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Validation of surface currents from operational ocean models against surface drifter data

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Surface currents are an important output parameter from operational ocean models with a variety of potential applications. However there is a scarcity of direct measurements with which to validate the models. Here we present validation of analyses from the FOAM(*) operational system against data from surface drifters deployed by the Global Drifter Program (GDP).

The method of validation will be described in detail and various statistical measures presented, including RMS errors and correlation scores. The impact on these measures of model resolution, the assimilation of altimeter data, and tuning of the model viscosities will also be discussed.

(*)Forecast Ocean Assimilation Model