

# ***Interactive comment on “Evaluation of atmospheric nitrogen inputs into marine ecosystems of the North Sea and Baltic Sea – part A: validation and time scales of nutrient accumulation” by Daniel Neumann et al.***

**Daniel Neumann et al.**

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## **Response to review comment #2 by referee #3**

We thank the reviewer for the constructive comments on the manuscript.

Below, the reviewer’s comments are written in bold letters and our answers in non-bold letters.

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The main result presented in this manuscript is the residence time of N and P in the studied region, which agrees with the existing literature. This somehow provides some indications that the model is not totally unrealistic.

However, the model as presented has a number of important shortcomings also mentioned by reviewer #2, which show significant deficiencies in the model's ability to simulate the marine N cycle. Lacking DIN depletion in summer (p. 20, line 3), a period over which it is expected that the atmospheric deposition will maximize because of the stratification of the seawater, will definitely introduce large inaccuracies in the calculated impact on the marine ecosystem. Therefore, as presented the quality of the modeling is questionable.

> We plan to remove the North Sea from the manuscript and consider only the Baltic Sea because the severe issues occur in the North Sea.

However, the authors use the first year of their simulation to validate their model, while they clearly say in the manuscript that their model did not reach a steady-state and they finally use the 2nd or 5th year to further investigate the impacts of atmospheric deposition. I would expect to see a model validation for the iteration that is used for the impact study, since the others appear as spin-up time for their model system. This might provide totally different results for the model evaluation.

In case that the last iteration is better representing the N marine cycle than what is actually shown in the manuscript and discussed, then it might be worth considering publishing this work to BG if it fulfills my comments below or to another journal, more appropriate for model description.

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> We thank the reviewer for the suggestion to consider later years for the validation. Unfortunately, the situation does not improve in the North Sea in later years but seems to be quite stable from the 2nd year and onwards.

**The manuscript has to be significantly shortened, focused and needs clarification in several parts. The key message of the manuscript has to be the evaluation and quantification of the uncertainty in the calculations and has to be reorganized in this direction. Several parts of the present manuscript can move to the supplement.**

> We will consider these comments in the revision.

**To be suitable for BG the manuscript needs also to further elaborate the science question, i.e. the contribution of atmospheric deposition to the DIN in the seawater (based on figure 11 and Figures 6&9).**

> We will work on the science question.

**The authors might consider merging it with the companion paper.**

> We will consider merging both manuscripts if this is possible in this publication format.

**Further comments for potential improvements: From all the figures here presented, figures 5, 6, 9 and 11 are the most informative for the purpose of the surface validation discussed here. In figure 6 and 9, I think the simulation that will be used for the impact study has to be evaluated and not the first one. Fig**

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**11 shows the tagged DIN but then it is not a contribution, for contribution one is expecting to see a ratio or a % value to the total DIN in the seawater. Also consider merging parts of Fig 6/9 and 11? Table 2 and 3 could be merged and additional literature data could be added for comparison. Finally, It is often confusing whether DIN concentrations in the atmospheric deposition or in the seawater are discussed/ shown in the figures. Also figures caption have to be more informative, e.g. is surface seawater composition shown or something else?**

> We will consider these comments in the revision.

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Interactive comment on Biogeosciences Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/bg-2018-364>, 2018.

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