

1 **Modeling ice melt rates from seawater intrusions in the**
2 **grounding zone of Petermann Gletscher, Greenland**

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8 **Key Points:**

- 9 • First modeling of ice melt rates from seawater intrusions in the kilometer-size ground-
10 ing zone of Petermann Glacier using an ocean model.
11 • Modeled melt rates are highest in the grounding zone and increase linearly with
12 grounding zone width and ocean thermal forcing.
13 • High melt rates in kilometer-size grounding zones imply a higher sensitivity of glaciers
14 to ocean warming than anticipated.

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Abstract

Satellite radar interferometry data reveals that the grounding line of Petermann Glacier, Greenland migrates by several kilometers during the tidal cycle, bringing pressurized, subsurface, warm ocean waters in regular contact with a large sector of grounded ice. We use the Massachusetts Institute of Technology general circulation model in two dimensions to calculate the ice melt rates as a function of grounding zone width and ocean thermal forcing. Ice melt rates are found to be higher in the grounding zone cavity than anywhere else in the ice shelf cavity. The melt rates increase sub-linearly with the width of the grounding zone and ocean thermal forcing. The model results agree well with remote sensing estimates of ice melt. High basal ice melt rates in tidally-flushed grounding zones imply that marine-terminating glaciers are more sensitive to ocean thermal forcing than anticipated, which will increase their projected contribution to sea level rise.

Plain Language Summary

The traditional view of ice melting in contact with ocean waters is that melt rates drop to zero at the grounding line, which is a semi-fixed boundary at the junction between grounded ice and the ocean. In reality, the grounding line migrates by kilometers during the tidal cycle, more than ten times beyond the range expected from hydrostatic equilibrium, which brings warm, saline water in rapid contact with broad sectors of grounded ice. We use an ocean model to calculate the melt rates caused by seawater intrusions. We find that the melt rates in the grounding zone are higher than anywhere else in the ice shelf cavity and increase as the grounding zone becomes wider and the ocean gets warmer. Ice melt in kilometer-size grounding zones will reduce the basal resistance to flow and will increase the sensitivity of the glacier flow to ocean warming, hence projections of sea level rise from the glacier will go up.

1 Introduction

Petermann Glacier is a major outlet glacier in North Greenland located at 60°W , 81°N . The glacier forms a 20-km wide and 45-km long floating ice shelf, which is the second longest floating ice tongue in the northern hemisphere (Figure 1a). Petermann drains 4% of the Greenland Ice Sheet in area (Mouginot et al., 2019). Ice discharge across the grounding line is ten times larger than the sum of surface melt and iceberg calving. This partitioning in mass loss has been explained by high melt rates of the ice shelf base in contact with warm ocean waters (Rignot & Steffen, 2008). Following a period of stability in the 20th century, Petermann Ice Shelf was affected by two major calving events in 2010 and 2012, which shortened its length by 25 km (Johannessen et al., 2013; Nick et al., 2012; Münchow et al., 2014). Around 2018, the glacier grounding line started to retreat by 7 kilometers at the center, 4 km on the sides, and the glacier had sped up by about 100 - 150 m/yr in 2022 (Millan et al., 2022).

The traditional view of a glacier grounding line is that it migrates over short distances, i.e. typically less than one unit model element, or 100-200 m, based on maintaining hydrostatic equilibrium during the tidal cycle; and ice melt rates converge to zero at the mean sea level grounding line. For instance, for a glacier slope of 1%, the grounding line should migrate by 100 m in response to a 1-m tide. Dense time series of satellite radar interferometry data, however, reveals that the grounding line migrates by several kilometers during the tidal cycle (Ciraci et al., 2023) (Fig. 1b). Such a high level of migration is not accounted for in ice sheet models or in models of ice-ocean interaction. The migration reveals kilometer-size seawater intrusions which have the potential to bring ocean heat at a rapid rate in contact with ice and hence melt it vigorously (Jenkins, 1991; Walker et al., 2013; Sayag & Worster, 2013). If the ocean waters get warmer, the intrusions will bring more heat in contact with grounded ice, over considerable distances,

64 reducing basal resistance to glacier flow, which in turn will lead to glacier speed up and
 65 cause a larger contribution to sea level rise from the glacier.

66 The grounding zone quoted herein is not the same as the flexure zone (Brunt et
 67 al., 2010). The flexure zone is a region about 5-10-km wide where the glacier progres-
 68 sively adjusts to hydrostatic equilibrium downstream of the grounding line. The ground-
 69 ing line is the location where ice detaches from the bed for the first time. The ground-
 70 ing zone delineates the region of migration of the grounding line itself, which is equiv-
 71 alent to the migration of the inland limit of flexure. Until recently, it was thought that
 72 the grounding zone was narrow and therefore equivalent to a line. We have, however, now
 73 evidence for kilometer-size grounding zones.

74 The magnitude of ice melt in the grounding zone is not well known. Recent esti-
 75 mates from a time series of digital elevation models and ice velocity from remote sens-
 76 ing, and reconstruction of surface balance from climate models suggest that the melt rates
 77 are high in the grounding zone (40-80 m/yr) and higher than anywhere else in the ice
 78 shelf cavity (Ciraci et al., 2023). If these observations are correct, seawater intrusions
 79 will have a considerable impact on glacier stability and evolution.

80 Earlier modeling studies, which did not have direct evidence for seawater intrusions,
 81 suggested that including such intrusions in models could up to double the projections
 82 of mass loss in a warming climate (Walker et al., 2013; Parizek et al., 2013), which was
 83 confirmed by more recent studies (Seroussi & Morlighem, 2018; Robel et al., 2022). Other
 84 studies have also proposed physical mechanisms for seawater intrusions over kilometer-
 85 scale distances (Wilson et al., 2020).

86 Here, we employ a two-dimensional configuration of the Massachusetts Institute
 87 of Technology global circulation model (MITgcm) ocean model, with bathymetry, ice shelf
 88 thickness, ocean thermal forcing, and tidal motion. We model ice-ocean interactions in
 89 a narrow, time-varying grounding zone inferred from satellite data. We model the ice
 90 melt rates and their sensitivity to: 1) oceanic Thermal Forcing (TF) and 2) the ground-
 91 ing zone width. We compare our model results with satellite-derived estimates of ice melt.
 92 We parameterize the modeled ice melt as a function of thermal forcing and distance of
 93 the seawater intrusions. We conclude on the impact of the model results on projections
 94 of sea level rise from Petermann and other marine-terminating glaciers.

95 2 Data and Methods

96 *Tidal motion of the ice shelf.* We measure tidal motion with Interferometric Syn-
 97 thetic Aperture Radar (InSAR) data from the Earth Remote Sensing satellite -1 (ERS-
 98 1), Sentinel-1, CosmoSkyMed, and ICEYE (Millan et al., 2022; Ciraci et al., 2023). We
 99 distinguish three regions of vertical ice motion (Fig. 1b): 1) The freely floating ice shelf,
 100 which experiences a vertical motion nearly in phase with the oceanic tide (Reeh et al.,
 101 2003) and of the same exact amplitude; 2) a flexure zone (FZ), which experiences a ver-
 102 tical tidal motion that decreases linearly with distance from the freely floating ice shelf
 103 and reaches zero at the grounding line; and 3) a zone of migration of the grounding line
 104 during the tidal cycle, or grounding zone (GZ). If the grounding line is fixed in time, the
 105 grounding zone is less than one model element. Here, the grounding zone width varies
 106 from 1 to 6 km (Ciraci et al., 2023). Within the grounding zone, the vertical motion of
 107 the ice measured with radar interferometry is similar to that recorded in a flexure zone,
 108 i.e., less than the tidal amplitude and typically a few centimeters to a few tens of cen-
 109 timeters. The vertical motion of the ice is caused by water intrusions of the same order
 110 magnitude height (i.e., could be freshwater or seawater).

111 *Model Domain.* We select a two-dimensional (2D) section along the center line of
 112 Petermann Glacier (Fig. 1c). Bathymetry is from a three-dimensional (3D) inversion of
 113 high-resolution gravity data (An et al. (2019); Ciraci et al. (2023)). Ice thickness is de-

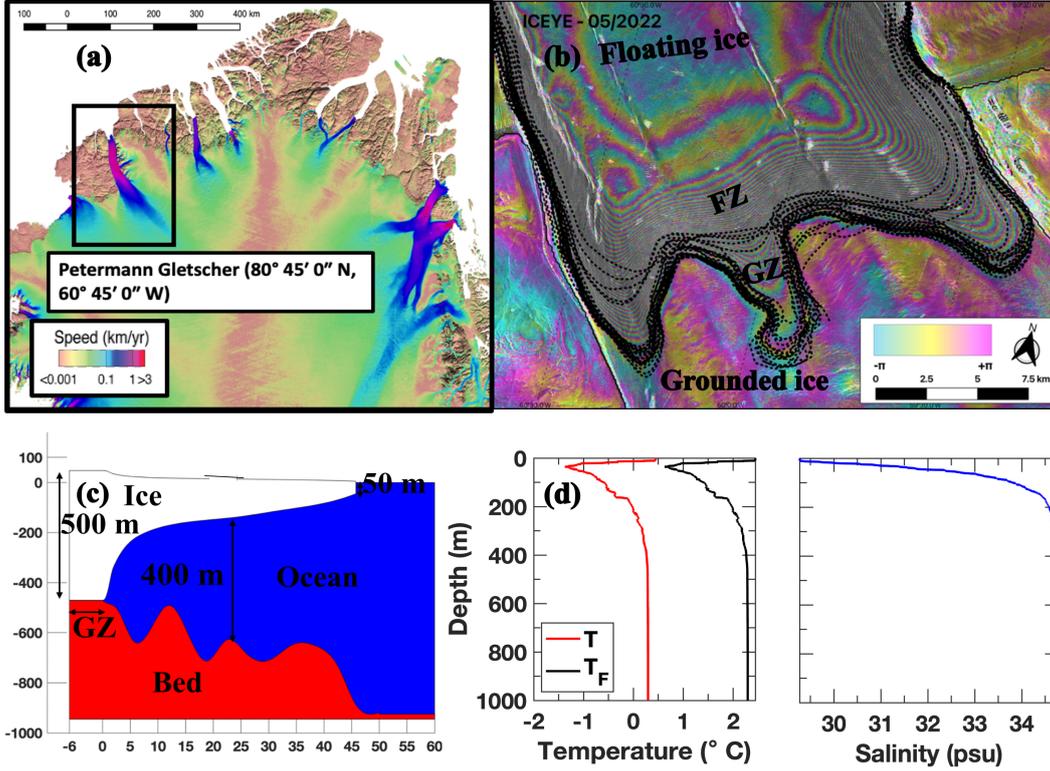


Figure 1. Model domain for the grounding zone of Petermann Glacier. (a) Location of Petermann Glacier in Greenland overlaid on a speed map color coded. (b) synthetic-aperture radar data observations of grounding line (thin black lines) migration at tidal frequencies overlaid on interferometric fringes (360° variations in phase; each fringe is a 1.3 cm incremental vertical displacement of the ice surface) of differential tidal motion from ICEYE. The zone of concentrated fringes is the flexure zone (FZ). The inner limit of the flexure zone is the grounding line. The zone of migration of the grounding line during the tidal cycle is the grounding zone (GZ). (c) two-dimensional cross-section of Petermann Glacier with ice (white), bed (red), and ocean water (blue). (d) Conductivity, Temperature, Depth (CTD) data from year 2015 (Jakobsson et al., 2018).

114 rived from a TANDEM-X digital elevation model (DEM) of the ice surface from year 2022
 115 assuming hydrostatic equilibrium of the ice (Ciraci et al., 2023). The grounding zone cav-
 116 ity is a rectangular cavity of one vertical ocean element, i.e., 1 m here. We utilize a Carte-
 117 sian grid with a vertical spacing of 1 m and a horizontal spacing ranging from 20 m in
 118 the grounding zone, linearly increasing to 500 m at the ice front.

119 The elevation of the ice-shelf base exhibits an inflection point at the cavity entrance.
 120 This break in slope has a strong influence on ice melt and, in particular, generates high
 121 melt rates. After evaluating various ways to "smooth out" this transition, we adopt the
 122 approach in Warburton et al. (2020).

123 *MITgcm Ocean model.* MITgcm employs a finite-volume grid point algorithm to
 124 solve the Boussinesq hydrostatic form of the Navier-Stokes equations for an incompress-
 125 ible fluid on an Arakawa C-grid (Marshall et al. (1997)). The MITgcm model incorpo-
 126 rates the SHELFICE package, specifically designed to handle ice-shelf cavities (Losch
 127 (2008)). The model calculates melt rates and the corresponding heat and salt fluxes at

128 the ice-ocean interface, solving the three-element equations in (Holland and Jenkins (1999)).
 129 These heat and salt fluxes are determined using the velocity-dependent melt rate param-
 130 eterization in Dansereau et al. (2014). We use the vertical re-meshing package in (Jordan
 131 et al. (2018)).

132 We incorporate the effects of ice bending and grounding line migration into the MIT-
 133 gcm model. Ice motion in the flexure zone starts from zero at the grounding line and lin-
 134 early increases to the full tidal amplitude at the end of the flexure zone. Instead of forc-
 135 ing the ice shelf position as an input to the code, we change the mass of the ice shelf.
 136 Specifically, using the known deflection of ice between two timestamps, we multiply it
 137 by the density of ice to determine how to alter the ice shelf mass. This methodology is
 138 employed because MITgcm uses the weight of the ice shelf as a boundary condition. Tidal
 139 forcing is a sinusoidal function of amplitude ± 1 m. In response to changes in oceanic tide,
 140 the grounding line migrates back and forth at a speed which is the ratio of the width of
 141 the grounding line divided by half of a tidal cycle, or 6 hours. For a cavity of 6 km, the
 142 speed of cavity opening is 28 cm/s.

143 The simulations use a time step of 1 second to ensure computational stability. We
 144 employ zero horizontal diffusivity, a vertical diffusivity of $2.8 \cdot 10^{-5} \text{m}^2/\text{s}$, horizontal vis-
 145 cosity of $0.3 \text{m}^2/\text{s}$, vertical viscosity of $2.8 \cdot 10^{-4} \text{m}^2/\text{s}$, and bi-harmonic viscosity of 2.5
 146 m^4/s . Salinity and temperature values are prescribed at the ocean boundary using Con-
 147 ductivity Temperature Depth (CTD) data collected in August 2015 (Jakobsson et al.,
 148 2018). To relax the model output to the boundary condition, we utilize a sponge layer
 149 with a length of approximately 5 km and a relaxation time of 1 day. Each experiment
 150 is conducted with a horizontally homogeneous temperature-salinity profile within the en-
 151 tire domain. We find that the simulations converge after two tidal cycles, i.e., the mod-
 152 eled results do not change at a detectable level (1 decimal) after two cycles.

153 *Experiments.* We conduct a series of simulations with a fixed grounding line where
 154 we adjust the ocean model parameters to match earlier simulations of ice melt by Cai
 155 et al. (2017). Secondly, we adjust the cavity length by increments of 1 km while main-
 156 taining the same ocean thermal forcing. The melt rate in the three-equation parameter-
 157 ization relies on the transfer coefficient for heat and salt, γ_T and γ_S , and the mixed layer
 158 velocity, U_m , derived from the model. Thirdly, we conduct simulations where we adjust
 159 the thermal forcing in increments of 0.5°C , from 0.75°C to 3.25°C . To do so, we apply
 160 a uniform shift to the 2015 temperature profile. Thermal forcing is the deviation of the
 161 in-situ water temperature, T_w , from the depth-dependent, salinity-dependent, freezing
 162 point of seawater, T_f , i.e., $TF = T_w - T_f$. At the entrance of the grounding zone, we
 163 force the curvature of the ice shelf base to be proportional to $U_m^{2/5}$ as in (Warburton et
 164 al., 2020).

165 3 Results

166 *Melt pattern.* The tidally-average melt rate observed in our numerical simulations
 167 exhibits the general profile in Figure 2. The melt rate is highest at the cavity entrance,
 168 which is the position of the grounding line at low tide, and decreases to zero toward the
 169 termination of the cavity. Outside the cavity, the melt rate drops rapidly, then returns
 170 to high values within a few hundred meters, forms a secondary peak, and then decays
 171 slowly for the next 10-20 km, depending on thermal forcing. We find that the first tidal
 172 cycle produces higher melt rates than the second tidal cycle because the cavity initially
 173 fills with warm waters (Fig. S1). The melt rate varies with time in the cavity as a func-
 174 tion of ocean state, water speed, and heat flux (Fig. S2). Starting in the second cycles,
 175 the cavity fills with a mix of warm seawater and residual melt water (Fig. S3), so the
 176 melt rates decrease slightly. The model converges in two cycles, i.e. the results do not
 177 change after two cycles.

178 The peak melt rate at the mouth of the grounding zone cavity varies from 30 m/yr
 179 with 1.25°C thermal forcing to 70 m/yr with 3.25 °C thermal forcing for a grounding
 180 zone width of 6 km (Fig. 2b). For comparison, the melt rate with no grounding zone peaks
 181 at a distance of 5 km from the grounding line to 15 m/yr with a 2.25°C thermal forc-
 182 ing, i.e. twice less than when a grounding zone of 6 km is present.

183 The melt rate decreases rapidly toward the termination of the grounding zone cav-
 184 ity and reaches zero well beyond the termination of the cavity, typically within the last
 185 kilometer. In the first cycle, the melt rates are higher in the termination of the cavity
 186 which fills with warm water (Fig. S3). When the cavity is flushed out for the first time,
 187 not all the water leaves the cavity, some melt water gets trapped. In the next cycle, sea-
 188 water intrusions do not penetrate to the entire cavity. We find that seawater on aver-
 189 age reaches about 72% of the cavity for different cavity lengths (Fig. S3). The remain-
 190 der of the cavity is filled with mostly fresh melt water with low heat.

191 For reasons of numerical stability of the model, we force the water thickness within
 192 the vertical elements of the model in the grounding zone cavity to maintain a minimum
 193 ϵ of 5% of the cavity height at low tide, or 5 cm here (note not all the model element
 194 has to be filled with 100% water, which allows us to model seawater intrusion with a sin-
 195 gular vertical layer). This minimum layer is equivalent to a permanent layer of subglacial
 196 water at the glacier base, e.g., produced by basal friction and geothermal heat. In our
 197 simulations, we find that changing the minimum height of the water column to $\epsilon = 10\%$
 198 of the height does not change the results at a significant level. The water is flushed in
 199 and out on a 12-hour cycle (Figure 2).

200 The plume of modeled meltwater ascends along the ice shelf base outside the cav-
 201 ity (Fig. 2c-d). A portion of this meltwater mixes with the surrounding more saline, warmer,
 202 sea water and intrudes the cavity again (Fig. 2e-f). About 70-80% of the water intru-
 203 sion is seawater. Near the termination of the cavity, the water speed drops to zero as a
 204 result of the boundary condition. Ice melt also drops to zero. The transition occurs within
 205 72% of the grounding zone width (Fig. S2).

206 *Sensitivity to the grounding zone width.* When we increase the grounding zone width,
 207 both the rate at which the cavity opens and the entrainment speed, U_m , increase. As
 208 a result, the modeled melt rate, cumulative melt rate, and integrated melt increase (Fig.
 209 3). In the absence of curvature at the grounding zone entrance, we find that for every
 210 kilometer increase in grounding zone width, the mean melt rate increases by 60% and
 211 the integrated melt by 143%. When a small amount of curvature is introduced at the
 212 mouth of the grounding zone, the mean melt rate and integrated melt decrease by 10%
 213 compared to the case with no smoothing.

214 *Sensitivity to ocean thermal forcing.* As we increase ocean thermal forcing, the model
 215 predicts greater rates of ice melt within the grounding zone. For every 1°C increase in
 216 thermal forcing, the mean melt rate and total integrated melt increase by approximately
 217 90%, i.e. almost linearly.

218 *Parameterization of melt.* We least square fit the simulated melt rate, \dot{m} , in met-
 219 ers per year in the form, $\dot{m} = AGZ^b TF^c$, where A is a constant, GZ is the ground-
 220 ing zone width in kilometers, TF is thermal forcing at a depth of the grounding line, and
 221 b and c are constants. A similar formulation parameterizes the integrated melt rate, \dot{M} .
 222 In the absence of curvature, the optimal values for A , b , and c for \dot{m} are 0.03166, 0.5951,
 223 and 0.89, respectively. For \dot{M} , the coefficients are 0.0025, 1.433, and 0.882, respectively.
 224 If we introduce curvature at the grounding zone entrance, the parameters for \dot{m} become
 225 $A = 0.0111$, $b = 0.7043$, and $c = 0.882$. For \dot{M} , they become $A = 0.0008323$, $b = 1.55$,
 226 and $c = 0.882$ for the integrated melt. The average and integrated melt rates, therefore,
 227 increase nearly linearly with ocean thermal forcing. The average melt rate exhibits a sub-
 228 linear growth with the grounding zone width. The integrated melt exhibits a supra-linear

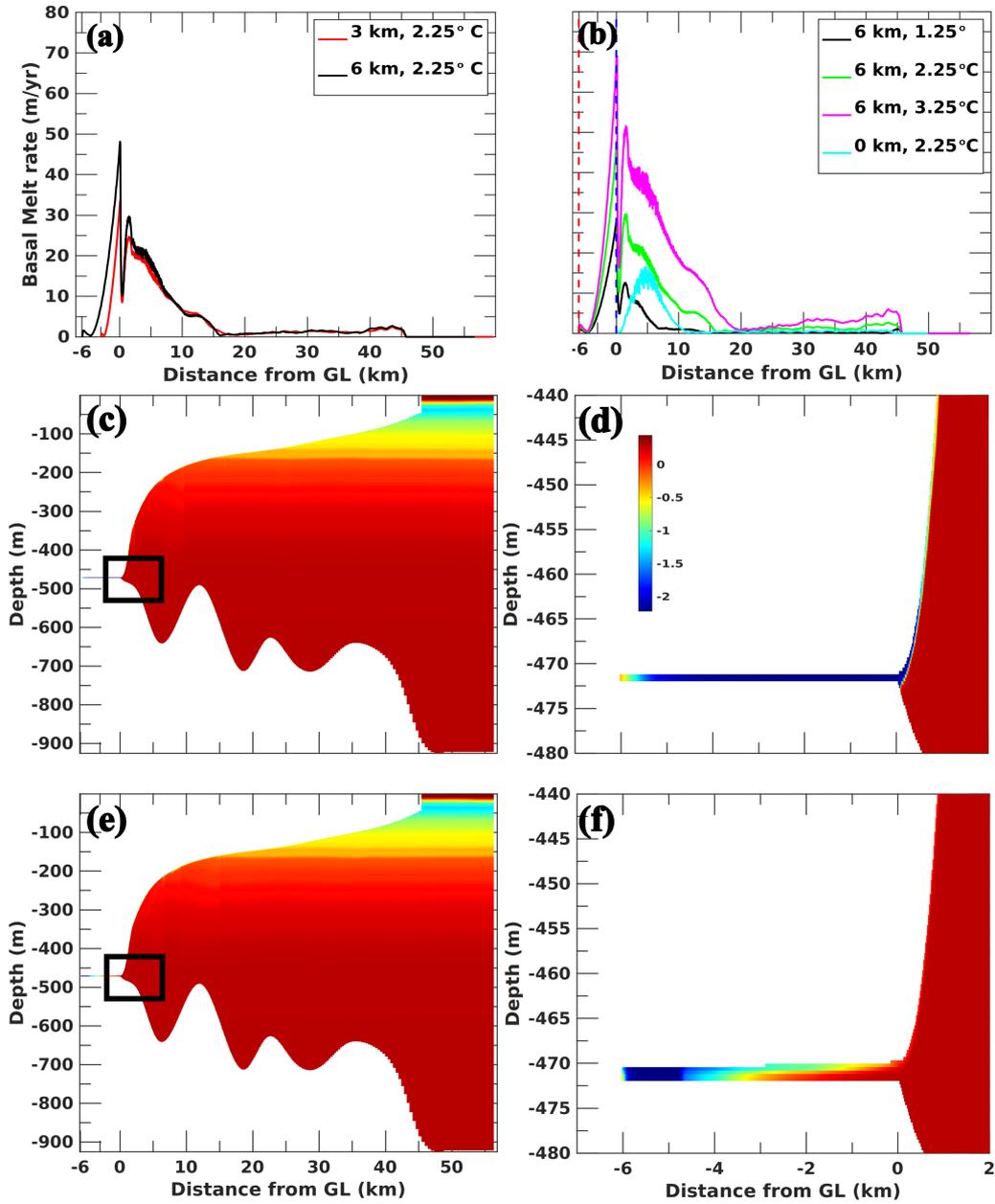


Figure 2. Modeling of melt rates in the grounding zone of Petermann Glacier. Average melt rate, \bar{m} , after one tidal cycle for (a) a 3-km and a 6-km wide grounding zone with 2.25°C thermal forcing and (b) a 6-km wide grounding zone with three thermal forcings and a fourth simulation with $TF = 2.25^\circ\text{C}$ and no grounding zone. Temperature snapshots after (c-d) 18 hours (low tide) and (e-f) 24 hours (high tide). (d) and (f) zoom on the grounding zone cavity (black rectangle) in (c) and (e).

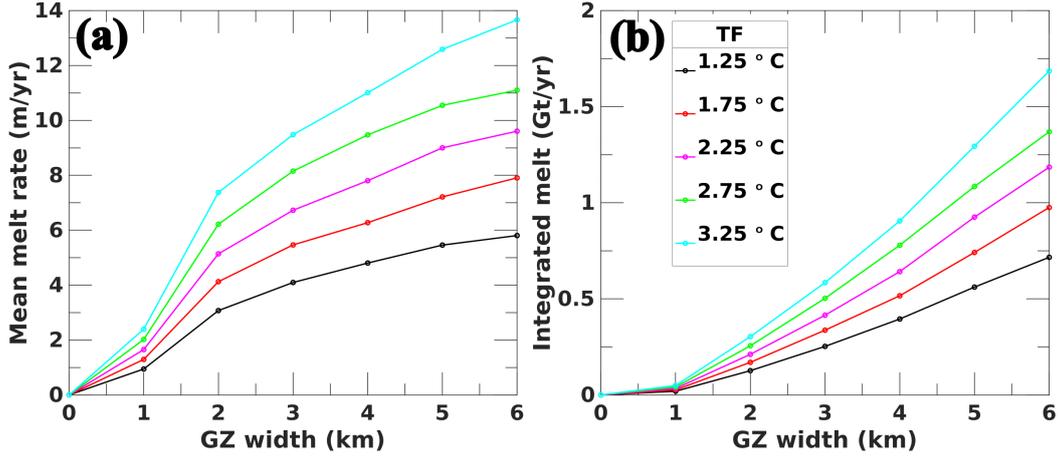


Figure 3. Parameterization of the melt rate in the grounding zone of Petermann Glacier for (a) averaged melt rate, \dot{m} , and (b) integrated melt, \dot{M} , as a function of the grounding zone (GZ) width and for different ocean thermal forcing, TF . Each diamond is one simulation, with a linear fit in between simulations. The model fit are $\dot{m} = 0.0111 GZ^{0.704} TF^{0.882}$ and $\dot{M} = 0.0008323 GZ^{1.55} TF^{0.882}$.

229 relationship with the grounding zone width since total melt is proportional to the length
 230 of the cavity.

231 4 Discussion

232 The model has a no-flow boundary condition at the upstream end of the ground-
 233 ing zone cavity. In the first tidal cycle, the melt rate is high at that upper boundary, then
 234 it converges to a lower value in the next iteration, and does not change after that (see
 235 Fig. S1). The simulations, therefore, reach a steady state quickly. There is no need to
 236 extend the simulations in time. The results are not affected by numerical instabilities.

237 The exponent coefficient for the grounding zone width, b , is less than 1, i.e. the melt
 238 is not increasing linearly with the cavity opening rate, which forces the speed of water
 239 flow, U_m . If the cavity was frictionless and infinite, the water should flow at the cavity
 240 opening rate and the coefficient b should be unity. The sub-linear dependency is caused
 241 by water experiencing friction along the cavity walls, motion across density gradients,
 242 and slowing down to zero at the cavity termination. The lack of water flow at the ter-
 243 mination of the cavity imposes zero melt. This region of no flow is a significant fraction
 244 of the cavity as it extends over 1-2 km for a 6-km long cavity (Fig. S2d).

245 In our simulation, we do not include subglacial discharge from the glacier. Subglacial
 246 discharge may have two opposing effects on the ice melt rates: 1) it may intensify the
 247 thermohaline circulation within the cavity by increasing the entrainment speed of the
 248 melt water plume during low tide; (2) conversely, it will oppose or block seawater inflow
 249 at high tide, thereby acting as a protective layer for the ice. Our minimum water height
 250 in the cavity is justified by the presence of subglacial water beneath the glacier produces
 251 a natural pathway to allow seawater intrusions (Warburton et al., 2020). Here, the model
 252 assumes a subglacial water layer of 5 cm with no input flow.

253 The geometry of the grounding zone influences the melt pattern and the location
 254 of the maximum melt rate. In the absence of high-resolution observations of the shape

255 of the grounding zone, i.e., ice shelf draft and bed topography, our modeling adopts an
 256 idealized rectangular cavity with smooth boundaries. The rationale for the smooth bound-
 257 ary is that high melt rates on sharp corners will naturally smooth them out. Most chan-
 258 nels and ice shelf bases are smooth (Rignot & Steffen, 2008), except for basal crevasses.

259 Our findings indicate that the rate of ice melt is asymmetric during the tidal cy-
 260 cle (Fig. S2) as in (Warburton et al., 2020). When water enters the cavity, it leads to
 261 greater melting than when it exits the cavity. This disparity in melting is caused by the
 262 asymmetry in entrainment speed as U_m has to drop to zero at the cavity termination.
 263 The water that exits the cavity consists mostly of meltwater, which has a lower thermal
 264 forcing and slower velocity. The melt water also encounters resistance as it moves against
 265 density gradients, leading to lower melt rates during the outflow. The asymmetry con-
 266 tributes to a sub-linear dependence of melt with the grounding zone width.

267 The distance of seawater intrusions is the maximum extent to which warm ambi-
 268 ent water penetrates into the cavity within a tidal cycle. In our simulations, this distance
 269 is $72\pm 3\%$ of the cavity length (Fig. S2). It is, therefore, important for future studies to
 270 differentiate between the grounding zone width from the extent of seawater intrusions,
 271 i.e., recognize that the distance of intrusion of seawater will always be less than the ground-
 272 ing zone width. The model confirms that melt water is trapped in the cavity at low tide
 273 (Warburton et al., 2020). The distance of seawater intrusion does not change when we
 274 change the thermal forcing.

275 Differences in water density across the grounding zone region and ice shelf cavity
 276 will generate geostrophic currents. In addition, the Coriolis force at the scale of the fjord
 277 will intensify the melting of ice in the grounding zone differentially and re-distribute ocean
 278 heat laterally. We do not incorporate these effects in 2D, but it will be useful to incor-
 279 porate them in 3D studies.

280 Increasing the number of vertical cells in the model within the cavity slightly re-
 281 duces the peak melt rate at the cavity entrance (Fig. S3), but does not change the av-
 282 erage and integrated melt rate significantly. This reduction occurs because, with more
 283 vertical layers, the melt water confined at the ice shelf base helps better insulate it from
 284 the underlying warm seawater. The extent of seawater intrusions remains unaffected. Here,
 285 we use a single vertical layer for the cavity to reduce computational complexity.

286 The modeled peak melt rates fall within the 40-80 m/yr range estimated from re-
 287 mote sensing data in the grounding zone (Ciraci et al., 2023). The values in Fig. 3 are
 288 cavity-averaged values, hence peak values are twice higher. With a thermal forcing TF
 289 $= 2.25^\circ\text{C}$, a cavity-averaged melt rate of 10 m/yr in the grounding zone, the total melt
 290 is 1.25 Gt/yr, which is 10% of the incoming glacier flux (about 12 Gt/yr). Within the
 291 flexure zone, the integrated melt is 3.5 Gt/yr or 30% of the glacier flux (Fig. S4). Over-
 292 all, 40% of the ice melts away within the grounding and flexure zones combined.

293 If we assume that the waters in Petermann fjord warmed up by 0.33°C from 1.75°C
 294 to 2.25°C in recent years (Millan et al., 2022), the average melt rate in the 2-km ground-
 295 ing zone cavity must have increased by 2 m/yr (Fig. 3). If the model is correct, the ice
 296 shelf thinned by 40 m from 2000 to 2020. If we also include that the grounding zone width
 297 increased from 2 km in the late 1990s to 6 km in the 2020's, the average melt rate would
 298 have increased from 3 m/yr to 10 m/yr, for a total thinning of 140 m for 2000-2020. For
 299 comparison, estimates from remote sensing data report a maximum thinning of the cav-
 300 ity of 190 m at the center in 10 years and less on the sides (Ciraci et al., 2023). Hence,
 301 the combination of warmer water and greater seawater intrusions explains the observed
 302 thinning. The longer cavity increases melt more significantly than the warmer ocean tem-
 303 perature.

304 The ocean model confirms that kilometer-scale intrusions of seawater beneath grounded
 305 ice during the tidal cycle cause high rates of ice melt. The highest melt rates are recorded

306 at the mouth of the grounding zone. Because the loss of grounded ice directly affects basal
 307 resistance to flow, the melt rates in the grounding zone are critically important to glacier
 308 flow. Prior studies indicated that the inclusion of such melt rates would increase the glacier
 309 sensitivity to ocean warming and thereby increase the projections of sea level rise. We
 310 have now observational evidence for these intrusions and modeling evidence that these
 311 intrusions result in high melt rates.

312 5 Conclusions

313 We present the first 2D modeling of ice melt within the idealized grounding zone
 314 cavity of Petermann Glacier where remote sensing data indicate kilometer-size seawater
 315 intrusions beneath grounded ice at tidal frequencies. Using an ocean model, we pre-
 316 dict a strong dependence of ice melt in the kilometer-size grounding zone cavity as a func-
 317 tion of ocean thermal forcing and distance of seawater intrusions. We find that seawater
 318 intrusions operate efficient ice melt over 73% of the cavity, with no melt occurring
 319 at the termination of the cavity where melt water is trapped. The modeled melt rates
 320 are highest near the mouth of the cavity and higher than elsewhere in the ice shelf cav-
 321 ity. We present a parameterization of ice melt rates as a function of cavity length and
 322 ocean thermal forcing that will be relevant to ice sheet models. Ocean thermal forcing
 323 may be constrained by CTD data and ocean modeling. Cavity length may be constrained
 324 by InSAR observations or seawater intrusion modeling (Wilson et al., 2020). Future work
 325 shall examine the impact of a lateral re-distribution of ocean heat in 3D simulations, with
 326 more vertical elements, and how an active layer subglacial water beneath the glacier may
 327 affect the results. We recommend to obtain detailed in-situ observations of ice melt rates
 328 in the grounding zone given their critical role in glacier evolution.

329 Open Research Section

330 The MITgcm model code is available at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8208482>.
 331 Our MITgcm model setup, along with the modified ice shelf package, is available at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8250817>. BedMachine Greenland is available at the National
 332 Snow and Ice Data Center (<https://doi.org/10.5067/GMEVBWFLWA7X>). The 2015 CTD
 333 data which we use is OD1507_10_CTD.txt and is available at Artic Data Center (<https://arcticdata.io/catalog/view/doi:10.18739/A2XS5JH16>).
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 335

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