

## Response to comments by Reviewers #1

We deeply thank you for your constructive suggestions on the early version of the manuscript numbered “os-2019-43” (hereinafter named old manuscript). We have addressed all the comments formulated by the replying (in blue) to your remarks (in black) and the changes in manuscript (in green).

As the manuscript have been modified significantly, the marked-up manuscript is hard to read. So, the page numbers and line numbers of changes in manuscript are those in the revised manuscript without using the revision mode in the Microsoft Word (attached in this documents).

(1) OVERVIEW -This study provides an analysis of the seasonal variation (or as I have called it in the past, “seasonality”) of the M2, S2, K1, and O1 tides in Bohai Bay. -This is a good an important subject to study, as the seasonal variability of tides (that is not astronomical) may be a significant part of water level variability in certain regions, particularly those subject to strongly seasonal weather patterns (like the monsoons in Asia), or especially shallow regions (like the Gulf of Thailand). -Overall, I think the methods and approach is sound, and the numerical models are sound. I would really like to accept this paper, but I am concerned that the missing data is a big limitation to the trust ability of the results, and this should at least be discussed more. I do have some other major concerns, listed below, and some other minor comments.

### Reply:

Thanks a lot for the positive assessment and constructive comments of our paper.

According to your fifth comment and the third comments from Reviewer #2, we have omitted the E1 station, at which there are some gaps in the sea level observations; in addition, the tidal gauge station Dalian, at which there are 17-year sea-level observations, is added to investigate the seasonal variation of principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea. Therefore, we have modified the title of the manuscript to be ‘Seasonal variation of the principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea’.

#### Changes:

P1L1: Seasonal variation of the principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea

P2L24: Hourly sea-level data at the Dalian tidal gauge station were obtained from the University of Hawaii Sea Level Center and used. After 1979, Dalian shared position with Laohutan (Feng et al., 2015), so the sea-level data at Dalian were comprised of data from Dalian from 1980-1990 and from Laohutan from 1991-1997, as shown in Figure 2b.

(2) -One factor that will have to be addressed in this manuscript is the English writing quality. It is not so bad, but it also not so good, and I can notice a number of small errors and style points (such as too many dependent clauses beginning sentences or paragraphs) that should be addressed to make this a better paper. So I would highly recommend having a native English speaker give this paper a very close read before acceptance.

#### Reply:

Thank you for your constructive suggestion. We are sorry that the old manuscript was hurriedly written and the English writing was not good. We have carefully modified and employed the professional language editors of Elsevier Language Editing Services to edit the revised manuscript.

The language editing certification is attached in the end of this document.

(3) As far as the “Enhanced harmonic analysis” methods and claims of novelty... There have been multiple improvements to T\_TIDE in the past decades, such as R\_T\_TIDE (Leffler and Jay, 2009), “versatile” tidal analysis (Foreman, 2009) and U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011). Were any of these methods tried in addition to T\_TIDE? If you haven’t tried these, then it’s harder to claim that your method is “enhanced” more than T\_TIDE when others have already produced “enhanced” methods. How does your method improve on all these past approaches?

#### Reply:

Thank you for your comment.

The R\_T\_TIDE (Leffler and Jay, 2009), versatile tidal analysis (Foreman et al., 2009) and U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011), are indeed improved to T\_TIDE in different perspectives. According to Equation (8) in Leffler and Jay (2009), Equation (4) in Forman et al. (2009) and Equation (2) in Codiga (2011), it can be found that the harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag) are assumed to be constant. In fact, the harmonic parameters are not constant and have multiscale temporal variations, as shown in Corkan (1934), Kang et al. (1995), Müller et al. (2014), Devlin et al. (2018), and so on.

Jin et al. (2018) and Pan et al. (2018) developed the enhanced harmonic analysis, in which the harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag) are assumed to be temporally varying and computed directly within the least squares fit. In this study, the nodal and astronomical argument corrections are embedded in the least squares fit; in addition, the harmonic parameters of minor constituents are assumed to be constant and computed together with the temporally varying harmonic parameters of principal tidal constituents to resolve more constituents and remain computational stability.

Although in the nonstationary tidal analysis tool NS\_TIDE (Matte et al., 2013) the harmonic parameters are also assumed to be temporally varying, the temporally varying harmonic parameters are assumed to be functions of river flow and greater diurnal tidal range at the reference station. Therefore, it just can be applied to the river tides. On the contrary, the enhanced harmonic analysis can be applied in analyzing any time series.

Therefore, the enhanced harmonic analysis used in this study improves on all the past approaches, which has been discussed in the revised manuscript.

#### Changes:

P9L16: In this study, the EHA developed in Jin et al. (2018) and Pan et al. (2018b) was further improved in order to resolve more tidal constituents by adding the minor constituents whose harmonic parameters were assumed to be constant and computed together with the temporally varying harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents. The nodal and astronomical argument corrections were embedded into the least square fit to eliminate the influences of nodal cycle and linearly varying astronomical argument. In fact, there have been

multiple improvements to T\_TIDE in the past decades, such as R\_T\_TIDE (Leffler and Jay, 2009), versatile tidal analysis (Foreman et al., 2009), U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011) and NS\_TIDE (Matte et al., 2013). In R\_T\_TIDE, versatile tidal analysis and U\_TIDE, the harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag) are assumed to be constant, although they have some improvements to T\_TIDE. However, harmonic parameters are not constant and have multiscale temporal variations, as shown in Corkan (1934), Kang et al. (1995), Müller et al. (2014), Devlin et al. (2018), and so on. Neglecting seasonal variation of tides will introduce significant error in sea-level prediction (Fang and Wang, 1986). Therefore, EHA, in which the harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents are assumed to be temporally varying and computed directly within the least squares fit, improved T\_TIDE in other ways. In NS\_TIDE, the harmonic parameters are also assumed to be temporally varying. However, the temporally varying harmonic parameters are assumed to be functions of river flow and greater diurnal tidal range at the reference station, so it can be applied only to river tides, while EHA can be applied in analyzing any time series. On the whole, EHA used in this study is indeed enhanced than other methods.

(4) While one year of hourly water level data is indeed enough to resolve most tides and reveal a seasonal cycle, I have some reservations about how much you can conclude about the seasonality cycle based on one year of observations. It is likely somewhat constant year-by-year, but it is hard to be sure. If you look at Devlin et al, 2018, for example, they looked at 30 years of data to show the seasonal cycle was basically constant, but not identical. If a single year had some sort of rare event (like a particularly strong storm season), this might skew the seasonal pattern a bit. I understand that one year is quite a bit of data to get from mooring, and more data is likely not available, but this is still a limitation that should be discussed somewhere in the paper.

**Reply:**

Thank you for your constructive suggestion.

The duration of hourly sea-level observations at E2 used in this study was only one year,

which is a limitation. Although the rare event might slightly skew seasonal pattern of tides, the seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  obtained using EHA were the same as those using traditional EHA, indicating that the results are not unreasonable and can reflect the seasonal variations of tides in the analysis period. The strong seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents can be captured by the results of numerical experiments.

Besides, according to your fifth comment and the third comments from Reviewer #2, we have omitted the E1 station, at which there are some gaps in the sea level observations; in addition, the tidal gauge station Dalian, at which there are 17-year sea-level observations, is added to investigate the seasonal variation of principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea.

Changes:

P10L1: The duration of hourly sea-level observations at E2 used in this study was only one year, which is a limitation. Although the rare event might slightly skew seasonal pattern of tides, the seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  obtained using EHA were the same as those using traditional EHA, indicating that the results are not unreasonable and can reflect the seasonal variations of tides in the analysis period. The strong seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents can be captured by the results of numerical experiments. The multi-annually averaged results at Dalian also showed the seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents, but the results of numerical experiments were not in accordance with the observed results, which may be because only the horizontally homogeneous profiles of the initial temperature and salinity were used and the temporally varying ocean circulation were not considered.

(5) Also, the existence of gaps in the single year dataset is also unfortunate, because it is hard to know the effect of the gaps without comparing them to a full year's data. Are there any ground-based tide gauges nearby to compare to? -I think that the data gaps at E1 are too extensive to trust this location. Unless you have another nearby location (like a ground-based tide gauge) to compare to, I don't think that these results can be trusted. So maybe this location should be omitted.

**Reply:**

Thank you for your constructive suggestion. We are sorry that there are no ground-based tide gauge stations nearby to compare to. The gaps at E1 are indeed difficultly evaluated, as you said. According to your suggestion, we have omitted E1 station.

Besides, the tidal gauge station Dalian, at which there are 17-year sea-level observations, is added to investigate the seasonal variation of the principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea. Therefore, both the mooring data and the tidal gauge station data are used in the revised manuscript.

(6) My recommendation is for major revision, with more discussions about the effects of missing data, and the comparisons to other methods and the results of other who have analysed seasonality.

**Reply:**

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to further improve the old manuscript.

According to the suggestions from you and Reviewer #2, we omit the E1 station, at which there are some gaps in the sea level observations; in addition, the tidal gauge station Dalian, at which there are 17-year sea-level observations, is added to investigate the seasonal variation of the principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea. Because there are no large gaps in the observations at both E2 and Dalian, the effect of missing data is not discussed in the revised manuscript.

The comparisons to other methods, including R\_T\_TIDE (Leffler and Jay, 2009), versatile tidal analysis (Foreman et al., 2009), U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011) and NS\_TIDE (Matte et al., 2013),

have been added in section 5 (discussions) of the revised manuscript, which have been shown in the ‘Changes’ of the third comment.

The comparisons to other studies have been added in the revised manuscript, as shown in the following ‘Changes’.

Changes:

P2L8: Previous studies have primarily focused on the seasonal variation in the  $M_2$  amplitude without considering the seasonality of other tidal constituents and their phase lags (Gräwe et al., 2014). Indeed, several studies have investigated the seasonality of several constituents. For example, Fang and Wang (1986) studied the seasonal variations of  $M_2$ ,  $N_2$ ,  $O_1$  and  $M_4$  in the Bohai Sea by introducing astro-meteorological constituents; Devlin et al. (2018) found that the diurnal ( $K_1$  and  $O_1$ ) and semidiurnal ( $M_2$  and  $S_2$ ) tidal amplitudes and phase lags exhibited strong seasonal variability in the seas of Southeast Asia. In this study, sea-level observations at one mooring station (E2) and one tidal gauge station (Dalian) in the Bohai Sea were used to investigate the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  using an enhanced harmonic analysis (EHA)..

P5L10: Compared to the annual averages, the mean  $M_2$  amplitude increased by 6.90 cm (approximately 9.33%) in the summer and decreased by 6.68 cm (approximately 9.03%) in the winter, close to the estimated values in Foreman et al. (1995) (6%), Huess and Andersen (2001) (6%) and Müller et al. (2014) (5%–10%).

P9L11: The spatial distribution of the absolute differences between the  $M_2$  tidal amplitude in summer and that in winter was similar to that in Müller et al. (2014).

(7) -ABSTRACT: -I understand what you are saying in your opening, and I do agree with everything you say, but the English is somewhat awkward right out of the gate, and this will confuse other readers who are not as familiar with tides. The text here just needs some minor refinement.

**Reply:**

Thank you for pointing this out. According to this suggestion, we have modified the first

sentence in the revised manuscript, as shown in ‘Changes’.

Changes:

P1L10: The seasonal variation of tides plays a significant role in water level changes in coastal regions.

(8) -INTRODUCTION -Page 2, line 3-4: Devlin et al, 2018 also looked at  $K_1$ ,  $O_1$ , and  $S_2$  seasonality found some interesting patterns of seasonality in  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  at some locations, though  $M_2$  was the primary seasonal variation observed.

Reply:

Thank you for pointing this out. According to this comment, we have rewritten it as shown in following ‘Changes’.

Changes:

P2L11: Devlin et al. (2018) found that the diurnal ( $K_1$  and  $O_1$ ) and semidiurnal ( $M_2$  and  $S_2$ ) tidal amplitudes and phase lags exhibited strong seasonal variability in the seas of Southeast Asia..

(9) -Line 5: “Several other studies have analysed the seasonal variability...”.

Reply:

Thank you for pointing this out. We agree with your comment and have modified it in the revised manuscript.

Changes:

P2L4: Several other studies have analysed the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  tide in polar regions.

(10) -Line 7: “tidal constants” ---> “tidal constituents”.

Reply:

Thank you for pointing this out. We agree with your comment and have modified it in the

revised manuscript.

Changes:

P2L5: Kagan and Sofina (2010) showed that the seasonal variability of tidal constituents was widespread in the Arctic Ocean.

(11) -Line 14: “major tidal harmonic parameters” ---> “largest tidal constituents”.

**Reply:**

Thank you for pointing this out. We agree with your comment and have modified it in the revised manuscript.

Changes:

P2L13: In this study, sea-level observations at one mooring station (E2) and one tidal gauge station (Dalian) in the Bohai Sea were used to investigate the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  using an enhanced harmonic analysis (EHA).

(12) -OBSERVATIONS AND METHODS -Page 2, line 26: How about eustatic sea level rise?

**Reply:**

Thank you for pointing this out. We are sorry that the eustatic sea level rise was not explicitly shown in Equation (1) in the old manuscript. In the revised manuscript, we have modified the Equation (1) as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\zeta(t) &= \zeta_0 + \sum_{k=1}^K \left\{ f_k(t) A_k \cos[V_k(t) + u_k(t) - g_k] \right\} + R(t) \\ &= \zeta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{N_{NR}} \left\{ f_i(t) A_i \cos[V_i(t) + u_i(t) - g_i] \right\} + R(t) + \\ &\quad \sum_{j=1}^{N_R} \left\{ f_j(t) A_j \cos[V_j(t) + u_j(t) - g_j] \right\} + \sum_{n=1}^{N_I} f_n(t) A_n \cos[V_n(t) + u_n(t) - g_n] \end{aligned}$$

where  $\zeta(t)$  is the total sea level;  $\zeta_0$  is the mean sea level;  $A$  and  $g$  are the amplitude and phase lag (UTC time, the same below), respectively;  $f$  and  $u$  are the nodal corrections to the amplitude and phase, respectively;  $V$  is the astronomical argument;  $R$  is the nontidal component;  $K$  is the number of tidal constituents;  $N_{NR}$  is the number of non-reference constituents;  $N_R$  is the number of reference constituents; and  $N_I$  is the number of constituents to be inferred from the

$j^{\text{th}}$  reference constituent.

Therefore, the eustatic sea level rise is included in  $R(t)$ .

Changes:

P2L28:

A sea level is composed of components from different sources (Godin, 1972; Foreman, 1977; Fang, 1986; Pawlowicz et al., 2002; Foreman et al., 2009):

$$\begin{aligned}\zeta(t) &= \zeta_0 + \sum_{k=1}^K \left\{ f_k(t) A_k \cos[V_k(t) + u_k(t) - g_k] \right\} + R(t) \\ &= \zeta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{N_{\text{NR}}} \left\{ f_i(t) A_i \cos[V_i(t) + u_i(t) - g_i] \right\} + R(t) + \\ &\quad \sum_{j=1}^{N_{\text{R}}} \left\{ f_j(t) A_j \cos[V_j(t) + u_j(t) - g_j] \right\} + \sum_{n=1}^{N_{\text{I}}} \left\{ f_n(t) A_n \cos[V_n(t) + u_n(t) - g_n] \right\}\end{aligned}\tag{1}$$

where  $\zeta(t)$  is the total sea level;  $\zeta_0$  is the mean sea level;  $A$  and  $g$  are the amplitude and phase lag (UTC time, the same below), respectively;  $f$  and  $u$  are the nodal corrections to amplitude and phase lag, respectively;  $V$  is the astronomical argument;  $R$  is the nontidal component;  $K$  is the number of tidal constituents;  $N_{\text{NR}}$  is the number of non-reference constituents;  $N_{\text{R}}$  is the number of reference constituents; and  $N_{\text{I}}$  is the number of constituents to be inferred from the  $j^{\text{th}}$  reference constituent.

(13) Page 3, line 4: See comment above about improvements to T\_TIDE.

**Reply:**

Thank you for your constructive suggestion.

As shown in the reply of the third comment, the R\_T\_TIDE (Leffler and Jay, 2009), versatile tidal analysis (Foreman et al., 2009) and U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011), are indeed improved to T\_TIDE in different perspectives. According to Equation (8) in Leffler and Jay (2009), Equation (4) in Forman et al. (2009) and Equation (2) in Codiga (2011), it can be found that the harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag) are assumed to be constant. In fact, the harmonic parameters are not constant and have multiscale temporal variations, as shown in Corkan (1934), Kang et al. (1995), Müller et al. (2014), Devlin et al. (2018), and so on.

Jin et al. (2018) and Pan et al. (2018) developed the enhanced harmonic analysis, in which the harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag) are assumed to be temporally varying and computed directly within the least squares fit. In this study, the nodal and astronomical argument corrections are embedded in the least squares fit; in addition, the harmonic parameters of minor constituents are assumed to be constant and computed together with the temporally varying harmonic parameters of principal tidal constituents to resolve more constituents and remain computational stability.

(14) Section 2.3 -I am bit unclear about what you mean by SHA here. Do you mean that you are harmonically analysing datasets that are monthly or shorter? If so, then you will resolve the four major tides, but you will likely not constrain the natural yearly variability that one-year analyses contain (such as SA and SSA). Therefore, any seasonality you observed might actually be just an artefact of the mathematics. If you had more than one year of data, you could perform overlapping one-year HA at one-month steps, then any seasonality revealed would be more “real” Maybe I am missing something, but at least you could explain it better. In any case, this is the obvious issue with only using one single year of data.

**Reply:**

Thank you for your comments.

In SHA, the sea level observations are divided into monthly segments according to calendar month and CHA with nodal and inference corrections is applied to each monthly segment to obtain the discrete tidal harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag), which has been used in many previous studies (e.g., Foreman et al., 1995; Kang et al., 1995; Müller et al., 2014; Devlin et al., 2018). Then the discrete amplitude and phase lag at each monthly segment are interpolated using cubic spline interpolation to obtain the temporally varying amplitude and phase lag.

It is reasonable to use the monthly analysis to obtain the seasonal variability of principal tide constituents, as long as a valid inference procedure is used. The seasonality in principal tide constituents have been investigated using monthly analysis in many previous studies (e.g.,

Foreman et al., 1995; Kang et al., 1995; Müller et al., 2014; Devlin et al., 2018).

As pointed out by Reviewer #2, the unresolved constituents in the monthly analysis will cause the spurious seasonality in  $K_1$  and  $S_2$  in the old manuscript. Following the suggestions from you and Reviewer #2, we have redone the data analysis in the revised manuscript. (1) Consider the nodal correction and infer unresolved constituents in SHA using the function in T\_TIDE; (2) Embed the nodal correction into EHA to eliminate the influence of 18.6-year nodal modulation and add the minor constituents, whose harmonic parameters are assumed to be constant, to resolve more constituents. The seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents at E2 and Dalian are shown in Figures 4 and 6, respectively, in the revised manuscript. The unreasonably large semi-annual modulations in  $S_2$  and  $K_1$  have disappeared and the results are reasonable on the whole.

#### Changes:

P3L13: Following Foreman et al. (1995), Kang et al. (1995), Müller et al. (2014) and Devlin et al. (2018), sea-level observations are divided into monthly segments by calendar month and CHA with nodal and inference corrections is applied to each monthly segment to obtain the discrete tidal harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag). Then the discrete amplitude and phase lag at each monthly segment are interpolated using cubic spline interpolation to obtain the temporally varying amplitudes and phase lags. This methodology is termed segmented harmonic analysis (SHA). Following Kang et al. (1995), the sea-level observations in every monthly segment are analyzed only when the duration of the observations is greater than 26 days.

(15) -Also, 15 days of data within a month as a criteria makes the results much worse, and could be highly spurious. This is less than 50% completeness, while I believe a criteria of 75% to 80% is needed.

#### Reply:

Thank you for your constructive suggestions. Following this comment and Kang et al. (1995), we have modified the criteria from 15 days to 26 days in the revised manuscript.

Changes:

P3L17: Following Kang et al. (1995), the sea-level observations in every monthly segment are analyzed only when the duration of the observations is greater than 26 days.

(16) RESULTS -Page 5, Line 4: Of course gaps will influence results, especially since you have such a relaxed criterion of completeness (50%) and such a short time-series (~ 1year). This has to be discussed more, and perhaps there is just not enough data to perform this study adequately.

**Reply:**

Thank you for your constructive suggestion. According to your suggestion and those from Reviewer #2, we have omitted the sea-level observations at E1 and added the multiyear sea-level observations at Dalian tidal gauge station. At both E2 and Dalian, there were no large gaps in the data, as shown in Figure 2 in the revised manuscript.

(17) MECHANISMS -Seasonal variations of sea level are indeed important and there can be a lot of reasons (monsoons, etc.), but can you discuss more what causes these variations, and how these might influence tides physically?

**Reply:**

Thank you for your constructive suggestions.

According to this suggestion, we have added the discussions of season variations of stratification and tides through physical processes. In winter, the strong northwest Asia monsoon develops a vertically well-mixed condition (Yanagi et al., 2001; Jeon et al., 2014), which will not stabilize the tidal currents and will lose more energy, leading to smaller tidal amplitudes. As the surface heating rate and freshwater discharge increase, the mixing is insufficient to homogenize the input potential energy and cause stratified conditions in summer (Huang et al., 1999; van Haren, 2000), during which the reduced vertical eddy viscosity will increase the tidal amplitudes. However, the  $S_2$  amplitude at Dalian was larger in winter and smaller in summer, which is inconsistent with the other principal tidal constituents and should

be further investigated in future studies.

Changes:

P10L9: The seasonal variations of stratification and vertical eddy viscosity and their influences on the tidal amplitudes may be as follows. In winter, the strong northwest Asia monsoon develops a vertically well-mixed condition (Yanagi et al., 2001; Jeon et al., 2014), which will not stabilize the tidal currents and will lose more energy, leading to smaller tidal amplitudes. As the surface heating rate and freshwater discharge increase, the mixing is insufficient to homogenize the input potential energy and cause stratified conditions in summer (Huang et al., 1999; van Haren, 2000), during which the reduced vertical eddy viscosity will increase the tidal amplitudes. However, the  $S_2$  amplitude at Dalian was larger in winter and smaller in summer, which is inconsistent with the other principal tidal constituents and should be further investigated in future studies.

(18) Line 14-15: I think that the importance of sea ice in the reason could still be important to seasonality, if you consider the “back-effect” connection of coastal embayments and open water as discussed by Arbic and Garret, 2010; Arbic, 2009 via resonance mechanisms. So, even if the ice cover is far away from your observations site, it could still be important. These studies should at least be mentioned and discussed here.

**Reply:**

Thank you for your constructive suggestions. According to the back-effect connection of the coastal shelf and open ocean via resonance mechanisms (Arbic et al., 2009; Arbic and Garrett, 2010), sea ice may be important to the seasonality of principal tidal constituents. However, Zhang et al. (2019) developed a three-dimensional ice-ocean coupled model based on Finite Volume Community Ocean Model (FVCOM) and found that the damping effect of sea ice on the astronomical tides were almost negligible in the Bohai Sea using the numerical experiments.

According to your comment, we have discussed the influences of sea ice in the revised manuscript by citing Arbic et al. (2009), Arbic and Garret (2010) and Zhang et al. (2019).

Changes:

P7L13: According to the back-effect connection of the coastal shelf and open ocean via resonance mechanisms (Arbic et al., 2009; Arbic and Garrett, 2010), sea ice may be important to the seasonality of principal tidal constituents. However, Zhang et al. (2019) found that the damping effect of sea ice on the astronomical tides was almost negligible in the Bohai Sea employing numerical experiments with a three-dimensional ice-ocean coupled model. Therefore, ice coverage was not considered in this study.

(19) -Page 8, line 14: “.. as the differences ... larger than 0.” is kind of an elementary statement, you can omit this.

**Reply:**

Thank you for pointing this out. According to your suggestions, we have deleted this sentence in the revised manuscript.

(20) -Page 6, Line 16-19: Can you restate this as a statement instead of a question? It doesn't read well in the middle of the paragraph as written.

**Reply:**

Thank you for pointing this out. According to your suggestions, we have deleted this sentence in the revised manuscript.

### ***References***

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# Seasonal variation of the principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea

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10 **Abstract.** The seasonal variation of tides plays a significant role in water level changes in coastal regions. In this study, seasonal variations of four principal tidal constituents, including  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$ , and  $O_1$ , in the Bohai Sea, China, were studied by analysing one-year sea-level observations at E2 and 17-year sea-level observations at Dalian with an enhanced harmonic analysis. At E2, the  $M_2$  tidal amplitude and phase lag had annual frequencies, with large values in summer and small values in winter, while the frequencies of  $S_2$  and  $K_1$  tidal amplitudes are also nearly annual. In contrast, the  $O_1$  tidal amplitude  
15 increased constantly from winter to autumn. The maxima of phase lags appeared twice in one year for  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$ , taking place near winter and summer. The seasonal variation trends estimated by the enhanced harmonic analysis at Dalian are different from those at E2, except for the  $M_2$  phase lag. The  $M_2$  and  $S_2$  tidal amplitudes varied semi-annually and annually, respectively, and were relatively significant at Dalian. The results of numerical experiments indicate that the seasonality of vertical eddy viscosity induced seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents at E2, while the variations at Dalian  
20 were due to the seasonality of stratification and vertical eddy viscosity.

## 1 Introduction

Although there is no primary seasonal cycle in the moon's orbit, a significant seasonal variation in the principal lunar tidal constituent has been observed and is dominant in coastal and polar regions (Müller et al., 2014). In particular, the seasonal variation in the major tidal constituent  $M_2$  has received considerable attention (Gräwe et al., 2014).

25 Corkan (1934) inferred a seasonal modulation of the  $M_2$  tide by analysing several sea-level records near the British coast. Foreman et al. (1995) observed a seasonal cycle of the  $M_2$  amplitude at Victoria, which is on the southern tip of Vancouver Island off Canada's Pacific coast. Kang et al. (1995) revealed the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  tidal harmonic constants in the seas adjacent to Korea. Huess and Andersen (2001) found a seasonal variation in the  $M_2$  constituent in the northwest European shelf. Kang et al. (2002) investigated the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  tide in the Yellow and East  
30 China Seas. Georgas (2012) observed seasonal episodes of significant tidal damping and modulation in the Hudson River estuary. Müller et al. (2014) studied the global seasonal cycle of the  $M_2$  tide and found significant seasonal variations in

several coastal areas, including the North Sea, East China Sea and Yellow Sea, Sea of Okhotsk and regions of the Banda, Timor, and Arafura Seas north of Australia. Tazkia et al. (2017) found that the  $M_2$  amplitude changed markedly between winter and summer in the northern Bay of Bengal.

Several other studies have analysed the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  tide in polar regions. Mofjeld (1986) observed seasonal fluctuations of the tidal harmonic parameters on the north-eastern Bering Sea shelf. Kagan and Sofina (2010) showed that the seasonal variability of tidal constituents was widespread in the Arctic Ocean. Further, Müller et al. (2014) studied the global seasonal cycle of the  $M_2$  tide and likewise identified significant seasonal variations in the Arctic regions.

Previous studies have primarily focused on the seasonal variation in the  $M_2$  amplitude without considering the seasonality of other tidal constituents and their phase lags (Gräwe et al., 2014). Indeed, several studies have investigated the seasonality of several constituents. For example, Fang and Wang (1986) studied the seasonal variations of  $M_2$ ,  $N_2$ ,  $O_1$  and  $M_4$  in the Bohai Sea by introducing astro-meteorological constituents; Devlin et al. (2018) found that the diurnal ( $K_1$  and  $O_1$ ) and semidiurnal ( $M_2$  and  $S_2$ ) tidal amplitudes and phase lags exhibited strong seasonal variability in the seas of Southeast Asia.

In this study, sea-level observations at one mooring station (E2) and one tidal gauge station (Dalian) in the Bohai Sea were used to investigate the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  using an enhanced harmonic analysis (EHA). The rest of the paper is organised as follows. In Section 2, the sea-level observations in the Bohai Sea are reported and the analysis methods are described. In Section 3, the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents is estimated by analysing observations. The mechanisms underlying the seasonal variability are discussed by using numerical experiments in Section 4. Further discussions and conclusions occupy Sections 5 and 6, respectively.

## 2 Observations and methods

### 2.1 Observations

From 0000 UTC 1 November 2013 to 0000 UTC 1 November 2014, total sea levels were observed hourly using a moored pressure gauge accurate to within 5 cm (Lv et al., 2018), at E2 station in the Bohai Bay, China (Figure 1). The time series of the total sea levels at E2 is shown in Figure 2a, demonstrating the continuous coverage of the observations.

Hourly sea-level data at the Dalian tidal gauge station were obtained from the University of Hawaii Sea Level Center and used. After 1979, Dalian shared position with Laohutan (Feng et al., 2015), so the sea-level data at Dalian were comprised of data from Dalian from 1980-1990 and from Laohutan from 1991-1997, as shown in Figure 2b.

### 2.2 Classical harmonic analysis

A sea level is composed of components from different sources (Godin, 1972; Foreman, 1977; Fang, 1986; Pawlowicz et al., 2002; Foreman et al., 2009):

$$\begin{aligned}
\zeta(t) &= \zeta_0 + \sum_{k=1}^K \left\{ f_k(t) A_k \cos[V_k(t) + u_k(t) - g_k] \right\} + R(t) \\
&= \zeta_0 + \sum_{i=1}^{N_{NR}} \left\{ f_i(t) A_i \cos[V_i(t) + u_i(t) - g_i] \right\} + R(t) + \\
&\quad \sum_{j=1}^{N_R} \left\{ f_j(t) A_j \cos[V_j(t) + u_j(t) - g_j] \right\} + \sum_{n=1}^{N_I} f_n(t) A_n \cos[V_n(t) + u_n(t) - g_n] \Big\}
\end{aligned} \tag{1}$$

where  $\zeta(t)$  is the total sea level;  $\zeta_0$  is the mean sea level;  $A$  and  $g$  are the amplitude and phase lag (UTC time, the same below), respectively;  $f$  and  $u$  are the nodal corrections to amplitude and phase lag, respectively;  $V$  is the astronomical argument;  $R$  is the nontidal component;  $K$  is the number of tidal constituents;  $N_{NR}$  is the number of non-reference constituents;  $N_R$  is the number of reference constituents; and  $N_I$  is the number of constituents to be inferred from the  $j^{\text{th}}$  reference constituent.

The mean sea level, amplitude and phase lag of each constituent can be solved by analyzing a time series of sea-level observations at a specific point using classical harmonic analysis (CHA). With different assumptions and conditions, CHA can be performed using the T\_TIDE (Pawlowicz et al., 2002), U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011) or Institute of Ocean Sciences Tidal Package (Foreman et al., 2009). In this study, T\_TIDE, in which the astronomical argument varies linearly and the nodal correction is performed after least squares fit, is used to realize CHA.

### 2.3 Segmented harmonic analysis

Following Foreman et al. (1995), Kang et al. (1995), Müller et al. (2014) and Devlin et al. (2018), sea-level observations are divided into monthly segments by calendar month and CHA with nodal and inference corrections is applied to each monthly segment to obtain the discrete tidal harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag). Then the discrete amplitude and phase lag at each monthly segment are interpolated using cubic spline interpolation to obtain the temporally varying amplitudes and phase lags. This methodology is termed segmented harmonic analysis (SHA). Following Kang et al. (1995), the sea-level observations in every monthly segment are analyzed only when the duration of the observations is greater than 26 days.

### 2.4 Enhanced harmonic analysis

By combining CHA with independent point scheme and cubic spline interpolation, Jin et al. (2018) developed EHA to directly obtain temporally varying mean sea level and tidal harmonic parameters. In contrast, the harmonic parameters are assumed to be constant in CHA and SHA. A MATLAB toolkit, S\_TIDE, was released to support EHA by Pan et al. (2018b). In this study, nodal and astronomical argument corrections are embedded into the least square fit, following Foreman et al. (2009); in addition, the harmonic parameters of the minor tidal constituents are assumed to be constant and computed

together with the temporally varying harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents to resolve more constituents and retain computational stability. The sea level in EHA is as follows:

$$\zeta(t) = \zeta_0(t) + \sum_{i=1}^I \left\{ f_i(t) A_i(t) \cos[V_i(t) + u_i(t) - g_i(t)] \right\} + \sum_{j=1}^J \left\{ f_j(t) A_j \cos[V_j(t) + u_j(t) - g_j] \right\} \quad (2)$$

where  $I$  is the number of principal tidal constituents with temporally varying harmonic parameters;  $J$  is the number of minor tidal constituents with constant harmonic parameters; and the mean sea level and nontidal component are included in  $\zeta_0(t)$ .

Similar to Jin et al. (2018) and Pan et al. (2018b), the independent point scheme and cubic spline interpolation are used to jointly determine solve the temporally varying and constant harmonic parameters, which are not shown here for brevity. As mentioned in Pan et al. (2018b), the temporally varying harmonic parameters obtained using EHA with different numbers of independent points represent oscillations on different time scales. In this study, six independent points are used to obtain the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents.

### 3 Results

One-year sea-level observations at E2 were analyzed using CHA with the automated constituent selection algorithm (Pawlowicz et al., 2002). According to the signal-to-noise ratio (Pawlowicz et al., 2002; Matte et al., 2013),  $M_2$ ,  $K_1$ ,  $S_2$  and  $O_1$  were selected as the principal tidal constituents to be investigated in this study.

#### 3.1 Seasonal variability at E2

As shown in Figure 3, the significant constituent near  $K_1$  was  $P_1$ , which was unresolved when analysing one-month observations (Fang and Wang, 1986), while that for  $S_2$  was  $K_2$  in the semidiurnal frequency band. Therefore, when the monthly analysis was performed in SHA, the automated constituent selection algorithm in T\_TIDE was used to determine the analysed constituents; in addition, the unresolved constituents  $P_1$  and  $K_2$  were inferred from  $K_1$  and  $S_2$ , respectively, with the inference parameters taken from a yearly harmonic analysis of the one-year sea-level observations at E2 (Kang et al., 1995; Foreman et al., 2009). When EHA was used to directly analyse the sea-level observations at E2, the harmonic parameters of  $M_2$ ,  $K_1$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $O_1$ ,  $P_1$  and  $K_2$  were estimated together; in detail, the harmonic parameters of  $M_2$ ,  $K_1$ ,  $S_2$  and  $O_1$  were assumed to be temporally varying and those of  $P_1$  and  $K_2$  were assumed to be constant.

As shown in Figure 4, the estimated harmonic parameters obtained with SHA and EHA, including the temporally varying amplitudes and phase lags, were nearly equal and near those estimated using CHA, indicating that the temporal variations in the harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents at E2 can be reasonably estimated using both SHA and EHA. Based on Wei and Wang (2012) and Zhang et al. (2017), spring, summer, autumn and winter were defined as March to May, June to August, September to November and December to February of the following year, respectively. The temporally varying harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents showed seasonal variations (Figure 4). For  $M_2$ , the

seasonal variations were significant; in detail, the amplitude reached maximum in summer and minimum in winter, just as the phase did, as in Müller et al. (2014). The seasonality of the  $S_2$  amplitude was not significant, but the estimated results using EHA increased significantly in summer. The temporal variation of the  $K_1$  amplitude spanned one period, with maxima and minima in summer and winter, respectively. In stark contrast, the  $O_1$  amplitude increased from winter to autumn. The phase lags of the  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  components varied semi-annually, in which the phase lags were larger in summer and winter and smaller in spring and winter, respectively. In the four principal tidal constituents, only the  $M_2$  amplitude had the similar variation trend as the phase lag.

The seasonally averaged amplitudes and phase lags of the principal tidal constituents are listed in Table 1. The variation trends of the averaged harmonic parameters of these constituents were the same as those obtained using EHA in Figure 4. Compared to the annual averages, the mean  $M_2$  amplitude increased by 6.90 cm (approximately 9.33%) in the summer and decreased by 6.68 cm (approximately 9.03%) in the winter, close to the estimated values in Foreman et al. (1995) (6%), Huess and Andersen (2001) (6%) and Müller et al. (2014) (5%–10%). For  $S_2$  ( $K_1$ ), the averaged amplitudes decreased by 4.71% (7.72%) in the winter and increased by 7.93% (5.91%) in the summer, indicating a nearly annual variation as shown in Figure 4. The mean  $O_1$  amplitude in the summer increased by 3.45 cm compared to that in the winter. Only the  $M_2$  phase lag in winter was smaller than the annual average, and the phase lags in both winter and summer were larger than the corresponding annual average for the other three principal tidal constituents.

### 3.2 Seasonal variability at Dalian

The multiyear data at Dalian shown in Figure 2b were analysed year by year. In each year, one-year sea-level observations were analysed using CHA, SHA and EHA with settings similar to those used for data from E2. As shown in Figure 5,  $P_1$  and  $K_2$  were the significant constituents unresolved in the monthly analysis, just like at E2. Therefore,  $P_1$  and  $K_2$  were inferred from  $K_1$  and  $S_2$  in SHA and taken as minor constituents with constant harmonic parameters in EHA. The estimated harmonic parameters from various years were then averaged (Fang and Wang, 1986) and are shown in Figure 6. The estimated harmonic parameters using both the SHA and EHA were near to those obtained using CHA, showing that the estimated results were reasonable. In addition, the estimated harmonic parameters obtained using EHA were much closer to those obtained using SHA for data from Dalian than those from E2.

The variation trends of the harmonic parameters estimated using EHA at Dalian were different from those at E2, except for the  $M_2$  phase lag (Figure 6). The  $M_2$  amplitude at Dalian varied semi-annually, with large values in summer and winter and small values in spring and autumn, respectively. The  $S_2$  amplitude had significant annual variation, with maximum in winter and minimum in summer, which is opposite of the variation trend of  $S_2$  amplitude at E2. The  $K_1$  amplitude was nearly constant from winter to spring and increased during the summer. The  $O_1$  amplitude reached the minimum in the winter and summer while increasing slightly in the spring and autumn. The estimated  $S_2$  phase lag reached the maximum in the spring with small variation. The  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  phase lags trended the same, increasing in the winter and summer while decreasing in the spring and early autumn.

The averaged amplitudes and phase lags of the principal tidal constituents at Dalian, as listed in Table 2, show a seasonal variation that was generally smaller than that at E2. All of the seasonal changes of the principal tidal constituents were less than 1.80 cm, a variation that only appeared in the  $S_2$  amplitude at E2. In addition, all of the seasonal changes of the phase lags were less than  $2.20^\circ$ , while the  $S_2$  and  $K_1$  phase lags at E2 changed by at least  $5.00^\circ$  in the summer and winter, respectively. The rate of change in the  $M_2$  amplitude at Dalian was less than 1%, which was significantly less than that at E2. The rates of changes in all phase lags were less than 1%, except for the  $M_2$  phase lag, which was larger than 2% in both summer and winter compared to the annual averages, and larger than those at E2. An increase in the  $S_2$  amplitude of 5.34% occurred in the winter, larger than its decrease in the winter at E2.

In summary, the harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents at E2 and Dalian varied seasonally, and the seasonality of the tides at E2 was significantly different from that at Dalian. The amplitude of the principal tidal constituent  $M_2$  at E2 varied annually, while that at Dalian was semi-annual. The  $M_2$  phase lags at E2 and Dalian had the similar variation trend, with larger values in summer and small values in winter. The  $S_2$  amplitude in winter at E2 was less than that in summer, which was opposite that at Dalian. The  $K_1$  amplitude at E2 had an annual frequency, with large values in summer and small values in winter, while the  $O_1$  amplitude increased steadily. In contrast, the variations of the  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  amplitudes at Dalian were small. The maxima of the  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  phase lags at E2 appeared twice, like those of  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  and different from that of  $S_2$  at Dalian.

#### 4 Mechanisms for the seasonal variability

Several previous studies have investigated the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  amplitude. Three main mechanisms have been proposed:

1) Seasonal variations of the mean sea level. Corkan (1934) related the seasonal modulation of the  $M_2$  tide near the British coast to seasonal variations of sea level and atmospheric pressure. Tazkia et al. (2017) pointed out that the seasonal variability of the sea level generated by many processes can induce a seasonal variation of the  $M_2$  tide, as tidal wave propagation was controlled by water depth on the first order.

2) Seasonally varying stratification. Foreman et al. (1995) presumed that the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  amplitude at Victoria, Canada was induced by the changes in stratification due to seasonal variability in estuarine flow. Kang et al. (2002) used a two-layer numerical model to investigate the baroclinic response of the tide and tidal currents in the Yellow and East China Seas, and found that seasonal stratification had several noticeable effects on the tides, including varying degrees of current shear, frictional dissipation, and barotropic energy flux. Müller (2012) indicated that in shallow seas, seasonal variations in stratification were a major factor for the observed seasonal modulation in tides. Müller et al. (2014) pointed out that the seasonal changes in stratification on the continental shelf affected the vertical profile of the eddy viscosity to further cause the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  tide.

3) Seasonally varying ice coverage. St-Laurent et al. (2008) proposed that the significant seasonal variations of the  $M_2$  surface elevation in all regions of the Hudson Bay system were essentially caused by under-ice friction. Georgas (2012) pointed out that the seasonal episodes of significant tidal damping (reductions in tidal amplitudes by as much as 50%) observed in the Hudson River estuary were primarily caused by the under-ice friction as well. Müller et al. (2014) found that the frictional effect between the sea ice and ocean surface layer led to the seasonal variability of the  $M_2$  tide.

Other mechanisms, including long-term changes in the tidal potential (Molinas and Yang, 1986), interactions with other physical phenomena (Huess and Andersen, 2001; Pan et al., 2018a), changes in the internal tide with corresponding small changes in its surface expression (Ray and Mitchum, 1997; Colosi and Munk, 2006), as well as a number of other more technical reasons, may also change the  $M_2$  tidal amplitude on various time scales. The above reasons have been presented or discussed in Woodworth (2010), Müller (2012), Müller et al. (2014) and Tazkia et al. (2017).

#### 4.1 Design of numerical experiments

The Bohai Sea in north China freezes to varying degrees every winter for approximately 3–4 months (Su and Wang, 2012). According to the back-effect connection of the coastal shelf and open ocean via resonance mechanisms (Arbic et al., 2009; Arbic and Garrett, 2010), sea ice may be important to the seasonality of principal tidal constituents. However, Zhang et al. (2019) found that the damping effect of sea ice on the astronomical tides was almost negligible in the Bohai Sea employing numerical experiments with a three-dimensional ice-ocean coupled model. Therefore, ice coverage was not considered in this study. Several numerical experiments (Exp1–Exp4) were carried out to simulate the four principal tidal constituents in the Bohai Sea under different conditions using MITgcm (Marshall et al., 1997), testing the influence of seasonal variations of mean sea level and stratification on the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents.

Identical model settings were used in all of the numerical experiments and described as follows. The simulation area was the Bohai Sea as shown in Figure 1b. The horizontal resolution was  $2' \times 2'$ , with 16 layers in the vertical direction with thicknesses ranging from 2–5 m. The four principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$ , and  $O_1$  were implemented as tidal forcing at the east open boundary, whose data were predicted using the constant harmonic parameters extracted from the TPXO model (Egbert and Erofeeva, 2002). Sea surface boundary conditions were not considered. The horizontal eddy viscosity coefficient was set to  $1.0 \times 10^3 \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ , and the quadratic bottom drag coefficient was set to  $1.3 \times 10^{-3}$  (Wang et al., 2014). The integral time step was 60 s and the total simulation time was 60 d. The results of the final 30 d were used to calculate the harmonic parameters using CHA.

Details of the model settings for numerical experiments Exp1–Exp4 are listed in Table 3. In Exp1, the simulation started from 0000 UTC 1 January 2014, while the simulation started from 0000 UTC 1 July 2014 in Exp2–Exp4. In Exp1, horizontally homogeneous profiles of the initial temperature and salinity (Figure 7) were extracted from the HYCOM global analysis results in winter, while those in summer were used in Exp2–Exp4. The vertical eddy viscosity coefficient was specified directly and no turbulence closure schemes were used. In Exp1, the vertical eddy viscosity coefficient was set to  $2.0 \times 10^{-3} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$  through a trial and error procedure. According to Müller et al. (2014), the eddy viscosity in summer was

reduced by orders of magnitude compared to well-mixed conditions in winter, as the stratification stabilized the water column. Therefore, the vertical eddy viscosity coefficient was decreased by one-half in Exp3 to test the influence of the vertical eddy viscosity caused by the stratification. As shown in Figure 8, monthly means of the low-pass sea levels, filtered using a cosine-Lanczos filter with a high frequency cut-off of 0.8 cpd, were nearly equal to the estimated mean sea level using SHA. They exhibited the same variation trend as those obtained using EHA, with large values in summer and small values in winter. Given the difference between the averaged mean sea level in summer and that in winter, Exp4 included 1 0.2-m increase of water depth to test the influence of mean sea level.

## 4.2 Results

The simulated harmonic parameters of the four principal tidal constituents in the numerical experiments and those obtained from observations at E2 and Dalian are shown in Figure 9. The simulated harmonic parameters were a little far from the observed results, except the  $M_2$  amplitude at E2 simulated in Exp1 and that simulated in Exp2, possibly because the constant bottom drag coefficient was used (Wang et al., 2014). Still, the differences between the simulated results in the different numerical experiments can be used to test the influence of potential factors on the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents.

The observed amplitudes at E2 in summer were larger than those in winter for all four principal tidal constituents, as shown in Figure 9, but the simulated amplitudes in Exp2 were nearly equal to those in Exp1. In contrast, both the decreased vertical eddy viscosity coefficient in Exp3 and the increased mean sea level in Exp4 increased the amplitudes for all principal tidal constituents. The increases of the observed  $M_2$  and  $S_2$  amplitudes at E2 from winter to summer were 13.58 cm and 2.62 cm, respectively, while those were 13.34 cm (2.08 cm) and 2.75 cm (0.56 cm) for simulated results in Exp3 (Exp4) compared to those in Exp1. In addition, the increases of the observed  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  amplitudes were also captured better by the simulated results in Exp3 than those in Exp 4, as shown in Figure 9. Therefore, the seasonally varying amplitudes of all principal tidal constituents were primarily impacted by the seasonal variation of vertical eddy viscosity. Differences between the simulated phase lags in Exp3 and those in Exp1 indicated that the seasonal variation of vertical eddy viscosity caused the same trends as the changes between the observed phase lags in summer and those in winter for all principal tidal constituents except  $K_1$ . In contrast, the changes in stratification in Exp2 and mean sea level in Exp4 only captured the variation trend of the  $S_2$  and  $O_1$  phase lags, respectively. The aforementioned results demonstrated that seasonal variation in the vertical eddy viscosity was the most important mechanism influencing the seasonal variability of principal tidal constituents at E2.

The seasonal variation of the  $S_2$  amplitude was the most significant at Dalian, but the decrease in the simulated result from winter (Exp1) to summer (Exp2) was less than 1 cm and the simulated  $S_2$  amplitudes in Exp3 and Exp4 were larger than that in Exp1, indicating the seasonality of stratification as a possible reason. However, the simulated seasonal variation was too weak, possibly because the simple horizontally homogeneous temperature and salinity profiles could not reflect reality. The water depth is large in the eastern part of Bohai Sea (Figure 1b), so the stratification and ocean circulation were noteworthy and had significant effects on the tides. The increases of the  $M_2$  and  $O_1$  amplitudes were only captured by the

changes in the vertical eddy viscosity coefficient in Exp3 and stratification in Exp2, respectively, while the increases of  $K_1$  amplitudes in Exp3 and Exp4 agreed with the observed results at Dalian. The variation lags of the  $M_2$  and  $S_2$  phase lags were not captured well and the simulated results in Exp2 were the best results, while those for  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  were best captured by the decrease of the simulated results in Exp3 compared to those in Exp1. On the whole, the seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents at Dalian were determined by the seasonality of stratification and vertical eddy viscosity.

The variations of the simulated amplitudes from winter (Exp1) to summer (Exp3) in the entire Bohai Sea are shown in Figure 10. The spatial distribution of the variations in  $M_2$  tidal amplitude had a strong positive correlation ( $R=0.98$ ) with that in the  $S_2$  tidal amplitude, similar to that for the diurnal tides ( $R=0.98$ ). Furthermore, the distributions were possibly related to tidal wave propagation as their patterns were similar to the co-phase lines, as shown in Figure 10. For the semi-diurnal tides  $M_2$  and  $S_2$ , the simulated amplitudes in summer were larger than those in winter in Bohai Bay, Laizhou Bay, Liaodong Bay, and smaller than those in winter in the middle of the Bohai Sea. The spatial distribution of the absolute differences between the  $M_2$  tidal amplitude in summer and that in winter was similar to that in Müller et al. (2014). For the diurnal tides  $K_1$  and  $O_1$ , the simulated amplitudes in summer were larger than those in winter in Bohai Bay, Laizhou Bay, Liaodong Bay and the middle areas, while smaller than those in winter in the northeast part of the Bohai Strait.

## 5 Discussions

In this study, the EHA developed in Jin et al. (2018) and Pan et al. (2018b) was further improved in order to resolve more tidal constituents by adding the minor constituents whose harmonic parameters were assumed to be constant and computed together with the temporally varying harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents. The nodal and astronomical argument corrections were embedded into the least square fit to eliminate the influences of nodal cycle and linearly varying astronomical argument. In fact, there have been multiple improvements to T\_TIDE in the past decades, such as R\_T\_TIDE (Leffler and Jay, 2009), versatile tidal analysis (Foreman et al., 2009), U\_TIDE (Codiga, 2011) and NS\_TIDE (Matte et al., 2013). In R\_T\_TIDE, versatile tidal analysis and U\_TIDE, the harmonic parameters (i.e., amplitude and phase lag) are assumed to be constant, although they have some improvements to T\_TIDE. However, harmonic parameters are not constant and have multiscale temporal variations, as shown in Corkan (1934), Kang et al. (1995), Müller et al. (2014), Devlin et al. (2018), and so on. Neglecting seasonal variation of tides will introduce significant error in sea-level prediction (Fang and Wang, 1986). Therefore, EHA, in which the harmonic parameters of the principal tidal constituents are assumed to be temporally varying and computed directly within the least squares fit, improved T\_TIDE in other ways. In NS\_TIDE, the harmonic parameters are also assumed to be temporally varying. However, the temporally varying harmonic parameters are assumed to be functions of river flow and greater diurnal tidal range at the reference station, so it can be applied only to river tides, while EHA can be applied in analyzing any time series. On the whole, EHA used in this study is indeed enhanced than other methods.

The duration of hourly sea-level observations at E2 used in this study was only one year, which is a limitation. Although the rare event might slightly skew seasonal pattern of tides, the seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  obtained using EHA were the same as those using traditional EHA, indicating that the results are not unreasonable and can reflect the seasonal variations of tides in the analysis period. The strong seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents can be captured by the results of numerical experiments. The multi-annually averaged results at Dalian also showed the seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents, but the results of numerical experiments were not in accordance with the observed results, which may be because only the horizontally homogeneous profiles of the initial temperature and salinity were used and the temporally varying ocean circulation were not considered.

The seasonal variations of stratification and vertical eddy viscosity and their influences on the tidal amplitudes may be as follows. In winter, the strong northwest Asia monsoon develops a vertically well-mixed condition (Yanagi et al., 2001; Jeon et al., 2014), which will not stabilize the tidal currents and will lose more energy, leading to smaller tidal amplitudes. As the surface heating rate and freshwater discharge increase, the mixing is insufficient to homogenize the input potential energy and cause stratified conditions in summer (Huang et al., 1999; van Haren, 2000), during which the reduced vertical eddy viscosity will increase the tidal amplitudes. However, the  $S_2$  amplitude at Dalian was larger in winter and smaller in summer, which is inconsistent with the other principal tidal constituents and should be further investigated in future studies.

## 6 Conclusions

In this study, based on one-year sea-level observations at E2 and 17-year sea-level observations in the Bohai Sea, the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents was investigated using different methods. When the sea-level observations at E2 and Dalian were analysed, the seasonal variations of all principal tidal constituents obtained using EHA were nearly equal to those obtained using SHA (Figures 4 and 6), indicating that the seasonal variations were not related to the applied methods. At both E2 and Dalian, the principal tidal constituents  $M_2$ ,  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  exhibited seasonal variations (Figures 4 and 6). The  $M_2$  amplitude at E2 varied annually, while that at Dalian was semi-annual. The  $M_2$  phase lags at E2 and Dalian had the similar variation trend, with large values in summer and small values in winter. The  $S_2$  amplitude in winter at E2 was less than that in summer, which was opposite that at Dalian. The  $K_1$  amplitude at E2 had an annual variation, with large values in summer and small values in winter, while the  $O_1$  amplitude increased steadily. On the contrary, the variations of the  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  amplitudes at Dalian were small. The maxima of the  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  phase lags at E2 appeared twice, which was the same as those of  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  and different from that of  $S_2$  at Dalian.

Through several numerical experiments, the mechanisms of the seasonal variability of the principal tidal constituents were investigated. The seasonal variations of the principal tidal constituents at E2 were caused by the seasonality of the vertical eddy viscosity, while the seasonal variations at Dalian were mainly induced by the seasonality of stratification and vertical eddy viscosity, although the simulated results were not consistent well with the observed results. Therefore, the synchronous simulation of circulation and tides, and a reasonable parameterization scheme to convert the variations in

stratification to those in vertical eddy viscosity were essential for precise simulation of the tides when considering the temporally varying harmonic parameters.

### Data availability

The HYCOM global analysis data is available at <http://hycom.org>. New version of S\_TIDE package can be downloaded from <https://www.researchgate.net/project/Adaptation-of-tidal-harmonic-analysis-to-nonstationary-tides>. The hourly sea level observations at Dalian are available at <https://uhsllc.soest.hawaii.edu/datainfo/>. The hourly sea level observations at E2 used in this work are available from the authors upon request (xqinglv@ouc.edu.cn).

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- 20

**Table 1. Averaged amplitudes (cm) and phase (°) of the principal tidal constituents obtained using EHA at E2**

Constituents	Parameter	Annual	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
$M_2$	Amplitude	73.97	67.29	71.56	80.87	76.04
	Phase	210.03	209.11	209.42	212.04	209.52
$S_2$	Amplitude	20.81	19.83	18.87	22.46	22.06
	Phase	273.74	276.69	272.81	279.67	265.80
$K_1$	Amplitude	30.30	27.96	29.99	32.09	31.13
	Phase	30.57	31.31	30.39	33.55	27.01
$O_1$	Amplitude	24.43	21.92	24.13	25.37	26.27
	Phase	345.91	351.35	340.62	348.00	343.79

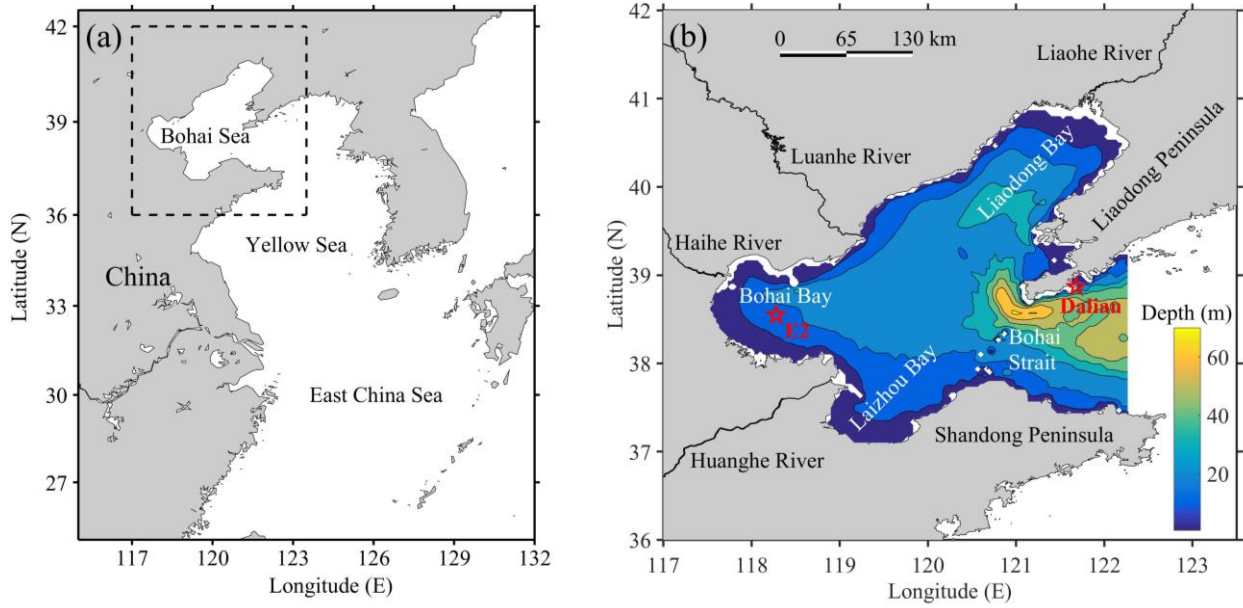
**5 Table 2. Averaged amplitudes (cm) and phase (°) of the principal tidal constituents obtained using EHA at Dalian**

Constituents	Parameter	Annual	Winter	Spring	Summer	Autumn
$M_2$	Amplitude	97.32	97.53	96.79	97.96	97.00
	Phase	54.25	52.93	53.43	55.34	55.28
$S_2$	Amplitude	30.89	32.54	30.91	29.1	31.02
	Phase	100.12	99.45	102.47	101.08	97.44
$K_1$	Amplitude	25.32	25.02	24.78	26.18	25.3
	Phase	240.94	242.44	239.91	239.31	242.15
$O_1$	Amplitude	17.91	17.41	18.05	17.88	18.29
	Phase	210.29	212.4	208.54	209.62	210.65

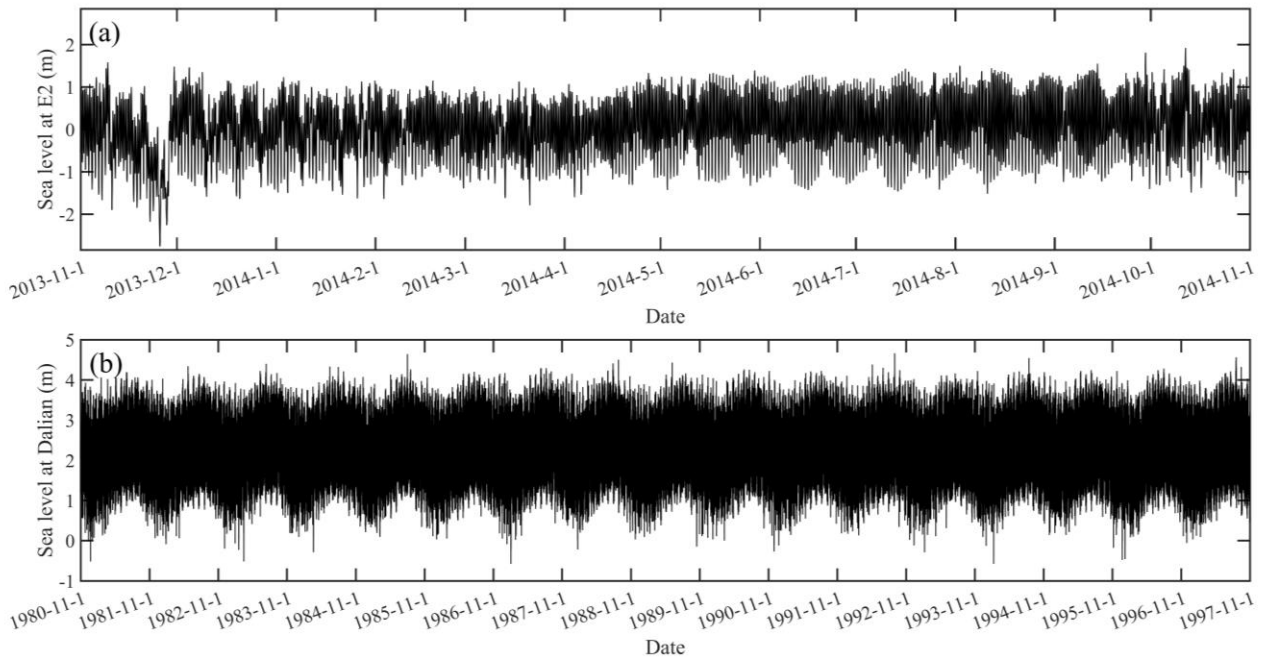
**Table 3. Model settings for the numerical experiments**

No.	Season	$A_z^a$ (m <sup>2</sup> /s)	Depth (m)
Exp1	Winter	$2.0 \times 10^{-3}$	Original
Exp2	Summer	$2.0 \times 10^{-3}$	Original
Exp3	Summer	$1.0 \times 10^{-3}$	Original
Exp4	Summer	$2.0 \times 10^{-3}$	Original+0.2

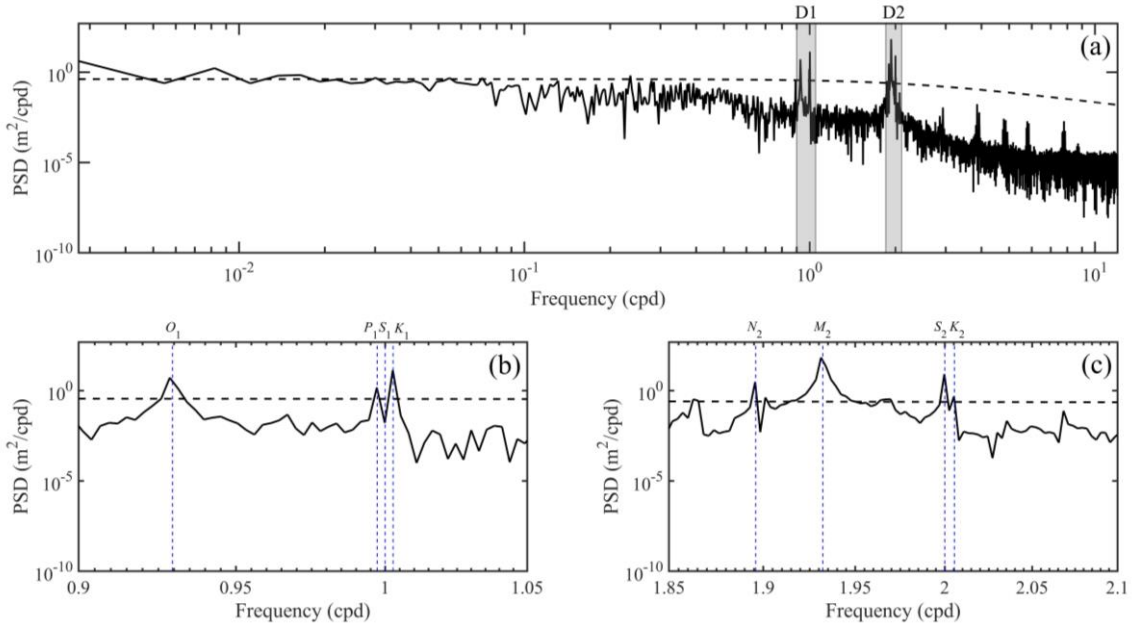
<sup>a</sup> Vertical eddy viscosity coefficient.



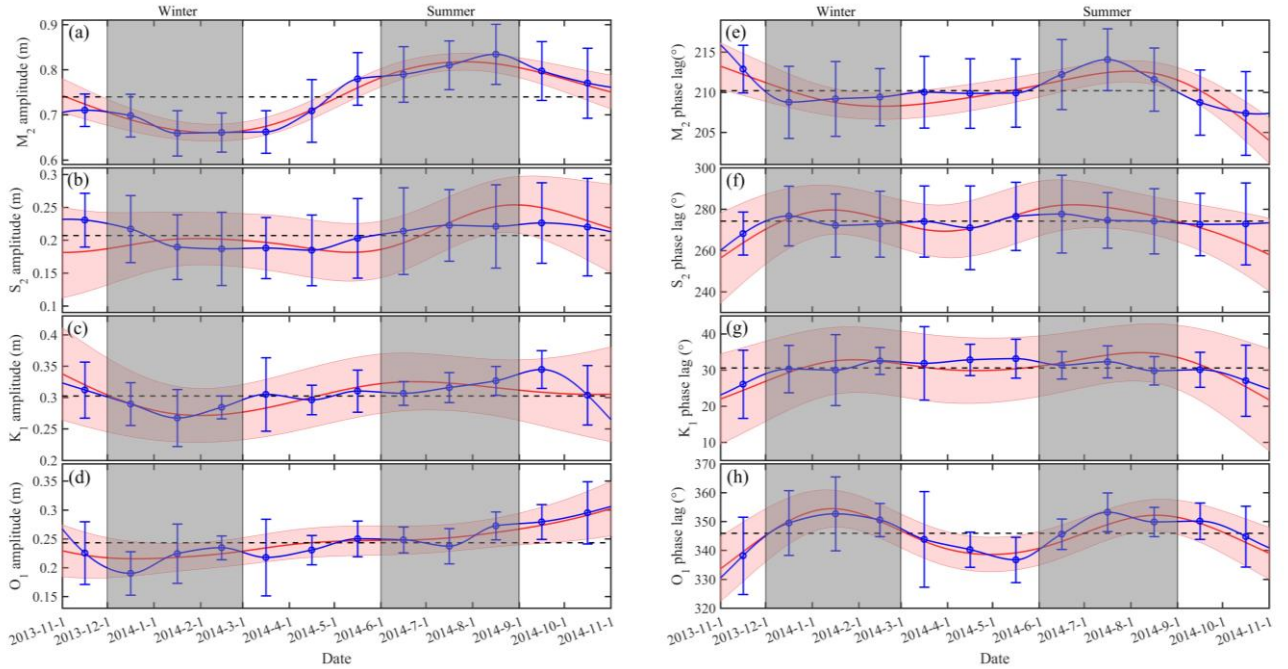
**Figure 1. (a) General location of the Bohai Sea (rectangle with dashed lines); and (b) locations of the observation stations (red stars), E2 and Dalian, in the Bohai Sea, and bathymetry of the Bohai Sea (colours).**



**Figure 2. Time series of the observed sea level at (a) E2 and (b) Dalian.**



**Figure 3.** Power spectral densities of the observed sea level at E2 (black line) in (a) all frequency bands, (b) the diurnal frequency band, and (c) the semidiurnal frequency band. In all panels, black dashed lines denote the corresponding 5% significance level against red noise.



**Figure 4.** Time series of the estimated temporally varying tidal amplitudes of principal tidal constituents, including (a)  $M_2$ , (b)  $S_2$ , (c)  $K_1$  and (d)  $O_1$ , at E2 when CHA (black dashed lines), SHA (blue lines) and EHA (red lines) were used.

(e-h) Similar to (a-d), but for the estimated temporally varying tidal phase lags. Blue vertical bars and pink shading indicate the corresponding 95% confidence intervals.

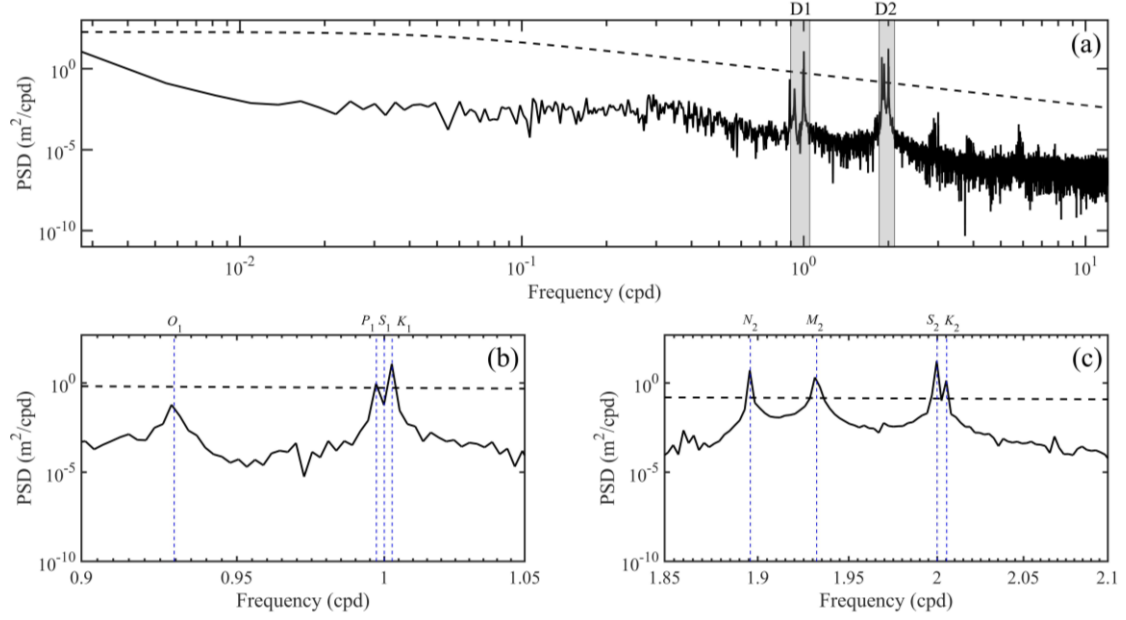


Figure 5. Similar to Figure 3, but for those at Dalian.

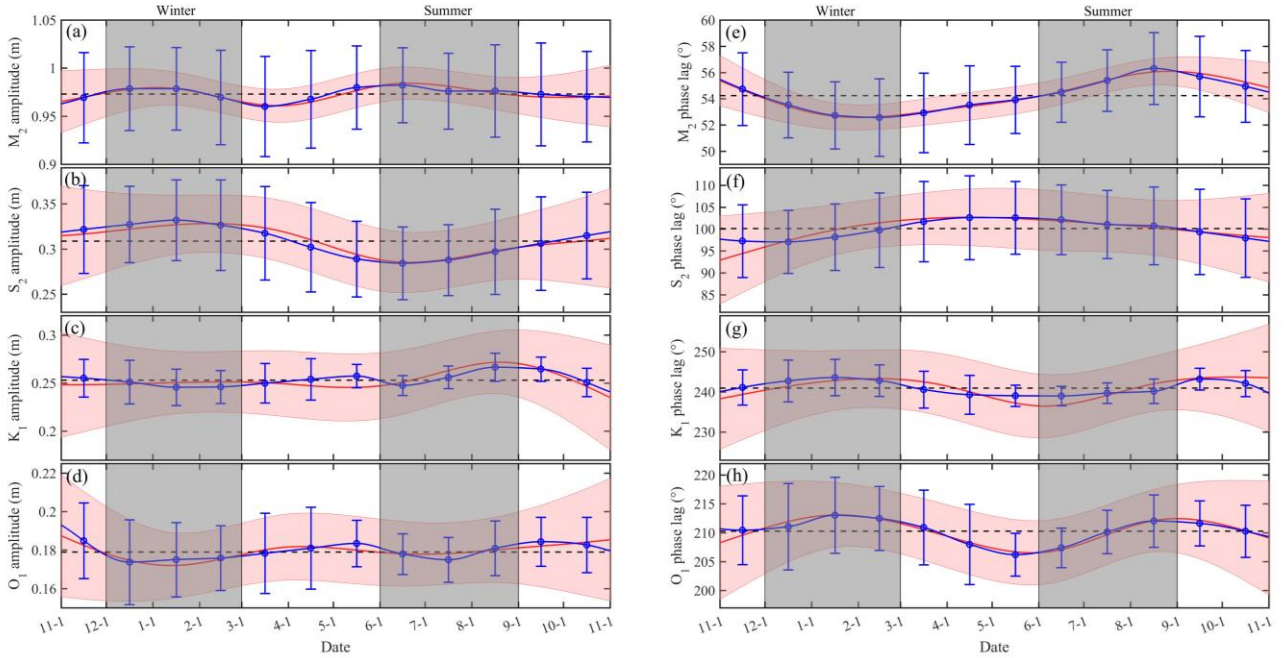
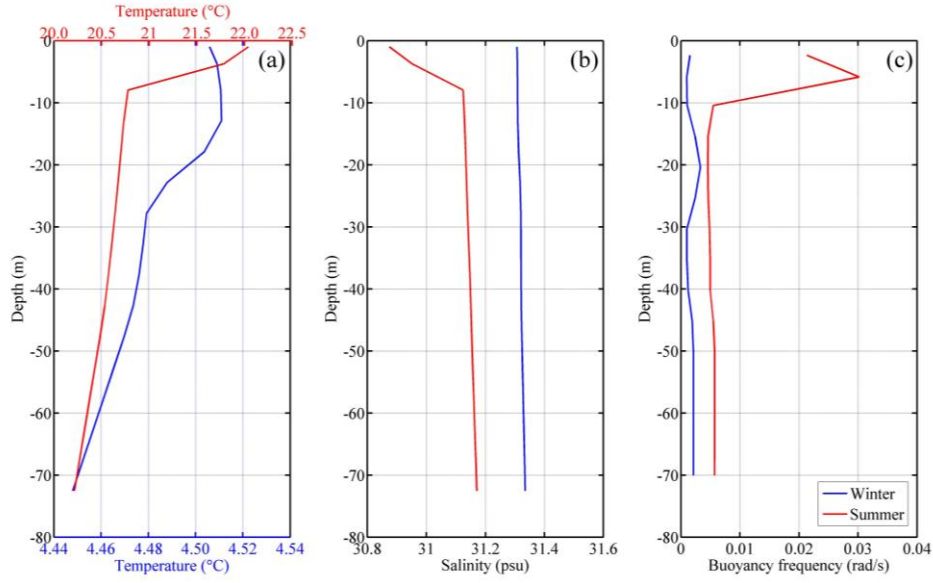
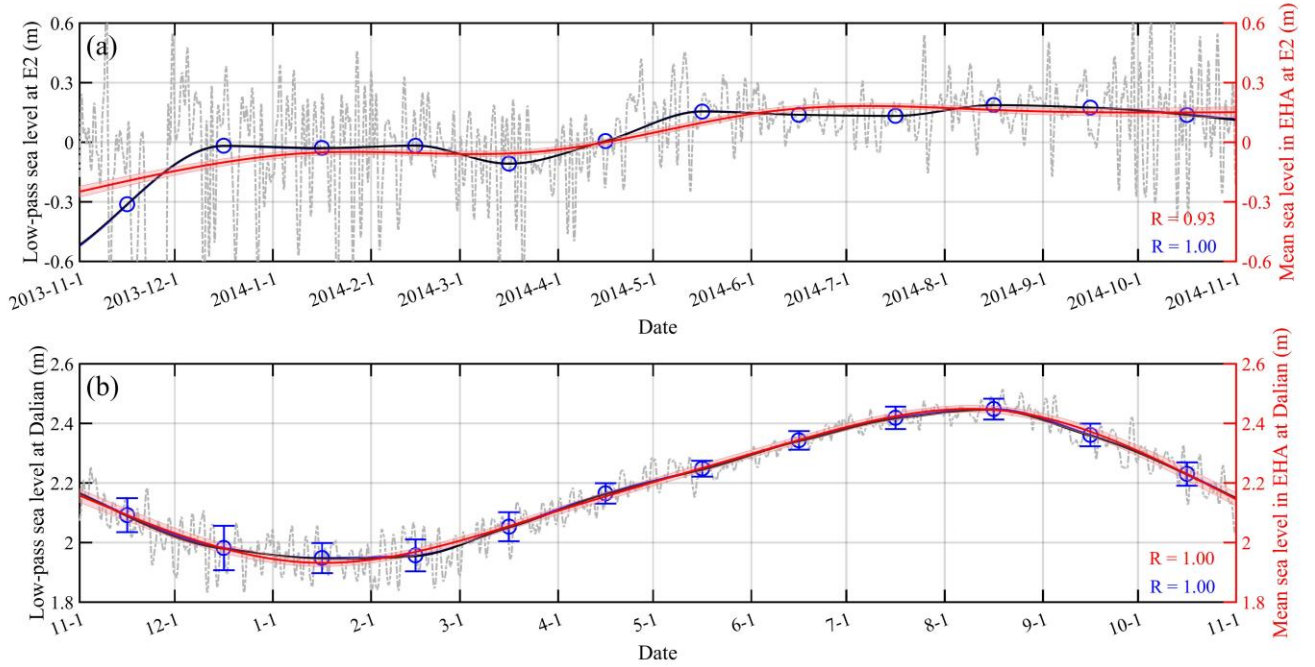


Figure 6. Similar to Figure 4, but for multi-yearly averaged values at Dalian.



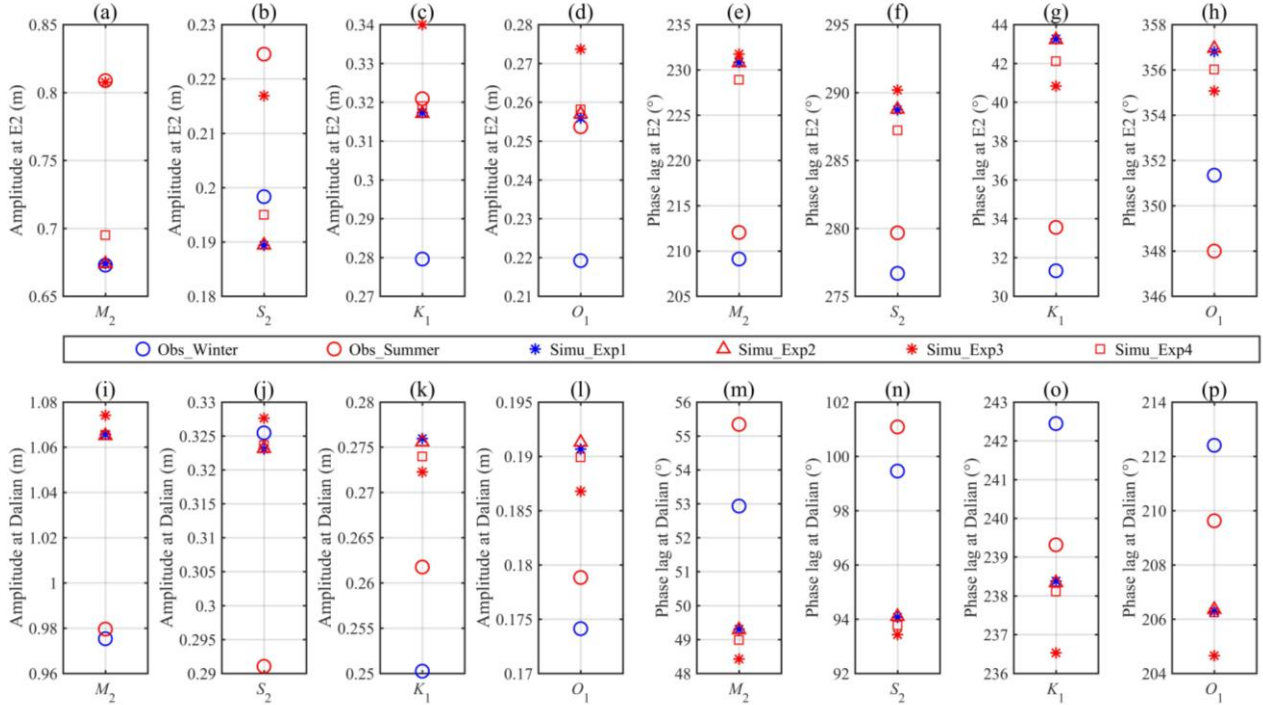
**Figure 7. Horizontally homogeneous profiles of the initial (a) temperature, (b) salinity and (c) buoyancy frequency used in the numerical experiments, in winter (blue solid lines) and in summer (red solid lines).**



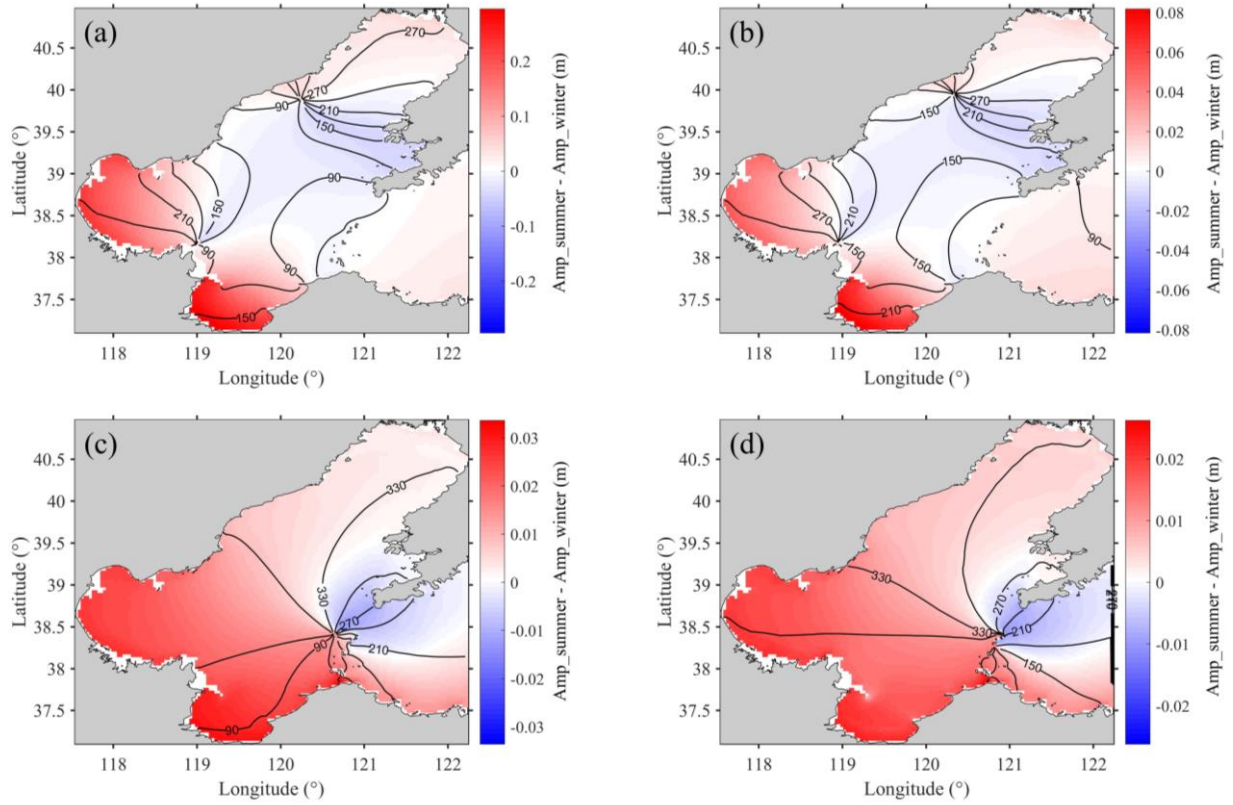
**Figure 8. Time series of the original low-pass sea level (grey line), the monthly averages of the original low-pass sea level (blue circles), the interpolated values of the monthly averaged low-pass sea level using the cubic spline**

interpolation (blue line) and the estimated mean sea level using SHA (black line) and EHA (red line), at (a) E2 and (b) Dalian. Only the original low-pass sea levels with absolute values less than 0.6 m are shown in panel (a). Pink shading indicates the corresponding 95% confidence intervals, while blue vertical bars designate the standard deviation in multi-yearly averaging.

5



**Figure 9.** (a) Averaged  $M_2$  tidal amplitude in winter (blue circle) and summer (red circle) by analysing observations at E2 using EHA, and those obtained by analysing the simulated results in Exp1 (blue asterisk), Exp2 (red triangle), Exp3 (red asterisk) and Exp4 (red square). (b-d) Similar to (a), but for  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$  at E2, respectively. (e-h) Similar to (a-d), but for the phase lags at E2. (i-p) Similar to (a-h), but for those at Dalian.



**Figure 10.** (a) Difference between the simulated  $M_2$  tidal amplitudes in summer (Exp3) and those in winter (Exp1) (colours), and the co-phase lines of the  $M_2$  tide in winter (Exp1) (black lines). (b-d) similar to (a), but for  $S_2$ ,  $K_1$  and  $O_1$ , respectively.



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