

In situ flux estimates reveal large variations in methane flux across the bottom boundary layer of a eutrophic lake

Sofia L. D'Ambrosio ,* Stephen M. Henderson , Jeffrey R. Nielson, John A. Harrison 

Washington State University Vancouver, School of the Environment, Vancouver, Washington

Abstract

Methane (CH₄) produced in anoxic sediments plays a significant role in the carbon economy of many lakes and reservoirs. CH₄ released from sediments first crosses the bottom boundary layer (BBL), the layer of water overlying the lakebed where currents are slowed by friction with the sediments below. Physical and biogeochemical conditions in the BBL, which can fluctuate hourly to daily with basin-wide internal waves (seiches), likely influence CH₄ transport from sediments into the hypolimnion. In this study, we estimated CH₄ fluxes across the BBL of a eutrophic lake using a novel in situ flux gradient approach adapted from marine applications. For 2–6 h periods throughout the spring and summer, we estimated CH₄ fluxes across the BBL using simultaneous measurements of CH₄ concentrations, turbulent mixing, and thermal stratification. Sub-daily variation in CH₄ fluxes was high, and CH₄ fluxes sometimes changed several-fold within hours. These rapid shifts in BBL fluxes were likely influenced by fluctuations in seiche-driven variations in the intensity of BBL turbulent mixing. Fluxes increased from spring to summer, concurrent with the development of lake stratification, and fueled an accumulation of CH₄ below the thermocline. Throughout the summer, CH₄ flux across the BBL exceeded CH₄ accumulation below the thermocline, suggesting significant methanotrophy in the hypolimnion, consistent with incubation-based oxidation rates. Our results are the first to demonstrate sub-daily and seasonal variability in the timing and magnitude of CH₄ fluxes within a lake BBL, and highlight a need to quantify such variability in other lentic systems.

Lakes and reservoirs are globally significant sources of methane (CH₄), contributing an estimated 70–175 Tg of CH₄ to the atmosphere per year (Rosentreter et al. 2021). Methanogenesis in anoxic sediments is a primary source of CH₄ in most lakes and reservoirs (Bastviken 2009), although the significance of oxic CH₄ production in the water column is an ongoing area of research (Günthel et al. 2019; Peeters and Hofmann 2021). Quantifying the flux and fate of CH₄ released from lake sediments is particularly important during summertime thermal stratification in monomictic and dimictic lakes. The development of stratification slows vertical mixing between the

epilimnion and hypolimnion. Methane diffusing from sediments during this stratified period can either accumulate in the hypolimnion, undergo bacterial oxidation, or slowly diffuse across the thermocline into the epilimnion. A significant portion of CH₄ accumulated in the hypolimnion during a stratified period can eventually be emitted during lake turnover (Kankaala et al. 2007; Encinas Fernández et al. 2014). Therefore, characterizing the magnitude, variability, and fate of CH₄ flux from lake sediments into the hypolimnion is crucial for understanding lentic greenhouse gas dynamics and emissions to the atmosphere.

A critical interface between the primary site of CH₄ production (sediments) and CH₄ storage (the hypolimnion) is the bottom boundary layer (BBL; Fig. 1), a region extending up to several meters above the lake sediment where currents are strongly affected by bottom friction (Wüest and Lorke 2003). The BBL can be further divided into multiple sublayers (Fig. 1), each governed by different physical controls (Henderson and Nielson 2021). Here, we focus on CH₄ flux through the turbulent BBL, which extends from several centimeters to potentially several meters above the sediment. Chemical transport in this layer is dominated by turbulent diffusion, which mixes water and solutes much more rapidly than molecular diffusion.

The large seasonal and daily variability in conditions within the turbulent BBL likely has important, but unexplored,

*Correspondence: sofia.dambrosio@wsu.edu

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implications for CH₄ flux and fate in the hypolimnion of stratified lakes. On a seasonal basis, thermal stratification can lead to the depletion of oxygen, nitrate, and other terminal electron acceptors in the BBL and hypolimnion (Eckert and Conrad 2007; Deemer and Harrison 2019). The resulting anoxia facilitates CH₄ flux into the hypolimnion (Hounshell et al. 2021), and seasonal shifts in CH₄ and electron acceptor concentrations may stimulate rapid responses in methanotrophy in the water column (Saarela et al. 2020; Mayr et al. 2020a, b). On an hourly to daily basis, many lakes experience a basin-wide internal wave (or seiche) that drives fluctuations in BBL conditions (Wüest and Lorke 2003). The seiche cycle can trigger periods of intense turbulent mixing in the BBL, which are sometimes followed by relatively quiescent periods where thermal stratification can significantly inhibit turbulent mixing (Henderson 2016a). Broadly, fluctuations in turbulent mixing rates above the sediment are known to cause fluctuations in diffusive boundary layer thickness, affecting sediment–water fluxes of oxygen and other compounds (Lorke et al. 2003; Brand et al. 2009). In some lakes, such fluctuations in turbulent mixing rates are specifically tied to the seiche cycle, generating intense variability in fluxes of oxygen (Brand et al. 2008; Bryant et al. 2010) and in gradients of nitrogenous compounds (Deemer et al. 2015) in the turbulent BBL.

Despite the potential for BBL conditions to influence CH₄ dynamics in the hypolimnion, common methods for quantifying the flux and fate of sediment-derived CH₄ in stratified lakes largely ignore variability in BBL conditions. For example, CH₄ flux from sediments is often measured using benthic chambers (Kuivila et al. 1988), porewater profiles (Huttunen et al. 2006), or ex situ incubations (Liikanen et al. 2002), none of which can account for variable BBL mixing. Mass balance approaches to determine the fate of sediment-derived CH₄ frequently rely on daily-averaged to seasonally-averaged CH₄ concentration profiles and estimates made well above the BBL (Bastviken et al. 2008), thus ignoring any short-term variability in lake mixing or biogeochemistry. Furthermore, some methods that are useful for resolving short-term variability in solute fluxes that can be measured rapidly, such as eddy correlation, cannot be used to estimate fluxes of CH₄ or other solutes for which fast-response sensors are unavailable. Owing to these methodological challenges, previous studies of the interplay between lake BBL conditions and CH₄ dynamics have been limited to a single study modeling sediment CH₄ oxidation (Brand et al. 2009). In that study, seiche-driven changes in the diffusive BBL (Fig. 1) had little effect on rates of methanotrophy within the uppermost layers of sediment. However, no studies to-date have investigated how CH₄ transport above the sediment, within the turbulent BBL, is influenced by seiche-induced dynamic forcing.

In this paper, we overcome these limitations by modifying and applying a flux gradient approach. This approach estimates fluxes as a function of vertical gradients in chemical concentrations, which can be measured in the BBL using

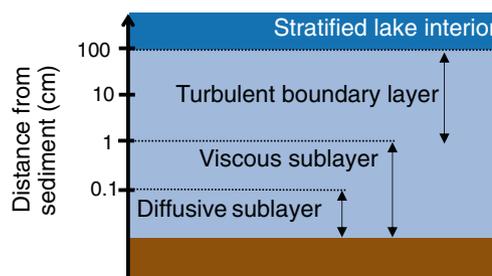


Fig. 1. Schematic showing layers of the BBL, as often observed in the hypolimnion immediately above a lakebed (note log scale on vertical axis).

recent advances in sampling and instrumentation (Sauter et al. 2005; Holtappels et al. 2011; Knoery et al. 2019). Within the BBL, the flux gradient technique has been used to estimate fluxes of oxygen, total alkalinity, and momentum in marine systems (Reidenbach et al. 2006; McGillis et al. 2011; Turk et al. 2015; Takeshita et al. 2016). However, these BBL studies assumed an unstratified turbulent BBL, within which logarithmic boundary layer theory can be applied. This assumption is often violated in strongly stratified low-energy flows (Holtappels and Lorke 2011), which are common in small lakes and reservoirs (Henderson 2016a). An alternative assumption of constant mixing efficiency, applicable to stratified low-energy conditions, has been used to obtain flux gradient estimates of nitrate fluxes across the thermocline in the ocean (Sharples et al. 2007; Williams et al. 2013). However, this approach becomes inapplicable in weakly stratified, high-energy flows, which can also occur in lake BBLs. Here, using generalized mixing parameterizations developed by previous researchers, we adapt the flux gradient approach for application across a range of cases, from high-energy logarithmic boundary layer cases to low-energy stratified conditions. We apply the flux gradient method for the first time to the lake BBL environment, yielding the first non-invasive estimates of BBL CH₄ fluxes.

We estimate CH₄ fluxes across the BBL of a eutrophic, monomictic reservoir before and during summer stratification. We combine fluxes estimated over multiple 2–6 h periods with simultaneous monitoring of turbulent mixing, stratification, temperature, and dissolved oxygen (DO) concentrations within the BBL. Our goal was to characterize the magnitude and variability of CH₄ fluxes within the BBL across short-term (sub-daily) and longer (seasonal) time scales and determine the fate of BBL CH₄ in the lake hypolimnion. In addition, we compare our results from the flux gradient approach with flux estimates obtained previously in other lakes using conventional methods.

Methods

Study system

Lacamas Lake is a eutrophic, monomictic reservoir located in southwestern Washington State, USA (Fig. 2). The reservoir has a

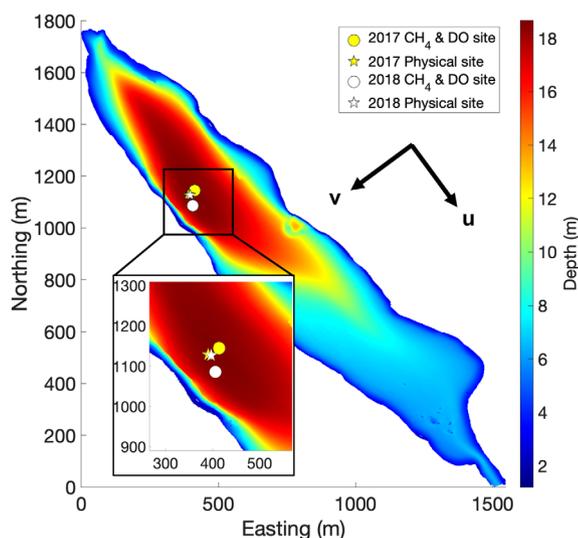


Fig. 2. Bathymetric map of Lacamas Lake with close-up of sampling sites (inset). Circles indicate sites for CH₄ and DO sampling. Stars indicate locations for physical (temperature and velocity) sampling. Locations for 2017 are shown in yellow and 2018 in white. Arrows indicate direction of along-lake velocity (u) and across-lake velocity (v), and the length of arrows are not quantitatively to scale. Origin of bathymetric map is 45.6098°N, 122.4366 W°.

surface area of 1.3 km², an average depth of 7.8 m, and a maximum depth of 18 m. Rates of surface CH₄ emission from Lacamas are comparable to rates from other eutrophic reservoirs, averaging 66 mg CH₄ m⁻² d⁻¹ (Deemer et al. 2016; Harrison et al. 2017). During summer, a metalimnion develops between 4 and 7 m depth, which largely inhibits mixing between the epilimnion and hypolimnion (Deemer et al. 2011). After the onset of stratification, CH₄ accumulates below the metalimnion (Deemer and Harrison 2019).

Our study focuses on conditions in the bottom meter of the BBL in Lacamas, where velocity, turbulent mixing, and temperature are strongly influenced by a wind-driven, basin-wide seiche (Henderson and Deemer 2012; Deemer et al. 2015; Henderson 2016a,b). Temporal seiche-induced temperature fluctuations are small compared to top-to-bottom temperature fluctuations during mid- and late-summer, indicating that strong stratification prevents overturning (Henderson and Deemer 2012). Correspondingly, previous work (Nielson and Henderson 2022) determined the seiche in Lacamas to be in the damped, linear regime during the summer (Horn et al. 2001). The seiche is responsible for velocity fluctuations with a period of approximately 10–24 h (Henderson and Deemer 2012; Henderson 2016a). Owing to the lake's narrow geometry, along-lake velocities (u) are generally larger than across-lake velocities (v , Fig. 2). In Lacamas, the energy flux carried by net vertical seiche propagation approximately balances the production of turbulent kinetic energy in the BBL (Henderson 2016a). Bursts of high-energy turbulent mixing in the BBL of the deep-water region follow bursts of strong wind

forcing by 1–2 d, as expected given the time for vertical propagation of energy by the seiche (Henderson 2016a).

Water column characterization

Profiles of temperature, DO, and CH₄ spanning the full water column were used to characterize the development of thermal and chemical stratification in Lacamas and to quantify CH₄ storage in the hypolimnion. Water column sampling was performed at the deepest part of the lake (18 m depth, Fig. 2) approximately bimonthly between April and September of 2017 and 2018. A Hydrolab DS5X Sonde measured temperature and DO every 1–3 m throughout the water column. CH₄ concentrations were determined via headspace equilibration at the same depths using duplicate water samples collected with a Van Dorn sampler. This process consisted of flushing and filling glass serum vials (70 mL) with water from each depth, fixing samples with saturated ZnCl₂, and crimp sealing filled vials using gray butyl septa. Less than 10% of samples contained bubbles and they were discarded. Vials were injected with a 20 mL pure helium headspace, shaken thoroughly, and allowed to equilibrate for at least 24 h. Headspace CH₄ concentrations were then measured on an HP 5890 gas chromatograph with a flame ionization detector (Deemer and Harrison 2019) with a precision of $\pm 5\%$ over the range of CH₄ concentrations analyzed. Aqueous concentrations were calculated using Bunsen temperature-specific solubility coefficients (Wanninkhof 1992).

BBL sampling locations

To estimate CH₄ fluxes in the BBL, profiles of CH₄, DO, velocity, and temperature were characterized in the bottom meter of Lacamas near the lake's deepest point (Fig. 2) from May to August 2017 and in May 2018. In both years, chemical (CH₄ and DO) and physical (temperature and velocity) profiles were measured simultaneously. To minimize flow disturbances for velocity measurements, physical sampling sites were separated from chemical sampling sites by 28 and 42 m in 2017 and 2018, respectively (Fig. 2). To evaluate if physical mixing conditions at the two sites were similar, temperatures were monitored at the same three elevations ($z=0.1, 0.4,$ and 0.9 m above the lakebed) at the chemical sampling site and the physical sampling site. Both sets of temperatures were found to be in excellent agreement (for 2017, linear regression yields $T_{\text{chem}} = 0.99 (T_{\text{phys}}) + 0.04^\circ\text{C}$ with $R^2 = 0.99$; for 2018, $T_{\text{chem}} = 1.00 (T_{\text{phys}}) + 0.02^\circ\text{C}$ with $R^2 = 0.99$).

BBL methane and oxygen sampling

BBL methane profiles were measured every 5–10 min for periods of 2–6 h on each CH₄ flux sampling date (approximately bimonthly from April to August 2017 and on four dates in May 2018). Gas-impermeable, opaque Viton fluoroelastomer tubing (1/8" ID, McMaster-Carr) was fastened to a 1.5-m tall aluminum tripod resting on the lakebed. Separate lines of tubing were used to draw water samples at elevations of $z = 0.1$ and $z = 0.9$ m above the lakebed in 2017; in 2018, a third line of tubing was

added at $z = 0.4$ m. DO was measured every minute using PME miniDOT loggers mounted at the same elevations as CH₄ sampling tubes. Tubing and oxygen loggers were arranged to minimize flow disturbance.

To measure CH₄ profiles in the BBL on each CH₄ flux sampling date, paired water samples from each elevation were slowly and simultaneously pulled up from depth every 5–10 min using 60-mL BD luer lok syringes connected to the tubing. The entire tubing volume was flushed once before each sampling pull. Water samples from the BBL were then processed for CH₄ concentrations as described above for the water column CH₄ profiles, but with smaller glass serum vials (27 mL water volume with a 10 mL helium headspace).

BBL velocity and temperature sampling

Profiles of water velocity and temperature within the BBL were used to determine rates of physical mixing, as required for CH₄ flux calculations. Variables involved in physical mixing rate and flux calculations are summarized in Supporting Information Table S1. Velocity and temperature were measured from April to September in 2017 and from April to May in 2018. Temperature profiles were measured by a vertical array of RBR Solo T thermistors (error $\pm 0.01^\circ\text{C}$), attached to an aluminum frame with a vertical line and held taut by a subsurface buoy. These instruments recorded temperature every 4 s at nine elevations (approximately every 0.1 m) from 0.18 to 0.86 m (2017) or 0.17 to 0.93 m (2018) above the lakebed, and half-hourly averages are presented.

Profiles of velocity were measured using two adjacent, upward-facing 2-MHz Nortek Aquadopp Acoustic Doppler Current Profilers (ADCPs) mounted together on an aluminum frame resting on the lakebed, with acoustic transducers about 0.04 m above the bed. Each ADCP operated in pulse-coherent mode and recorded velocity profiles during one 0.5-s interval every 15 s. Velocity profiles were recorded between 0.15 and 0.90 m above the bed, with 0.015 m vertical resolution. The two ADCPs yielded two time series of half-hourly averaged horizontal velocity. These two time series were in excellent agreement and were averaged for all results presented here.

N² estimation

The squared buoyancy frequency N^2 , an indicator of the strength of stratification used in the estimation of CH₄ fluxes, was estimated between each instrument pair in the temperature profile:

$$N^2 = \frac{-g}{\rho_0} \frac{\partial \rho}{\partial z}, \quad (1)$$

where g is gravitational acceleration (9.81 m s^{-2}), ρ is the density at elevation z above the lakebed (kg m^{-3}) as a function of temperature, and ρ_0 is the mean density of the temperature

profile (Thorpe 2007). Estimated N^2 error was approximately $\pm 1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-2}$, based on RBR thermistor errors ($\pm 0.01^\circ\text{C}$).

Turbulent dissipation rate estimation

The rate of viscous dissipation of turbulent energy (\mathcal{E}), an indicator of the strength of turbulent mixing used in the estimation of methane fluxes, was estimated along vertical profiles using a structure–function method based on Wiles et al. (2006). First, spatial velocity variability is quantified by:

$$\beta(z, r) = w(\bar{z} + r/2) - w(\bar{z} - r/2), \quad (2)$$

where $w(\zeta)$ is the velocity measured a distance ζ along one of the ADCP acoustic beams, $\bar{z} = z/\cos(25^\circ)$ is the along-beam distance corresponding to elevation z , and the factor $\cos(25^\circ)$ accounts for beam tilt (Wiles et al. 2006). One β time series was calculated for every pair of rangebins along an acoustic beam, so that along-beam separation r equaled 1, 2, 3, or 4 bins. To separate turbulence from long period motions such as currents and internal waves, a 4-min running mean was subtracted from each β time series, with deviations from the running mean denoted by β' . The magnitude of small-scale turbulent velocity fluctuations was then quantified by the variance of $\beta'(z, r)$, that is:

$$Q(z, r) = \overline{\beta'^2(z, r)}, \quad (3)$$

where the overbar denotes averaging over a half-hour interval. For each r , further statistical stability was obtained by averaging over all $Q(z, r)$ values in 10-cm vertical z bins.

The differencing used to calculate β removes motions with scales much larger than r . Therefore $Q(z, r)$ approaches zero as r approaches zero. Specifically, the theory of homogeneous inertial subrange turbulence suggests:

$$Q(z, r) = C(\mathcal{E}r)^{2/3}, \quad (4)$$

where the empirical constant $C \approx 2$ (Monin and Yaglom 1975). Therefore, at each height, the dissipation rate $\mathcal{E}(z)$ is estimated as $A^{3/2}$, where A is the slope of a linear regression between $Q(z, r)$ and $r^{2/3}$. Since stratification invalidates the underlying inertial-subrange theory at large (Ozmidov) scales, separations of more than four rangebins are excluded from the regression. At each elevation z , one \mathcal{E} estimate is obtained from each of the six acoustic beams of the two ADCPs, and the median of these six estimates is reported.

Turbulent dissipation rate measurements were used for estimating the thickness of the diffusive and viscous sublayers in the BBL (Fig. 1). These sublayer thicknesses were not directly used to calculate CH₄ fluxes, but they are useful as indicators of transport across the sediment–water interface. Specifically, relatively high sublayer thickness indicates high resistance to flux across the sediment–water

interface, whereas lower thickness is associated with more rapid diffusion. Following Lorke et al. (2003), the thickness of the viscous sublayer (δ_ν) was calculated as:

$$\delta_\nu = \frac{11\nu}{(\kappa z_1 \varepsilon_1)^{1/3}}, \quad (5)$$

where ν is the kinematic viscosity of water ($\text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$), κ is the dimensionless constant 0.4, z_1 is the elevation of the lowest \mathcal{E} estimate (m), and ε_1 is the corresponding turbulent dissipation rate at z_1 (W/kg). Diffusive sublayer thickness (δ_d) was calculated as:

$$\delta_d = S_c^{-\alpha} \delta_\nu, \quad (6)$$

where S_c is the Schmidt number and α is the dimensionless constant 0.33 (Lorke and MacIntyre 2009). We assume S_c as 1.31×10^3 , as appropriate for the kinematic viscosity of water and molecular diffusivity of solutes within the temperature range of the BBL in Lacamas (about 1.31×10^{-6} and $10^{-9} \text{m}^2 \text{s}^{-1}$, respectively, at 10°C).

Methane flux estimation

Methane fluxes at an elevation z in the turbulent BBL were estimated by adapting a flux gradient approach previously used in marine applications:

$$F_{\text{BBL}} = -D \frac{\partial C}{\partial z}, \quad (7)$$

where F_{BBL} is the CH₄ flux, D is the turbulent diffusivity, and $\frac{\partial C}{\partial z}$ is the derivative of CH₄ concentration with depth. Similar expressions are often used to estimate chemical fluxes across the diffusive sublayer. However, the turbulent diffusivity in Eq. 7 represents mixing at elevations well above the diffusive sublayer, and greatly exceeds the molecular diffusivity. Correspondingly, the gradient $\partial C/\partial z$ is weaker in the turbulent BBL than within the diffusive sublayer. Rearranging Eq. 7, assuming a constant flux between sampling elevations z_1 and z_2 , and integrating with respect to depth gives:

$$F_{\text{BBL}} = -k_{\text{BBL}}(C_{z_2} - C_{z_1}), \quad (8)$$

where $(C_{z_2} - C_{z_1})$ indicates the average CH₄ concentration gradient (mmol m^{-3}) between sampling elevations z_1 and z_2 and the corresponding piston velocity (m s^{-1}) is $k_{\text{BBL}} = \left(\int_{z_1}^{z_2} \frac{dz}{D} \right)^{-1}$ (Fig. 3). In 2017, z_1 and z_2 were, respectively, 0.1 and 0.9 m above the bed. In 2018, two pairs of z_1 and z_2 were used: 0.1 and 0.4 m (hereafter the inner BBL) or 0.4 and 0.9 m (hereafter the outer BBL). Methane fluxes from Eq. 8 were calculated on a half-hourly basis, and then pooled together into hourly averages to increase statistical power.

Diffusivity D , used in the estimation of k_{BBL} , was calculated using a modified Osborn method (Osborn 1980):

$$D = \frac{\Gamma \mathcal{E}}{N^2}, \quad (9)$$

where Γ is the mixing efficiency coefficient. We estimated $\frac{\Gamma}{N^2}$ as:

$$\frac{\Gamma}{N^2} = \left[0.7 e^{(-5.7 \text{Ri}_g)} S^2 + 4N^2 \right]^{-1}, \quad (10)$$

where S^2 is shear $\left([\partial \bar{u}/\partial z]^2 + [\partial \bar{v}/\partial z]^2 \right)$ of half-hourly mean along-lake (\bar{u}) and across-lake (\bar{v}) velocities and Ri_g is the gradient Richardson number $\left(\frac{N^2}{S^2} \right)$. Equation 10 closely resembles Eq. 6 of Nielson and Henderson (2022), written in a form that remains finite in the unstratified ($N^2 \rightarrow 0$) limit. As explained by Nielson and Henderson (2022), Eq. 10 is derived from a parameterization by Venayagamoorthy and Stretch (2010). The output of Eq. 10 is multiplied by \mathcal{E} to calculate diffusivity D (Eq. 9), which in turn is used to determine k_{BBL} for estimating CH₄ flux (Eq. 8).

Equations 9–10 recover the formulas used in previous marine applications of the flux gradient technique in appropriate limits. In the limit of a weakly stratified logarithmic boundary layer, $D = \kappa u_* z / \text{Pr}_T$ is recovered, where $\text{Pr}_T = 0.7$ is the turbulent Prandtl number for unstratified flow (this is established by setting Ri_g and N^2 to zero on the right of Eq. 10, substituting Eq. 10 into Eq. 9, and using the standard results $S = u_*/(\kappa z)$ and $\varepsilon = u_*^3/(\kappa z)$ from the theory of logarithmic boundary layers). This expression was assumed in previous applications of the flux gradient technique to marine BBLs (McGillis et al. 2011; Takeshita et al. 2016), although these authors adopted the simplification $\text{Pr}_T = 1$. In the limit of strongly stratified (high Ri_g) flow, $\Gamma = 0.25$ is recovered, which closely resembles previous applications of the flux gradient technique to regions above the BBL (Sharpley et al. 2001, 2007; Williams et al. 2013). The transition from weakly to strongly stratified conditions, and the associated transition in Γ values, is an ongoing area of research (Venayagamoorthy and Stretch 2010; Gregg et al. 2018; Monismith et al. 2018). However, our conclusions were not sensitive to the details of Γ parameterization. Applying an alternative parameterization for Γ (Monismith et al. 2018) resulted in flux estimates similar to those calculated using the approach described above.

Adjusting for low Reynolds number conditions

Our approach to calculating CH₄ fluxes in the BBL assumes the turbulent diffusivity for heat (D from Eq. 9) is a suitable proxy for the turbulent diffusivity of CH₄. However, solutes may be mixed more slowly than heat in some very low-energy stratified cases (Smyth et al. 2005), that is, in cases with low values of the buoyancy Reynolds number $\text{Re}_b = \frac{\varepsilon}{\nu N^2}$. We account for this by approximating the relationship between Re_b and the turbulent diffusivity of salinity observed by Smyth et al. (2005):

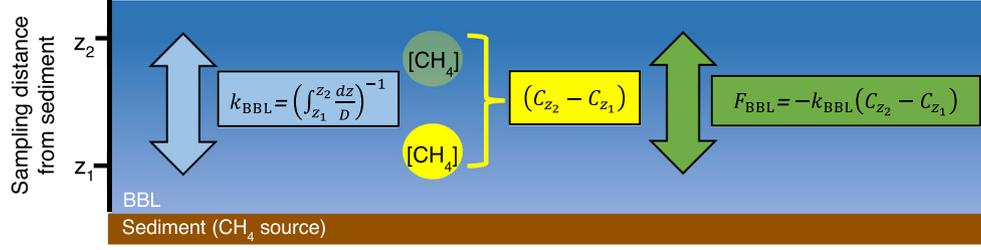


Fig. 3. Conceptual diagram of CH₄ flux estimates. Estimates of piston velocity k_{BBL} and CH₄ flux F_{BBL} are indicated with the blue and green arrows, respectively. Circles indicate CH₄ concentrations, with the more opaque yellow circle representing a higher CH₄ concentration. Estimates of CH₄ gradient ($C_{z_2} - C_{z_1}$) represented by the yellow bracket.

$$D_a = \begin{cases} D, & \text{Re}_b > 100 \\ D \left(\frac{\text{Re}_b}{100}\right)^{1/4}, & \text{Re}_b < 100 \end{cases} \quad (11)$$

where D_a is the adjusted diffusivity and D is the diffusivity estimated from Eq. 9. This expression was chosen to fit the data in Fig. 15 of Smyth et al. (2005).

Mixing becomes very weak, and poorly understood, when Re_b is less than about 20 (Stillinger et al. 1983). In such cases, flux estimates presented here may have been subject to large relative errors, even with the diffusivity adjustment in Eq. 11. However, fluxes during such very low-energy cases are small and did not contribute greatly to total estimated CH₄ transport (see “Discussion” section).

Statistical analysis

To analyze monthly differences in CH₄ flux in 2017, hourly flux estimates from each sampling date were grouped by month. Each month was individually tested for normality with an Anderson–Darling test and constant variance was assessed across months with Bartlett’s test. Differences across months were then assessed using a non-parametric Kruskal–Wallis test and Dunn’s post hoc test. To analyze the hourly time series presented from 2018, fluxes were grouped by sampling height (inner or outer BBL fluxes) and by hour. Each flux group was individually tested for normality with an Anderson–Darling test. Depending on whether the normality assumption was met, each group was then analyzed with a one-sample t -test or Wilcoxon signed rank test to determine if each hourly flux group was significantly different from zero.

Hypolimnetic CH₄ balance

Methane fluxes measured in the BBL during 2017 were time-averaged to approximate the daily supply of CH₄ from the BBL to the hypolimnion during summer stratification. Trapezoidal integration was performed on the CH₄ flux time series for sampling date. Integrated values were divided by the total sampling time (usually 2–6 h d⁻¹; see “BBL methane and oxygen sampling” section) to calculate one time-averaged flux for each of the two sampling dates per month, and the monthly mean is presented.

The mass storage of CH₄ in the hypolimnion, as well as the hypolimnetic accumulation rate of CH₄, were calculated for summer 2017 as in Deemer et al. (2011) using water column CH₄ concentration profiles. Briefly, Lacamas was divided into an epilimnion (< 4 m depth), a metalimnion (4–7 m depth), and a hypolimnion (> 7 m depth). The hypolimnion was subdivided into layers based on the depths at which CH₄ concentrations were measured bimonthly (see “Water column characterization” section). The volume of each layer was determined using bathymetric data from the Washington Department of Ecology (Deemer and Harrison 2019). The mass of CH₄ in each layer was then calculated using the layer’s volume and CH₄ concentration. Methane masses from each layer were summed to determine total hypolimnetic CH₄ mass for each sampling date. The accumulation rate in the hypolimnion was then calculated as the change in hypolimnetic CH₄ mass between subsequent sampling dates, divided by the days in between dates and the surface area of the hypolimnion. This approach assumes that CH₄ is well mixed horizontally. Monthly averages of hypolimnetic CH₄ accumulation rates are presented.

Methane flux across the metalimnion F_{meta} (mmol m⁻² d⁻¹) in summer 2017 was calculated using Fick’s first law:

$$F_{\text{meta}} = K_{\text{meta}} \frac{dC}{dz}, \quad (12)$$

where K_{meta} is eddy diffusivity (m² d⁻¹) and $\frac{dC}{dz}$ is the vertical derivative of CH₄ concentration evaluated across the summer metalimnion (4–7 m depth from the surface). K_{meta} was calculated over multiple 3- to 25-d intervals in summer 2017 using the heat budget method (Jassby and Powell 1975). An average monthly F_{meta} was calculated using monthly averages of K_{meta} and water column profiles of CH₄ and temperature (see “Water column characterization” section).

Hypolimnetic oxidation rates

Oxidation rates in the hypolimnion in summer 2017 were determined using a combination of incubations and previous studies in Lacamas. Incubation samples collected on 04 June 2017 and 17 July 2017 were used to determine oxidation rates in June and July 2017, respectively. On each date, 16 glass

serum vials (70 mL) were flushed and filled with water drawn from 0.9 m above the bed using the tubing system described earlier (see “BBL methane and oxygen sampling” section). Half of the vials were fixed immediately with saturated ZnCl₂, whereas the other half were wrapped in foil and incubated in the dark in a water bath at in situ temperature (10°C). After 24 h, the incubated vials were terminated with saturated ZnCl₂. All vials were analyzed for aqueous CH₄ concentrations via headspace equilibration as described earlier (see “Water column characterization” section). Oxidation rates (mmol L⁻¹ d⁻¹) were calculated as the linear slope of CH₄ concentrations vs. time in the vials.

Incubations were not performed in August 2017, therefore August hypolimnetic oxidation rates R_{ox} (mmol L⁻¹ d⁻¹) were estimated based on the first-order rate law for CH₄ oxidation in Lacamas from Reed et al. (2017):

$$R_{\text{ox}} = m(C_{\text{hyp}}), \quad (13)$$

where m is the first-order rate constant for CH₄ oxidation (0.12 d⁻¹) observed previously in incubations of hypolimnetic water in Lacamas (Reed et al. 2017) and C_{hyp} is the mean hypolimnetic concentration of CH₄ (mmol L⁻¹). C_{hyp} in August 2017 (0.2–0.3 mmol L⁻¹) was within the range of CH₄ concentrations at which Reed et al. (2017) fit the relationship in Eq. 13. However, Reed et al. (2017) sampled in the fall, when significantly larger concentrations of terminal electron acceptors were present in the anoxic hypolimnion than in summer. Therefore, oxidation rates presented here for August should be considered potentials, and in situ rates in August may have been lower than predicted by Eq. 13 because the supply of terminal electron acceptors was more limited during our sampling. Oxidation rates from incubations or Eq. 13 were converted to per-area units (mmol m⁻² d⁻¹) using the volume and surface area of the Lacamas hypolimnion (Deemer and Harrison 2019).

Potential terminal electron acceptors for CH₄ oxidation in the hypolimnion of Lacamas were assessed as in Reed et al. (2017). Briefly, monthly water column profiles of DO, nitrate (NO₃⁻), and sulfate (SO₄²⁻) were used to approximate the concentration of electron acceptors available for CH₄ oxidation in the hypolimnion. The stoichiometric relationships between these electron acceptors and known CH₄ oxidation pathways (Reed et al. 2017) were used to determine the potential for DO, NO₃⁻, or SO₄²⁻ to explain observed CH₄ oxidation rates. Manganese and iron concentrations were not measured because they are small contributors to the terminal electron pool in Lacamas (Reed et al. 2017).

Results

Overview

The results presented below are divided into sections describing sub-daily, then seasonal trends in BBL mixing, CH₄

and DO concentrations, and CH₄ fluxes. On sub-daily timescales, a key finding is that the upward CH₄ flux displays intense variability within the BBL. CH₄ flux pulses were observed during intervals of intense, seiche-driven turbulent mixing, whereas weaker, near-zero fluxes were often observed during low-energy stratified conditions. On seasonal timescales, CH₄ flux within the BBL increased almost two orders of magnitude from spring to summer. This increase coincided with the development of lakewide stratification and the onset of hypoxia then anoxia in the hypolimnion. Although the summertime increase in CH₄ flux fueled some hypolimnetic CH₄ accumulation, most of the CH₄ transported across the BBL was ultimately oxidized in the hypolimnion.

Sub-daily mixing and stratification

The main driver of mixing in the BBL was a seiche with a period of 10–24 h (Deemer et al. 2015; Henderson 2016a, 2016b). An example of the oscillating flows of the seiche over a 5-d period in May 2018 is shown in Fig. 4. Seiche-driven velocity fluctuations (Fig. 4a) were associated with sub-daily variations in turbulent mixing rates and temperature in the BBL (Fig. 4b,c).

A closer look at such variability during a typical 24-h period in May (16 May 2018) is shown in Fig. 5. Methane flux sampling occurred on this date from 10:00 to 13:00 (dashed vertical black lines, Fig. 5). On this date, temperature and stratification fluctuated through the seiche period (Fig. 5a,b). Temperature fluctuations were small (< 0.07°C), and their relationship with seiche-induced velocities was complex. For example, small temperature increases were observed at 04:00 and 17:00 (Fig. 5a) as the flow transitioned from up-lake to down-lake (Fig. 5c), but the largest temperature increase was observed during the CH₄ sampling period, as flow transitioned from down-lake to up-lake at 10:30. Temperatures varied with elevation, leading to fluctuations in stratification as measured by buoyancy frequency N (Fig. 5b). For example, near-bed cooling occurred during the latter half of CH₄ sampling. During this period, temperatures first dropped below 8.3°C at measurement elevation $z=0.18$ m above the lakebed (11 : 45), and subsequently at increasingly higher elevations (by 12:15 at $z=0.46$ m, and by 13:45 at $z=0.86$ m). The initial appearance of cold water near the bed at 11:45 generated intense stratification (Fig. 5b), which propagated upward through the BBL as temperatures subsequently dropped at higher elevations. This pattern could be explained by upward mixing of colder water from below the lowest temperature logger ($z=0.18$ m), or by propagation of a tilted cold front past the measurement location.

Along-lake velocities exceeded across-lake velocities (Fig. 5c,d). Intervals of relatively high (≥ 0.02 m s⁻¹) velocities from the seiche stimulated intense viscous dissipation of turbulent energy, particularly near the bed (Fig. 5e). For example, from 04:00 to 09:00, a period of down-lake flow (positive u , flowing towards the reservoir outlet; Fig. 5c) corresponded with large turbulent

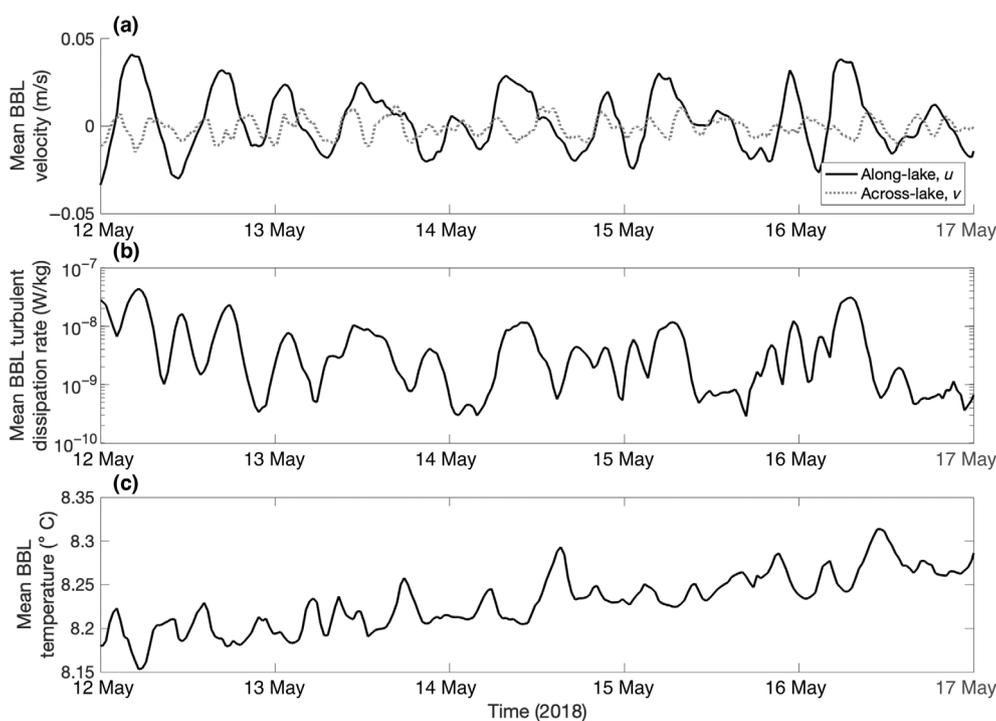


Fig. 4. Half-hourly averages of the mean **(a)** along-lake velocity (u ; black line) and across-lake (v ; dotted gray line) velocity; **(b)** turbulent dissipation rate (ϵ); and **(c)** temperature in the bottom meter of Lacamas for a representative 5-d period in May. Positive and negative u indicate down-lake and up-lake flows, respectively.

dissipation rates throughout the BBL (up to $\epsilon = 10^{-7} \text{ W kg}^{-1}$; Fig. 5e). After 11:00, flows were generally weaker, and turbulent dissipation less intense. However, an interval of weak up-lake flow (negative u , flowing towards the reservoir inlet) during the latter half of the CH₄ flux sampling period coincided with moderate turbulent dissipation near the bed (up to $\epsilon = 10^{-8} \text{ W kg}^{-1}$ below $z = 0.4 \text{ m}$ from about 11:40 to 14:00).

Consistent with previous observations (Lorke et al. 2003; Bryant et al. 2010; Schwefel et al. 2017), seiche-induced changes in BBL turbulent dissipation caused substantial variations in the estimated thickness of the viscous and diffusive sublayers. Estimated diffusive sublayer thickness ranged from 0.08 to 0.4 cm and viscous sublayer thickness ranged from 0.9 to 5.0 cm (Fig. 5f). Since the diffusive sublayer can limit chemical fluxes between sediments and overlying waters, thinner sublayers can lead to periods of relatively rapid transport across the sediment–water interface (Lorke et al. 2003; Bierlein et al. 2017). Thin sublayers were observed during periods of fast flows and intense turbulent dissipation, such as 04:00–09:00 (Fig. 5c). Similarly, sublayers thinned during the last half of the CH₄ sampling interval, as velocity increased and moderate turbulent dissipation rates developed near the bed.

During intervals of weak flow, density stratification often strongly inhibited turbulent mixing, as indicated by Ri_g values greater than 0.25 (Fig. 5g; Miles 1961). During such times, Re_b values occasionally dropped below 25 (Fig. 5h), suggesting

that even the largest (Ozmidov-scale) eddies were strongly dissipated by viscosity, possibly leading to a collapse of turbulent mixing (Stillinger et al. 1983). In contrast, during intervals of strong flow, stratification was too weak to have a large local effect on turbulent mixing, as indicated by $Ri_g < 0.05$. During such times, much larger Re_b indicated active turbulent mixing. Consistent with previous observations in Lacamas (Henderson 2016a), strong inhibition of turbulent mixing by stratification (i.e., $Ri_g > 0.25$) was more common in the outer BBL than the inner BBL.

The fluctuations in turbulent mixing, stratification, and temperatures described above influenced turbulent diffusivity (and thus piston velocities, Eq. 8) during the 3 h of CH₄ flux sampling on 16 May 2018, as shown in Figs. 5i, 6. As outlined above, during the latter half of CH₄ flux sampling, turbulent dissipation rates increased below $z = 0.4 \text{ m}$ and corresponding diffusive and viscous sublayer thickness decreased (Fig. 5e,f). Simultaneously, turbulent diffusivity also increased below $z = 0.4 \text{ m}$ during the latter half of CH₄ flux sampling (Fig. 6a), suggesting faster transport across the sediment–water interface into the inner BBL. However, owing to evolving stratification (Fig. 5b), turbulent diffusivity did not increase at $z = 0.4 \text{ m}$ and above during the same interval. Consequently, piston velocities representing layer-integrated mixing in the inner BBL remained relatively constant during this period, whereas piston velocities in the outer BBL decreased throughout sampling (Fig. 6b).

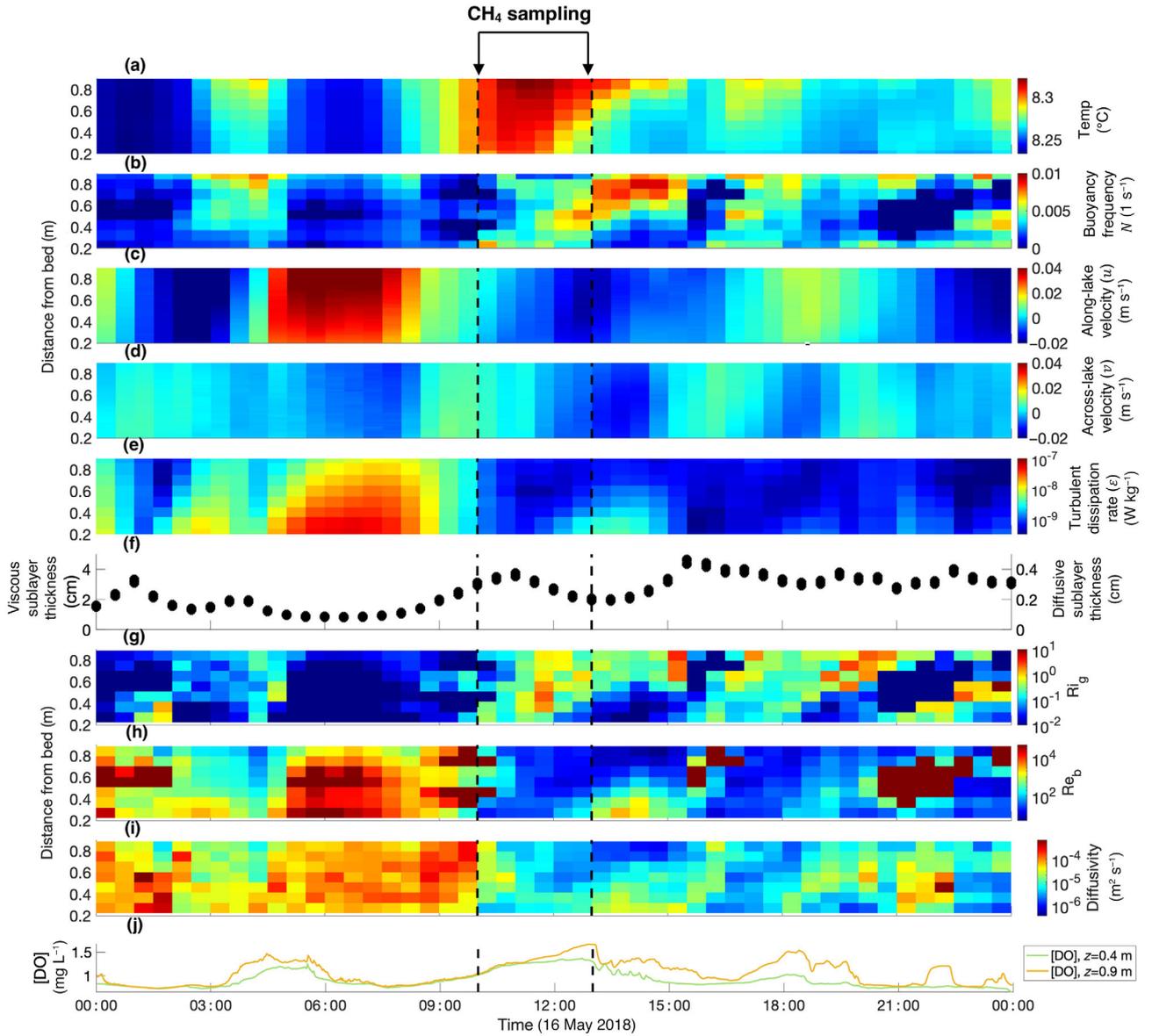


Fig. 5. Conditions in the BBL during 24 h on 16 May 2018. Vertical black dashed lines denote start and end of CH₄ sampling on this date (see Fig. 7). (a) Temperature by height in the BBL; (b) buoyancy frequency (N); (c) along-lake velocity (u , Fig. 2), with positive and negative velocities indicating down-lake and up-lake flows, respectively; (d) across-lake velocity (v , Fig. 2); (e) turbulent dissipation rate (ϵ); (f) thickness of the viscous sublayer (δ_v) and diffusive sublayer (δ_d) in the BBL; (g) gradient Richardson numbers (Ri_g); (h) buoyancy Reynolds number (Re_b); (i) turbulent diffusivity; and (j) DO concentrations measured at $z = 0.4$ m (green line) and $z = 0.9$ m (orange line) above the bed. All panels present half-hourly averages except for panel (j), which shows DO measured once per minute.

Sub-daily CH₄ and DO dynamics

In spring, prior to the onset of summer anoxia, the seiche was responsible for substantial variability in DO concentrations in the BBL (Fig. 5j). High DO concentrations were generally observed where temperatures were warmer, whereas lower concentrations were observed where temperatures were cooler. For example, during CH₄ flux sampling on 16 May 2018, DO increased at $z = 0.4$ and $z = 0.9$ m (Fig. 5j) as measured temperatures increased at the same elevations (Fig. 5a). This correlation between temperature and DO is expected as warmer

water arriving to the BBL has been moved down from a shallower part of the water column, nearer to regions of photosynthesis and atmospheric exchange.

Methane concentrations measured at three elevations in the BBL ($z = 0.1, 0.4$, and 0.9 m) also exhibited sub-daily variations (Fig. 6c). During the periods of most rapid variability, CH₄ concentrations could change twofold to threefold within several hours. Regardless of fluctuations, CH₄ concentrations were usually larger at sampling elevations closer to the sediments than farther away from sediments, resulting

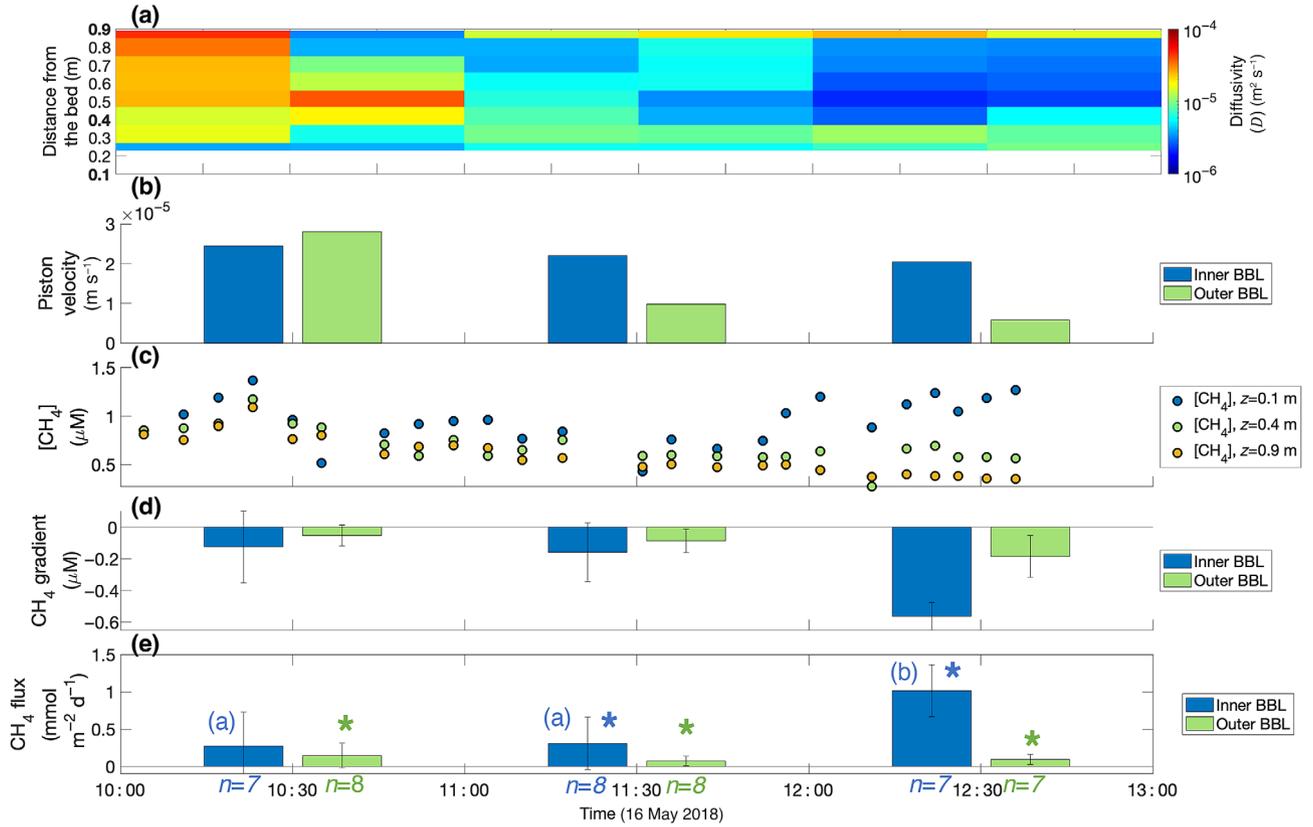


Fig. 6. Conditions in the BBL on 16 May 2018 during the CH₄ sampling period. **(a)** Half-hourly averages of turbulent diffusivity, with bolded tick labels on y-axis indicating elevations above the bed at which CH₄ concentrations were measured; **(b)** hourly average piston velocity; **(c)** CH₄ concentrations measured every 5–10 min at $z = 0.1$ m (blue points), $z = 0.4$ m (green points), and $z = 0.9$ m (yellow points); **(d)** hourly average CH₄ gradients (± 1 standard deviation); and **(e)** hourly average CH₄ flux (± 1 standard deviation). In **(b,d,e)**, blue and green bars represent values measured across the inner BBL ($z = 0.1$ – 0.4 m above the bed) and outer BBL ($z = 0.4$ – 0.9 m), respectively. Asterisks in plot **(e)** indicate fluxes significantly different from zero by one-sample t -test or Wilcoxon rank sum test, $p < 0.05$. Letters in plot **(e)** indicate statistically significant groupings of fluxes (Kruskal–Wallis test, $p < 0.05$) and n values indicate sample size per hour.

in consistently negative mean CH₄ gradients ($C_{z_2} - C_{z_1} < 0$, Fig. 6d) and therefore positive (upward) flux in the inner and outer BBL (Fig. 6e).

On 16 May 2018, CH₄ gradients were small and variable throughout the first 2 h of sampling (Fig. 6d). In the last hour of sampling, CH₄ gradients increased by almost fourfold in the inner BBL ($-0.59 \pm 0.09 \mu\text{M}$) and more than doubled in the outer BBL ($-0.19 \pm 0.13 \mu\text{M}$). The large increase in inner BBL CH₄ gradients resulted from a rapid increase in CH₄ concentration at $z = 0.1$ m, which reached values exceeding $1 \mu\text{M}$, coinciding with the arrival of relatively cold water at the same elevation (Fig. 5a). In contrast, the more modest increase in outer BBL CH₄ gradients resulted from a slight decrease in CH₄ concentrations at $z = 0.9$ m and little change at $z = 0.4$ m.

Sub-daily CH₄ flux magnitude and variability

Estimated methane fluxes in the inner and outer BBL fluctuated over hourly time scales. Periods of persistent CH₄ gradients and upward fluxes were interspersed with periods of weak gradients and fluxes small enough to be statistically

indistinguishable from zero. For example, on 16 May 2018, CH₄ fluxes in the inner BBL were small and variable enough during the 1st hour of sampling to be statistically insignificant, whereas inner BBL fluxes in the 2nd and 3rd hours of sampling were statistically significant (Fig. 6e). In the 3rd hour of sampling, inner BBL fluxes increased by more than fourfold. This increase was driven by a larger CH₄ gradient (Fig. 6d) rather than a change in piston velocities, which were relatively constant during this interval in the inner BBL (Fig. 6b). In the outer BBL, gradients were less variable and fluxes were statistically significant during all 3 h of sampling.

Most fluxes observed in the BBL were positive. Across $n = 12$ total hours of flux sampling in 2018, upward CH₄ fluxes were observed during $n = 10$ h in the inner and outer BBL. Statistically significant fluxes were observed during $n = 6$ out of $n = 12$ total sampling hours in the inner and outer BBL, all of which were upwards fluxes. During the remaining $n = 6$ out of $n = 12$ sampling hours in 2018, statistically insignificant fluxes were measured in the inner and outer BBL, coinciding with periods of weak CH₄ gradients. Rarely, brief

periods of very small, negative (downward) flux were observed ($n = 2$ h in the inner and outer BBL in 2018) when CH₄ gradients were weak enough to reverse in sign ($C_{z_2} - C_{z_1} > 0$). Methane gradients and piston velocities were generally weaker in the outer BBL (Fig. 6b,d), resulting in generally smaller outer BBL fluxes compared with inner BBL fluxes (Fig. 6e).

Seasonal mixing and stratification

Seasonal trends in BBL dynamics and CH₄ fluxes were examined during from May to August 2017. Thermal

stratification developed in the full water column of Lacamas during the transition from spring to summer (Fig. 7a). Prior to May, the water column was relatively well mixed, with temperatures ranging between 9 and 11°C. The thermocline, defined as the depth of the steepest temperature gradient, first developed at a depth of about 1 m between sampling dates 28 April 2017 and 03 May 2017 (black arrows, Fig. 7a). The thermocline deepened gradually from early May to mid-July, then stabilized at about 4–5 m depth and separated the warmer epilimnion (20–25°C) from the colder hypolimnion

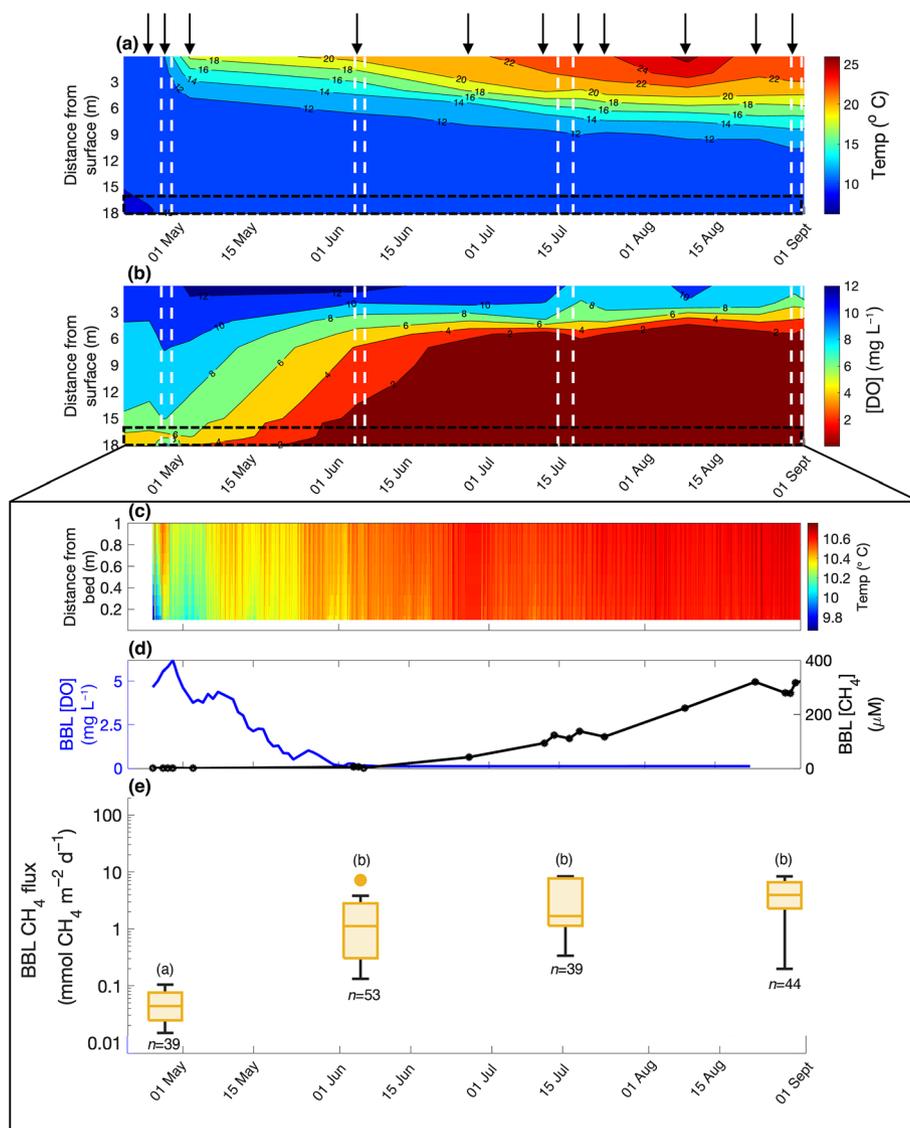


Fig. 7. Time series of conditions in full water column (top panel) and BBL specifically (inset) during spring and summer 2017. **(a)** Temperature in the full water column. Black contour lines for every 2°C shown. **(b)** DO concentrations in the full water column. Black contour lines for every 2 mg L⁻¹ shown. Black arrows at the top of the figure indicate sampling dates of temperature **(a)** and oxygen **(b)** in the full water column, with measurements interpolated in between dates. White dashed vertical lines indicate sampling dates for CH₄ fluxes in the BBL. **(c)** Temperature in the BBL averaged half-hourly. **(d)** Mean CH₄ concentrations (black line, measured 2–4 times per month) and daily mean DO (blue line) concentrations in the BBL. **(e)** CH₄ fluxes measured from $z = 0.1$ to 0.9 m above the bed and averaged hourly. Each box in **(e)** pools data from two sampling dates in the same month. Number of CH₄ gradient observations shown below each box and statistically significant groupings indicated with letters above each box (Kruskal-Wallis test and Dunn's post hoc, $p < 0.01$).

(10–15°C) for the remainder of sampling. Within the BBL specifically, mean daily temperatures gradually warmed starting in April (9.8°C) and stabilized around 10.6°C from July to September (Fig. 7c).

Seasonal CH₄ and DO dynamics

The development of thermal stratification in the water column coincided with O₂ depletion and CH₄ accumulation in the BBL and hypolimnion (Fig. 7b,d). Note that full water column data presented in panels Fig. 7a,b are interpolated over bimonthly sampling dates (see Fig. 7 caption). Nevertheless, the summertime trend towards increasing stratification and reduced hypolimnion O₂ concentrations is clear, and rapid near-bed sampling provided much higher resolution of BBL temperatures used for CH₄ flux calculations (see “Methods” section). Daily DO concentrations in the BBL, averaged between measurements at $z = 0.4$ and 0.9 m above the bed, dropped from over 5.0 mgL⁻¹ in early May to less than 0.1 mgL⁻¹ in early June 2017 (Fig. 7d). Conditions remained anoxic (DO < 2 mgL⁻¹; Nürnberg 2022) in the BBL throughout the remainder of the 2017 sampling period. The decrease in DO concentrations measured in the BBL was consistent with the development of hypoxia (DO < 5 mgL⁻¹; Nürnberg 2022) in the hypolimnion in June, followed by complete anoxia in the hypolimnion in July and August (Fig. 7b). CH₄ concentrations within the BBL started at 0.7–1.1 μM in late April 2017 (Fig. 7d; Supporting Information Table S2). Once thermal stratification was established in early June, CH₄ concentrations rose to 1.5–5.9 μM. Methane concentrations continued to increase steadily to 110–137 μM in mid-July and 278–317 μM in late August.

Seasonal CH₄ flux magnitude and variability

Methane fluxes measured bimonthly from April to August (excluding May) showed a distinct seasonal increase after the lake stratified (Fig. 7e; Table 1). Median fluxes increased more than 100-fold, from 0.11 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ in April to 36 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ in August, and fluxes measured in April were significantly lower than those measured in June, July, and August (Fig. 7e). Methane fluxes were also highly variable over daily timescales, spanning one to two orders of magnitude between sampling dates 2–3 d apart (Table 1). This large flux variability between closely spaced sampling dates is expected given the sub-daily variability described above (in Fig. 6).

Hypolimnetic CH₄ balance

As mixing across the metalimnion was suppressed by thermal stratification in June, July, and August 2017 (Fig. 7a), CH₄ accumulated in the hypolimnion (Fig. 7d; Supporting Information Table S3). The rate of CH₄ accumulation ranged from 0.66 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ in June to 18 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ in August, corresponding to a daily rate of 0.36–9.5 kmol d⁻¹ for the entire hypolimnion (Fig. 8). If CH₄ loss from the hypolimnion

Table 1. Average daily flux and number of flux observations for sampling dates in 2017.

Sampling date	Number of flux observations	Average daily flux (mean ± SD; mmol m ⁻² d ⁻¹)
27 Apr 2017	16	0.11 ± 0.12
29 Apr 2017	23	0.11 ± 0.09
4 Jun 2017	30	23 ± 28
6 Jun 2017	23	2.8 ± 4.6
14 Jul 2017	23	63 ± 41
17 Jul 2017	19	8.5 ± 8.5
29 Aug 2017	22	24 ± 19
31 Aug 2017	21	71 ± 48

via diffusion through the metalimnion and oxidation were negligible, the rate of hypolimnetic CH₄ accumulation would approximately balance the rate of BBL CH₄ flux. However, monthly time-averaged BBL fluxes (13–47 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ or 1.1–25 kmol d⁻¹; Fig. 8) were consistently larger than observed CH₄ accumulation rates. Only 12–38% of CH₄ transported across the BBL remained stored below the metalimnion, and only 0.07–3.2% (0.0012–1.3 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹, or 0.00075–0.80 kmol d⁻¹; Fig. 8) was transferred from the hypolimnion via diffusion into the metalimnion. The remaining 58–88% of CH₄ transported across the BBL was presumably removed from the hypolimnion at a rate of 1.4–32 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ (0.77–17 kmol d⁻¹; Fig. 8).

Methane oxidation in the hypolimnion was likely responsible for the bulk of CH₄ loss. CH₄ oxidation rates in June and July, measured directly using water incubations at $z = 0.9$ m, were 13–39 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ and therefore sufficiently large to explain the loss. Similarly, potential oxidation rates (182 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹), calculated in August using a first-order rate law for methanotrophy observed in the Lacamas hypolimnion (Eq. 13) could account for more than enough CH₄ oxidation to balance the hypolimnion CH₄ budget in August. In June, enough oxygen was present in the hypolimnion (Fig. 7b) to sustain the observed CH₄ oxidation (Supporting Information Table S4). However, as oxygen depletion in the hypolimnion continued throughout July and August (Fig. 7b), hypolimnetic concentrations of electron acceptors commonly attributed to CH₄ oxidation (O₂, NO₃⁻, and SO₄²⁻) were insufficient to fuel the observed CH₄ oxidation for more than 6–8 d (Supporting Information Table S4).

Discussion

Comparison with other flux measurement methods

In this study, we applied a flux gradient approach to compare spatiotemporal variations in physical conditions, biogeochemical conditions, and CH₄ fluxes in the BBL of a lake at

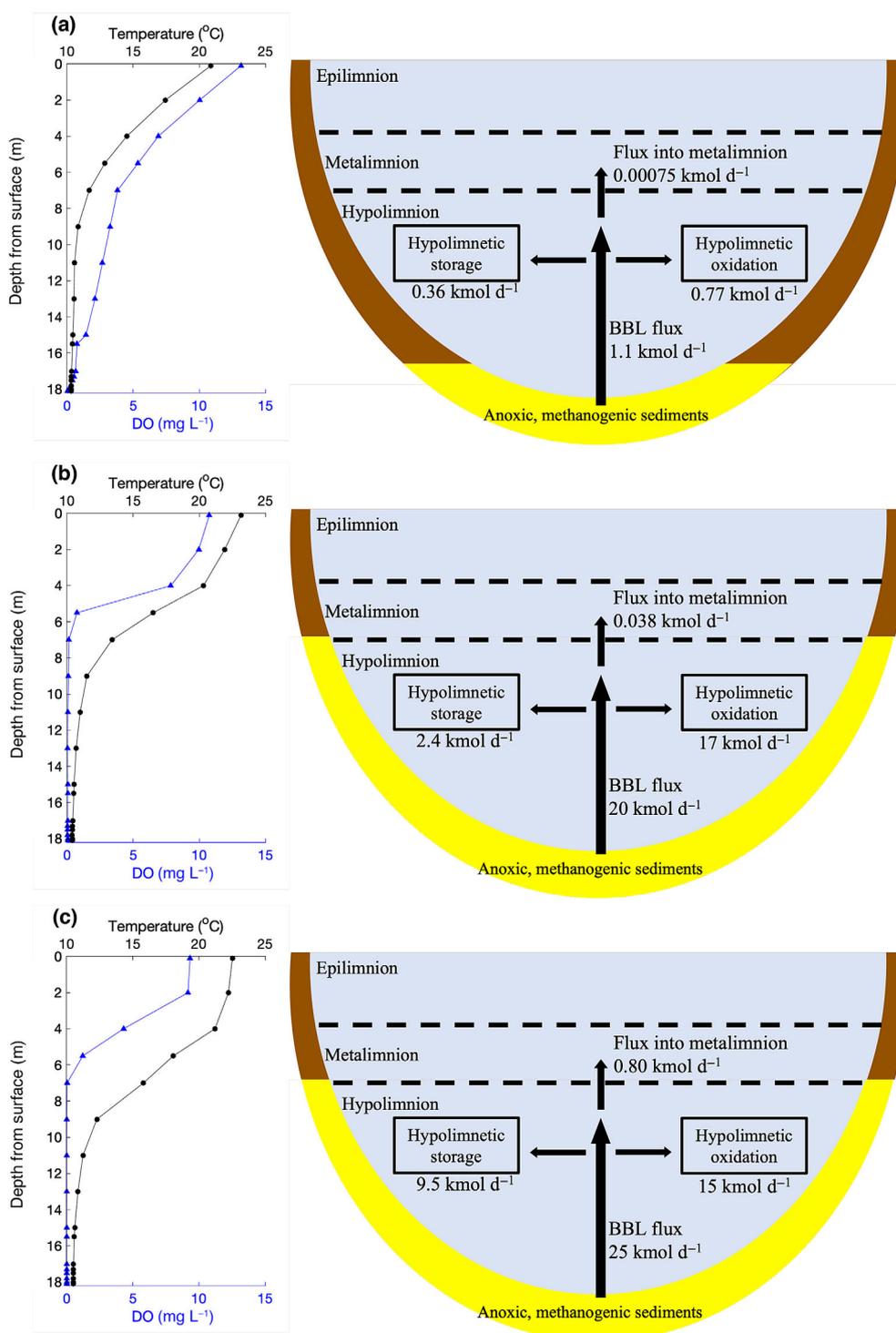


Fig. 8. For June (a), July (b), and August (c) 2017, left panels show representative temperature (black) and DO (blue) depth profiles and right panels show the calculated hypolimnetic CH₄ balance. In the mass balance, arrow size approximates the relative rates of transport from the BBL, hypolimnetic storage, transport to the metalimnion and hypolimnetic oxidation, yet arrows are not quantitatively to scale. Dashed lines delineate the metalimnion (4–7 m from the surface). The surface area of sediments in the full hypolimnion (7 m depth and below) was used to convert rates (mmol m⁻² d⁻¹) of hypolimnetic CH₄ storage, flux into the metalimnion, and oxidation into rates of kmol CH₄ d⁻¹. For converting time-averaged BBL flux (mmol m⁻² d⁻¹) into kmol CH₄ d⁻¹, only the surface area of sediments overlain by anoxic water and therefore considered to be actively producing CH₄ (highlighted in yellow; sediments at 17 m depth and below in June, 7 m depth and below in July and August) was used. Mass balance values rounded to two significant figures.

Table 2. Minimum, mean, and maximum CH₄ fluxes across the sediment–water interface (top rows; rates displayed in the same significant figures as reported by authors) and across the BBL from this study (bolded rows). Empty boxes indicate no data.

Study	Method	Trophic status	Min (mmol m ⁻² d ⁻¹)	Mean (mmol m ⁻² d ⁻¹)	Max (mmol m ⁻² d ⁻¹)
Maerki et al. (2009)	Benthic chambers	Eutrophic		7.5	
Kuivila et al. (1988)	Benthic chambers	Mesotrophic	0.21		0.31
Donis et al. (2017)	Fickian diffusion model	Mesotrophic	1.6		6
Steinsberger et al. (2017)	Fickian diffusion model	Multiple	0.08		4.24
Carignan and Lean (1991)	Fickian diffusion model	Mesotrophic	1		5
Norđi et al. (2013)	Fickian diffusion model	Eutrophic		0.04	
Huttunen et al. (2006)	Fickian diffusion model	Multiple	0.03		6.55
Brand et al. (2009)	Fickian diffusion model	Eutrophic			1.25
Gruca-Rokosz and Tomaszek (2015)	Fickian diffusion model	Eutrophic	0.01		2.19
Strayer and Tiedje (1978)	Fickian diffusion model	Hypereutrophic	10	25	46
Matthews et al. (2005)	Mass balance	Hypereutrophic	7.3		11.7
Rudd and Hamilton (1978)	Mass balance	Eutrophic	1		10
Kelly and Chynoweth (1980)	Mass balance		3.2		9.8
Bastviken et al. (2008)	Mass balance	Multiple	3.87		5.05
Fallon et al. (1980)	Mass balance	Eutrophic		35.8	
Peeters et al. (2019)	Mass balance	Multiple	0.16	2	7.4
Clayer et al. (2016)	Reaction-transport model	Oligotrophic	0.104		7.46
This study (Apr–Aug 2017)	Flux gradient	Eutrophic	0.03	24	94
This study (May 2018, inner BBL)	Flux gradient	Eutrophic	−2.1	9.6	85
This study (May 2018, outer BBL)	Flux gradient	Eutrophic	−0.58	2.7	16

sub-daily and seasonal time scales. Like the eddy covariance approach, the flux gradient approach yields turbulent flux estimates a small distance above the sediment–water interface. Previous eddy covariance observations suggest that vertical variability could cause BBL fluxes to differ from sediment–water fluxes, particularly over short timescales (Brand et al. 2008). However, given the proximity of the BBL to lake sediments, comparing rates of both processes is useful for understanding how CH₄ released from sediments is transported into the hypolimnion.

Mean CH₄ fluxes from the flux gradient approach (2.7–24 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹; Table 2), estimated on an hourly basis then averaged across sampling periods in 2017 or 2018, were similar to mean sediment–water fluxes measured in other lake systems using other methods (2–35.8 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹; Table 2).

Mean CH₄ fluxes reported here were also comparable to the mean sediment CH₄ production rate reported in a meta-analysis of incubation experiments across a variety of lakes and reservoirs (2.98 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ mean, 0–21.8 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ range; D'Ambrosio and Harrison 2021). However, compared with other approaches, the fluxes observed here were more variable and had a higher maximum. We report fluxes spanning more than three orders of magnitude (0.03–94 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ in 2017), a wider range than that of sediment–water fluxes reported for all systems in the literature previously (0.01–46 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹). In addition, the maximum fluxes we report (up to 94 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹) are approximately twice as large as the highest previously reported sediment–water fluxes (up to 46 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹; Strayer and Tiedje 1978).

As a check on our CH₄ flux estimates, we estimated oxygen fluxes in the outer BBL for the time period shown in Fig. 6 using DO gradients (Fig. 5j) and the same piston velocities used for calculating CH₄ fluxes (Fig. 6b). Oxygen fluxes during this hypoxic period ranged from -0.5 to -5 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹ (negative values indicating a flux toward the bed). These values are similar to benthic oxygen fluxes observed in the BBL of Lake Lucerne throughout the seiche cycle (-3.5 to -45 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹; Brand et al. 2008), in the hypoxic BBL of Daheiting Reservoir (not exceeding -1 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹; Zhang et al. 2021), and in the BBL of a riverine lake (-6.4 to -84 mmol m⁻² d⁻¹; Murniati et al. 2015). The reasonable O₂ flux estimates suggest that our piston velocities (and in turn CH₄ fluxes) were not greatly overestimated.

A substantial component of the variability in our flux estimates resulted from seiche-induced fluctuations in mixing rates. Similarly large variability in BBL oxygen fluxes, also resulting from variations in mixing rates throughout a seiche cycle, has previously been observed using eddy covariance (Brand et al. 2008) and microprofiler measurements (Lorke et al. 2003). Typical approaches for measuring sediment–water CH₄ flux, such as benthic chambers, incubations, and modeling, exclude the influence of sub-daily variations in BBL mixing rates. The large range of our flux estimates suggest that incorporating the influence of fluctuating BBL mixing rates, as done here, reveals significant temporal variability in CH₄ transport from sediments in situ. Furthermore, the large magnitude of maximum fluxes in our study indicates that CH₄ transport in the BBL is likely punctuated by periods of intense flux previously unresolved by conventional methods.

The estimates of small fluxes presented here may be prone to error because they primarily occurred during periods of weak concentration gradients or minimal mixing. Occasional negative flux estimates (17% of hourly estimates in 2018, but none in 2017) resulted from reversals in concentration gradients. These reversals were most common when gradients were weak, and may have resulted from random turbulent fluctuations in concentration. Moreover, in very low-energy stratified conditions, with $Re_b < 10$ – 25 , turbulent mixing becomes intermittent and difficult to measure (Stillinger et al. 1983; Ivey and Imberger 1991), so that associated flux estimates are prone to large relative errors. However, such low- Re_b periods were infrequent, with an hourly average $Re_b < 25$ present during just 12% of CH₄ sampling hours in 2017 and 16% of hours in 2018. Moreover, fluxes observed during low- Re_b times were uniformly small and contributed only 2–13% to the total integrated flux on each sampling date. Therefore, time-averaged fluxes are likely insensitive to even substantial relative errors in estimates of fluxes occurring during low- Re_b times.

Sub-daily controls on fluxes

Estimated CH₄ fluxes showed major variability over time-scales of several hours. An example from 1 day is shown in

Fig. 6, and similar variability was observed during the majority of sampling days. Multiple physical and biological factors, such as lateral advection, fluctuations in methanotrophy within the BBL, and/or seiche-induced variations in turbulent mixing, could have interacted to produce the temporal changes in flux observed in Fig. 6e. We examine each possible driver individually below and suggest that seiche-induced fluctuations in turbulent mixing, rather than fluctuations in lateral advection or methanotrophy, were an important control on fluxes in the time series shown in Fig. 6.

Lateral advection of CH₄ in or out of the sampled region of the BBL may have influenced CH₄ gradient and flux estimates. For the case shown in Fig. 6, the increase in CH₄ concentration at $z = 0.1$ m above the bed (Fig. 6c) coincided with a decrease in temperature at the same elevation (Fig. 5a), as would be expected if the seiche advected CH₄-rich cold water over the measurement location. The lack of simultaneous increase in temperature and CH₄ concentration at $z = 0.4$ m, which led to the increased CH₄ gradient and flux, could be explained if a tilted cold front propagated over the measurement location. However, this explanation is called into question by the fact that the CH₄ concentration at $z = 0.4$ m did not rise when the cold water finally arrived at $z = 0.4$ m during the third hour of sampling. More generally, if CH₄, like temperature, were transported as a passive tracer without local sources or sinks, then a strong correlation between temperature gradients and CH₄ gradients would be expected. Across all sampling days, a lack of correlation between temperature gradients and CH₄ gradients (Supporting Information Fig. S1) suggests that lateral advection was not the most important driver of CH₄ dynamics in the near-bed region measured here.

Methanotrophic activity in the water column could also influence CH₄ flux estimates by consuming CH₄ within the sampled region of the BBL. For example, oxidation of CH₄ might explain the consistent trend of greater fluxes observed in the inner BBL compared to the outer BBL (Fig. 6e). If this was the case, BBL oxidation would approximately balance the flux difference observed between the inner and outer BBL ($R_{\text{ox-BBL}} = F_{\text{inner}} - F_{\text{outer}}$). In order to evaluate the potential importance of within-BBL oxidation, we estimated hourly, depth-integrated oxidation rates in the BBL ($R_{\text{ox-BBL}}$) during the time series presented in Fig. 6 by applying and vertically integrating Eq. 13 from $z = 0.25$ to $z = 0.65$ m above the bed:

$$R_{\text{ox-BBL}} = \int_{z=0.25}^{z=0.65} mCdz, \quad (14)$$

where the integral was evaluated by linearly interpolating the CH₄ concentration C between measurement elevations. The ratio of $R_{\text{ox-BBL}}$ to the difference in fluxes between the inner and outer BBL ($F_{\text{inner}} - F_{\text{outer}}$) was typically 0.01–0.1, suggesting that within-BBL oxidation could only explain

1–10% of the flux difference in the inner and outer BBL during the time shown in Fig. 6. This is a high-end estimate of the potential role of CH₄ oxidation, because oxidation rates estimated with Eq. 13 are likely closer to potential rates than actual rates (see “Methods” section). Therefore, when only methanotrophy occurring within the thin BBL is considered, consumption was likely too slow to explain the observed variability in BBL fluxes with elevation. However, when methanotrophy occurring throughout the much larger region of the entire hypolimnion is considered, total consumption does appear sufficient to influence CH₄ dynamics (Fig. 8).

Our results suggest that seiche-induced variation in turbulent mixing within the BBL, rather than changes in lateral advection or water column methanotrophy, was likely responsible for the short-term variability shown in Fig. 6e. We hypothesize that methane may accumulate near the bed during periods of weak mixing, and subsequently flux upwards past our measurement locations only when turbulent mixing increases. This may explain the observed increase in inner BBL CH₄ fluxes observed during the last hour of sampling on 16 May 2018 (12:00–13:00; Fig. 6e). Consistent with this hypothesis, the inner BBL flux increase was a consequence of greater CH₄ concentrations at $z = 0.1$ m (Fig. 6c), which steepened the CH₄ gradient (Fig. 6d). Methane concentrations at higher elevations did not decrease during the same period (Fig. 6c), as would be expected if loss of CH₄—either through lateral advection or oxidation—was responsible for the steeper gradient and larger flux observed in the last hour of sampling (Fig. 6d,e). Rather, we observed greater near-bed mixing during this last hour, quantified by a reduced thicknesses of diffusive and viscous sublayers (Fig. 5f). Therefore, we attribute the increase in flux from 12:00 to 13:00 to episodically elevated upward transport of CH₄ accumulated near the bed, rather than lateral advection or methanotrophy.

Changes in methanotrophy and/or methanogenesis within the surface sediment could also play a role in sub-daily CH₄ flux variations observed in the BBL. For example, temporal variations in oxygen availability at the sediment–water interface could influence the activity of surface sediment methanogens, which are highly sensitive to DO concentrations (Borrel et al. 2011). Variations in the concentration of oxygen or other electron acceptors could similarly affect methanotrophic activity within the surface sediment (Martinez-Cruz et al. 2018). However, we did not monitor sediment microbial communities during our study; therefore, we cannot exclude variations in sediment microbial activity as a potential control on sub-daily CH₄ dynamics.

Seasonal controls on fluxes

The wide range of fluxes in our study was in part due to the seasonal increase in CH₄ fluxes observed from spring to summer 2017 (Fig. 7e; Table 1). This increase may have resulted from the development of hypolimnetic hypoxia, and then anoxia, as the full water column of Lacamas thermally

stratified (Fig. 7a,b). Development of BBL anoxia (Fig. 7d) likely coincided with a depletion of oxygen within the surface sediment, possibly facilitating increased methanogenic activity close to the sediment–water interface (Frenzel et al. 1990; Liikanen et al. 2003; Huttunen et al. 2006). Furthermore, the transition through hypoxic to anoxic conditions in the hypolimnion (Fig. 7b) may have suppressed aerobic CH₄ oxidation in the surface sediment (Frenzel et al. 1990). Elevated surface chlorophyll *a* concentrations (Perkins et al. 2019) may have also stimulated CH₄ production by increasing the supply of carbon to sediments (West et al. 2012; Rodriguez et al. 2018). Lastly, temperature also influences CH₄ fluxes. In laboratory experiments, increasing sediment temperatures by 6–26°C stimulated CH₄ production rates by 10- to 100-fold (Duc et al. 2010). However, since temperatures observed 0.1 m above the bed increased less than 1°C from spring to summer in Lacamas (Fig. 7c), the temperature dependence of methanogenesis could not explain the 100-fold increase in fluxes observed from April to August in our study (Fig. 7e).

Linking CH₄ transport across the BBL to hypolimnion accumulation

Detailed CH₄ flux estimates in the BBL were time-averaged to determine the lakewide supply of CH₄ to the lake hypolimnion (see “Methods” section). The majority (58–88%) of CH₄ flux across the BBL appears to have been oxidized in the hypolimnion of Lacamas (Fig. 8). Much (12–38%) of the remaining CH₄ accumulated in the hypolimnion and a small amount (0.07–3.2%) diffused across the metalimnion to the epilimnion. These results are consistent with other studies of stratified lakes with anoxic hypolimnia, which show that most CH₄ diffusing out of profundal sediments is consumed before reaching the lake surface (Bastviken et al. 2008; Donis et al. 2017; Li et al. 2021). In Peter, Paul, and Hummingbird Lakes, 20–45% of CH₄ released from deep sediments was stored in the water column and 51–80% was oxidized, primarily in the anoxic hypolimnion (Bastviken et al. 2008). A recent study of several Siberian lakes concluded 61–100% of the upwards flux of CH₄ was oxidized anaerobically in the water column (Cabrol et al. 2020). Similarly, in Dendre Lake, 70–83% of the upwards flux of CH₄ was oxidized in the mostly anoxic water column (Roland et al. 2017).

Calculated Lake numbers (Deemer and Harrison 2019) and Wedderburn numbers (Supporting Information Table S5) suggest that maximum wind speeds were sufficient to cause occasional overturning in May and early June, likely supplying some oxygen or other electron acceptors to the hypolimnion. However, the supply of electron acceptors to the hypolimnion was greatly limited as anoxic conditions developed during July and August. Lake numbers and Wedderburn numbers increased in July and August (Supporting Information Table S5), suggesting that overturning was inhibited as summertime stratification developed. Direct measurements of along-lake temperature sections during summer confirm that

vertical isotherm displacements are small compared with the lake depth (Henderson and Deemer 2012). Consistent with these observations, time series measured at both ends of the lake during summer display seiche-induced temperature fluctuations that are much smaller than the full-depth temperature variations (Nielson and Henderson unpubl.; Deemer et al. 2015; Henderson 2016b).

Sufficient O₂ was present in the hypolimnion to explain the observed oxidation rates in June (Supporting Information Table S4). In contrast, during the July–August period of strong stable stratification, the supply of electron acceptors commonly attributed to CH₄ oxidation (O₂, NO₃⁻, and SO₄²⁻) was insufficient to fuel all of the CH₄ oxidation necessary to balance the hypolimnion CH₄ budget (Supporting Information Table S4). Therefore, although our mass balance indicates CH₄ oxidation was active in the lake hypolimnion during summer, it remains unclear which electron acceptors were responsible for CH₄ oxidation. Previous investigations in other lakes (including Lacamas) have reported significant CH₄ oxidation occurring in the anaerobic hypolimnion that could not be sustained by the standing supply of terminal electron acceptors available (Crowe et al. 2011; Norði et al. 2013; Bles et al. 2014; Reed et al. 2017). These studies have proposed alternative mechanisms to explain oxidation in the anaerobic hypolimnion, such as cryptic cycling of terminal electron acceptors (Norði et al. 2013), recycling of electron acceptors in the water column (Crowe et al. 2011), or micro-aerobic oxidation (Bles et al. 2014). Previous work in Lacamas has hypothesized that organic acids, possibly acting as direct electron acceptors or electron shuttles, could support significant rates of oxidation in the anaerobic hypolimnion (Reed et al. 2017). Although we do not have the data to fully explore the role of cryptic cycling, electron acceptor recycling, micro-aerobic oxidation, and/or organic acids in supporting methanotrophy within Lacamas, investigating these possible mechanisms is an important area for future work.

In our mass balance, methanotrophy was invoked to explain the mass of CH₄ remaining after quantifying CH₄ that entered, was stored, and exited the hypolimnion (Fig. 8). Accordingly, if the mass of CH₄ entering the hypolimnion (i.e., time-averaged fluxes across the BBL) was overestimated, hypolimnetic oxidation rates would also be overestimated. A reduction in time-averaged BBL fluxes of 68%, 88%, and 58% would be required to calculate zero oxidation in the hypolimnion in June, July, and August, respectively. If BBL fluxes were consistently overestimated by half, oxidation in the hypolimnion would still be required to explain the fate of 37%, 75%, and 17% of CH₄ flux observed across the BBL in June, July, and August, respectively. Our conclusion that methanotrophy is likely responsible for the loss of CH₄ in the hypolimnion is therefore robust even to significant overestimations of BBL flux.

Spatial variability in sediment CH₄ flux within Lacamas could have also contributed to error in BBL fluxes used in the

mass balance. We account for some of this spatial variability in our mass balance by considering how the onset of anoxia varies with depth in the summer, influencing the surface area of sediment that releases CH₄ (see Fig. 8 and caption). Spatial variability in sediment organic carbon accumulation, which we did not consider in our study, may influence the exchange of CH₄, O₂, and other compounds between the sediment and water column (Steinsberger et al. 2017; Schwefel et al. 2018). However, considering spatial variability in sediment dynamics would likely increase our BBL flux estimates. Methane fluxes were estimated in the deepest region of the reservoir (Fig. 2), where CH₄ ebullition data in Lacamas suggests rates of sediment methanogenesis are low compared to shallower regions closer to the reservoir inlet (Harrison et al. 2017).

Conclusions and future directions

The flux gradient approach, adapted here for the first time for use in a stratified lake BBL, lends new insight into patterns and controls of lake BBL CH₄ fluxes. Using this technique, we demonstrate large seasonal and sub-daily variability in CH₄ fluxes within the BBL of a seiche-driven, eutrophic reservoir. Methane transport across the BBL increased from spring to summer, coincident with the development of anoxia in the hypolimnion. Short-term fluctuations in CH₄ flux were linked to seiche-associated variations in BBL conditions, with smaller fluxes observed during near-bed stratification and much larger fluxes observed during bursts of intense near-bed turbulent mixing.

The implications of the observed variability in CH₄ fluxes are not yet well understood and an important area for future study in other seiche-driven lakes. Short-term variability in CH₄ transport across the BBL could potentially influence CH₄ supply to methanotrophs in the hypolimnion, thereby affecting a critical pathway for lentic carbon processing (Reis et al. 2022) and a significant player in the pelagic food web of some lakes (Kankaala et al. 2006a,b). Seasonal variability in BBL fluxes compared with seasonal CH₄ accumulation suggested intense oxidation in the anoxic hypolimnion of Lacamas, a phenomenon reported in other stratified lakes (Bastviken et al. 2008; Roland et al. 2017; Cabrol et al. 2020). Future work could identify which electron acceptors support methanotrophy in the hypolimnion, and mechanisms supporting electron transfer.

Our results also highlight the need to develop techniques that consider BBL dynamics when measuring benthic CH₄ fluxes (D'Ambrosio and Harrison 2022). In addition to the flux gradient approach presented here, eddy correlation (Lorrai et al. 2010) or relaxed eddy accumulation techniques (Lemaire et al. 2017) consider boundary layer dynamics and could be adapted for measuring near-bed CH₄ fluxes in lakes, pending the development of sufficiently high-frequency dissolved CH₄ sensors. Flux gradient approaches have the advantage of not requiring fast-response concentration measurements, unlike eddy covariance techniques. Therefore, the flux gradient

approach developed here could be applied to examine benthic fluxes of other ecologically important solutes that are difficult to measure with fast-response instruments, such as phosphorus or manganese. Coupling flux gradient measurements with monitoring of BBL conditions could provide potentially powerful future insight into how physical and biological processes influence the biogeochemistry of lake BBLs.

Data availability statement

All data are available upon request to the authors.

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Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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