

Supplement of

An observation-based evaluation and ranking of historical Earth System Model simulations for regional downscaling in the northwest North Atlantic Ocean

5 Arnaud Laurent¹, Katja Fennel¹, Angela Kuhn²

⁶ ¹Department of Oceanography, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada.

⁷ ²Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UC San Diego, USA.

8 S1 Introduction

9 This supporting information provides the equations for the biogeochemical model and additional Table S1
10 and Figures S1 to S9 for the main article.

11 S2 Biogeochemical model

12 The model has 10 state variables, namely phytoplankton, split into small (P_S) and large (P_L) size groups
 13 with their respective chlorophyll concentration (Chl_S and Chl_L), zooplankton, divided into 2 size classes
 14 representing the micro- (Z_S) and meso- (Z_L) zooplankton, nitrate (NO_3^-), ammonium (NH_4^+), and small
 15 (D_S) and large (D_L) detritus. State variables are in mmol N m^{-3} except for chlorophyll (mg m^{-3}).

16 The time rates of change of the biogeochemical state variables due to biological processes are described
17 below. The list of parameters, values and units is presented in Table S1.

$$\frac{\partial P_S}{\partial t} = \mu_{P_S}^{\max} L_S^E L_{P_S}^N P_S - g_{Z_S P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} Z_S - g_{Z_L P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S}(P_L + Z_S)} Z_L - m_{P_S} P_S - w_{P_S} \frac{\partial P_S}{\partial Z} \quad (1)$$

$$\frac{\partial P_L}{\partial t} = \mu_{P_L}^{\max} L_{P_L}^E L_{P_L}^N P_L - g_{Z_S P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} Z_S - g_{Z_L P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} Z_L - m_{P_L} P_L - \tau (D_S + P_L) P_L - w_{P_L} \frac{\partial P_L}{\partial z} \quad (2)$$

$$\frac{\partial \text{Chl}_S}{\partial t} = \rho_{\text{Chl}} \mu_{P_S}^{\max} L_{P_S}^E L_{P_S}^N \text{Chl}_S - \frac{\text{Chl}_S}{P_S} \left(g_{Z_S P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} Z_S + g_{Z_L P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S} (P_L + Z_S)} Z_L \right) - m_{P_S} \text{Chl}_S - w_{P_S} \frac{\partial \text{Chl}_S}{\partial z} \quad (3)$$

$$\frac{\partial \text{Chl}_L}{\partial t} = \rho_{\text{Chl}} \mu_{P_L}^{\max} L_{P_L}^E L_{P_L}^N \text{Chl}_L - \frac{\text{Chl}_L}{P_L} \left(g_{Z_S P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} Z_S + g_{Z_L P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} Z_L \right) - m_{P_L} \text{Chl}_L - \tau (D_S + P_L) \text{Chl}_L - w_{P_L} \frac{\partial \text{Chl}_L}{\partial z} \quad (4)$$

$$\frac{\partial Z_S}{\partial t} = \left(\left(g_{Z_S P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} + g_{Z_S P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} \right) \beta_{Z_S} - l_{Z_S}^{\text{BM}} \right. \\ \left. - l_{Z_S}^E \left(\frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} + \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} \right) \beta_{Z_S} - m_{Z_S} Z_S \right) Z_S - g_{Z_L Z_S}^{\max} \frac{Z_S^2}{k_{Z_L Z_S} + Z_S^2} Z_L \quad (5)$$

$$\frac{\partial Z_L}{\partial t} = \left(\left(g_{Z_L P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S} (P_L + Z_S)} + g_{Z_L P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} + g_{Z_L Z_S}^{\max} \frac{Z_S^2}{k_{Z_L Z_S} + Z_S^2} \right) \beta_{Z_L} \right. \\ \left. - l_{Z_L}^{\text{BM}} - l_{Z_L}^E \left(\frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S} (P_L + Z_S)} + \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} + \frac{Z_S^2}{k_{Z_L Z_S} + Z_S^2} \right) \beta_{Z_L} - m_{Z_L} Z_L \right) Z_L \quad (6)$$

$$\frac{\partial \text{NO}_3^-}{\partial t} = - \mu_{P_S}^{\max} L_{P_S}^E L_{P_S}^{\text{NO}_3^-} P_S - \mu_{P_L}^{\max} L_{P_L}^E L_{P_L}^{\text{NO}_3^-} P_L + \hat{n} \text{NH}_4^+ \quad (7)$$

$$\frac{\partial \text{NH}_4^+}{\partial t} = - \mu_{P_S}^{\max} L_{P_S}^E L_{P_S}^{\text{NH}_4^+} P_S - \mu_{P_L}^{\max} L_{P_L}^E L_{P_L}^{\text{NH}_4^+} P_L - \hat{n} \text{NH}_4^+ + l_{Z_S}^{\text{BM}} Z_S + l_{Z_L}^{\text{BM}} Z_L \\ + l_{Z_S}^E \left(\frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} + \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} \right) \beta_{Z_S} Z_S + l_{Z_L}^E \left(\frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S} (P_L + Z_S)} \right. \\ \left. + \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} + \frac{Z_S^2}{k_{Z_L Z_S} + Z_S^2} \right) \beta_{Z_L} Z_L + \hat{r}_{D_S} D_S + \hat{r}_{D_L} D_L \quad (8)$$

$$\frac{\partial D_S}{\partial t} = \left(g_{Z_S P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} + g_{Z_S P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} \right) (1 - \beta_{Z_S}) Z_S \\ + \left(g_{Z_L P_S}^{\max} \frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S} (P_L + Z_S)} + g_{Z_L P_L}^{\max} \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} + g_{Z_L Z_S}^{\max} \frac{Z_S^2}{k_{Z_L Z_S} + Z_S^2} \right) (1 - \beta_{Z_L}) Z_L + m_{P_S} P_S \\ + m_{P_L} P_L + m_{Z_S} Z_S^2 - \hat{r}_{D_S} D_S - \tau (D_S + P_L) D_S - w_{D_S} \frac{\partial D_S}{\partial z} \quad (9)$$

$$\frac{\partial D_L}{\partial t} = \tau (D_S + P_L)^2 + m_{Z_L} Z_L^2 - \hat{r}_{D_L} D_L - w_{D_L} \frac{\partial D_L}{\partial z} \quad (10)$$

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial O_2}{\partial t} = & \mu_{P_S}^{\max} L_{P_S}^E \left(\frac{L_{P_S}^{NO_3^-}}{L_{P_S}^N} R_{O_2:NO_3^-} + \frac{L_{P_S}^{NH_4^+}}{L_{P_S}^N} R_{O_2:NH_4^+} \right) L_{P_S}^N P_S + \mu_{P_S}^{\max} L_{P_S}^E \left(\frac{L_{P_L}^{NO_3^-}}{L_{P_L}^N} R_{O_2:NO_3^-} \right. \\
& \left. + \frac{L_{P_L}^{NH_4^+}}{L_{P_L}^N} R_{O_2:NH_4^+} \right) L_{P_L}^N P_L - 2\hat{n}NH_4^+ - R_{O_2:NH_4^+} \left(l_{Z_S}^{BM} Z_S + l_{Z_L}^{BM} Z_L + l_{Z_S}^E \left(\frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_S P_S} + P_S^2} \right. \right. \\
& \left. \left. + \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_S P_L} + P_L^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_S P_L} P_S} \right) \beta_{Z_S} Z_S + l_{Z_L}^E \left(\frac{P_S^2}{k_{Z_L P_S} + P_S^2} e^{-\psi_{Z_L P_S} (P_L + Z_S)} + \frac{P_L^2}{k_{Z_L P_L} + P_L^2} \right. \right. \\
& \left. \left. + \frac{Z_S^2}{k_{Z_L Z_S} + Z_S^2} \right) \beta_{Z_L} Z_L + \hat{r}_{D_S} D_S + \hat{r}_{D_L} D_L \right)
\end{aligned} \tag{11}$$

18 Phytoplankton growth is limited by temperature (T ; °C), light (E ; W m⁻²) and nitrogen (N). The maximum
19 growth rate of phytoplankton ($\mu_{P_X}^{\max}$; d⁻¹) depends on temperature according to *Eppley* [1972]:

$$\mu_{P_X}^{\max} = \mu_{P_X}^0 \cdot Q^T, \tag{12}$$

20 where $\mu_{P_X}^0$ is the phytoplankton (P_S or P_L) maximum growth rate at 0°C and $Q^T = 0.59 \cdot 1.066^T$. Q^T is also
21 applied to phytoplankton and zooplankton mortality (m_P and m_Z), grazing (g_Z) and zooplankton basal
22 metabolism (l_{BM}) and excretion (l_E).

23 Light limitation $L_{P_X}^E$ is formulated with an instantaneous growth rate vs. light function (Evans and
24 Parslow, 1985):

$$L_{P_X}^E = \frac{\alpha_{P_X} E}{\sqrt{(\mu_{P_X}^{\max})^2 + (\alpha_{P_X})^2 E^2}}, \tag{13}$$

25 where E is the light intensity (W m⁻²) and α_{P_X} is the initial slope of the instantaneous growth rate vs light
26 curve for P_S or P_L.

27 Nutrient limitation factors $L_{P_X}^{NO_3^-}$ and $L_{P_X}^{NH_4^+}$ are calculated similarly for P_S and P_L such that:

$$L_{P_X}^{NO_3^-} = \frac{NO_3^-}{k_{NO_3^-} + NO_3^-} \cdot \frac{1}{1 + NH_4^+/k_{NH_4^+}} \tag{14}$$

$$L_{P_X}^{NH_4^+} = \frac{NH_4^+}{k_{NH_4^+} + NH_4^+} \quad (15)$$

$$L_{P_X}^N = L_{P_X}^{NO_3^-} + L_{P_X}^{NH_4^+} \quad (16)$$

28 Phytoplankton acclimates to light and nutrients conditions by varying the chlorophyll content in a cell
 29 such that only a fraction of phytoplankton growth ($\rho_{P_X}^{Chl}$) is dedicated to chlorophyll synthesis following
 30 *Geider et al.* [1996, 1997]:

$$\rho_{P_X}^{Chl} = \frac{\theta_{P_X}^{max} \mu_{P_X} P_X}{\alpha_{P_X} E Chl_X} \quad (17)$$

31 The rates of phytoplankton grazing by zooplankton and Z_L predation on Z_S ($g_{XY}; d^{-1}$) are represented by
 32 Holling-type III functions with the addition of an inhibition factor for Z_S grazing on P_L and Z_L grazing on
 33 P_S when an alternate food source is available:

$$g_{XY} = g_{XY}^{max} \frac{Y^2}{k_{XY} + Y^2} e^{-\psi_{XY}\omega}, \quad (18)$$

34 where $g_{XY}^{max} (d^{-1})$, $k_{XY} ((mmol N m^{-3})^2)$ and $\psi_{XY} ((mmol N m^{-3})^{-1})$ are the maximum consumption rate, the
 35 half-saturation concentration and the inhibition coefficient for consumption of Y by X, respectively. Ω is
 36 the sum of alternate food source such that $\omega = P_S$ for Z_S grazing on P_L , $\omega = P_L + Z_S$ for Z_L grazing on P_S
 37 and $\omega = 0$ otherwise.

38 Nitrification ($n; d^{-1}$) is inhibited by light and low O_2 (Fennel et al., 2006, 2013):

$$\hat{n} = \left(1 - \hat{n}_{max} \max \left[0, \frac{E - E_0}{k_E + E - E_0}\right]\right) \cdot \max \left[\left(\frac{O_2 - O_2^{th}}{k_{O_2} + O_2 - O_2^{th}}\right), 0\right], \quad (19)$$

39 whereas the remineralization parameters are modified by O_2 only (Fennel et al., 2013):

$$\hat{r}_{D_X} = r_{D_X} \cdot \max \left[\left(\frac{O_2 - O_2^{th}}{k_{O_2} + O_2 - O_2^{th}}\right), 0\right] \quad (20)$$

40

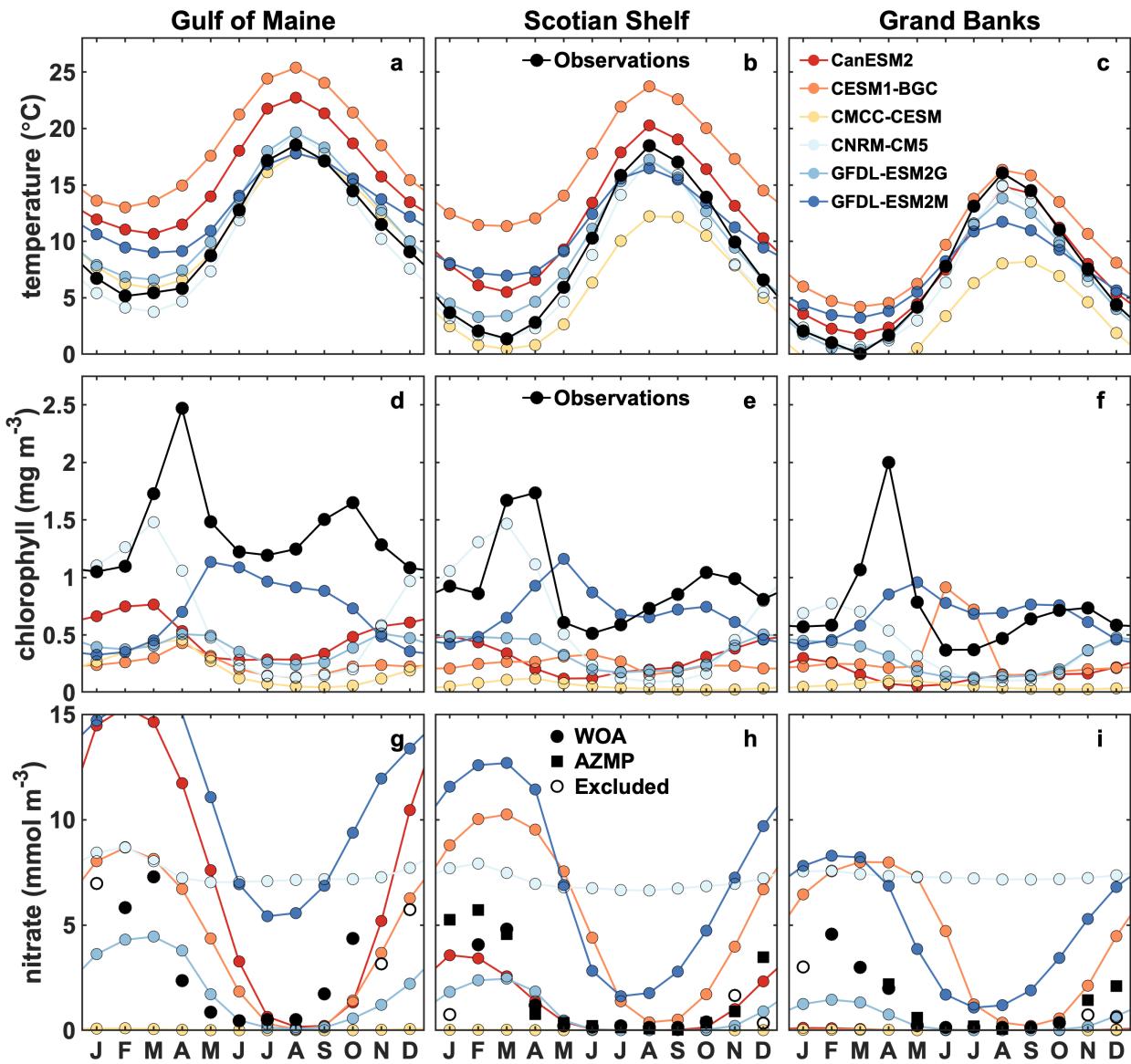
- 41 **S3 References**
- 42 Eppley, R. W.: Temperature and phytoplankton growth in the sea, Fish. Bull., 70(4), 1063–1085,
43 1972.
- 44 Evans, G. and Parslow, J. S.: A model of annual plankton cycles, Deep Sea Res. Part B.
45 Oceanogr. Lit. Rev., 32(9), 759, doi:10.1016/0198-0254(85)92902-4, 1985.
- 46 Fennel, K., Wilkin, J., Levin, J., Moisan, J., O'Reilly, J. and Haidvogel, D.: Nitrogen cycling in
47 the Middle Atlantic Bight: Results from a three-dimensional model and implications for the
48 North Atlantic nitrogen budget, Global Biogeochem. Cycles, 20(3), GB3007,
49 doi:10.1029/2005GB002456, 2006.
- 50 Fennel, K., Hu, J., Laurent, A., Marta-Almeida, M. and Hetland, R.: Sensitivity of hypoxia
51 predictions for the northern Gulf of Mexico to sediment oxygen consumption and model nesting,
52 J. Geophys. Res. Ocean., 118(2), 990–1002, doi:10.1002/jgrc.20077, 2013.
- 53 Geider, R., MacIntyre, H. and Kana, T.: Dynamic model of phytoplankton growth and
54 acclimation:responses of the balanced growth rate and the chlorophyll a:carbon ratio to light,
55 nutrient-limitation and temperature, Mar. Ecol. Prog. Ser., 148(1–3), 187–200,
56 doi:10.3354/meps148187, 1997.
- 57 Geider, R. J., MacIntyre, H. L. and Kana, T. M.: A dynamic model of photoadaptation in
58 phytoplankton, Limnol. Oceanogr., 41(1), 1–15, doi:10.4319/lo.1996.41.1.0001, 1996.
- 59

60 **S4 Supplementary table and figures**

61 Table S1. Parameters for the biological model.

| Symbol | Value | Parameter description | Units |
|------------------------------|---------|---|--|
| <i>Phytoplankton</i> | | | |
| $\mu_{P_S}^0$ | 1.1629 | Small phytoplankton maximum growth rate at 0°C | d ⁻¹ |
| $\mu_{P_L}^0$ | 1.1242 | Large phytoplankton maximum growth rate at 0°C | d ⁻¹ |
| α_{P_S} | 0.0405 | Initial slope of the instantaneous growth rate vs light curve for P _S | (W m ⁻²) ⁻¹ d ⁻¹ |
| α_{P_L} | 0.0393 | Initial slope of the instantaneous growth rate vs light curve for P _L | (W m ⁻²) ⁻¹ d ⁻¹ |
| $k_{NO_3^-}$ | 0.5 | NO ₃ ⁻ half saturation concentration | mmol N m ⁻³ |
| $k_{NH_4^+}$ | 0.5 | NH ₄ ⁺ half saturation concentration | mmol N m ⁻³ |
| $m_{P_S}^0$ | 0.2377 | Phytoplankton mortality rate at 0°C for P _S | d ⁻¹ |
| $m_{P_L}^0$ | 0.1169 | Phytoplankton mortality rate at 0°C for P _L | d ⁻¹ |
| $\theta_{P_S}^{\max}$ | 0.0328 | Maximum chlorophyll to carbon ratio for P _S | mgChl (mg C) ⁻¹ |
| $\theta_{P_L}^{\max}$ | 0.0386 | Maximum chlorophyll to carbon ratio for P _L | mgChl (mg C) ⁻¹ |
| $\theta_{C:N}^P$ | 6.625 | Carbon to nitrogen ratio for phytoplankton | mmol C (mmol N) ⁻¹ |
| w_P | 0.1 | Phytoplankton sinking rate | m d ⁻¹ |
| $R_{O_2:NO_3^-}$ | 8.625 | O ₂ produced per mol of NO ₃ ⁻ assimilated during photosynthesis | mmol O ₂ (mmol NO ₃ ⁻) ⁻¹ |
| $R_{O_2:NH_4^+}$ | 6.625 | O ₂ produced per mol of NH ₄ ⁺ assimilated during photosynthesis | mmol O ₂ (mmol NH ₄ ⁺) ⁻¹ |
| <i>Zooplankton</i> | | | |
| $g_{Z_S P_S}^0$ | 6.6761 | Maximum grazing rate at 0°C of Z _S on P _S | d ⁻¹ |
| $g_{Z_S P_L}^0$ | 6.6761 | Maximum grazing rate at 0°C of Z _S on P _L | d ⁻¹ |
| $g_{Z_L P_S}^0$ | 3.33805 | Maximum grazing rate at 0°C of Z _L on P _S | d ⁻¹ |
| $g_{Z_L P_L}^0$ | 1.1126 | Maximum grazing rate at 0°C of Z _L on P _L | d ⁻¹ |
| $g_{Z_L Z_S}^0$ | 6.6761 | Maximum consumption rate at 0°C of Z _L on Z _S | d ⁻¹ |
| $k_{Z_S P_S}$ | 0.5 | Squared zooplankton grazing half saturation of Z _S on P _S | (mmol N m ⁻³) ² |
| $k_{Z_S P_L}$ | 0.5 | Squared zooplankton grazing half saturation of Z _S on P _L | (mmol N m ⁻³) ² |
| $k_{Z_L P_S}$ | 0.5 | Squared zooplankton grazing half saturation of Z _L on P _S | (mmol N m ⁻³) ² |
| $k_{Z_L P_L}$ | 0.5 | Squared zooplankton grazing half saturation of Z _L on P _L | (mmol N m ⁻³) ² |
| $k_{Z_L Z_S}$ | 0.5 | Squared zooplankton grazing half saturation of Z _L on Z _S | (mmol N m ⁻³) ² |
| m_Z^0 | 0.0224 | Zooplankton mortality at 0°C | (mmol N m ⁻³) ⁻¹ d ⁻¹ |
| β_{Z_S} | 0.75 | Assimilation efficiency for Z _S | Dimensionless |
| β_{Z_L} | 0.75 | Assimilation efficiency for Z _L | Dimensionless |
| l_{BM}^0 | 0.0886 | Zooplankton excretion rate due to basal metabolism at 0°C | d ⁻¹ |
| l_E^0 | 0.0886 | Maximum rate of assimilation related excretion at 0°C | d ⁻¹ |
| $\psi_{Z_S P_L}$ | 3.010 | Inhibition coefficient for Z _S grazing on P _L | (mmol N m ⁻³) ⁻¹ |
| $\psi_{Z_L P_S}$ | 3.010 | Inhibition coefficient for Z _L grazing on P _S | (mmol N m ⁻³) ⁻¹ |
| <i>Nutrient and detritus</i> | | | |
| n_{\max} | 0.2 | Maximum nitrification rate | d ⁻¹ |
| E_0 | 0.0095 | Radiation threshold for nitrification inhibition | W m ⁻² |
| k_E | 0.1 | Light intensity for half-saturated nitrification inhibition | W m ⁻² |
| τ | 0.0023 | Phytoplankton and small detritus aggregation | d ⁻¹ |
| r_{D_S} | 0.4 | Remineralization rate of D _S | d ⁻¹ |
| r_{D_L} | 0.01 | Remineralization rate of D _L | d ⁻¹ |
| w_{D_S} | 0.1 | Sinking rate of D _S | m d ⁻¹ |
| w_{D_L} | 5.0 | Sinking rate of D _L | m d ⁻¹ |

| | | | |
|------------------|-------|---|--|
| $R_{O_2:NO_3^-}$ | 8.625 | O ₂ produced per mol of NO ₃ ⁻ assimilated during photosynthesis | mmol O ₂ (mmol NO ₃ ⁻) ⁻¹ |
| $R_{O_2:NH_4^+}$ | 6.625 | O ₂ produced per mol of NH ₄ ⁺ assimilated during photosynthesis | mmol O ₂ (mmol NH ₄ ⁺) ⁻¹ |

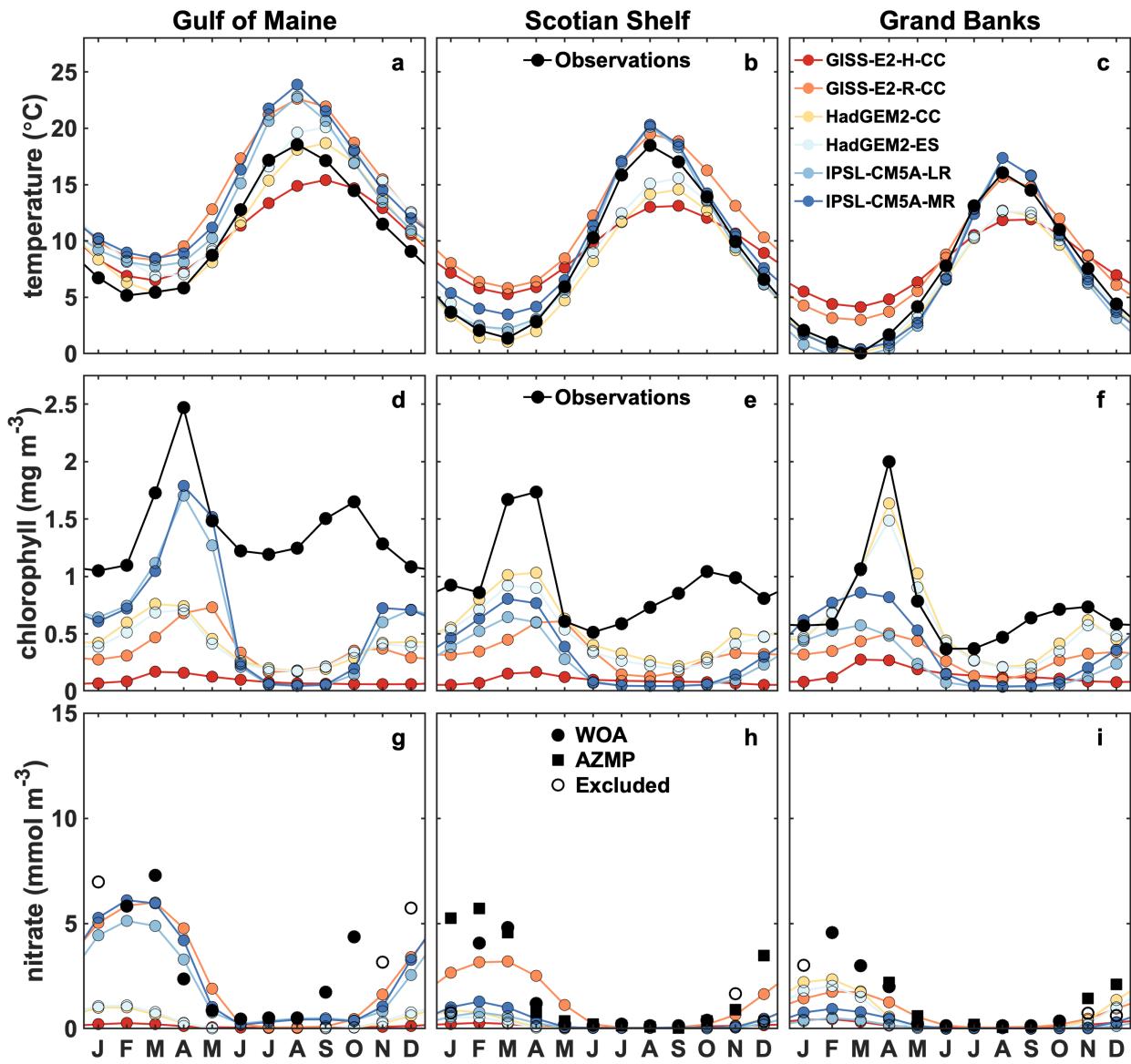


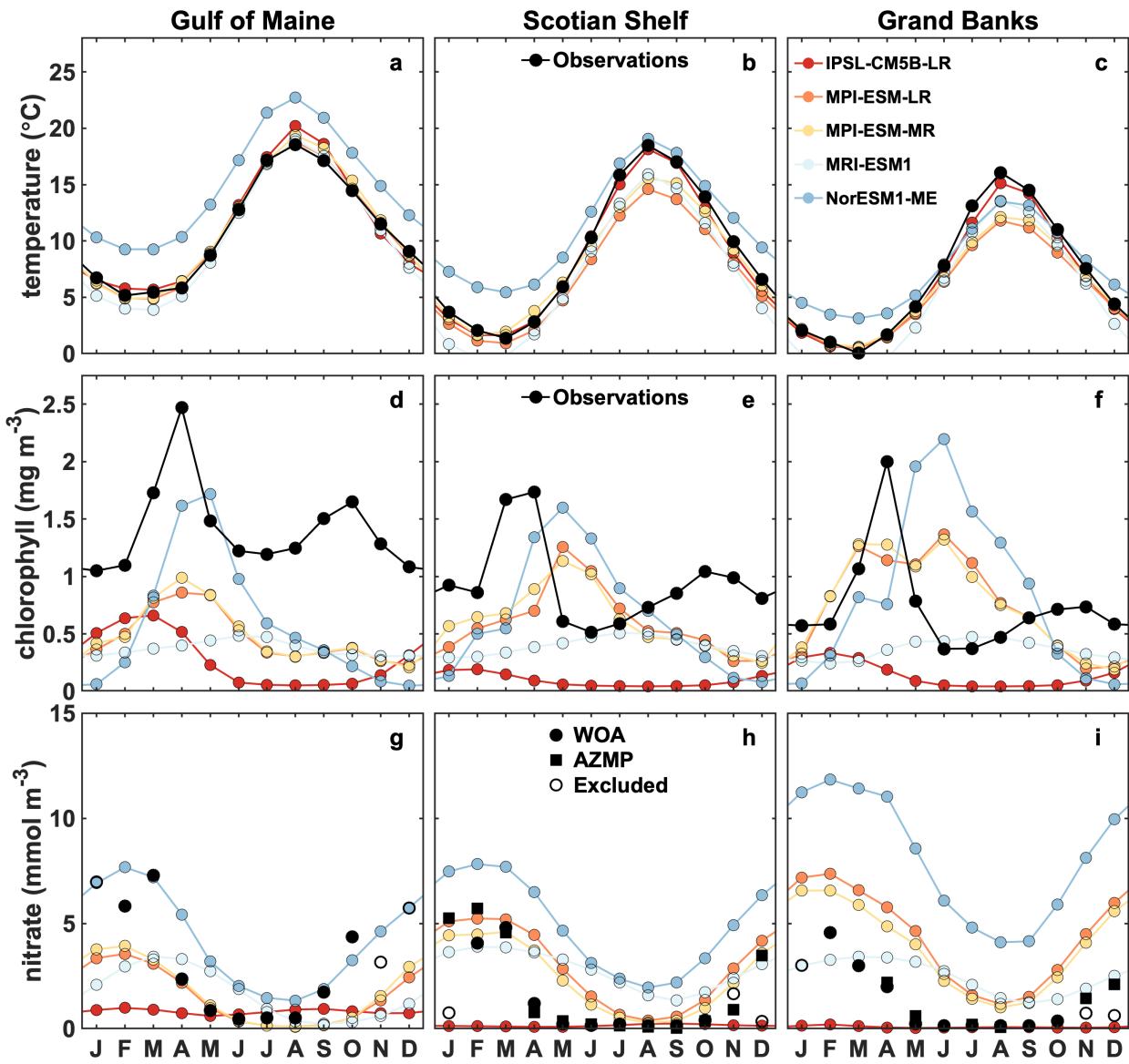
63
64
65

Figure S1. Comparison between observed (black) and simulated (models 2-7) area averaged surface temperature (a-c), chlorophyll (d-f) and nitrate (g-i) for the 3 ECS areas.

66

67 Figure S2. Comparison between observed (black) and simulated (ESMs 8–13) area averaged
 68 surface temperature (a–c), chlorophyll (d–f) and nitrate (g–i) for the 3 ECS areas.

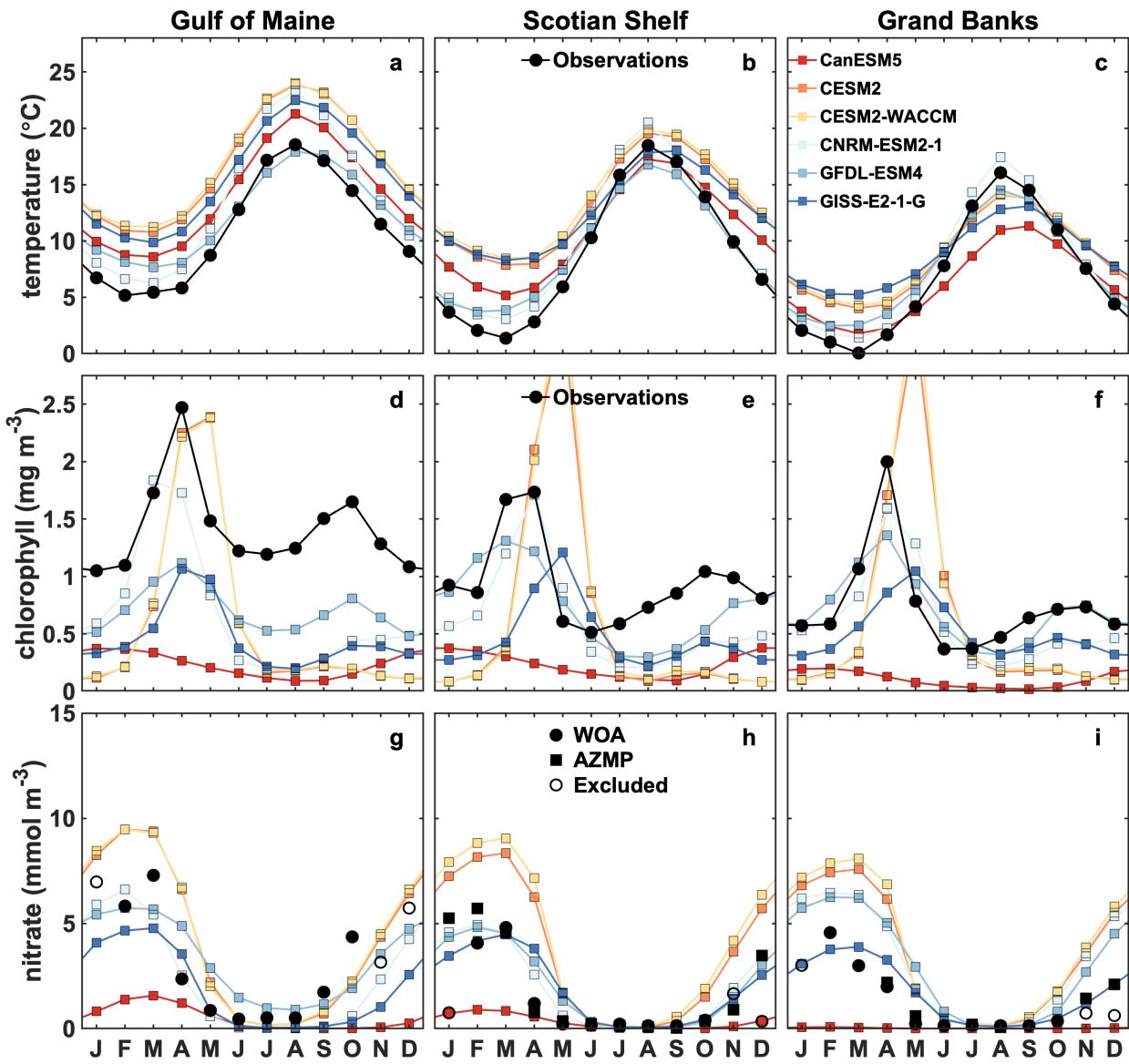




69

70 Figure S3. Comparison between observed (black) and simulated (ESMs 14–18) area averaged
 71 surface temperature (a-c), chlorophyll (d-f) and nitrate (g-i) for the 3 ECS areas.

72

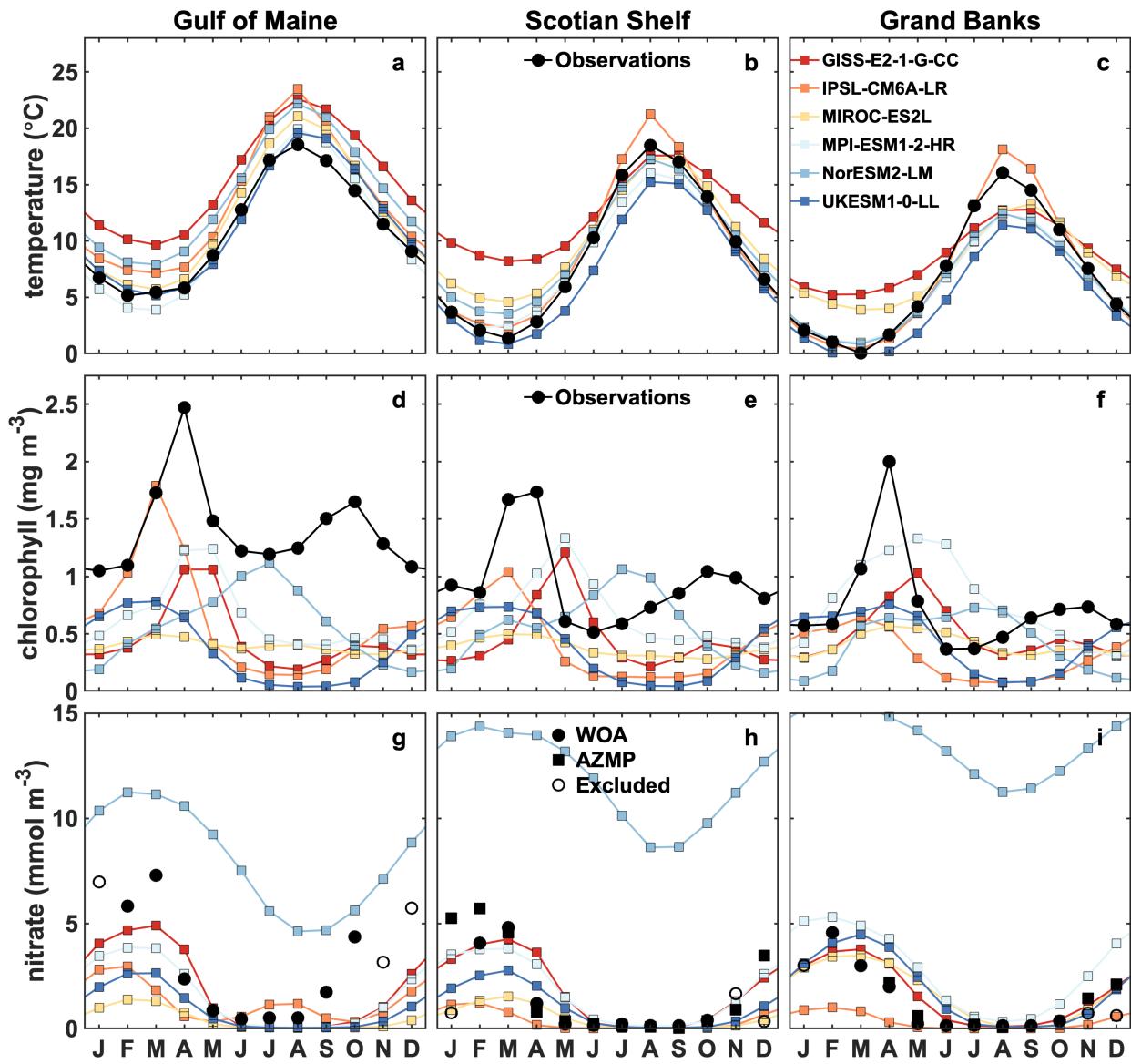


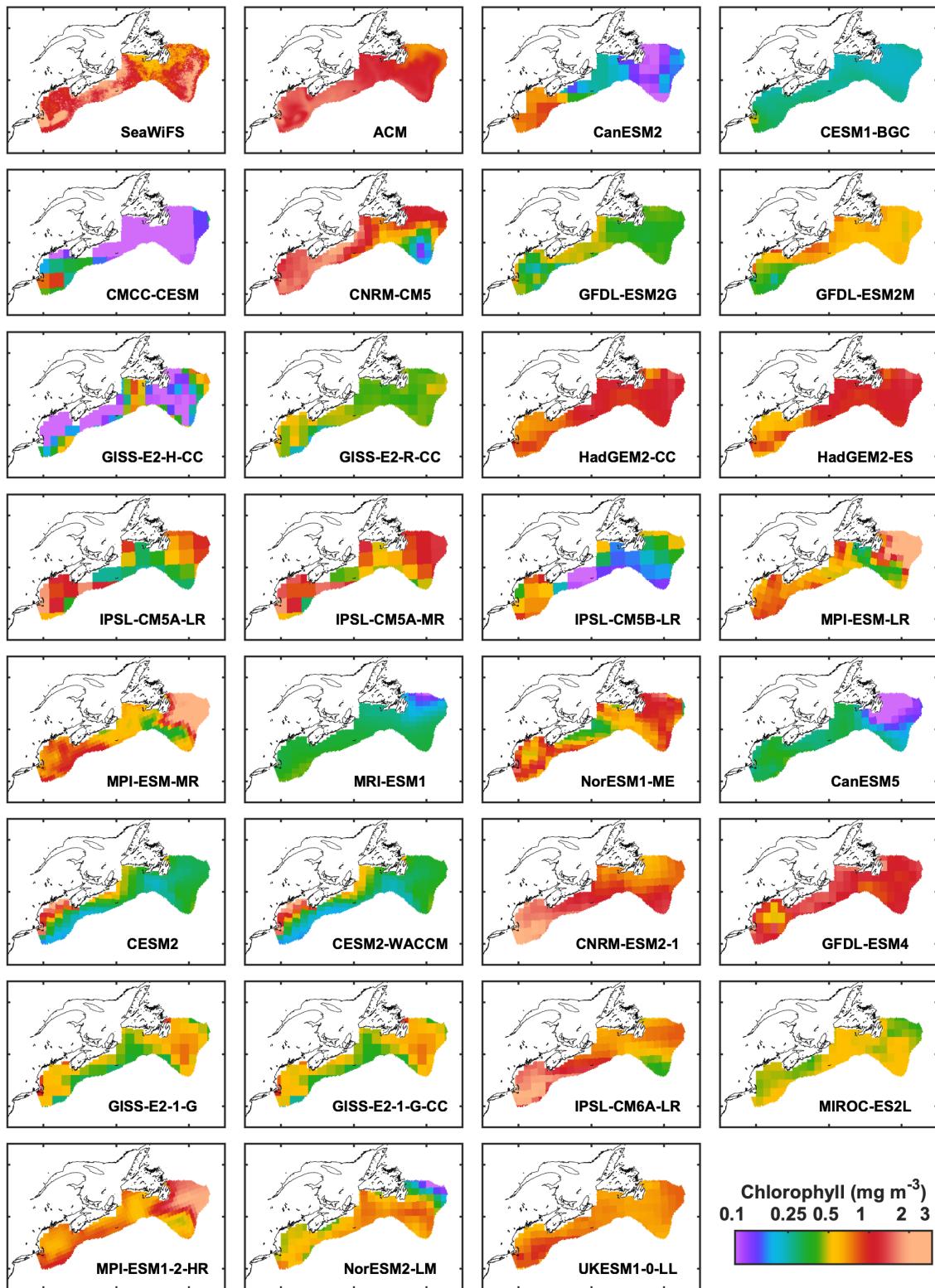
73

74 Figure S4. Comparison between observed (black) and simulated (ESMs 19–24) area averaged
 75 surface temperature (a-c), chlorophyll (d-f) and nitrate (g-i) for the 3 ECS areas.

76

77 Figure S5. Comparison between observed (black) and simulated (ESMs 25–30) area averaged
 78 surface temperature (a-c), chlorophyll (d-f) and nitrate (g-i) for the 3 ECS areas.



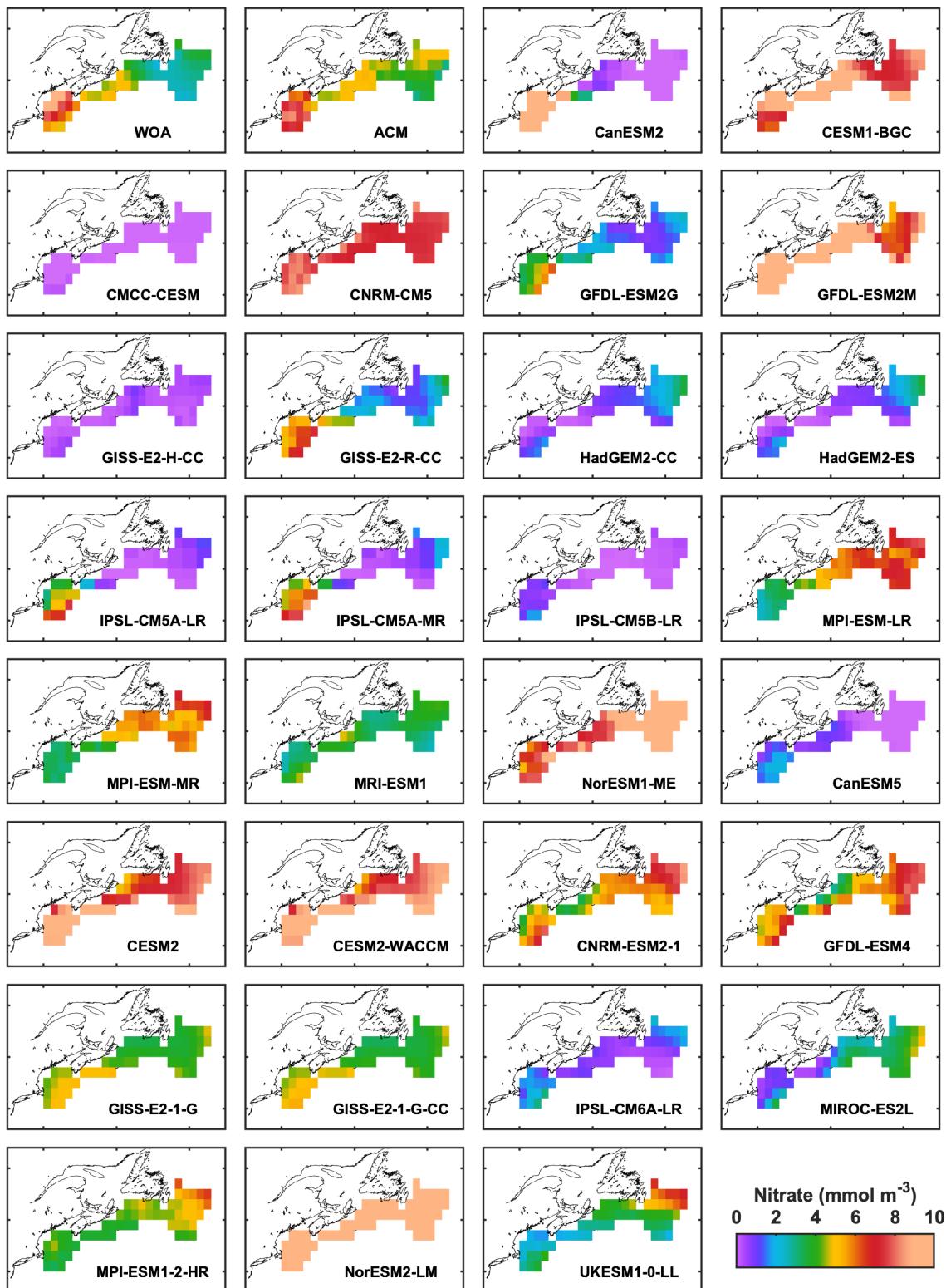


79

80

81

Figure S6. Comparison of SeaWiFS surface chlorophyll concentration in March with the simulated surface chlorophyll of the 30 models interpolated on the SeaWiFS grid.

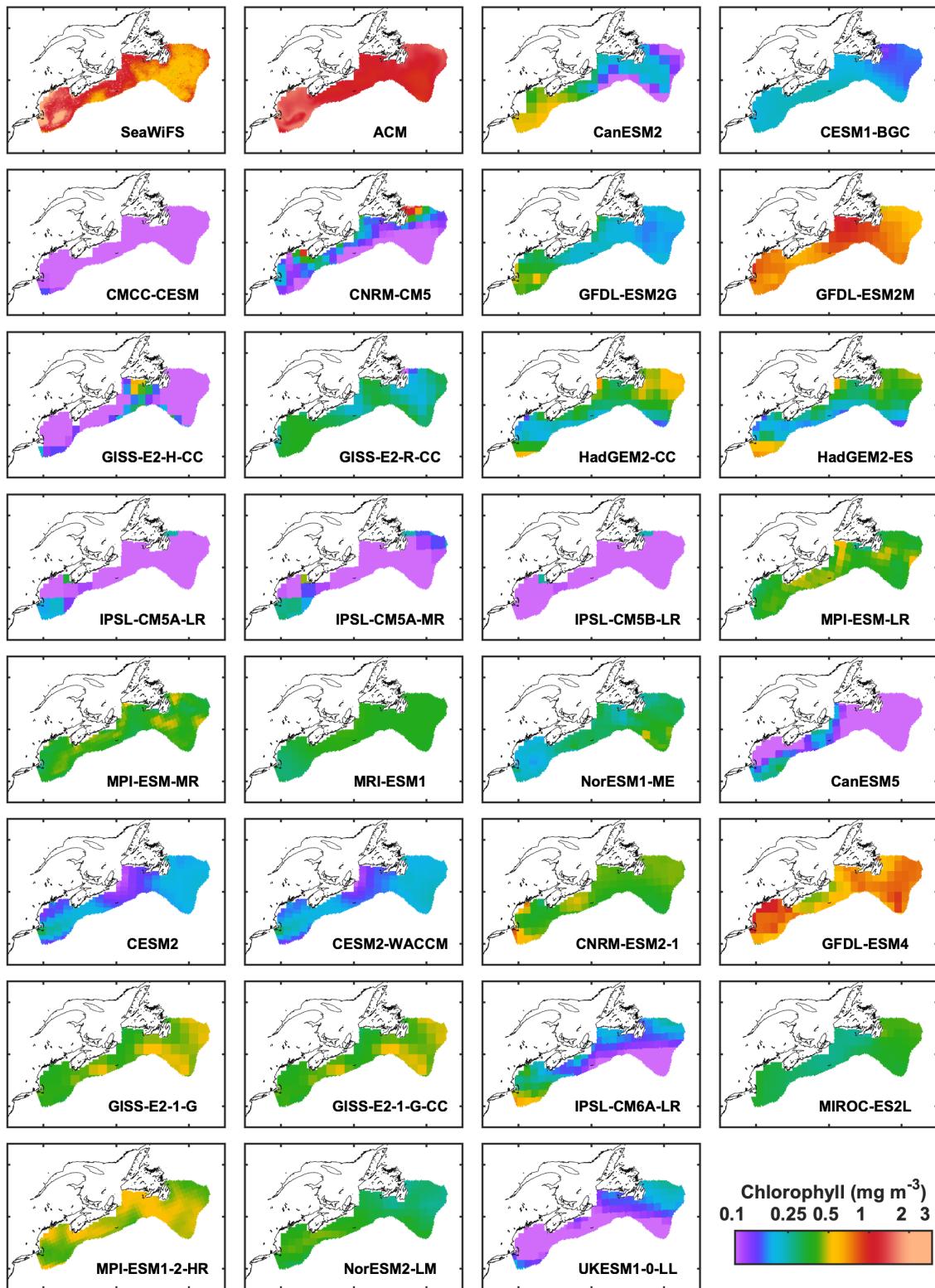


82

83

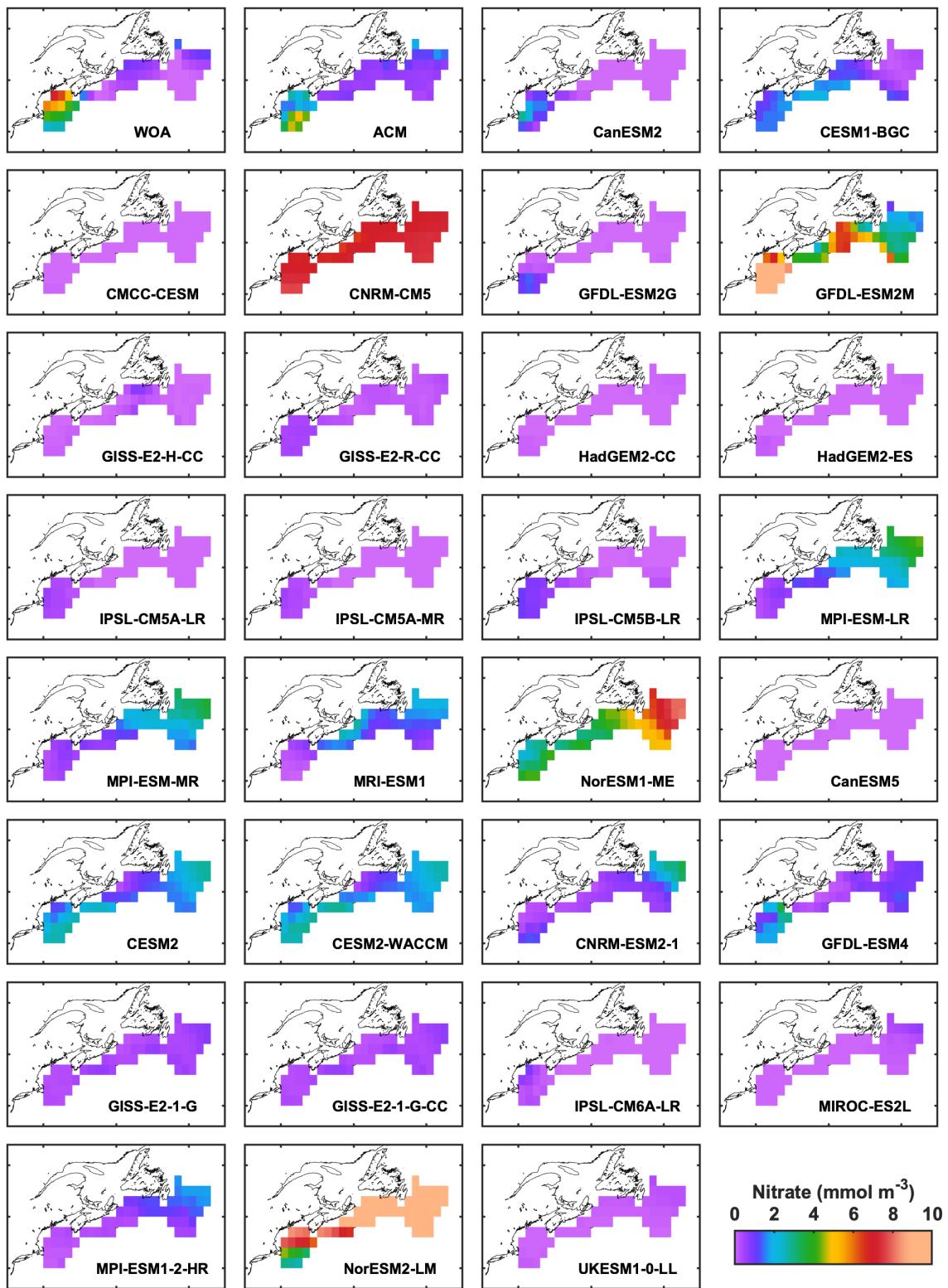
84

Figure S7. Comparison of WOA surface nitrate concentration in March with the simulated surface nitrate of the 30 models interpolated on the WOA grid.



85
86

Figure S8. Same as Figure S6 but for October.



87
88

Figure S9. Same as Figure S7 but for October.