



Abstract Details

[AOGS 1st Annual Meeting](#) > [Ocean and Atmospheres](#) > **Midlatitude Ocean Variability and Forcing of the Pacific Decadal Oscillations: Responses and Potential Feedback** >

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Title: Midlatitude Ocean Variability and Forcing of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation: Responses and Potential Feedback

Abstract:

Sea surface temperature (SST) signals in the western North Pacific over the past three decades are dominated by fluctuations with a 10-year time scale. By analyzing the sea surface height (SSH) data from the TOPEX/Poseidon satellite altimeter measurements and by hindcasting the SSH signals over the past 45 years using surface wind stress data, we found that the intensity of the zonal Kuroshio Extension (KE) jet modulated with a dominant time scale of ~ 11 yrs. Weakening (strengthening) of the jet is caused by westward (eastward) expansions of negative (positive) SSH anomalies south of the KE and positive (negative) SSH anomalies north of the KE. Emergence of oppositely-signed SSH anomalies on the two sides of the KE jet is due to the different propagating speeds of the baroclinic Rossby waves, which cause wind-induced SSH anomalies generated over the eastern North Pacific to propagate westward. By examining the baroclinic adjustment processes under stochastic atmospheric forcing relevant to the midlatitude North Pacific, we found that the maximum modulation of the zonal KE jet is obtained when the forcing period is about 10 years. At shorter forcing periods, phases of the wind-induced SSH signals across the KE jet change rapidly along the jet length, decreasing the coherent modulation of the zonal mean jet. At longer forcing periods, the small SSH difference across the jet (due to the broad length scales of the wind-induced SSH signals) again suppresses the amplitude of the modulating KE jet. The decadal varying SST signals are in part caused by this modulation of the KE jet. A more complete description of this study can be found in Qiu (2003, *J. Phys. Oceanogr.*, 33, 2465-2482).

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