

Abstract

Due to limited resolution and inaccurate physical parameterizations, weather and climate models consistently develop biases compared to the observed atmosphere. These biases are problematic for forecasting on timescales from medium-range weather to centennial-scale climate. Using the FV3GFS model at coarse resolution, we propose a method of machine learning corrective tendencies from a hindcast simulation nudged towards an observational analysis. We show that a random forest can predict the nudging tendencies from this hindcast simulation using only the model state as input. This random forest is then coupled to FV3GFS, adding corrective tendencies of temperature, specific humidity and horizontal winds at each timestep. The coupled model shows no signs of instability in year-long simulations and has significant reductions in short-term forecast error for 500hPa height, surface pressure and near-surface temperature. Furthermore, the root mean square error of the annual-mean precipitation is reduced by about 20%.

Plain Language Summary

After initialization from a realistic snapshot of the atmosphere, weather and climate models inevitably develop predictable errors compared to the real world. This decreases the usefulness of forecasts. These errors arise from the coarse resolution of the numerical models and from the uncertain treatment of small-scale processes. We propose a method to reduce these errors by training a machine learning model to correct for them as the atmospheric model proceeds. We show that a random forest can make reasonably skillful predictions of the required correction using a snapshot of the model state as input. When we make a forecast with the machine-learning corrected model, the lead-time for the prediction of important mid-tropospheric and surface variables is increased by half a day to a day. The pattern of precipitation predicted by the machine learning corrected model is also more realistic, with a decrease in excessive rainfall over high mountains. On the other hand, the corrected model develops larger errors in temperature in the high latitudes, particularly in the lower stratosphere.

1 Introduction

Despite steady improvements in the skill of numerical weather and climate models over the last decades, a longstanding issue is the development of biases after initialization. These biases (systematic forecast errors) cause degradation of performance for both medium range weather forecasting and subseasonal to decadal climate predictions. They arise from limited resolution and inaccurate physical parameterizations. Typically, post-processing steps are developed to handle these biases such as model output statistics for weather forecasting (Glahn & Lowry, 1972) or ensemble bias correction for seasonal prediction (Stockdale et al., 1988; Arribas et al., 2011). In this study, we propose an online bias correction method using machine learning (ML). We apply a corrective tendency to the prognostic state of the atmospheric model at each time step in order to reduce model error growth. The necessary corrective tendencies are estimated from a hindcast simulation which is linearly nudged towards an observational analysis. An ML model is trained to predict the nudging tendencies using only the state of the model as inputs. This ML model can then be used in a forecast to keep the model evolution on a more realistic manifold.

Online bias correction has been previously proposed (Leith, 1978; Saha, 1992; DelSole & Hou, 1999) and implemented in a prototype manner (Danforth et al., 2007; DelSole et al., 2008; Yang et al., 2008). In these studies, a corrective tendency is typically estimated from the error growth within the first day of a forecast and the applied tendencies are time-mean or seasonal-mean values. It was found that applying such a correction can lead to the reduction of error growth of corrected variables. State-dependent corrections, typically linearly dependent on the atmospheric state (e.g. DelSole et al.,

2008), have been attempted but with little benefit over time-mean tendencies. The distinguishing features of this work are the use of a non-linear function estimator (specifically a random forest) to estimate the corrective tendencies, and the consideration of the effects of correcting specific humidity onto the surface precipitation.

The use of ML for atmospheric model parameterization has seen significant recent effort (Krasnopolsky et al., 2013; Rasp et al., 2018; Brenowitz & Bretherton, 2018). The typical goal has been whole-scale replacement of physical parameterizations either by emulating the behavior of an existing scheme (Krasnopolsky et al., 2005; O’Gorman & Dwyer, 2018) or by learning from high-resolution simulations (Brenowitz & Bretherton, 2018, 2019; Yuval & O’Gorman, 2020) or reanalysis (McGibbon & Bretherton, 2019). In this work, we leverage the significant effort that has already been put into developing skillful physics routines and use ML to provide a correction on top of a full suite of parameterizations. This empirical strategy also reveals physical processes in the target model which are behaving unrealistically (Rodwell & Palmer, 2007). Thus, it provides information that can be used to tune existing physical parameterizations and an automated way to correct for remaining biases after tuning. The proposed method uses existing observational analysis data and does not require costly high-resolution simulations to generate training data. This makes it amenable for groups who wish to explore improving their GCMs with ML but do not have capability for global storm-resolving simulations (Stevens et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2020).

2 Methods

2.1 Atmospheric model

To test our proposed method we use NOAA’s global weather forecast system FV3GFS (Zhou et al., 2019). FV3GFS is based on the FV3 non-hydrostatic dynamical core on a cubed-sphere grid (Putman & Lin, 2007) coupled to physics parameterizations implemented by NOAA’s Environmental Modeling Center. Briefly, we use the hybrid eddy-diffusivity mass flux turbulence scheme (Han et al., 2016), GFDL microphysics (Zhou et al., 2019), scale-aware mass flux convection scheme (Han & Pan, 2011), RRTMG radiation (Iacono et al., 2008), and the mountain blocking and orographic gravity wave drag parameterization. The operational version uses C768 (13 km) grid resolution and 64 vertical levels (NOAA, 2018). We use a coarse C48 (approximately 200km) horizontal resolution with 79 vertical levels and a physics timestep of 15 minutes.

2.2 Nudging approach

In order to estimate the atmospheric model biases across seasons and the diurnal cycle, we perform a two-year hindcast simulation in which the prognostic state is continuously nudged towards an observational analysis (Fig. 1). Specifically, a linear relaxation term is added to the prognostic equations of certain variables:

$$\frac{\partial a}{\partial t} = -\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla a + Q_a^p - \underbrace{\frac{a - a_{obs}}{\tau}}_{\Delta Q_a}, \quad (1)$$

where a is a prognostic variable, $-\mathbf{v} \cdot \nabla a$ is advection by the dynamical core, Q_a^p is the tendency of a due to all physical parameterizations (e.g. Yanai et al., 1973), a_{obs} is an estimate of the observed value of a at the given time and position, and τ is a nudging timescale. The nudging tendencies ΔQ_a are saved as a diagnostic and are the target for the ML described in Section 2.3. The nudging keeps the model simulation tracking close to the observed evolution of the atmosphere and the nudging tendencies are an estimate of the (negative) model error throughout the simulation.

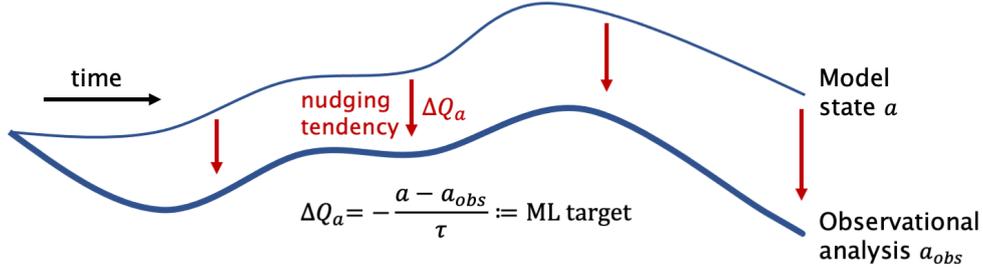


Figure 1. Schematic of procedure to generate the nudging tendencies which serve as a target for the ML model.

109 The nudging is active for temperature (nudging tendency labeled ΔQ_1), specific
 110 humidity (ΔQ_2), horizontal winds (ΔQ_u and ΔQ_v) and surface pressure.¹ A 6-hour timescale
 111 τ is used for all variables. The reference dataset is the GFS analysis (NCEI, 2020) on
 112 a 1.4° latitude-longitude grid. The analysis is available every 6 hours, and is linearly in-
 113 terpolated to obtain a state in between these times. At each timestep during the sim-
 114 ulation, the analysis is interpolated vertically to the model’s pressure surfaces as well as
 115 horizontally to FV3GFS’s cubed-sphere grid. No nudging is applied to any variable in
 116 the top-most model level to avoid the sponge layer, and no nudging is applied for spe-
 117 cific humidity above 100hPa due to low confidence in the analysis dataset at these lev-
 118 els.

119 Nudging specific humidity impacts the hydrological cycle. For example, if the column-
 120 integrated humidity nudging is non-zero, then the nudging is a source or sink of mois-
 121 ture for the atmospheric column. As will be shown in Section 3.1, the humidity nudg-
 122 ing dries the vast majority of columns so can typically be interpreted as additional pre-
 123 cipitation. Therefore, we subtract the column-integrated moistening due to nudging from
 124 the surface precipitation rate generated by the physics parameterizations. For the cases
 125 when the moistening due to nudging is larger than the physics precipitation we set the
 126 total precipitation rate to zero:

$$P = \max(0, P_{physics} - \langle \Delta Q_2 \rangle), \quad (2)$$

127 where $P_{physics}$ is the surface precipitation rate produced by the physics parameteriza-
 128 tions (the shallow convection, deep convection and microphysics schemes) and

$$\langle \Delta Q_2 \rangle = \frac{1}{g} \int_0^{p_s} \Delta Q_2 dp. \quad (3)$$

129 The clipping at zero in Eq. 2 effectively acts a moisture source for the coupled land-atmosphere
 130 system with consequences described in the discussion section.

131 The FV3 dynamical core uses D-grid staggering (Arakawa & Lamb, 1977) and the
 132 horizontal winds point in grid-relative directions instead of east and north. To nudge the
 133 winds, they are interpolated to the grid center and rotated to latitude-longitude coord-
 134 inates before the nudging tendencies are computed and then transformed back to the
 135 D-grid. This is analogous to how the GFS physical parameterizations interact with the
 136 dynamical core winds.

¹ Surface pressure is not a prognostic variable in the non-hydrostatic FV3GFS model. The nudging tendency is computed using the diagnosed surface pressure, and then applied to the pressure thickness of each atmospheric layer proportionally to the coefficient of relation between the layer pressure and surface pressure specified by the vertical hybrid-sigma coordinate.

137 Over the ocean, the surface boundary condition is a prescribed sea-surface temper-
 138 ature from the same GFS analysis dataset used for the nudging. The monthly 1982-2012
 139 climatology of sea ice extent from the NCEP Climate Forecast System Reanalysis (Saha
 140 et al., 2010) is used to determine the ice-ocean boundary.

141 **2.3 Machine learning architecture**

142 A random forest is trained using the scikit-learn Python package (Pedregosa et al.,
 143 2011) to predict the nudging tendencies for a particular GCM column given the atmo-
 144 spheric profile at this column. The inputs and outputs are taken from the nudged hind-
 145 cast simulation described above. The random forest predicts the nudging tendencies of
 146 temperature, specific humidity, eastward wind and northward wind. Its inputs are tem-
 147 perature, specific humidity, eastward wind, northward wind, the land/sea/sea-ice mask,
 148 surface geopotential and the cosine of the solar zenith angle. The first four inputs, which
 149 depend on the vertical level, describe the state of the atmosphere. The mask and sur-
 150 face geopotential distinguish between land and ocean and indicate surface topography.
 151 The cosine of zenith angle is a proxy for insolation.

152 The random forest is trained by minimizing a mean squared error loss function in
 153 which each scalar output is normalized by its standard deviation. Sixteen individual de-
 154 cision trees form the random forest; each tree has a maximum depth of thirteen. Sec-
 155 tion 2.5 will describe the sampling of the training and test data in more detail.

156 **2.4 Coupling of machine learning to GCM**

157 We use a Python wrapper of the FV3GFS Fortran model (McGibbon et al., 2021)
 158 in order to execute Python code during the model simulation. Briefly, the wrapper al-
 159 lows viewing and modifying the model state from a Python script at certain checkpoints
 160 in the main Fortran time loop. We obtain the input variables at the end of each timestep,
 161 evaluate the random forest to compute tendencies of temperature, humidity and winds,
 162 multiply these by the physics timestep and then apply these increments to the model state.
 163 The tendency of specific humidity predicted by the random forest is limited so that the
 164 resulting specific humidity is not negative. Without this adjustment, regions of negative
 165 humidity arise near the poles and typically lead to model crashes after about two months.
 166 The effects of the column moisture tendency from the ML on surface precipitation is han-
 167 dled in the same way as the nudging case (Eq. 2).

168 The random forest prediction at each timestep takes about one quarter the time
 169 as the full suite of physics parameterizations. This is about 10% of the total wall clock
 170 time for the simulation, only a slight increase in computational cost. On the other hand,
 171 the random forest trained for this study requires about 360 MB of memory, which is a
 172 substantial addition to the approximately 600 MB required on each processor to run a
 173 baseline version of FV3GFS at C48 resolution, assuming one rank per cubed-sphere tile.

174 **2.5 Experiment configuration and validation**

175 A procedure is designed to 1) generate training data from across the seasonal cy-
 176 cle and 2) test the online and offline model skill on a time period independent from the
 177 training data. We first perform a two-year long simulation that is initialized from GFS
 178 analysis on 1 January 2015 and continuously nudged towards the GFS analysis as de-
 179 scribed in Section 2.2. The nudging tendencies and prognostic state are saved every five
 180 hours to ensure sampling around the diurnal cycle.

181 The random forest is trained on output from the first year of the two-year simu-
 182 lation. Columns from 160 time steps which uniformly span 2015 are used for training,
 183 resulting in about 2.2M samples (all $6 \cdot 48 \cdot 48 = 13824$ columns are used for each time).

184 To evaluate the offline skill of the random forest, a test dataset of 90 evenly spaced times
 185 is chosen from the second year (2016) of the two-year nudged run. The performance of
 186 FV3GFS coupled to the random forest, which we call online skill, is tested in two ways.
 187 First, we initialize twelve 10-day forecasts each starting from the first of the month for
 188 every month of 2016. These will be used to evaluate the error growth on short- to medium-
 189 range weather forecasting timescales. Second, we initialize a single year-long run on 1
 190 January 2016 in order to evaluate longer timescale statistics. Time-mean biases in pre-
 191 cipitation and other fields will be diagnosed from this simulation. All forecasts are ini-
 192 tialized from GFS analysis. We compare the ML-corrected simulations against identically-
 193 configured baseline runs without ML.

194 To compute errors in the online simulations, we use the second half of the two-year
 195 nudged simulation as truth. For variables which are directly nudged (temperature, hu-
 196 midity, surface pressure and horizontal winds) this is a reasonable representation of the
 197 true state of the atmosphere for our purposes, assuming that model errors are substan-
 198 tially larger than the errors of the GFS analysis. However, precipitation or other diag-
 199 nostic quantities in that simulation may differ strongly from observational estimates. Thus,
 200 we compare the simulated precipitation patterns against daily data from the Global Pre-
 201 cipitation Climatology Project v1.3 (GPCPv1.3; Huffman et al., 2001). The observed
 202 product is on a 1° by 1° latitude-longitude grid and the model output is interpolated from
 203 the cubed-sphere to this grid for comparison.

204 **3 Results**

205 **3.1 Nudging tendencies and offline performance**

206 Before evaluating the performance of the random forest, it is useful to examine the
 207 structure of the nudging tendencies. By definition, the time-mean model bias relative
 208 to the reference analysis dataset is equal to the negative of the time-mean nudging ten-
 209 dency multiplied by the nudging timescale (Eq. 1). Therefore, Figs. 2a and 2c show that
 210 our baseline configuration of the FV3GFS model drifts moister and cooler than the GFS
 211 analysis in the column integral since the nudging tends to dry and heat in most regions.
 212 The spatial pattern of the nudging indicates that it especially strengthens the drying and
 213 heating in convective regions—Indo-Pacific warm pool and inter-tropical convergence zone—
 214 and in midlatitude fronts (see also Supplemental Movie). The imprinting of the cubed-
 215 sphere grid in Fig. 2a is due to the nudging tendency correcting artifacts introduced by
 216 the dynamical core at the coarse C48 resolution, and we expect this signal would be di-
 217 minished at higher resolutions (Zhao et al., 2018). The pattern of the tendencies sug-
 218 gest that the nudging of temperature and humidity amplifies precipitation and latent heat-
 219 ing, likely correcting a bias of the convective parameterization to generate insufficient
 220 rainfall in realistic conditions for this grid resolution.

221 When evaluated offline on samples from the test data, the random forest success-
 222 fully predicts the time-mean pattern of heating and moistening (Figs. 2b and 2d). The
 223 random forest also has only small global-mean column-integrated biases: about 1.3% too
 224 much heating and 2.5% too much drying. On the other hand, the ML does not repro-
 225 duce some finer-scale features of the test data such as the heating/cooling dipole near
 226 the tip of South America, regional patterns of heating/cooling over land and the cubed-
 227 sphere grid artifacts.

228 It is important to also evaluate the skill of the random forest in making instantane-
 229 ous predictions of the nudging tendency. Figure S2a-b shows the zonal mean R^2 skill
 230 for the heating and moistening as a function of latitude and pressure. The heating (ΔQ_1)
 231 predictions are substantially more skillful than the moistening (ΔQ_2) predictions. In the
 232 tropical lower troposphere, the random forest predictions explain 30-50% of the variance
 233 of temperature nudging tendencies. There is also notable skill around the tropical tropopause,

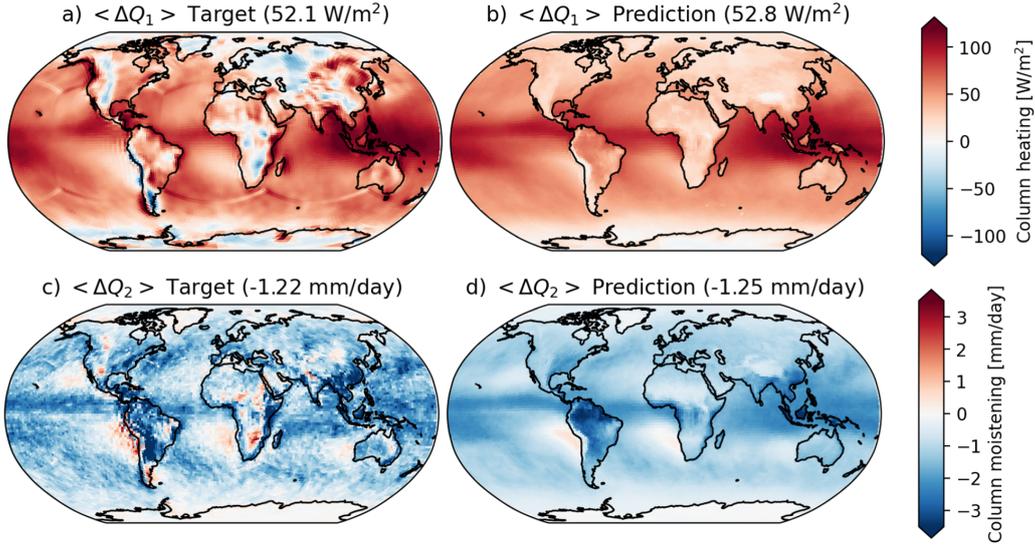


Figure 2. Column integrated heating (top) and moistening (bottom) from nudging, time-averaged across offline test data. Actual tendencies from nudged simulation shown on left and offline random forest predictions on right. Values in titles are the global mean of each panel.

234 the Northern Hemisphere mid-latitudes and the polar regions. The humidity nudging
 235 predictions are less skillful, with a maximum of 20% of variance explained in the up-
 236 per troposphere near the equator. Despite the apparent low skill, recall that the random
 237 forest accurately predicts the time-mean humidity nudging tendency. Part of the rea-
 238 son for poor R^2 performance is that the nudging tendency of ΔQ_2 is particularly noisy
 239 due to fast variability of the model state. For example, note the local speckling in Fig. 2c,
 240 which is already an average over 90 timesteps. We do not expect this noisiness to be learn-
 241 able and indeed it is smoothed by the random forest (Fig. 2d).

242 3.2 Online performance: weather skill

243 How does the ML-corrected FV3GFS performs when evaluated with metrics for weather
 244 forecast skill and climate drift? A key measure for the skill of a weather model is the speed
 245 at which the global root mean squared error (RMSE) of particular variables grows. This
 246 indicates how well the model simulates the evolution of the circulation of the atmosphere.

247 Figure 3 shows global RMSE of 500-hPa geopotential height, surface pressure and
 248 lowest model layer temperature (see Section 2.5 for details of the forecast experiments).
 249 The ML-corrected FV3GFS has significantly lower error than the baseline model for all
 250 three of these variables at lead times ranging from 1-day to 10-days. Depending on the
 251 variable and time elapsed, the ML-corrected FV3GFS model is able to make equally skill-
 252 ful forecasts from half to a full day further into the future. This is a substantial improve-
 253 ment given the marginal increase in computational cost associated with evaluating the
 254 random forest once per timestep. Furthermore, no variable we have examined has sig-
 255 nificantly worse skill on the 10-day timescale in the ML-corrected model compared to
 256 the baseline.

257 What drives the improvements in Fig. 3? We trained an random forest to only predict
 258 ΔQ_1 and ΔQ_2 and not predict the momentum tendencies (blue lines in Fig. S3).
 259 Clearly, the increase in forecast skill for surface pressure arises from predicting the wind
 260 tendencies. The baseline model has a biased zonal mean surface pressure pattern, with

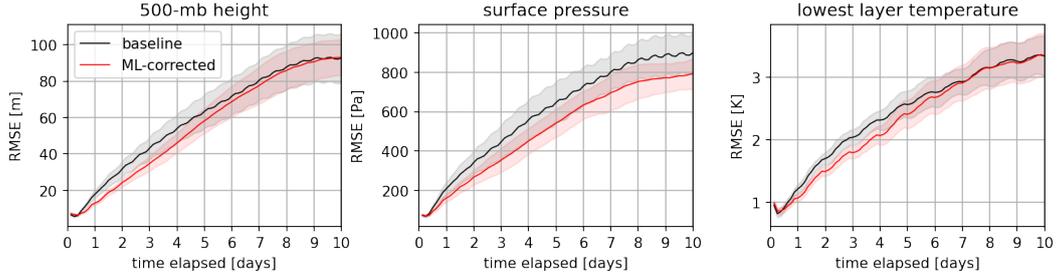


Figure 3. Global root mean squared error for (left) 500hPa geopotential height, (middle) surface pressure and (right) lowest model layer temperature. Averaged across 12 forecasts initialized on the first of every month of 2016. Shading shows one standard deviation. Baseline (black) is standard FV3GFS model and ML-corrected (red) is the FV3GFS coupled to the ML model.

261 overly high pressure in the polar regions and low pressure in the tropics. The ML cor-
 262 rection of winds strongly decreases this bias. On the other hand, the increase in skill for
 263 near-surface temperature is similar for the two ML models, indicating that the correc-
 264 tive tendencies of temperature and/or specific humidity are responsible for this improve-
 265 ment.

266 3.3 Online performance: climate skill

267 For multi-year climate simulations there are additional requirements for any machine-
 268 learning corrected GCM. The model must be able to run indefinitely without numeri-
 269 cal instabilities arising. Some previous works using ML for parameterization replacement
 270 have struggled with this issue, especially when using neural networks (e.g. Brenowitz &
 271 Bretherton, 2019; Brenowitz, Beucler, et al., 2020; Rasp, 2020). Furthermore, the cli-
 272 mate of the model must not drift far from a realistic state over the course of a months-
 273 to years-long run. Ideally, the machine-learning corrected model will have a climate state
 274 that is less biased than the baseline model.

275 We perform a year-long simulation initialized on 1 January 2016. Since the train-
 276 ing data for the random forest is drawn from 2015 only, this is an independent verifica-
 277 tion time period. The ML-corrected model runs for the full year without any crashes or
 278 any special effort to tune its architecture or hyperparameters. It was necessary to add
 279 a limiter to the online predictions of the specific humidity tendencies by the random for-
 280 est to ensure that the specific humidity did not become negative. Without this limiter,
 281 which is active in the upper troposphere in about 15% of grid columns on average, re-
 282 gions of negative specific humidity develop and lead to very cold temperatures near the
 283 surface that eventually cause model crashes.

284 The climatological spatial pattern of precipitation in the ML-corrected simulation
 285 is notably improved compared to the baseline run (Fig. 4). Using the GPCPv1.3 dataset
 286 (Huffman et al., 2001) as a reference, the spatial RMSE of the 2016-mean precipitation
 287 substantially decreases by about 24%, from 2.14 mm/day to 1.62 mm/day. While there
 288 is a slight increase in the global mean bias of precipitation, this quantity is not well-constrained
 289 by the observations (Sun et al., 2018). For comparison, the RMSE of 2016-mean precipi-
 290 tation in the run that is directly nudged towards the GFS analysis is 1.39 mm/day (Fig.
 291 S4). This is a lower bound on the precipitation RMSE we might expect from the ML-
 292 corrected run, suggesting it has realized over two-thirds of the greatest possible precipi-
 293 tation bias improvement we might hope to achieve. The reduction of precipitation er-

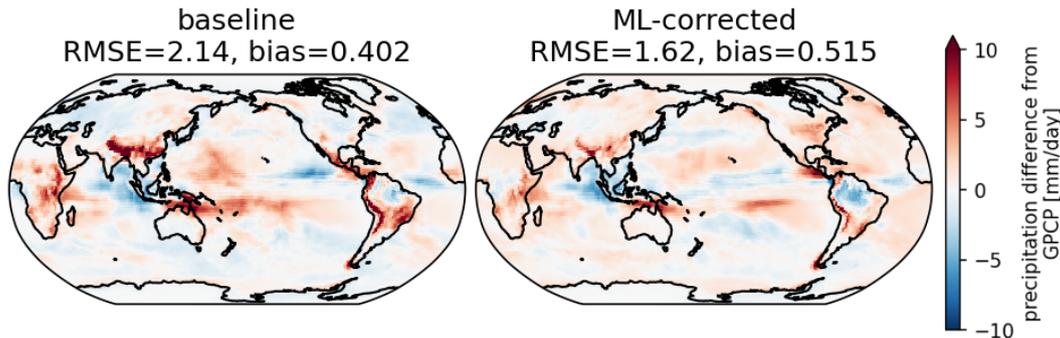


Figure 4. Bias of precipitation, $P_{physics} - \langle \Delta Q_2 \rangle$, averaged over 2016. Bias is computed relative to GPCPv1.3 observational product. Global root mean square error and global mean bias are shown in titles for each run in units of mm/day.

294 rors mostly arises from the corrective tendencies of temperature and moisture (compare
 295 bottom panels of Fig. S4).

296 The baseline model strongly overpredicts precipitation over the Himalaya, South-
 297 east Asia, and the Andes (Fig. 4). In the ML-corrected FV3GFS, the biases of precipi-
 298 tation over these regions are much smaller in magnitude and cover a smaller area. Over
 299 the ocean, the largest biases are mostly decreased in the ML-corrected run (e.g. see West-
 300 ern Pacific). However, the corrected run also has slightly too much precipitation in sub-
 301 tropical regions where there is typically descent. This artifact arises from the nudging
 302 method rather than the ML, as the nudged run has a similar bias (Fig. S4).

303 In the global mean, the year-long ML-corrected runs remain fairly close to the ver-
 304 ification data for total water path and lower tropospheric temperature (Fig. S5). How-
 305 ever, over the first few weeks of the simulation, prognostic variables such as tempera-
 306 ture and zonal wind develop substantial regional biases in the ML-corrected runs. There
 307 is a strong annual-mean bias (up to 30K) of temperature in the polar regions at around
 308 100hPa - 250hPa (Fig. S6) and related biases in zonal mean zonal wind (not shown).

309 4 Discussion

310 The nudging tendencies can be interpreted as biases of the physical parameteriza-
 311 tions of the FV3GFS model at our chosen resolution. For example, the additional heat-
 312 ing and moistening done by the nudging in regions of convection (Fig. 2 and Supplemen-
 313 tal Movie) indicate that the convective parameterization is generating too little precipi-
 314 tation. Similarly, the nudging tendency of winds show an acceleration over topography
 315 in the time-mean (Fig. S1) suggesting that the gravity wave drag parameterization may
 316 be overly active in the column mean. It is likely that tuning of the parameterizations
 317 could reduce the size of these biases and decrease the corrective nudging tendencies that
 318 must be machine-learned.

319 The nudging timescale τ (Eq. 1) is a free parameter for this method. In principle,
 320 a shorter nudging timescale will allow the ML correction to represent faster timescale
 321 processes and better represent the diurnal cycle. On the other hand, for physical pro-
 322 cesses such as boundary layer turbulence which happen on the timescale of hours, there
 323 can be a constant tug-of-war between the nudging tendencies and boundary layer ten-
 324 dencies if the nudging timescale is too short. The 6-hour nudging timescale we used pro-
 325 vided a balance between these competing issues and was also a natural choice given the
 326 6-hourly availability of the GFS analysis. Using a 6-hour nudging timescale for the tem-

327 perature and humidity nudging while using a 24-hour timescale for the wind and sur-
 328 face pressure nudging lead to worse offline and online performance of the random for-
 329 est (not shown).

330 Although the offline skill of the trained random forest is somewhat modest (Sec-
 331 tion 3.1), our strategy is to use ML to apply a correction to a complete set of param-
 332 eterizations. Thus, we neither expect nor require that the ML model we train have ex-
 333 ceptional offline skill. Even a time-mean tendency prediction would provide some ben-
 334 efit (DelSole et al., 2008) and any additional ML-derived skill has potential to gain fur-
 335 ther improvements once coupled back to the atmospheric model.

336 Ideally, one would apply the ML corrections to the the same model that is used to
 337 generate the nudging target (i.e. the analysis). This would ensure that the nudging ten-
 338 dencies represent actual corrections towards the observed state of the atmosphere instead
 339 of, for example, the difference between the boundary layer parameterizations of the two
 340 models. In an operational weather forecasting context, it would be possible to adapt this
 341 method to learn analysis increments from a fully-fledged data assimilation system and
 342 this would ensure consistency between the models.

343 The coupling between the ML tendencies of the atmosphere and the land surface
 344 is a key aspect of this method, in particular because the nudging of specific humidity ac-
 345 counts for about a third of the global mean drying of the atmosphere. Without adding
 346 the column integrated nudging or ML tendency of humidity to the surface precipitation
 347 (Eq. 2) there is a strong drying of the land surface globally. However, due to the require-
 348 ment of maintaining positive precipitation and not having a simple way to modify the
 349 evaporation predicted by the land-surface model, we have introduced a small but sig-
 350 nificant moisture source to the coupled land-atmosphere. The nudging in turn has to coun-
 351 teract this moisture source with further drying, and this may lead to a biased estimate
 352 of the proper nudging tendency of moisture. Ongoing work is exploring whether nudg-
 353 ing soil moisture and learning these tendencies (e.g. DelSole et al., 2008) could help ad-
 354 dress this issue.

355 5 Conclusions

356 We propose a method to perform online bias correction of a general circulation model
 357 using machine learning of nudging tendencies from a hindcast simulation. A random for-
 358 est is able to make reasonably skillful predictions of the nudging tendencies using only
 359 the model state as input. When coupled back to the atmospheric model, the ML-corrected
 360 GCM increases its lead-time forecasts for 500hPa geopotential height and surface pres-
 361 sure by about a day, and for near-surface temperature by about half a day. Furthermore,
 362 the RMSE of the time-mean pattern of precipitation is reduced by about 20%. These
 363 improvements come with only slight increase in computational cost. However, significant
 364 temperature biases develop in the polar lower stratosphere after a number of weeks in
 365 the ML-corrected simulations.

366 One area for future work is investigating how much this method improves higher-
 367 resolution (e.g. operational weather forecast) simulations. Second, being able to predict
 368 the ML correction with a neural network architecture would also be useful for highly par-
 369 allel simulations where memory use is a limitation. Neural networks also show better skill
 370 than random forests in offline tests, although this is not necessarily a key factor for on-
 371 line skill (Brenowitz, Henn, et al., 2020; Yuval et al., 2020). Generating a less noisy train-
 372 ing dataset, for example by smoothing the nudging tendencies in time, could also lead
 373 to better offline skill.

374 Due to the use of historical analysis data, the training dataset is restricted to the
 375 climate of the last few decades and the proposed method may have limitations for use
 376 in climate-change scenarios due to out-of-sample inputs (e.g. O’Gorman & Dwyer, 2018).

377 To handle this limitation, one can use a high-resolution model as a target dataset for nudg-
 378 ing and run the high-resolution simulations for current and future warmed simulations.
 379 We will report on this approach in a forthcoming paper.

380 Acknowledgments

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 382 at GFDL provided assistance in using the nudging capability of FV3GFS and supplied
 383 post-processed GFS analysis data in a form compatible for nudging. We acknowledge
 384 NOAA-EMC, NOAA-GFDL and the UFS Community for publicly hosting source code
 385 for the FV3GFS model (<https://github.com/ufs-community/ufs-weather-model>) and NOAA-
 386 EMC for providing the necessary forcing data to run FV3GFS. The version of FV3GFS
 387 used for this work (<https://github.com/VulcanClimateModeling/fv3gfs-fortran>) contains
 388 minor changes to ease use on cloud computing and as part of a python wrapper
 389 (<https://github.com/VulcanClimateModeling/fv3gfs-wrapper>). GPCPv1.3 data was ob-
 390 tained from NOAA-NCEI (<https://doi.org/10.7289/V5RX998Z>). GFS analysis data is
 391 available at <https://www.nco.ncep.noaa.gov/pmb/products/gfs>. If and when this manuscript
 392 is accepted, we will provide DOI's for the two Vulcan Climate Modeling GitHub repos-
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394 References

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