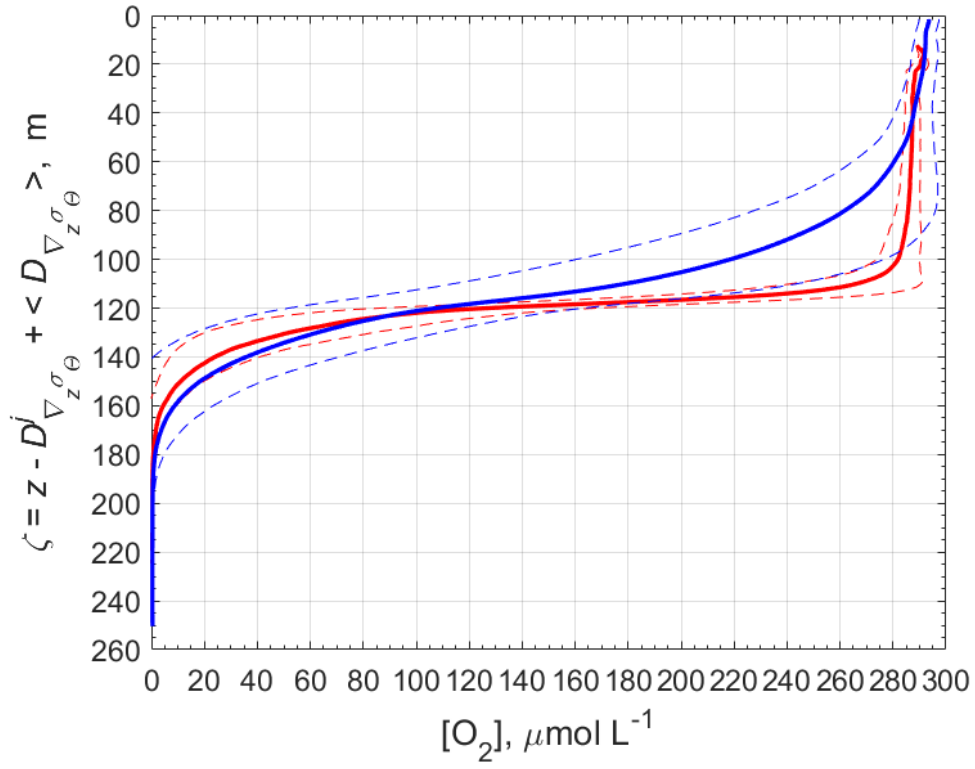


Figure 78: Mean profiles of dissolved oxygen content for $I_{\sigma 14} < 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ (red curve) and $I_{\sigma 14} \geq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ (blue curve).

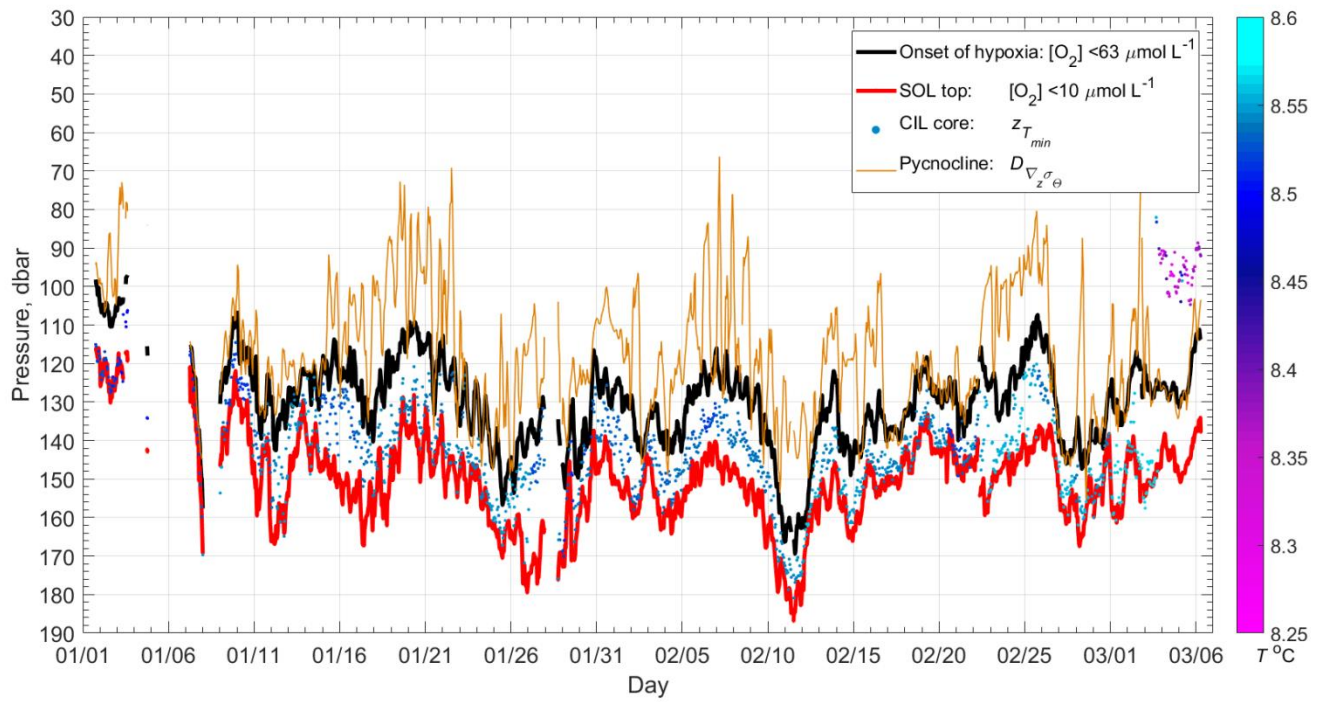


Figure 9: Depths of the hypoxia onset, suboxic layer, and maximum vertical gradient of density and the minimum water temperature (regarding the colored spots, refer to the color scale to the right of the figure).

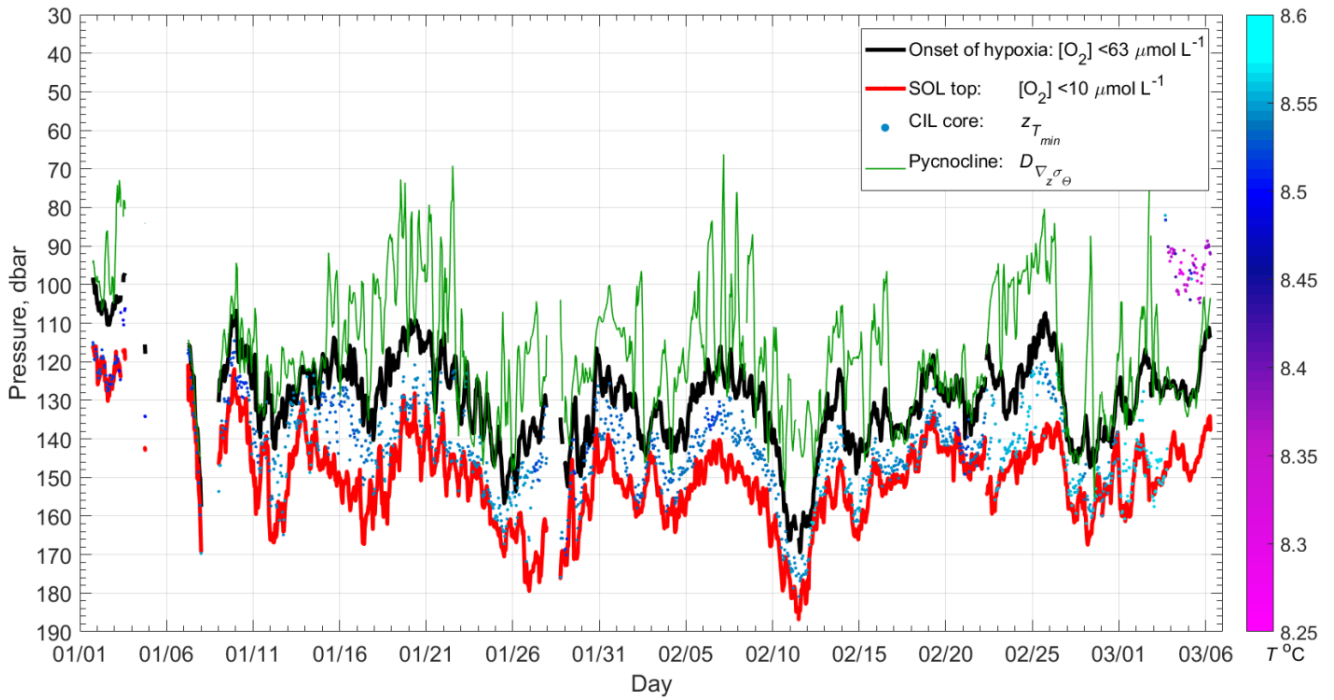


Figure 8: Depths below the onset of hypoxia $[O_2] < 63 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$, the suboxic layer $[O_2] < 10 \mu\text{mol L}^{-1}$, the regions of maximum vertical gradient of density and minimum water temperature (regarding the colored spots, refer to the color scale to the right of the figure).

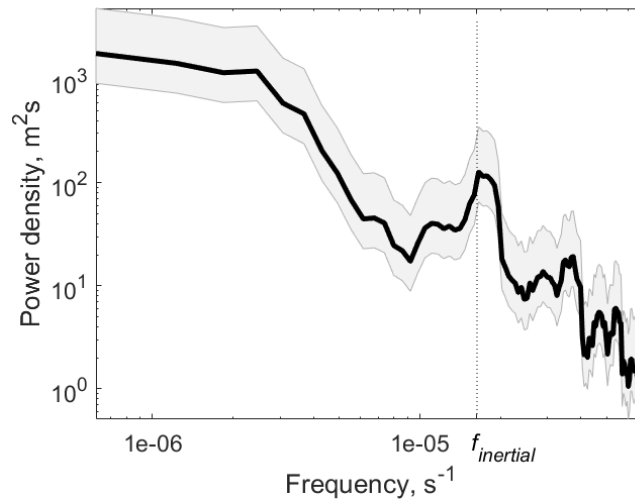


Figure 10: Spectral density of the hypoxia onset depth for January 4-27, 2016. The 95% confidence interval is shown in gray.

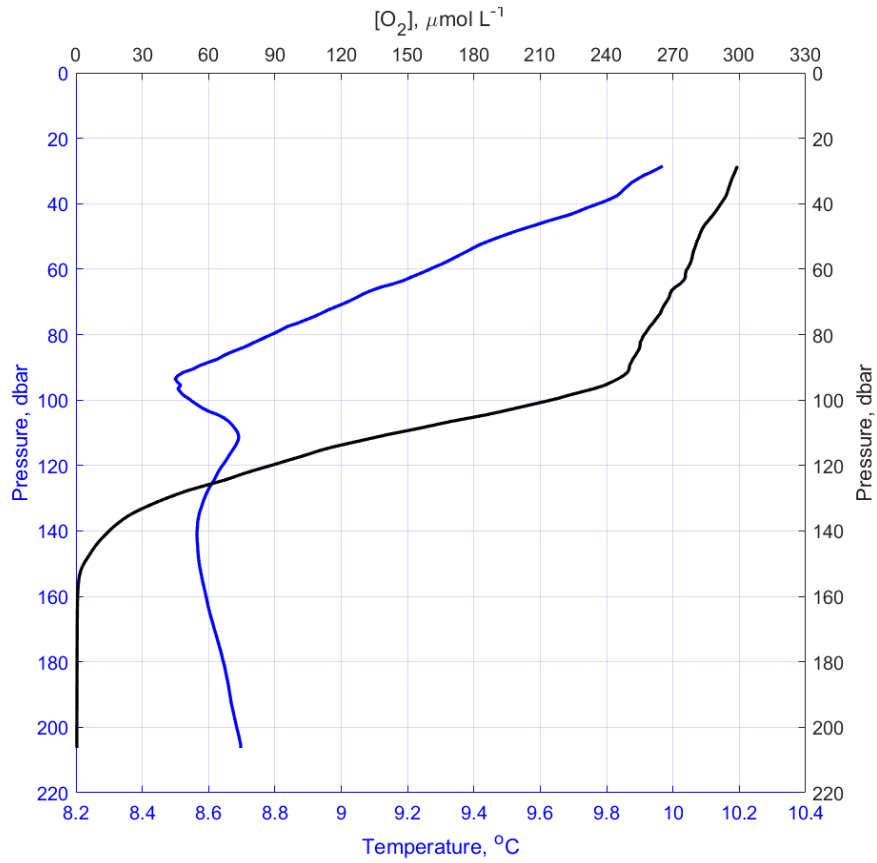


Figure 911: Mean profiles of water temperature and oxygen concentration during the period from 16:00 UTC 3.3.2016 until 07:00 UTC 6.3.2016. Note the minimum temperature in the new CIL at the depth range of 70-110 m.

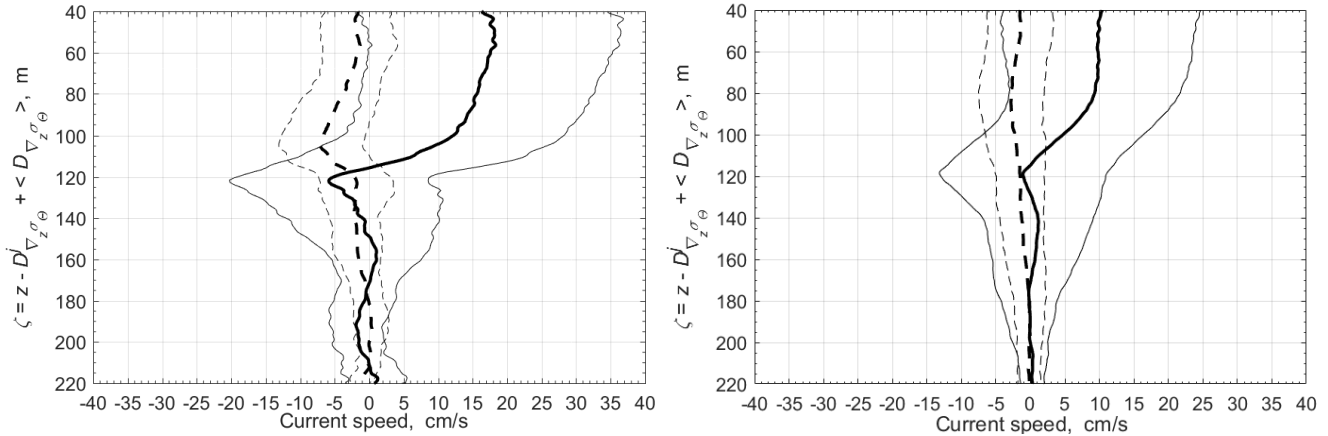


Figure 12: Depth profiles of along-shelf (NW direction is positive; solid curve) and cross-shelf (NE direction is positive; dashed curve) current speed components, which are derived from the ensemble of profiles when $I_{\sigma 14} \leq 3.5$

mol m⁻² (left) and when $I_{\sigma14} \geq 3.5$ mol m⁻² (right) from January-March 2016. The thick curves show the mean profiles, while the thin curves indicate standard deviations.

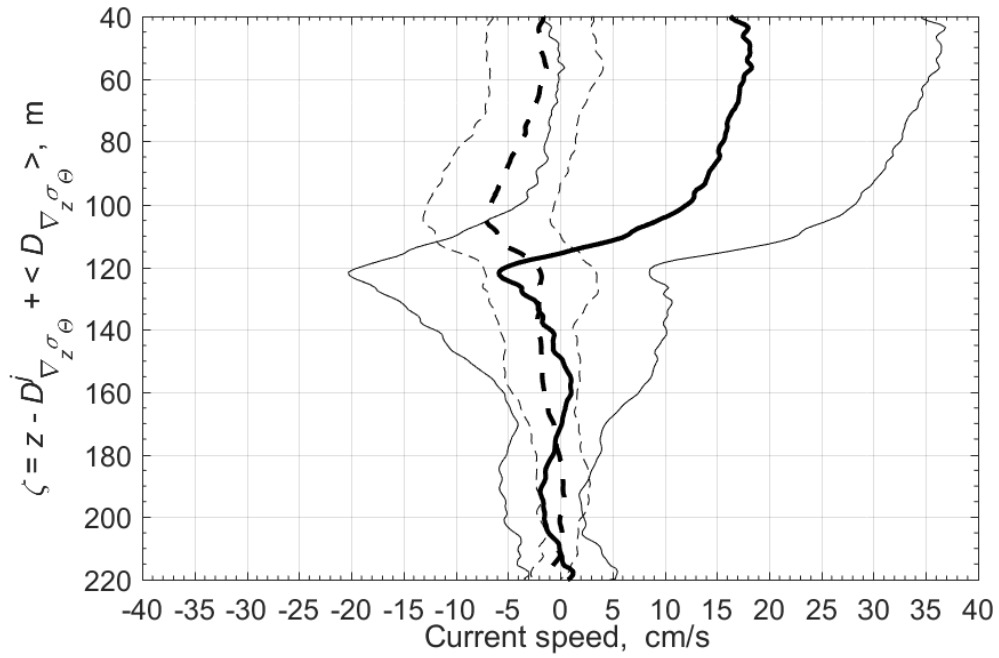


Figure 10: Depth profiles of along-shelf (NW direction is positive; solid curve) and cross-shelf (NE direction is positive; dashed curve) current speed components, which are derived from the ensemble of profiles when $I_{\sigma14} < 3.5$ mol m⁻² from January-March 2016. The thick curves show the mean profiles, while the thin curves indicate standard deviations.

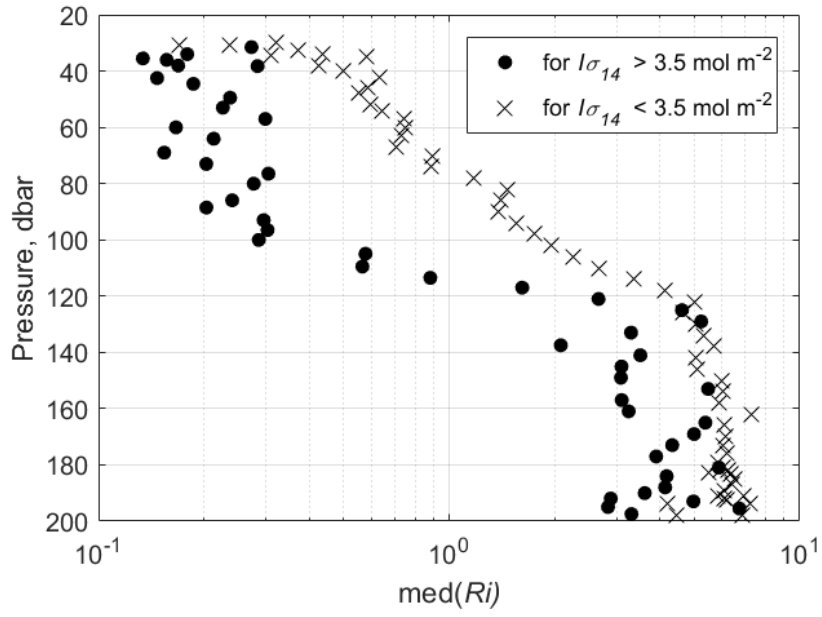


Figure 1413: Vertical profiles of the median values of the Richardson numbers, which ~~that~~ are estimated based on two data ensembles: for $I_{\sigma_{14}} < 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$ and $I_{\sigma_{14}} \geq 3.5 \text{ mol m}^{-2}$.