

1 The import and export of organic nitrogen species at a Scottish ombrotrophic
2 peatland

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4 Rebecca M. McKenzie*^{a,b}, Mustafa Z. Özel^c, J.Neil Cape^a, Julia Drewer^a, Kerry J.
5 Dinsmore^a, Eiko Nemitz^a, Y.Sim Tang^a, Netty van Dijk^a, Margaret Anderson^a, Jacqueline
6 F. Hamilton^c, Mark A. Sutton^a, Martin W. Gallagher^b, Ute Skiba^a

7 a) Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, Edinburgh, Bush Estate, Penicuik, EH26 0QB, United Kingdom

8 b) School of Earth, Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences, The University of Manchester, Williamson Building,
9 Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL, United Kingdom

10 c) Department of Chemistry, The University of York, York, YO10 5DD, United Kingdom

11 *Corresponding author. Present address: Department of Geography, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, LE11
12 3TU. Tel.: +44 1509 228196. Fax: 01509 223930. Email address: r.mckenzie@lboro.ac.uk

13 Abstract

14 Dissolved organic nitrogen (DON) contributes significantly to the overall nitrogen
15 budget, but is not routinely measured in precipitation or stream water. In order to
16 investigate the contribution of DON to the deposition and export of N, precipitation,
17 stream and soil water samples were collected from an ombrotrophic peatland and
18 analysed for DON over a two year period. In wet only deposition DON contributed up to
19 10% of the total dissolved nitrogen (TDN), and was the most dominant fraction in soil
20 water (99%), and stream water (75%). NH_4^+ was the most dominate form of N in
21 precipitation, with NO_3^- contributing the least to precipitation, soil water and stream
22 water.

23 Precipitation and stream DON was qualitatively analysed by GCxGC NCD after trapping
24 onto C18 SPE cartridges. Ten unique compounds were detected and five identified as
25 pyrrole, benzonitrile, dodecylamine, N-nitrosodipropylamine and decylamine. Five
26 compounds were present in both precipitation and stream samples: pyrrole, benzonitrile
27 and three unidentified compounds. The SPE extraction efficiency for DON was very low
28 (11%), but with improvements DON speciation could become a valuable tool to provide
29 information on its sources and pathways and inform chemical transport models.

30

31 *Keywords: organic nitrogen, ammonium, nitrate, precipitation, stream, GC×GC-NCD*

32 **1 Introduction**

33 The total deposition of N in the UK was estimated to be approximately 330 Gg in 2004,
34 with wet and cloud deposition accounting for approximately 211 Gg (63.9%), and the rest
35 consisting of dry deposition (Fowler et al., 2009, Hertel et al., 2011).

36 Wet deposition of the dissolved inorganic nitrogen (DIN) compounds ammonium (NH_4^+)
37 and nitrate (NO_3^-) has been studied over many years (Violaki et al., 2010, Cape et al.,
38 2011, Zhang et al., 2012). The former is produced by the dissolution of ammonia gas
39 (NH_3) and the scavenging of NH_4^+ aerosol, and the latter by the dissolution of nitric acid
40 gas (HNO_3) and the scavenging of NO_3^- aerosol (Russell et al., 1998, Cornell et al., 2003,
41 Tian et al., 2011). The dissolved organic nitrogen (DON) fraction is less well
42 documented due to difficulties in measuring it, but it can be an important fraction of the
43 total dissolved nitrogen (TDN) deposited, and can potentially be biologically available as
44 a source of N (Russell et al., 1998, Neff et al., 2002, Cornell et al., 2003, Cape et al.,
45 2004). The sources of DON are not well understood, but it is known to be ubiquitous in
46 the environment, present in particulate, gaseous and aqueous phases (Cornell et al., 2003,
47 Cape et al., 2004, Özel et al., 2011). Studies have shown that DON can contribute 30-
48 50% of the wet deposition of water soluble N (Neff et al., 2002, Cape et al., 2004, Zhang
49 et al., 2008, Cape et al., 2011, Cornell, 2011, Zhang et al., 2012).

50 Several atmospheric species of DON are considered hazardous to human health, and
51 appear on the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) hazardous air pollutant list (Özel et
52 al., 2011). Sources of DON are believed to include: pollen; sea spray; soil dust; deposits
53 from fauna and flora; the scavenging of aerosols; and reactions in the atmosphere
54 between inorganic gaseous nitrogen species and organic compounds (Prospero et al.,
55 1996, Russell et al., 1998, Cornell et al., 2003, Calderon et al., 2007, Zhang et al., 2008,
56 Violaki et al., 2010). Some studies have identified organic N compounds, so that their
57 sources can be traced. Amino acids, urea, aliphatic amines and peptides have all been
58 found in the atmosphere from naturally occurring sources (Calderon et al., 2007, Violaki
59 et al., 2010). The main anthropogenic organic compounds are believed to be N-
60 heterocyclic compounds, nitrophenols and nitro-polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons
61 (Violaki et al., 2010). Alky amides have also been identified and are believed to result
62 from reactions between NH_3 and fatty acids at high temperatures (Cheng et al., 2006);
63 photochemical reactions are believed to be responsible for the presence of alky nitrates
64 and peroxyacetyl nitrates (Violaki et al., 2010).

65 As with wet deposition, N is present in streams as both DIN and DON, with most focus
66 usually being on the DIN fraction. DIN, in particular NO_3^- , is often used as an indicator
67 of N saturation, with higher stream concentrations and changes in seasonal patterns
68 indicating an increase in the leaching of DIN from the catchment (Cundill et al., 2007,
69 Daniels et al., 2012). DON, however, is not routinely measured in spite of being the most
70 dominant fraction in waters draining peatland catchments; DON is known to contribute
71 60-90% of the TDN load in peatland streams (Yesmin et al., 1995).

72 The aim of this study was to investigate the contribution of DON to TDN of wet
73 deposition and TDN export via a stream at a typical NW European ombrotrophic peatland
74 over a two year period. In addition to this, an attempt was made to identify some of the
75 less polar individual DON compounds present in a selection of precipitation and stream
76 samples. A comparison between possible sources of compounds detected in both the
77 precipitation and stream water was also discussed

78 **2 Site and methods**

79 **2.1 Study area**

80 Auchencorth Moss (Fig. 4.1) is an ombrotrophic peat bog located in south Scotland,
81 approximately 18 km southwest of Edinburgh (National Grid Reference NT221562; lat.
82 $55^{\circ}47'34''$ N; long. $03^{\circ}14'35''$ W). The site is used primarily for low intensity sheep
83 grazing (less than one livestock unit km^{-2}) and in 2009 a small herd of cows (15-20) also
84 grazed on the site.

85 The volume of peat in the catchment is estimated to be \sim 50 million m^3 , with depths up to
86 5 m, and an average depth of 50 cm. The total peat coverage is \sim 1214 ha, of which
87 approximately 170 ha is extracted (located 1.75 - 3.4 km W-SW of the monitoring
88 station) (Mitchell and Mykura, 1962, Dinsmore, 2008).

89 The Black Burn runs SW to NE of the CEH atmospheric monitoring station at
90 Auchencorth Moss, and drains into the North Esk river. It has a catchment area of
91 approximately 335 ha, which is fed by numerous tributaries, including one which
92 originates in the area of peat extraction. There are a number of overgrown ditches laid out
93 in parallel which is evidence of past drainage activities. The elevation of the catchment is
94 approximately 250-300 m and the main soil type is Histosols (85% coverage), with
95 Gleysol (9%), Humic Gleysol (3%) and Cambisols (3%) present mostly at the margins of
96 the catchment (Billett et al., 2004).

97 The vegetation is arranged into numerous hummocks and hollows. The hollows are
98 depressions up to 30 cm deep and are dominated by blankets of *Sphagnum* mosses, with
99 various sedges, monocotyledons and other bryophytes also present; the hummocks can be
100 up to 30 cm high, and although *Sphagnum* mosses are present, there is a larger density of
101 vascular plants with the dominant species being *Deschampsia flexuosa*, *Eriophorum*
102 *vaginatum* and *Juncus effusus*. Flechard and Fowler (1998) and Dinsmore (2008) have
103 presented more detailed vegetation information for Auchencorth Moss.

104 The mean water table depth was determined from nine dip wells located close to the
105 monitoring station (Figure1) and was -14.8 cm, ranging from -52.4 to 7 cm above the
106 peat surface during the study period (January 2009 - December 2010).

107

108 2.2 Wet-only precipitation

109 Auchencorth Moss is a European Monitoring and Evaluation Programme (EMEP)
110 supersite contributing to the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of
111 the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe
http://www.emep.int/index_facts.html. Precipitation was collected daily using an
112 automated wet-only collector (Eigenbrodt NSA 181/KS, Königsmoor, Germany). A
113 sensor detected when rain fell, opening the lid and allowing rain to be collected in a
114 PTFE-coated funnel draining to refrigerated polyethylene bottles. When rainfall ceased,
115 the sensor closed the lid, protecting the samples from contamination from dry deposition
116 and animal inputs. The collector was kept at 4°C by an internal cooling system and
117 samples were manually emptied from the daily collector once a week, where they were
118 stored in a cool room, also at 4°C. Samples were analysed by Ion Chromatography (IC)
119 for NH_4^+ and NO_3^- , following EMEP protocols
<http://www.nilu.no/projects/ccc/manual/index.html>.

120 A Metrohm 761 Compact Ion Chromatograph (IC) connected in parallel with a Metrohm
121 733 IC Separation Centre to a Metrohm 766 IC sample processor (Metrohm Ltd.,
122 Herisau, Switzerland) measured NO_3^- and NH_4^+ respectively. NO_3^- was determined by
123 pumping an eluent solution of 3.2 mM sodium carbonate and 1.0 mM sodium bicarbonate
124 through a Metrosep A Supp 5 column. For NH_4^+ determination, an eluent solution of 24
125 mM boric acid, 5 mM tartaric acid and 0.7 mM dipicolinic acid, was pumped through a
126 Metrosep C1 column. Typical detection limits were 1 $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ for both NO_3^- and NH_4^+ .
127

129 Whenever enough precipitation was collected, the EMEP sample was subsampled (5 ml)
130 for analysis of TDN (TDN = DIN + DON). Samples were filtered using Millipore
131 Hydrophilic PTFE (0.45 μ m pore size) syringe filters prior to freezing and later analysed
132 for TDN by high-temperature catalytic oxidation using an ANTEK 8060-M Nitrogen
133 Specific HPLC Detector (ANTEK Instruments Inc., Houston, TX, USA). The analysis
134 was conducted in flow-injection mode, in which 20 μ l samples were introduced into an
135 eluent stream of 10% methanol in deionised water at a flow rate of 250 μ l min⁻¹. It was
136 then combusted in oxygen at 1050 °C, producing nitric oxide (NO) which was detected
137 by chemiluminescence. The detection limit for TDN was ~ 1 μ mol N l⁻¹. DON was
138 determined by subtracting DIN from TDN.

139 Subsamples were also analysed for NO₃⁻ and NH₄⁺ on the IC at CEH and where
140 compared to the EMEP samples. The agreement was good, with an average standard
141 error of \pm 0.22 μ mol N l⁻¹ between NO₃⁻ samples and \pm 1.45 μ mol N l⁻¹ between NH₄⁺
142 samples.

143 The uncertainty of DON is greater than for DIN as a result of errors associated with
144 measuring TDN and DIN compounding (Cornell et al., 2003). A negative bias may result
145 from these combined uncertainties, from DON not being fully converted during the total
146 N analysis, and from losses due to the collection and storage procedure (Russell et al.,
147 1998, Cornell et al., 2003). A positive bias results from setting small negative values of
148 DON to zero. To avoid this bias small negative values of DON were included in the data
149 analyses here. The limit of detection of DON was determined by the summation of the
150 detection limits of the 3 independent measured concentrations (NH₄⁺, NO₃⁻ and TDN)
151 and was 3 μ mol N l⁻¹.

152 2.3 Soil water

153 Soil water was collected once or twice per month from nine dip wells, from which the
154 water table was also measured. They were filtered within 24 hours of collection, using
155 Millipore Hydrophilic PTFE (0.45 μ m pore size) syringe filters and stored frozen until
156 analysis. The dip wells consisted of high-density polyethylene perforated pipes (0.04 m
157 diameter) buried in the ground, with rubber bungs to prevent contamination. Samples
158 were analysed for NH₄⁺, NO₃⁻ and TDN by the IC and ANTEK methods described
159 previously. DON was determined by subtracting DIN from TDN.

160 2.4 KCl-extractable mineral N

161 Soil cores were collected at a depth of 0-10 cm at three locations (next to the dip wells),
162 in spring and autumn in 2009 and in spring, summer and winter in 2010. NH_4^+ and NO_3^-
163 were extracted from soil samples using KCl; 15 g of soil were shaken for 1 hour with 50
164 ml of 1M KCl solution at a rate of 100 rpm. Samples were then filtered using Whatman
165 42 filter papers and frozen prior to analysis by IC. TDN was not measured, so DON could
166 not be determined.

167 2.5 Stream water

168 Stream water spot samples were collected from the Black Burn, to the north of the field
169 station by dipping a 300 ml glass bottle once a week. The samples were filtered within 24
170 hours of collection, using Millipore Hydrophilic PTFE (0.45 μm pore size) syringe filters
171 and frozen until ready for analysis. Samples collected from January 2009 – October 2009
172 were analysed for TDN, NH_4^+ and NO_3^- using a San⁺⁺ Automated Wet Chemistry
173 Analyzer/Continuous Flow Analyzer (SKALAR, The Netherlands). Samples from
174 November 2009-November 2010 were analysed for NH_4^+ , NO_3^- and TDN using the IC
175 and ANTEK methods described above. In both cases, DON was determined by
176 subtracting DIN from TDN.

177 Discharge was determined from water height using manually calibrated rating curves
178 ($R^2 > 0.90$) based on measurements of dilution gauging (Dinsmore, per. com.). Pressure
179 transducers were used to measure water height at 10 minute intervals. Until April 2009, a
180 Druck PDCR 1830 series pressure transducer was used at the sample site (Fig 1). After
181 April 2009, an In Situ Inc. Level Troll® pressure transducer located ~2 km downstream
182 was used.

183 2.6 GC \times GC-NCD

184 Comprehensive two-dimensional gas chromatography coupled to a nitrogen
185 chemiluminescence detector (GC \times GC-NCD) was used to separate DON into different
186 peaks and identify individual components where possible. To trap DON samples were
187 extracted by solid phase extraction (SPE), using Superclean ENVI-18 SPE tube 20 μm
188 polymeric C₁₈-reverse phase 500 mg-3 ml SPE cartridges (SUPELCO, Bellefonte, PA,
189 USA). Cartridges were conditioned with 5 ml methanol followed by 5 ml of water at a
190 rate of 2-5 ml min^{-1} . Between 5 and 18 ml of precipitation and 9 and 24 ml of stream
191 water was passed through the cartridge at a rate of 2-5 ml min^{-1} . The cartridge was

192 thoroughly dried under vacuum for ~30 minutes, eluted with 5 ml dichloromethane
193 (DCM), and then concentrated in a stream of nitrogen to a volume of ~ 0.1 ml prior
194 analysis by GC \times GC-NCD. We investigated the extraction efficiency retrospectively on
195 rainwater and river water samples collected in October 2015 from the same locations the
196 precipitation and stream water samples were collected in 2009 and 2010, and analysed
197 these for DIN and TDN as described in section 2.2. As expected the C18 SPE cartridges
198 did not retain NH₄ and NO₃ on the SPE cartridges, but unfortunately also the retention of
199 DON was low (9% for the precipitation and 18% for the river waters).

200 The GC \times GC-NCD was an Agilent 7890 GC coupled with an Agilent 255 NCD (Agilent
201 Technologies, Palo Alto, CA, USA). 1 μ l extracts were injected in pulsed splitless mode
202 at 280 °C and a pressure of 30 psi for 2 min, using a Gerstel automated liquid injector
203 (Gerstel, Mulheim an der Ruhr, Germany). The first dimension column was a non-polar
204 BPX5 (30 m x 0.32 nm i.d. x 0.25 μ m film thicknesses), set to an initial temperature of
205 55 °C for 1 min. The temperature was then increased at a rate of 5 °C min⁻¹ until 305 °C
206 where it was isothermally held for 1 min. The second column was a BPX50 (1.5 m x 0.10
207 mm i.d. x 0.10 μ m film thickness) set to an initial temperature of 70 °C for 1 min, then
208 increasing the temperature at a rate of 5 °C min⁻¹ until 320 °C where it was isothermally
209 held for 1 min. Both columns were from SGE Analytical Science (VIC, Australia).
210 Helium was used as a carrier gas at a constant flow of 1 mL min⁻¹ and the data was
211 collected at 50 Hz. Pyrolysis was carried out at 900 °C with a hydrogen flow rate of 4 ml
212 min⁻¹ and oxygen flow rate of 10 ml min⁻¹.

213 The detector shows an equimolar response regardless of the chemical state of the organic
214 nitrogen (except azo compounds), allowing nitrogen-containing compounds to be
215 quantified without the need for a separate calibration standard for each compound (Yan,
216 2002, Özel et al., 2011). Details of the optimization of the NCD response and the
217 analytical performance with respect to equimolar response using standards was evaluated
218 by Özel et al., (2011).

219 **3 Results**

220 **3.1 Meteorology**

221 Total rainfall was determined from the volume of rain collected in the wet only analyser.
222 In 2009 the total rainfall was 902 mm with monthly totals varying from 16 mm in
223 February to 180 mm in November. The mean monthly temperature varied from 0.5 °C in
224 December to 13.7 °C in July, with a yearly mean of 7.6 °C. In 2010 the total rainfall was

225 732 mm with monthly totals varying from 21 mm in May to 128 mm in November.
226 However, a significant amount of snow fell, which was not recorded by the wet-only
227 collector. Based on the ratio of discharge and precipitation (Dinsmore et al., 2013, Skiba
228 et al., 2013) it was estimated that snow accounted for an additional 291 mm, making the
229 total precipitation collected for 2010 approximately 1023 mm. The mean monthly
230 temperature varied from -2.0 °C in December to 13.6 °C in July, with a yearly mean of
231 6.6 °C.

232 3.2 Wet-only N deposition

233 Figure 2 shows the volume-weighted monthly mean concentrations of N in precipitation.
234 The temporal variation of NH_4^+ and NO_3^- follow a similar pattern, with DON differing. In
235 both 2009 and 2010 (Table 1), NH_4^+ was the dominant component of wet-only deposition
236 with annual mean concentrations of $27.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (58% of TDN) and $30.7 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$
237 (53% of TDN) respectively. The contribution of NO_3^- was greater in 2010 than in 2009,
238 with mean concentrations of $15.0 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (32% of TDN) in 2009 and $22.7 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$
239 (39% of TDN) in 2010. Although DON contributed the least to annual concentrations in
240 both years, on a monthly timescale there were a few occasions when DON exceeded NO_3^-
241 (March 2009, June 2009, Aug 2009 and Oct 2010). A loose seasonal pattern was
242 observed for NH_4^+ and NO_3^- , with peak concentrations occurring between January and
243 June, especially in 2010. DON has no clear seasonal pattern, although the lowest
244 concentrations seem to occur in the winter months (Nov- Jan). A weak, but significant
245 correlation was found between NH_4^+ and NO_3^- in 2009 ($R^2 = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$) and a
246 slightly stronger correlation in 2010 ($R^2 = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$). No correlations were
247 observed between NH_4^+ , DON, temperature, rainfall or precipitation; NO_3^- , DON,
248 temperature, rainfall or precipitation; or DON, temperature, rainfall or precipitation.

249 3.3 Soil water and KCl-extractable N

250 As expected for a peatland, DON dominates TDN concentrations in the soil water. The
251 contribution of DON to TDN was higher in 2010 at 99% compared to 85% in 2009
252 (Table 2). Mean annual NO_3^- concentrations were $1.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (2% of TDN) in 2009
253 and $0.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (0.3% of TDN) in 2010. Mean annual NH_4^+ concentrations were also
254 larger in 2009 ($8.6 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$) than in 2010 ($0.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$). The contribution of NH_4^+ to
255 TDN was thus much larger in 2009 at 13% and just 0.4% in 2010. Due to data gaps,

256 caused by dip wells remaining empty in low rainfall periods, or frozen in winter 2010, it
257 was difficult to assess seasonal patterns.

258 Soil extractions of NO_3^- and NH_4^+ using 1 M KCl on two occasions in 2009 and 3 three
259 occasions in 2010 showed similar trends; no detectable NO_3^- , and NH_4^+ concentrations of
260 $29 \pm 12 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ and $39 \pm 20 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ for 2009 and 2010, respectively.

261 3.4 Concentration and forms of N in stream water

262 DON is the dominant N species found in the stream water. Monthly mean discharge
263 weighted concentrations contributed on average 74.6% (in 2009) and 74.3% (in 2010) to
264 TDN; with the highest concentrations in summer/autumn, however no clear seasonal
265 pattern was evident (Figure 4, Table 3). Monthly mean discharge weighted concentrations
266 of NO_3^- ranged from 0.0 to $13.7 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2009 and 0.0 to $15.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2010.
267 Annual mean concentrations were $2.3 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2009 and $4.5 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2010. In
268 2009, concentrations varied seasonally; largest NO_3^- concentrations were measured
269 during the cooler months and the smallest during the warmer months. In summer 2009
270 there was no detectable NO_3^- . In 2010 stream water NO_3^- concentrations initially
271 followed a similar pattern as in 2009, with concentrations increasing during the winter
272 months and decreasing as temperature increased and summer approached. However, there
273 was a large increase in NO_3^- concentrations in June and July 2010. Consequently, average
274 annual NO_3^- concentrations in 2010 were nearly double those in 2009, contributing 6.6%
275 of TDN compared to 3.6% of TDN (Table 3). Monthly median concentrations for NO_3^-
276 for the whole period showed a similar pattern to monthly discharge-weighted mean
277 concentrations, with the exception of June 2010, which is reduced to a summer low of 0
278 $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$, suggesting the monthly mean value was skewed by an unusually large value.
279 Median concentrations made little difference to the July 2010 maximum. July 2010 also
280 showed a maximum in the mean concentrations of DON and NH_4^+ .

281 Monthly mean discharge weighted concentrations of NH_4^+ ranged from 5.4 to $21.9 \mu\text{mol}$
282 N l^{-1} with an annual mean of $14.1 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2009, and 0.0 to $52.3 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ with an
283 annual mean of $12.9 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2010. Concentrations of NH_4^+ were consistently higher
284 than NO_3^- and there was no clear seasonal pattern. No correlation was observed between
285 NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , DON, discharge, temperature, rainfall (both air and stream) or precipitation.

286 3.5 DON speciation by GC \times GC-NCD

287 Tables 4 and 5 display breakdowns of the individual DON compounds detected by the
288 GC \times GC-NCD and their concentrations for precipitation and stream water, respectively.
289 The plasticiser N-butyl-benzenesulphonamide (not included in tables) was a prominent
290 compound in all samples, with extremely high concentrations, sometimes higher than
291 TDN detected in the precipitation by ANTEK. We assume that the N-butyl-
292 benzenesulphonamide detected was most likely to be a sampling contaminant from the
293 storage bottles during storage in the freezer prior to analysis, or from SPE extraction
294 tubes by reaction with the DCM. This contamination was not detected in blank water
295 samples (deionised water) or by the ANTEK as samples run on this machine were filtered
296 directly into glass vials for storage before analysis. The source of this contamination is
297 discussed later and the compound was thus excluded from the results.

298 In 13 of the 31 precipitation samples, and 2 of the 21 stream samples, no DON
299 compounds were detected or the peaks were too small to be distinguishable from
300 background noise. The limit of detection (LOD) using the optimized method was
301 determined between 0.16-0.27 pgN using GC \times GC-NCD of standard mixtures (Özel et al.,
302 2011).

303 Peak identification was carried out by comparing retention times and Rt_2 of sample
304 peaks (Rt_1) with retention times of known standards (Rt_2). This could lead to some
305 misidentification, however co-elution is greatly reduced using GC \times GC and there is very
306 good retention time stability between runs. Several peaks, consistently present in some
307 samples, could not be identified as they did not match any of the retention times of the
308 standards available, and therefore were labelled “Unknown” A-F. In total 10 unique
309 compounds were found to be present in the stream and precipitation, of which only 5
310 could be identified. Tables 4 and 5 present a summary of the compounds identified in
311 precipitation and stream water DON, respectively. Both the precipitation and the stream
312 water contained 8 distinct compounds, 5 of which were in common.

313 The most common compound identified in the precipitation samples was Unknown E,
314 present in 10 samples, followed by Unknown D in 6 samples and Unknown B in 5
315 samples, with mean concentrations of $0.3 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$, $0.14 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ and $0.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$.
316 Two precipitation samples contained pyrrole, with a mean concentration of $0.03 \mu\text{mol N}$
317 l^{-1} . Unknown F was in 3 samples (mean concentrations of $0.1 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$), dodecylamine
318 was in 2 samples (mean concentration of $0.02 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$), and Unknown C was in one

319 sample ($0.02 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$). The precipitation samples did not contain Unknown A, N-
320 nitrosodipropylamine or decylamine, which were found in the stream samples.

321 The most common compound identified in the stream samples was Unknown A, the
322 mean concentration was $2.0 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (Table 5). Pyrrole was the next most common
323 compound, found in 18 of the stream samples, with a mean concentration of $1.2 \mu\text{mol N}$
324 l^{-1} . Unknowns E and F both appeared in 9 stream samples, with mean concentrations of
325 $0.5 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ and $0.4 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$. N-nitrosodipropylamine (NDPA) was present in 4
326 stream samples, followed by Unknown B and decylamine in 3 stream samples. Mean
327 concentrations were $0.2 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ for all three compounds. Unknown D, Unknown C
328 and dodecylamine, present in the precipitation samples, were absent from the stream
329 samples.

330 In both the stream and precipitation samples, only one sample contained benzonitrile,
331 with means of $0.01 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (precipitation) and $0.1 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ (stream).

332 Figures 5a and 6a display breakdowns of the monthly means of individual DON
333 compounds extracted with the C18 SPE cartridges prior identification by the GC \times GC-
334 NCD method and the remaining DON measured by ANTEK for precipitation and stream
335 water, respectively. Figures 5b and 6b show the monthly means of individual DON
336 compounds detected by the GC \times GC-NCD only, to make this fraction more visible. In
337 both cases, the majority of DON was not was “unidentified”, contributing a mean of 91%
338 and 82% of total DON detected in precipitation and stream water, respectively. In the
339 precipitation samples, Unknown E is the only compound present in all 5 sampling
340 months, and is the only compound identified in September. October had the most
341 identified compounds present, with 6 of the 8 compounds measured (Fig. 5b). In the
342 stream samples, pyrrole and Unknown A were present in all 4 sampling months. October
343 also had the most identified compounds present, with 7 of the 8 compounds present (Fig.
344 4).

345 4 Discussion

346 4.1 The composition of N in precipitation

347 Cape et al., (2004) studied several sites in the UK on a range of land uses and noted an
348 annual cycle for DIN and DON, with peak concentrations for NH_4^+ and NO_3^- occurring
349 in April-June 2000-2002 and a DON peak occurring later (June-August 2000-2002). Both
350 DIN and DON showed minima in winter. The data presented here are similar, but with

earlier DIN maxima in (Feb-April in 2009 and Feb-June 2010) followed by lower values in the autumn and beginning of winter. DON also peaked earlier than reported by Cape et al. (2004) but roughly a month after DIN peaked in both 2009 and 2010. Generally, sources of NH_4^+ in precipitation tend to be of agricultural origin, and sources of NO_3^- in precipitation from combustion activities (Cape et al., 2011). Although Auchencorth Moss is located in a rural setting and with minimal agricultural activity on the peatland itself; there are several chicken farms in the area. Chickens farms emit ammonia (NH_3), which when dissolved in rainwater, produces NH_4^+ (Schlesinger, 1997). NH_4^+ also makes up a large fraction of atmospheric aerosols and is often transported further downwind of its source (Nieder and Benbi, 2008), where it can then be washed out and deposited by precipitation.

Sources of NO_3^- include motor vehicles and stationary combustion sources (power stations, domestic heating) following atmospheric oxidation of the emitted nitrogen oxides. As a secondary pollutant, nitric acid and nitrates are less easily traced back to sources. The sources of DON are more difficult to generalise and the magnitude of DON is likely to be the result of different contributions of biological and anthropogenic local origin and those deposited through long range transport. Spring maxima of DON may be due to the release of pollen, plant debris and spores (Violaki et al., 2010), or spreading of manure and mineral N fertilisers (Neff et al., 2002, Zhang et al., 2012). Conversely, autumn maxima may be linked to decomposition of vegetation (Cape et al., 2004). The contribution of DON to TDN is low at Auchencorth – 10.0% and 8.3% in 2009 and 2010, respectively, when compared to the 24% (June 2005 to April 2007) measured at Bush Estate, an agricultural area 10 km north of Auchencorth Moss dominated by grazed grasslands with high stocking densities and receiving high rates of mineral nitrogen fertiliser ($\sim 200 \text{ kg N ha}^{-1} \text{ y}^{-1}$, Gonzalez Benitez et al., 2009). The literature average from a range of environments is 30% (Cornell et al., 2003, Cape et al., 2004, Zhang et al., 2008, Cape et al., 2011, Zhang et al., 2012).

Previous studies of precipitation DIN and DON reported varying degrees of correlation between DON, NH_4^+ and NO_3^- . For example, Violaki et al. (2010) found no correlation between DON, NH_4^+ and NO_3^- in wet deposition in the Eastern Mediterranean. Zhang et al. (2008) also did not observe correlation between DON, NH_4^+ and NO_3^- in precipitation at 15 sites in China. However, when an additional 37 sites from across the globe were added to these data, positive relationships between DON and DIN were found, suggesting that broadly similar sources of DON and DIN at the global, but not regional, scale. In a

385 number of studies, DON and NH_4^+ were correlated, or at least more closely correlated
386 than DON and NO_3^- , suggesting DON is more closely associated with agricultural
387 sources than with combustion processes (Cape et al., 2004, Chen et al., 2008, Cape et al.,
388 2011, Zhang et al., 2012). Our Auchencorth Moss study showed weak to moderate
389 correlations between NH_4^+ and NO_3^- but no correlation between DIN and DON. This
390 suggests that whilst DIN compounds might share a common source (e.g. secondary
391 aerosol), DON does not. This is further supported by the later seasonal maxima of DON
392 compared to those of the DIN compounds (Cape et al., 2011).

393 4.2 N in the soil solution

394 Interestingly, the TDN and DIN deposited as precipitation in 2010 was larger than in
395 2009, but the soil chemistry showed the opposite. The larger soil water DIN
396 concentrations in 2009 may be due to the activities of sheep which grazed on this
397 moorland at very low livestock density of less than 1 ewe ha^{-1} and also a small herd of 15
398 – 20 cattle. In 2009, sheep and sheep droppings were observed in and around the vicinity
399 of the dip wells and where the soil cores were collected; the small cattle herd (15-20) also
400 had access to this area. However, in 2010, there were no cattle on site and the sheep
401 frequented another area of this large peatland.

402

403 4.3 The composition of N in stream water

404 DON is the dominant form of stream water N in high rainfall areas, catchments with
405 steep slopes and those draining peatlands. Typical DON contributions vary from 54% to
406 82% annually (Chapman et al., 2001, Cundill et al., 2007, Helliwell et al., 2007a), which
407 is similar to the 75% and 74% measured in the Black Burn for 2009 and 2010,
408 respectively. Mean annual NH_4^+ concentrations (22% in 2009 and 19% in 2010) were
409 larger than NO_3^- concentrations (3.6% in 2009 and 6.6% in 2010). This was also observed
410 by Helliwell et al. (2007a) in four upland regions in the UK. Usually, the leaching of
411 inorganic N is dominated by NO_3^- , whereas NH_4^+ remains in the soil in weak association
412 with organic matter and incorporation into clay lattices (Scherer, 1993, Chapman and
413 Edwards, 1999, Davies et al., 2005, Helliwell et al., 2007a).

414 A previous study carried out at the Black Burn in 2008, approximately 2.5 km
415 downstream from the sampling site reported here, also found DON to be the dominant
416 species (mean concentration of 47.9 $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$) contributing 71 % of the TDN, followed

417 by NH_4^+ (mean concentration $10.7 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$), contributing 16% of TDN, and NO_3^-
418 (mean concentration $8.6 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$), contributing 13% of TDN (Vogt 2011). The DON
419 values are comparable to the study reported here, but the Vogt study found lower NH_4^+
420 and higher NO_3^- values. These differences may be due to the location of the Vogt study
421 site, which was further downstream, next to a busy road, and was frequented by sheep
422 more regularly than our upstream site. No correlation was found between the wet
423 deposition of atmospheric N and stream concentrations suggesting that precipitation does
424 not represent a major source of stream water N.

425 4.4 Seasonal patterns of N in stream water

426 No clear seasonal pattern was identified for DON, although the general trend was higher
427 concentrations in the warmer months. Also Chapman et al. (2001), who studied 28
428 Scottish upland streams, found DON to be larger in the summer than winter months.
429 They suggested that this was due to an increase of in-stream biological DON production,
430 mediated by algae and microorganisms, rather than increased leaching from the soil.
431 The seasonal pattern of NO_3^- , where concentrations were higher in cooler months and
432 lower in warmer months has been observed in numerous upland studies (Black et al.,
433 1993, Chapman et al., 2001, Daniels et al., 2012). In warmer months, the biological
434 uptake of NO_3^- by plants and microbes both in the terrestrial and aquatic systems is at its
435 highest, immobilising NO_3^- . In winter, productivity declines, increasing the amount of
436 NO_3^- available to be leached into the stream and its residence time in the stream (Black et
437 al., 1993, Chapman et al., 2001, Helliwell et al., 2007 b). The summer peaks in June and
438 July 2010 are unusual and different to the summer lows observed in 2009. The high June
439 value appears to be due to one high concentration, skewing the mean monthly
440 concentration; the median value for June was $0 \mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$. The high July 2010 peak is
441 also evident in the mean concentrations of DON, and NH_4^+ , and is still reflected in
442 median values. The reason for these high values are unclear, however the differences in
443 discharge and precipitation between the two sampled years may be a contributing factor.

444 4.5 DON speciation by GC \times GC-NCD

445 More than 82% of the DON was not trapped by the SPE cartridges. This low retention
446 implies that further work is needed to improve the extraction procedure and maximise the
447 applicability of this technique, or alternatives, such as liquid-liquid extractions or stir bar
448 sorptive extraction, and thereby provide a more comprehensive picture of the DON

449 species in precipitation and stream waters. For example, it is noticeable that highly polar
450 and large molecular weight DON species were not detected by the GC \times GC-NCD, and
451 presumably also not retained by the C18 SPE cartridges.

452 Whilst some of the compounds detected by the GC \times GC-NCD appear in the precipitation
453 and the stream water, the two main compounds identified in the stream water were only
454 present in precipitation in small amounts or not present at all. This suggested that at least
455 some sources of DON in precipitation and stream waters are different. Schulten and
456 Schnitzer, (1998) and Leinweber et al., (2013) investigated the chemistry of organic
457 matter of humic substances and soils. Amongst other compounds they identified pyrrole
458 and benzonitrile, along with derivatives of pyrrole. Pyrrole and pyrrolic compounds are a
459 major N source in coal and are often found in peats (van Smeerdijk and Boon, 1987,
460 Schulten and Schnitzer, 1998). It is therefore likely that the source of pyrrole in the
461 streams was the peat in the surrounding catchment. Pyrrole has also been identified in fog
462 waters where it was found to be quickly degraded during transport by photochemistry
463 (Anastasio and McGregor, 2000). It is thought to be present in the atmosphere originating
464 from soil dust rich in humic/fluvic material (Schulten and Schnitzer, 1998, Anastasio and
465 McGregor, 2000). This may explain the presence of a small amount of pyrrole found in
466 the precipitation samples. The three other compounds identified were all amines:
467 dodecylamine (found only in the precipitation), NDPA and decylamine (both only found
468 in the stream). The number of unknown compounds detected may be reduced by running
469 more standards for comparison.

470 In spite of the low DOC retention by the SPE cartridges, our attempt to describe the DON
471 speciation in precipitation and streams, suggests that further investigation could provide
472 some insight into the temporal and sector dependent speciation of DON and their sources.
473
474

475 5 Conclusions

476 DON is an important source of nitrogen in precipitation and stream water and must not be
477 ignored in measurements of atmospheric nitrogen deposition rates or stream water
478 nitrogen balances. The mean volume-weighted concentration of DON found in the
479 precipitation over the total study period was $4.8 \mu\text{mol N L}^{-1}$, with a mean contribution of
480 9% to TDN.

481 DON in stream water was a major contributor to TDN (with an overall mean of 75%) and
482 showed no clear seasonal pattern. The presence of pyrrole, the large DON concentrations

483 and the high NH_4^+ in stream water, suggest mineralisation of organic N stored in peat was
484 one of the sources.

485 In soil water, DON contributed an overall mean of 92% to TDN. The mean
486 concentrations of DON did not vary greatly between the years but the concentration of
487 NH_4^+ did (8.6 $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2009 and 0.2 $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$ in 2010), possibly due to localised
488 impact of animal waste and the importance of water table variation on the availability of
489 N to plants and on immobilisation.

490 GC \times GC-NCD shows promise as a technique to identify compounds in stream
491 water/precipitation and their potential sources, but requires further development.

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681 Table 1. Statistics of annual concentrations of NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , DON and TDN for 2009 and
 682 2010 in wet-only precipitation. Values are based on individual samples collected over the
 683 two year period. N* indicates the number of samples collected.

	NO_3^- $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	NH_4^+ $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	DON $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	TDN $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$
2009				
Mean	15	27	5	47
Min	< LOD	< LOD	< LOD	6
Max	148	273	50	426
Standard deviation	21	35	4	50
N*	227	227	63	63
% TDN	32	58	10	100
2010				
Mean	23	31	5	58
Min	2	2	< LOD	8
Max	260	218	45	483
Standard deviation	30	33	5	59
N*	169	169	63	63
% TDN	39	53	8	100

684 Table 2. Statistics of annual concentrations of NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , DON and TDN for 2009 and
 685 2010 in soil water. Values are based on individual samples collected from dip wells over
 686 the two year period. N* indicates the number of samples collected.

	NO_3^- $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	NH_4^+ $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	DON $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	TDN $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$
<u>2009</u>				
Mean	1	9	57	67
Min	< LOD	< LOD	11	11
Max	6	91	319	389
Median	0	1	48	54
Standard deviation	2	15	44	54
N*	72	72	72	72
% of TDN	2	13	85	100
<u>2010</u>				
Mean	< LOD	< LOD	59	60
Min	< LOD	< LOD	23	23
Max	8	7	285	285
Median	0	0	44	44
Standard deviation	1	1	43	43
N*	54	54	45	45
% of TDN	0.3	0.4	99.3	100

687

688 Table 3. Statistics of annual concentrations of NH_4^+ , NO_3^- , DON and TDN for 2009 and
 689 2010 in stream water. Values are based on individual samples collected over the two year
 690 period. N* indicates the number of samples collected.

	NO_3^- $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	NH_4^+ $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	DON $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$	TDN $\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$
<u>2009</u>				
Mean	2	14	48	65
Min	< LOD	5	10	25
Max	14	22	96	118
Median	0	14	47	64
Standard deviation	4	3	21	21
N*	43	43	43	43
% of TDN	4	22	75	100
<u>2010</u>				
Mean	5	13	50	67
Min	< LOD	< LOD	16	16
Max	15	52.3	104	145
Median	4	7.9	46	59
Standard deviation	4	13.8	20	31
N*	48	48	48	48
% of TDN	7	19	74	100

691

693

694 Table 4. Summary of compounds and their concentrations ($\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$) detected by the GC \times GC-NCD, and overall DON concentrations ($\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$)
 695 derived from TDN-DIN in precipitation samples. Samples collected on dates shaded in grey did not contain compounds at measurable concentrations
 696 by the GC \times GC-NCD. Blank spaces indicate a value below the detection limit. Rt_1 and Rt_2 are retention times in seconds for the first and second GC
 697 columns.

Sample Rt ₁ /Rt ₂	DON (TDN-DIN)	Pyrrole 375/1.24	Benzonitrile 825/1.8	Unknown B 11.45/1.52	Unknown C 1218/1.48	Dodecylamine 1590/1.5	Unknown D 1615/1.7	Unknown E 1910/1.7	Unknown F 2200/2.09
09/07/2010	9.2							1.6	1.7
13/07/2010	13.8		0.4				0.5		
14/07/2010	6.5								
15/07/2010	5.5								
09/08/2010	9.4						0.6		1.8
12/08/2010	6.5							0.3	0.3
20/08/2010	3.5	0.2						0.6	
23/08/2010	2.4							0.5	
06/09/2010	3.1							1.9	
13/09/2010	3.2								
14/09/2010	5.8								
18/09/2010	3.3								
01/10/2010	0.5								
05/10/2010	1.0	0.7		2.0					
06/10/2010	-2.4								
18/10/2010	2.1			0.7			0.7		
21/10/2010	19.8				1.3		0.5	2.4	
24/10/2010	7.1				1.2				
25/10/2010	1.2				0.5		0.7	1.8	

698

699

700

701 Table 4. continued. Summary of compounds and their concentrations ($\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$) detected by the GC \times GC-NCD, and DON concentrations ($\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$)
 702 as TDN-DIN in precipitation samples. Samples collected on dates shaded in grey did not contain compounds at measurable concentrations by the
 703 GC \times GC-NCD. Blank spaces indicate a value below the detection limit. Rt_1 and Rt_2 are retention times in seconds for the first and second GC columns.
 704

Sample	DON	Pyrrole	Benzonitrile	Unknown B	Unknown C	Dodecylamine	Unknown D	Unknown E	Unknown F
Rt_1/Rt_2	(TDN-DIN)	375/1.24	825/1.8	11.45/1.52	1218/1.48	1590/1.5	1615/1.7	1910/1.7	2200/2.09
26/10/2010	5.8				0.5			0.9	
01/11/2010	3.9								
02/11/2010	7.0						0.1		
03/11/2010	5.1							0.4	
04/11/2010	2.9								
05/11/2010	3.9								
06/11/2010	4.6								
08/11/2010	9.9							0.4	
09/11/2010	-2.4								
10/11/2010	-0.2								
11/11/2010	5.0							0.7	
13/11/2010	6.1							0.6	

705

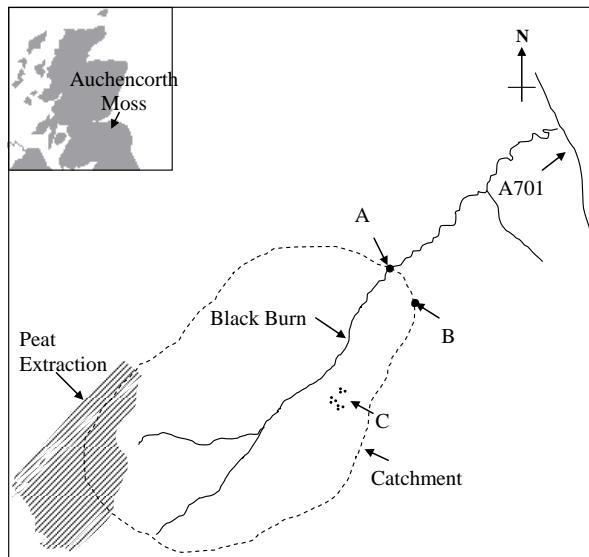
706 Table 5. Summary of compounds and their concentrations ($\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$) detected by the GC \times GC-NCD, and DON concentrations ($\mu\text{mol N l}^{-1}$) detected
 707 by ANTEK in stream water samples. Samples collected on dates shaded in grey did not contain compounds at measurable concentrations by the
 708 GC \times GC-NCD. Blank spaces indicate a measured value of below the detection limit.. Rt_1 and Rt_2 are retention times in seconds for the first and second
 709 GC columns.

Sample Rt ₁ /Rt ₂	DON (TDN-DIN)	Pyrrole 375/1.24	Unknown A 415/1.24	Benzonitrile 825/1.8	N-nitrosodipropylamine 970/1.4	Unknown B 11.45/1.52	Decylamine 1295/1.64	Unknown E 1910/1.7	Unknown F 2200/2.09
11/08/2010	45.9	1.3	3.2					0.9	
19/08/2010	54.8	0.2	0.3		1.2				
26/08/2010	85.2	0.7	2.7	3.0					
10/09/2010	30.5	0.2	0.8			1.6			1.4
30/09/2010	87.2	3.8	6.9					1.5	
06/10/2010	57.8	5.0	3.9					1.8	
12/10/2010	69.4	0.8	2.1			1.4			
14/10/2010	60.1		0.7			1.3			
15/10/2010	49.1								
18/10/2010	46.1	1.8	3.4						
19/10/2010	75.0		1.4		1.3			1.0	0.8
21/10/2010	58.2	2.3	4.0						
23/10/2010	65.9	0.3	1.9		0.7			1.2	0.5
26/10/2010	56.5	1.0							0.9
28/10/2010	57.6	0.7	1.8		1.7			1.8	0.6
02/11/2010	61.5	0.6	2.3					1.9	1.0
03/11/2010	69.5	2.5	3.4					0.4	
04/11/2010	79.4	0.6	0.6					0.4	0.7
05/11/2010	58.9								
10/11/2010	70.7		0.5					0.5	0.4
11/11/2010	65.6	4.3	1.8			1.1		1.6	1.7

710

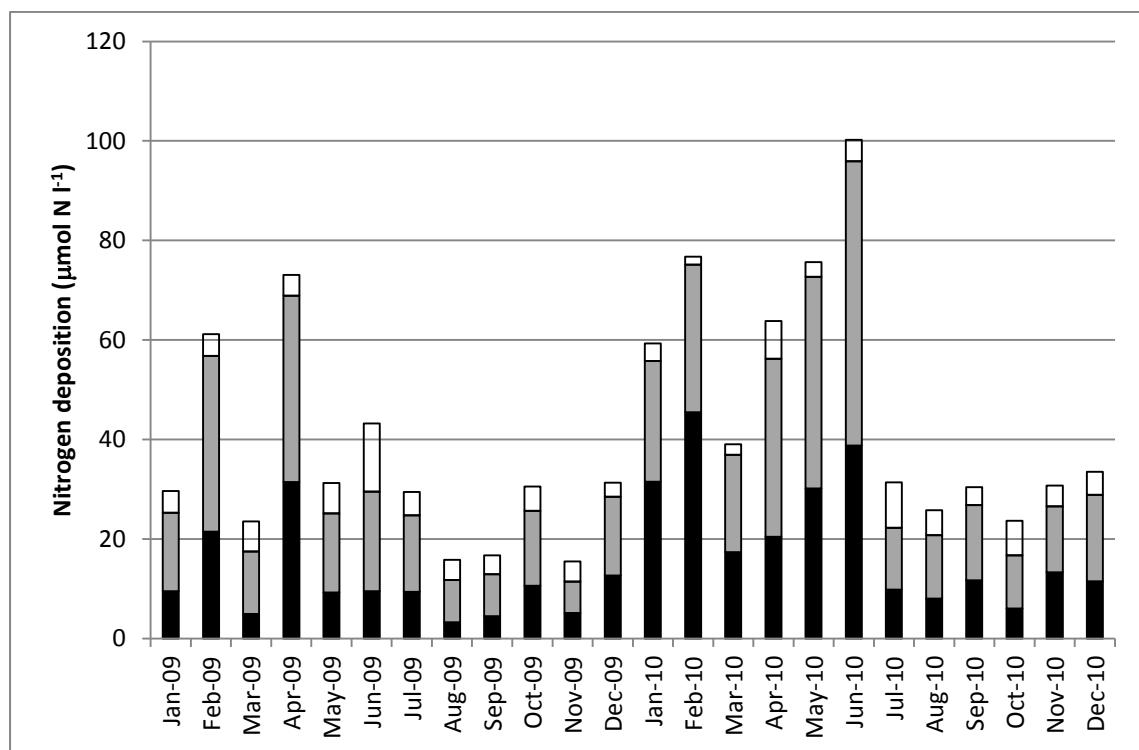
711 Figure 1: Schematic map of catchment and sampling sites at Auchencorth Moss. Key: (A)
 712 study catchment outlet and stream sampling site; (B) monitoring station (wet only analyser);
 713 (C) dip wells. Adapted from Dinsmore et al., (2010).

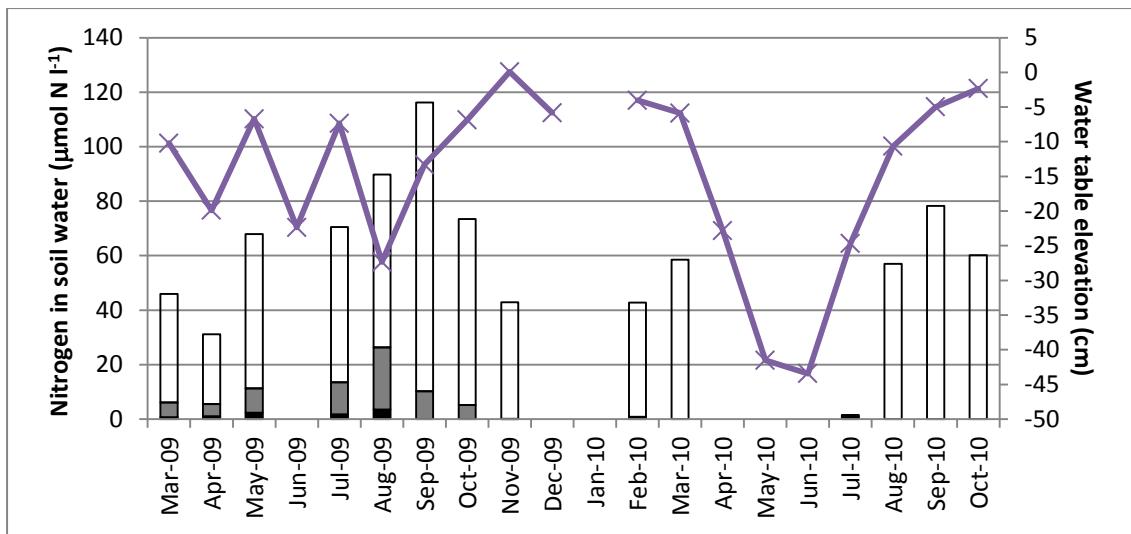
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716 Figure 2. Volume-weighted monthly average concentrations of NH_4^+ (grey), NO_3^- (black) and
 717 DON (white) in wet only precipitation.

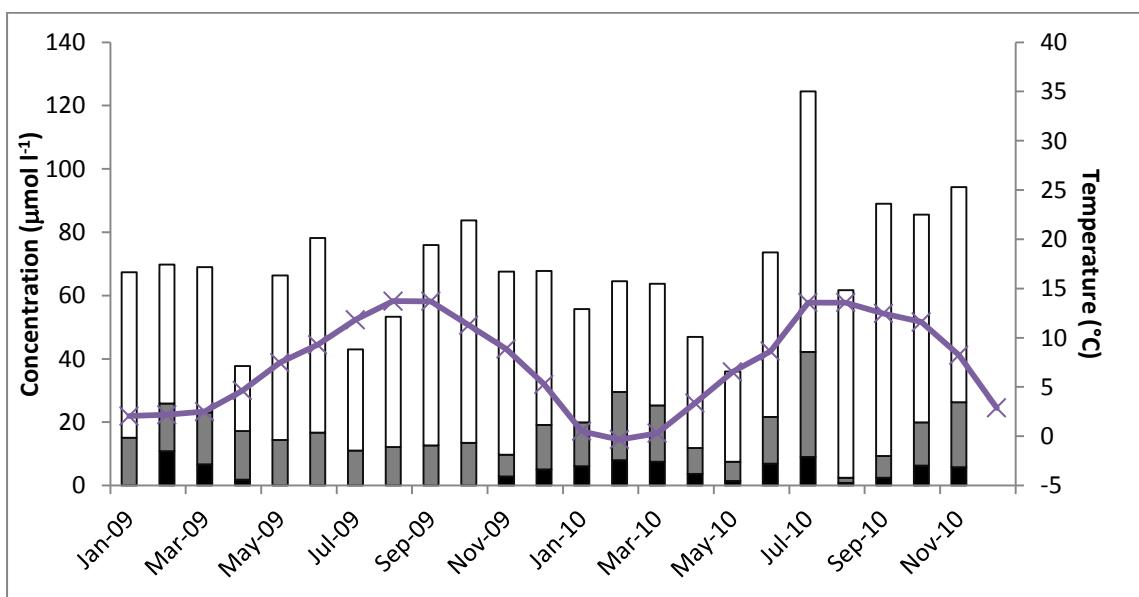




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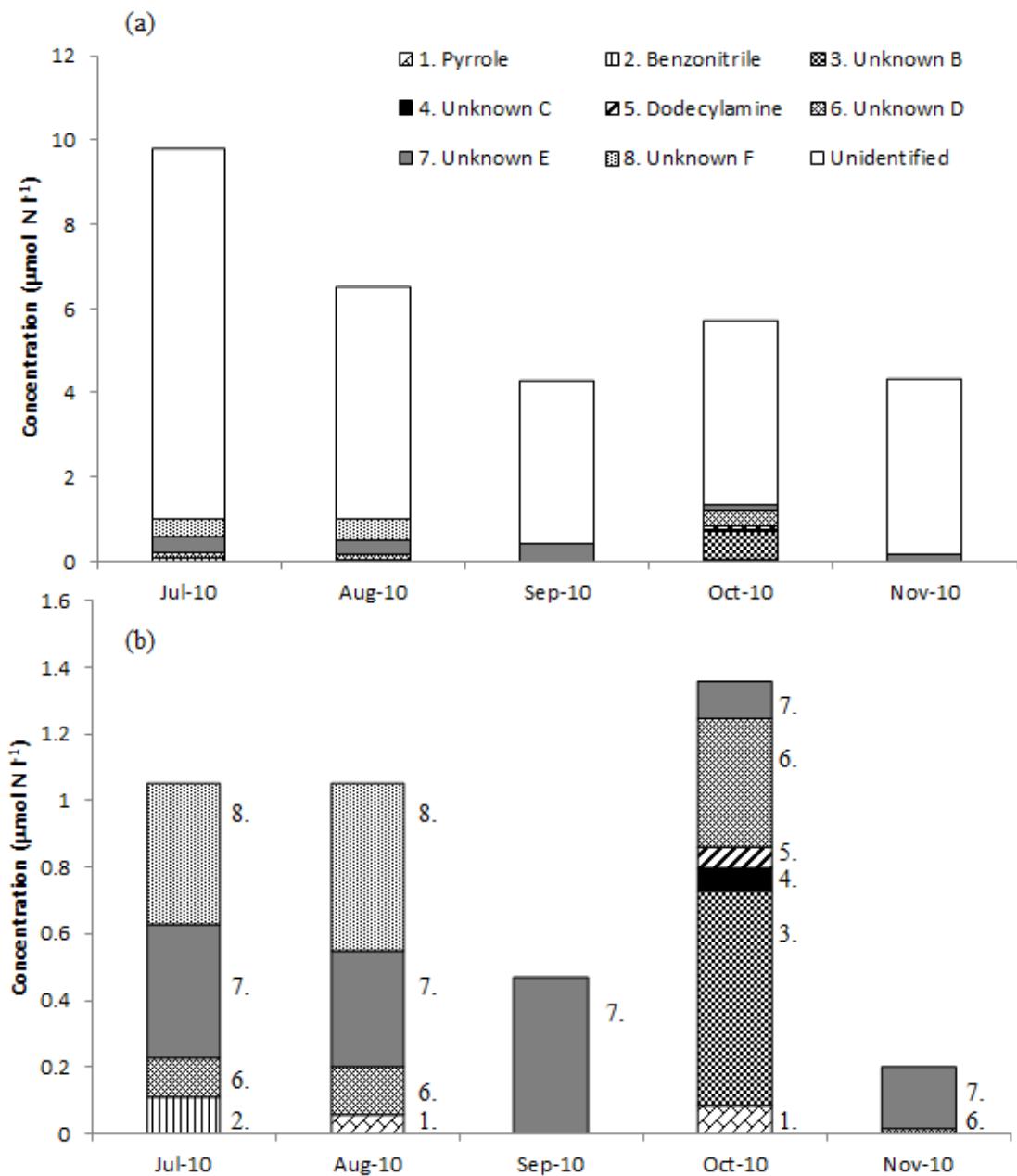
719 Figure 3. Monthly concentrations of NH_4^+ (grey), NO_3^- (black) and DON (white) in soil
 720 water. The line represents monthly water table elevation. The June-09 sample was misplaced
 721 and Dec-09 and Jan 2010 were frozen, the remaining blank spaces indicate the dip wells were
 722 dry on the day of collection.

723



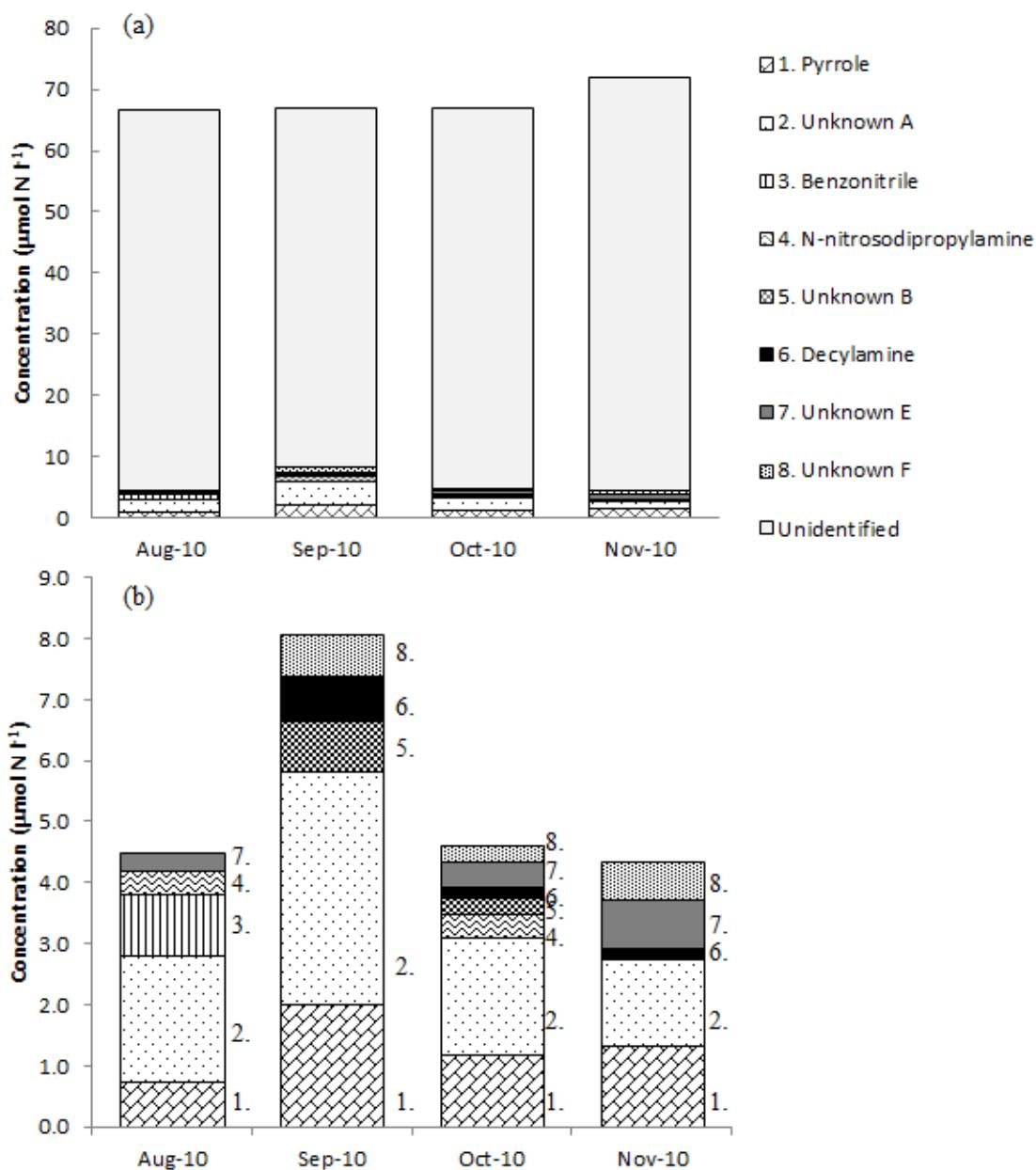
724

725 Figure 4. Discharge-weighted monthly mean concentrations of NH_4^+ (grey), NO_3^- (black) and
 726 DON (white) in stream water. The line represents mean monthly air temperature.



727

728 Figure 5. Mean monthly concentrations of the individual DON compounds found in
729 precipitation water. (a) includes the DON fraction identified from the ANTEK (white bar).
730 (b) excludes the unidentified fraction, so that the speciation achieved by GC \times GC-NCD is
731 more clearly seen.



732

733 Figure 6. Mean monthly concentrations of the individual compounds found in stream water.

734 (a) includes the DON fraction identified from the ANTEK (white bar) (b) excludes the

735 'unidentified' fraction, so the fraction detected by GC \times GC-NCD is more clearly seen.