

Interactive comment on “Spatial distribution and sources of organic carbon in the surface sediment of the Bosten Lake, China” by Z. T. Yu et al.

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Preface: We appreciate the reviewers' constructive comments and the editor's precious time for handling our manuscript. We have thoroughly considered all the comments, and made revisions as suggested.

Reviewer 1: Main comments The manuscript by Yu et al. presents a detailed study about spatial distribution of sediment organic matter in Bosten Lake, based on which they calculated the contributions of terrestrial plant, soil and lake plankton and evaluate the potential factors responsible for their spatial variability. I think this study address an important issue about widely used geochemical proxies (C/N and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$). Many studies applied C/N and $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ as organic matter source indicators without consideration of other factors such as hydrodynamic and mineral contents. Meanwhile, this manuscript

C7036

is well written and its topic is suitable for Biogeosciences. I have several concerns, which should be addressed before publish.

Specific comments: 1. Page 7: The authors attributed sediment organic matter to three endmember, high plant, soil and lake plankton. I think it is better to say “terrestrial plants” instead of high plant. High plant (or higher plant) is not an accurate definition because many higher plants such as emerged, floating and submerged plants can be quite abundant in some lakes. In this manuscript, the endmember value for high plant is apparently from land plants. Response: Yes, we agree. In the revision, we have replaced the “high plant” with “terrestrial plant”.

2. Page 7: for end member values, the authors cited the data from Zhang et al. (2013). I did not check their raw data, but it is kind strange they only provided average values. I believe there are different types of land plants and soils, and therefore, the C/N and ^{13}C should vary with species and sampling sites. In my opinion, those data should be reported with. This is a good point. We agree and have added the standard errors (please see page 6, lines 13–1619 – 22).

3. Page 11: delete “as known” since this phrase does not provide any useful information Response: Done.

4. Figure 2 and other figures: the font size is too small. Response: Thanks for the comment. We have reproduced all the figures using a larger font size in the revised version.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<http://www.biogeosciences-discuss.net/12/C7036/2015/bgd-12-C7036-2015-supplement.zip>

Interactive comment on Biogeosciences Discuss., 12, 13793, 2015.

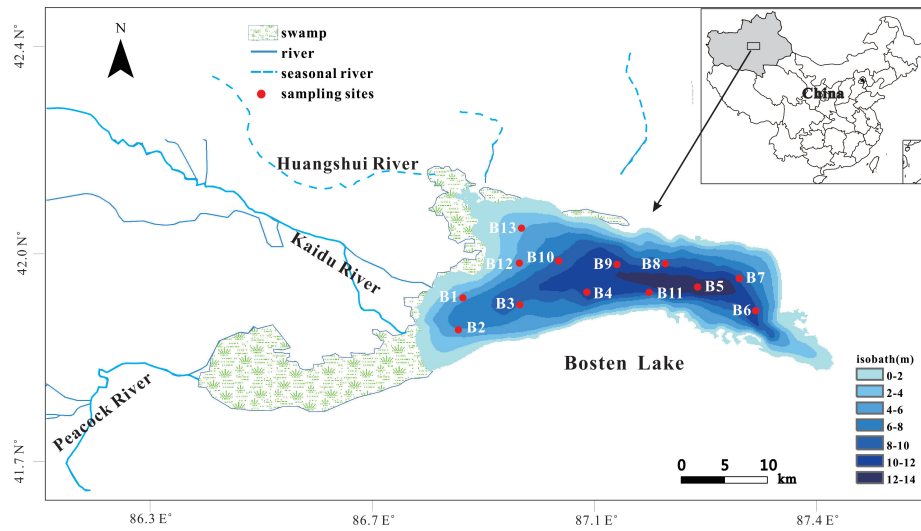


Fig. 1.

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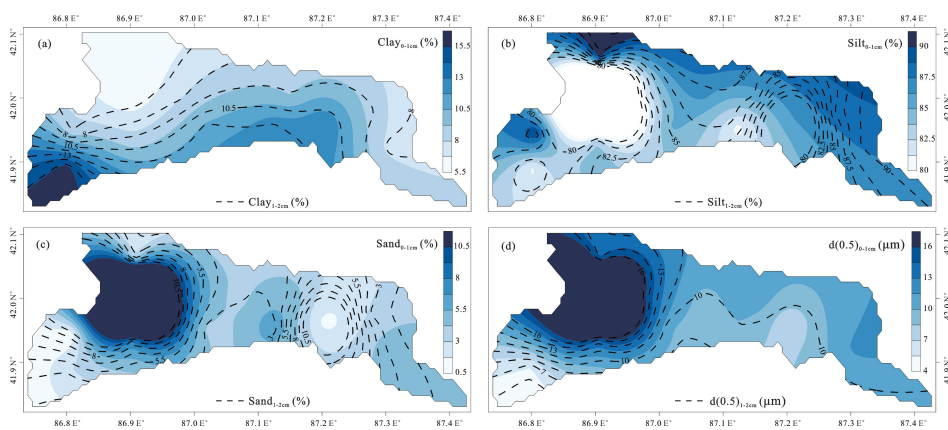


Fig. 2.

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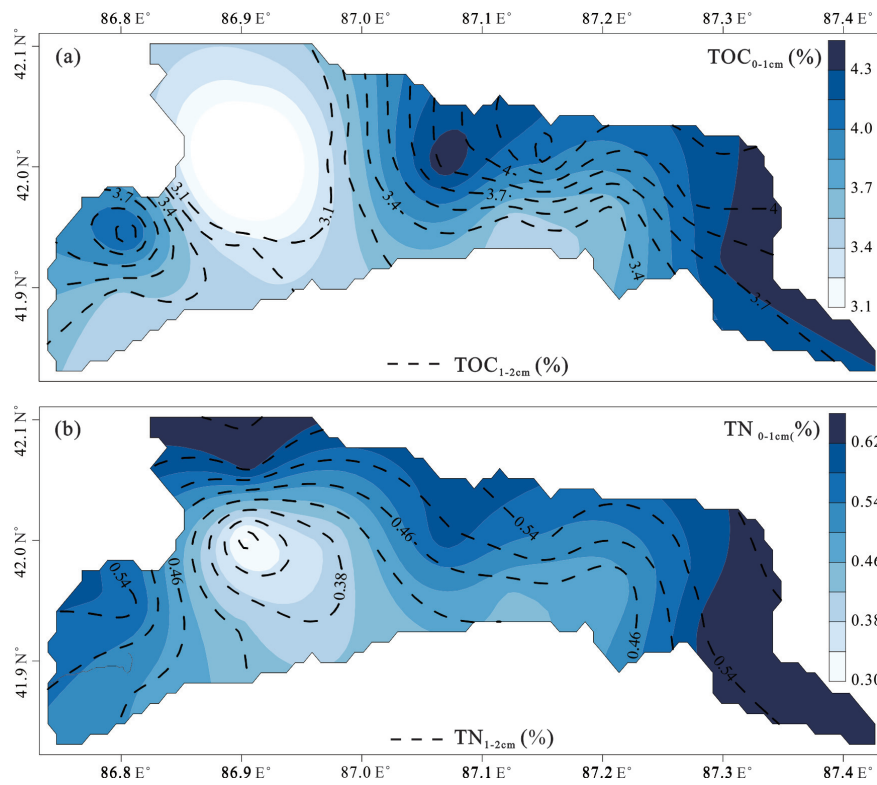


Fig. 3.

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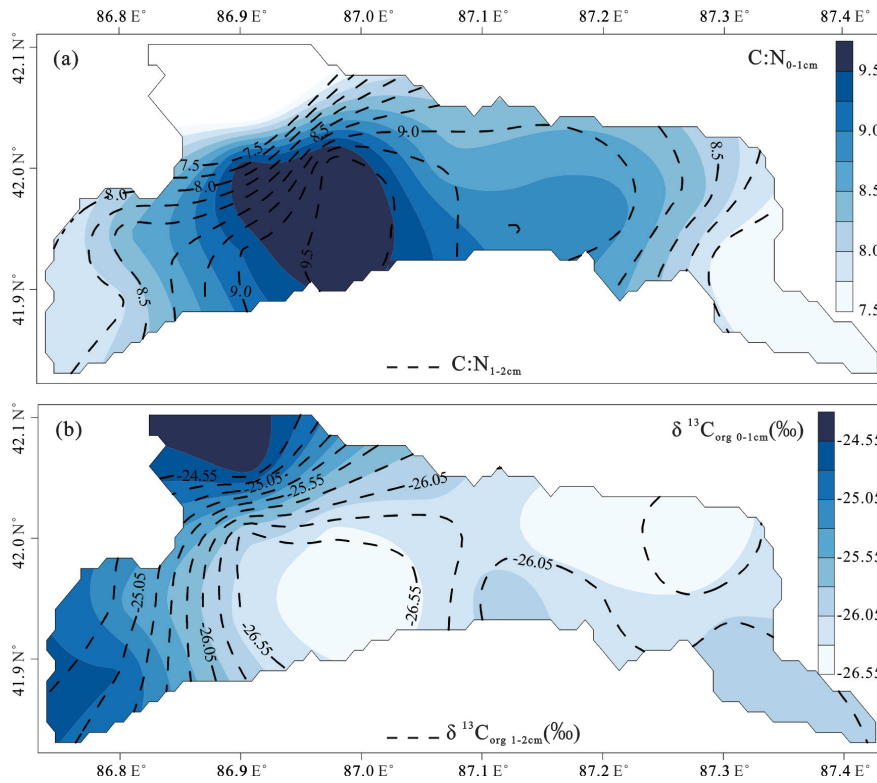


Fig. 4.

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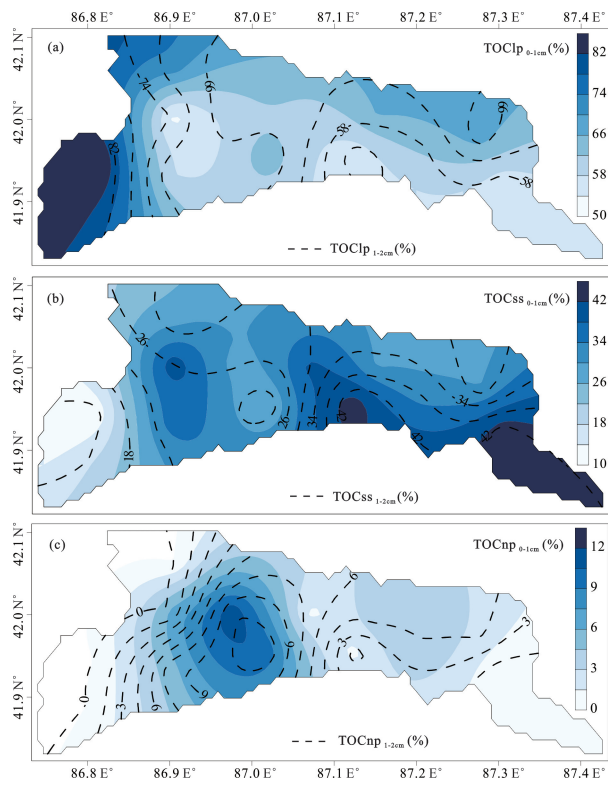


Fig. 5.

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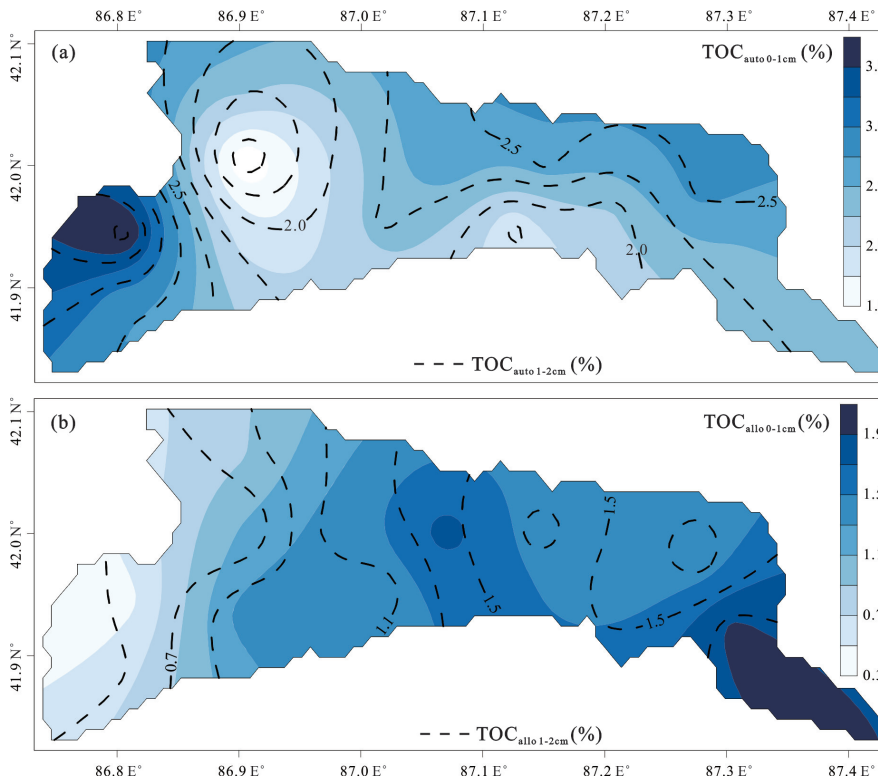


Fig. 6.

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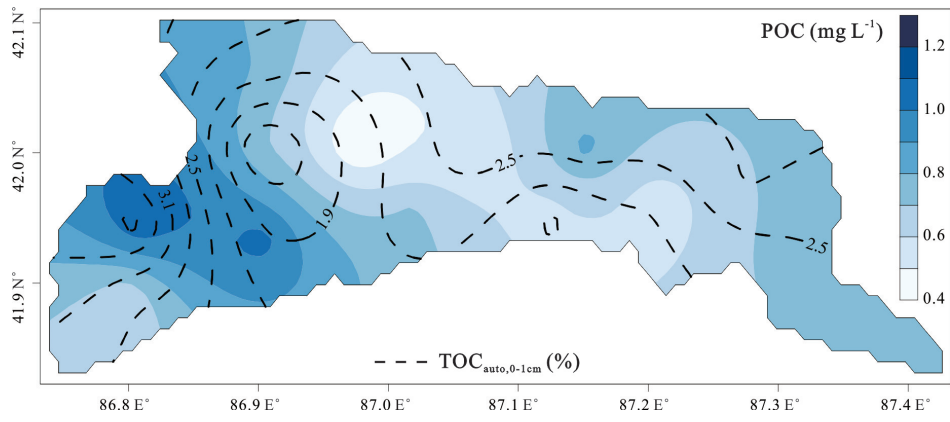


Fig. 7.

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