

Interactive comment on “Nitrous oxide fluxes from tropical peat with different disturbance history and management” by J. Jauhainen et al.

Anonymous Referee #1

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General comments

The justification for the research reported in this manuscript is the lack of data on N₂O emissions from tropical peat. Measurements of N₂O flux at 6 sites subjected to different disturbances (drainage, burning, agriculture) were measured over various periods from 2000 to 2007. Water table depth was also measured. The manuscript is well-written for the most part, but makes only a modest contribution to our knowledge of factors influencing N₂O fluxes from tropical peat. Partly this is due to a lack of supporting data to relate the N₂O flux values to, as only water table depth was measured concurrent with N₂O fluxes. Its main contribution is flux values for these under-studied ecosystems, which are then compared to CO₂ and CH₄ fluxes (measured at the same sites and reported elsewhere). The authors conclude that N₂O fluxes are very variable

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in time and space (a fact well-known) and that annual emissions in terms of CO₂eq are relatively small when compared to CO₂ and CH₄. The study is inconclusive with respect to effect of disturbances and management, likely because of the experimental design (uncontrolled conditions, non-simultaneous measurements). Perhaps the flux values could be reported in a short communication article.

Specific comments

P. 5424

L. 1: The opening sentence is a bit awkward; consider re-phrasing.

L. 3: Is this the main knowledge gap that is being addressed with the study reported? (i.e. "N₂O dynamics"). It would be better to more specific on the research question that authors are trying to address.

L. 5: Objective(s) and the location of the study site (country) should be added here. Also, the period of measurement.

L. 14-15: Please quantify these statements (most; modest peak).

L. 15-16: It is well known that N₂O fluxes vary significantly in space and time, typically presenting log-normal or other 'skewed' probability distributions (eg. Yates et al., 2007. SSSAJ 70(3)). The main (novel) finding of this research should be stated here. The title refers to 'disturbance history' and 'management' so this factor should be addressed in your summary of results: what are the conclusions related to these two factors?

P. 5425

L. 8: What is the relevance of N₂O exchange being 'concurrent' with CO₂ and CH₄?

P. 5426

L. 10-13: Consider changing to 'There are a limited number of studies quantifying all three major GHG fluxes from tropical peat sites'.

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L. 15-20: More background and justification on the research questions related to potential factors affecting N₂O fluxes from peat should be given in the introduction. What led the authors to choose the study sites with the given characteristics (eg. how are N₂O fluxes affected by peat burning? drainage?)? As the authors state, most research has been conducted in boreal peatlands. What is known about N₂O production in peat of cold regions? What are contrasting factors (temperature, rainfall, pH?) in tropical regions that would affect N₂O fluxes? Which hypothesis did the authors formulate before their study?

L. 19-20: This is a relatively weak objective. Can it be formulated to address a research question?

P. 5427

L. 6: More information on the peat chemical characteristics at each site needs to be given (eg. pH, N content). What type of peat was present at each site?

P. 5430:

L. 6: What is the justification for selecting these arbitrary values for data filtering. Why only at these two sites?

Please also note the supplement to this comment:

<http://www.biogeosciences-discuss.net/8/C1919/2011/bgd-8-C1919-2011-supplement.pdf>

Interactive comment on Biogeosciences Discuss., 8, 5423, 2011.