

Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis

Working Group I contribution to the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report

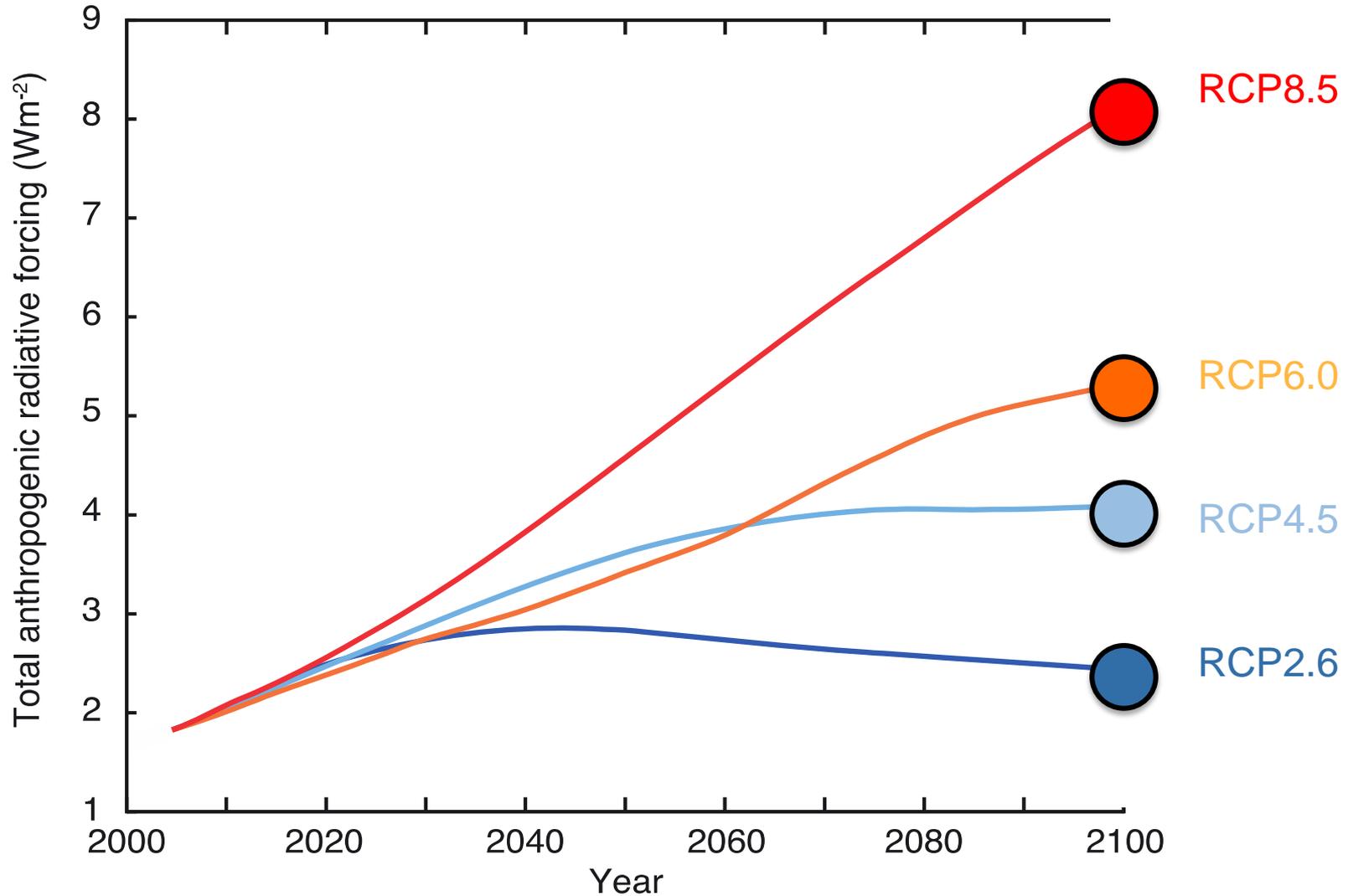
Projections of climate change Climate sensitivity, cumulative carbon

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CLA chapter 12

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Scenarios and projections

Representative Concentration Pathways (RCP)



Projections

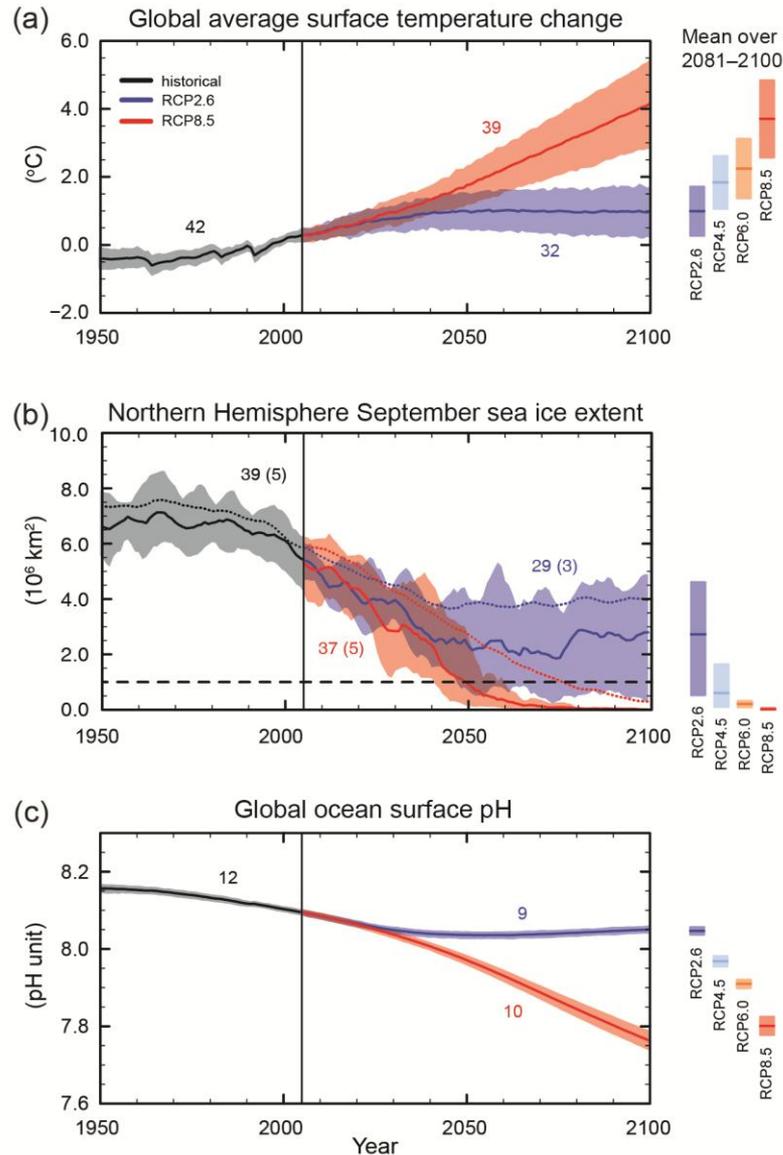


Fig. SPM.7

Projections

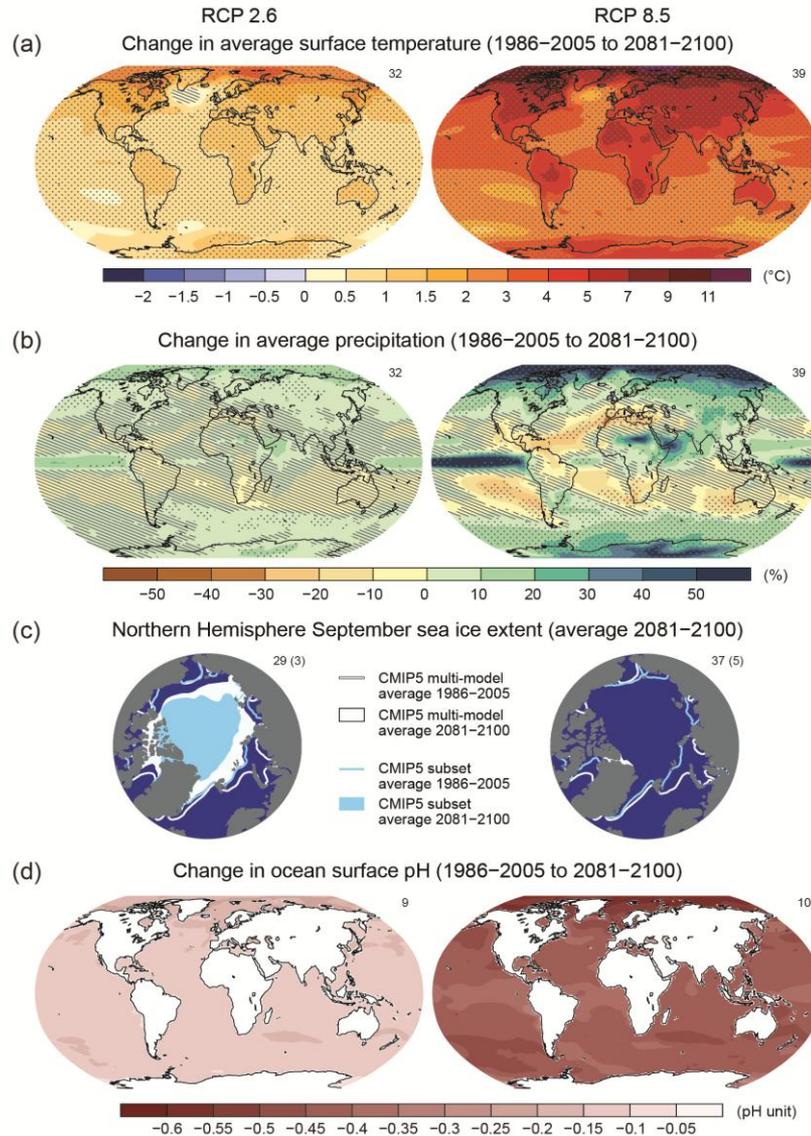


Fig. SPM.8

Uncertainties in projections

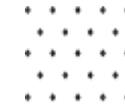
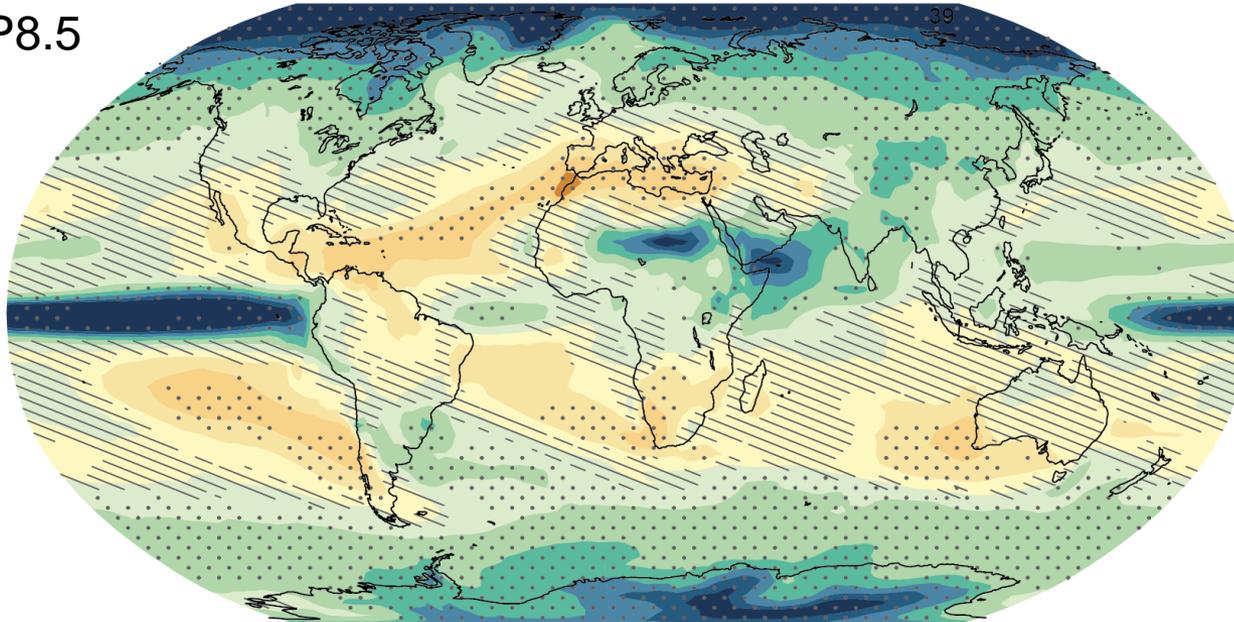
Internal variability – an important source of climate variability

Future climate change is a sum of:

- An externally forced response, due to changes in radiative forcing arising from human activity, variations in the sun and major volcanic eruptions
- Internal variability, e.g. the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) and other patterns, and year-to-year and decade-to-decade fluctuations in winds, precipitation, temperature, ...

How large is the projected change compared to internal variability?

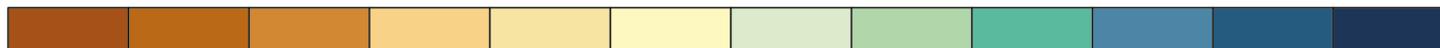
RCP8.5



Stippling: changes are “large” compared with internal variability, and at least 90% of models agree on sign of change



Hatching: changes are “small” compared with internal variability

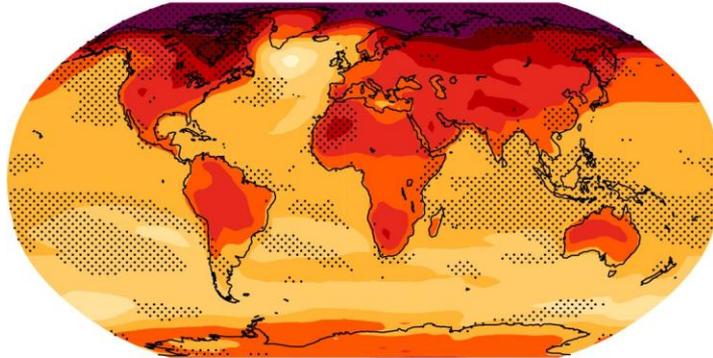


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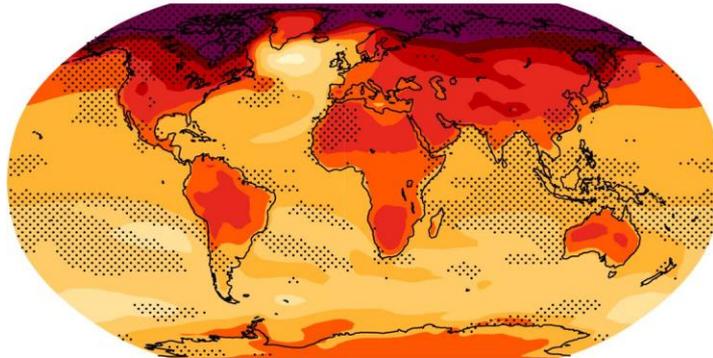
Precipitation change (%)

AR4 and AR5 projections are very similar when accounting for scenario differences

temperature scaled by global T ($^{\circ}\text{C}$ per $^{\circ}\text{C}$)
CMIP3 : 2080-2099



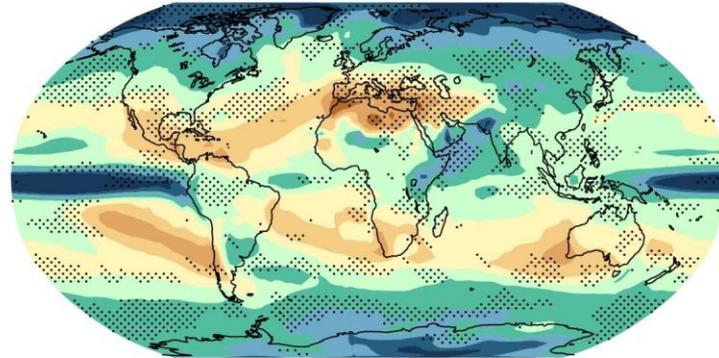
CMIP5 : 2081-2100



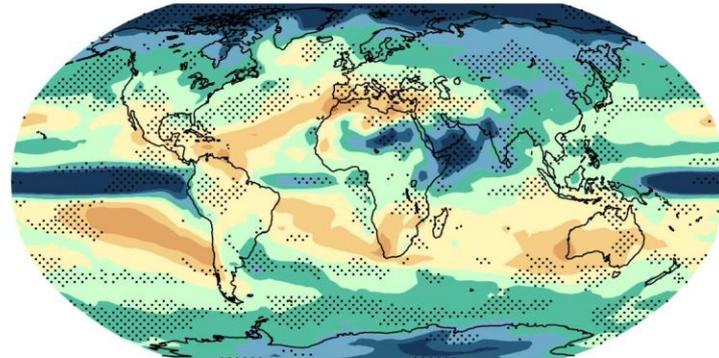
($^{\circ}\text{C}$ per $^{\circ}\text{C}$ global mean change)



precipitation scaled by global T (% per $^{\circ}\text{C}$)
CMIP3 : 2080-2099



CMIP5 : 2081-2100



(% per $^{\circ}\text{C}$ global mean change)

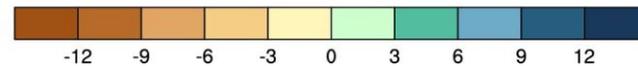
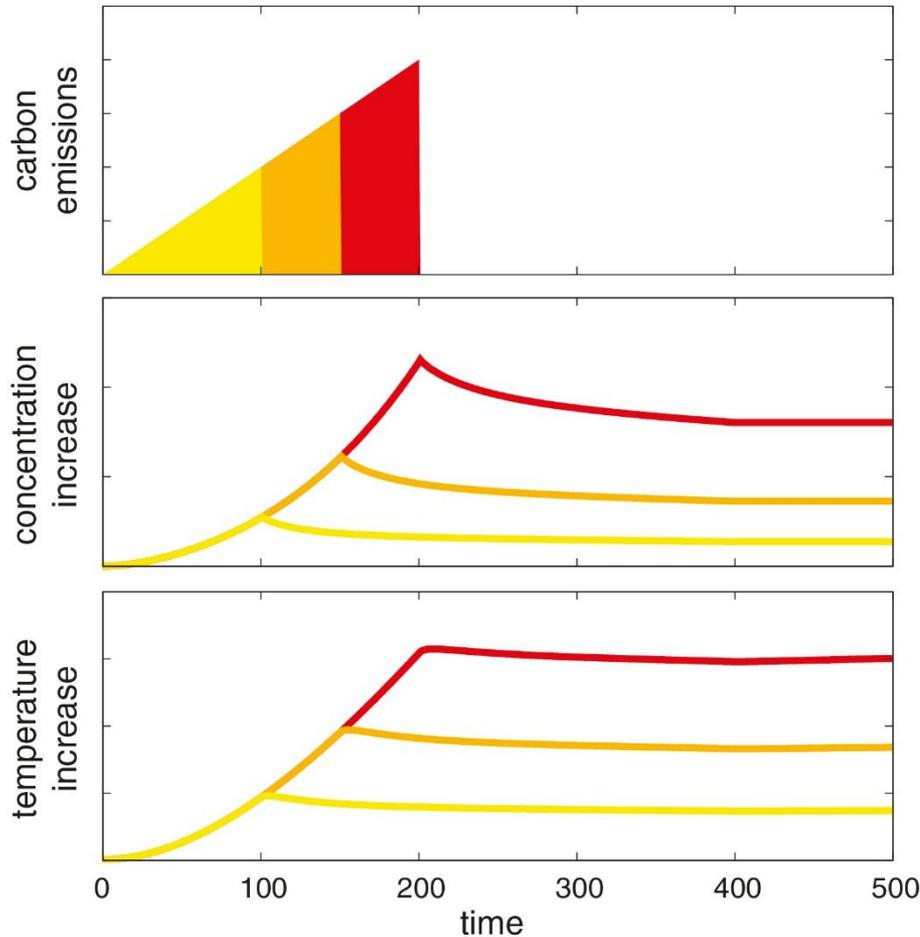


Fig. 12.41

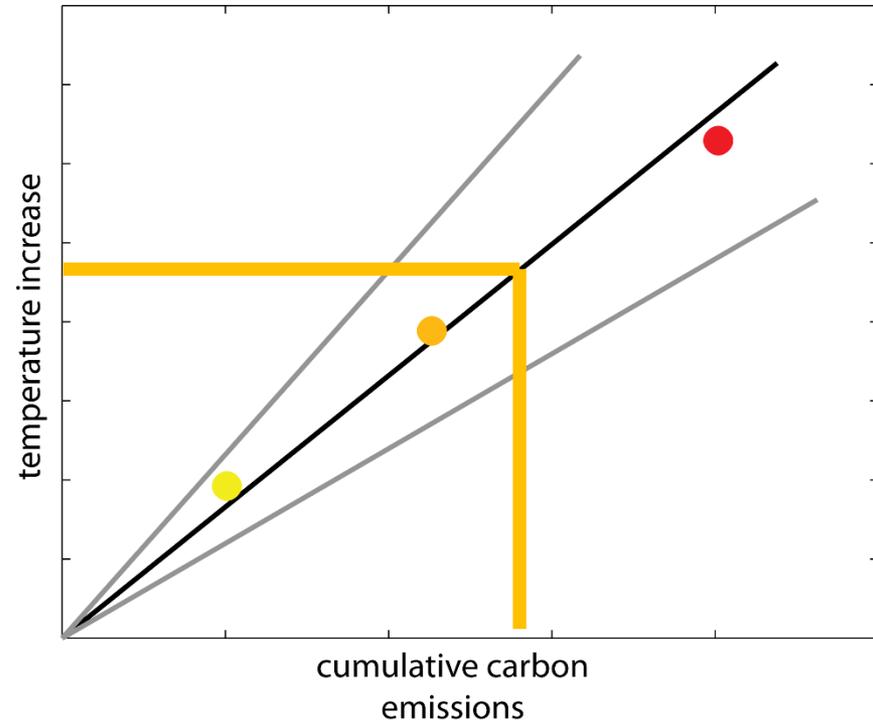
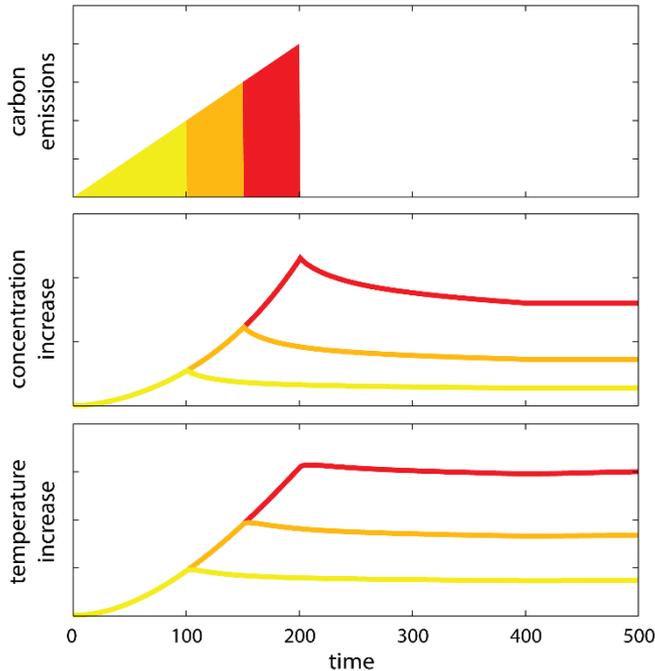
Long term climate change and cumulative carbon

Warming will persist for centuries



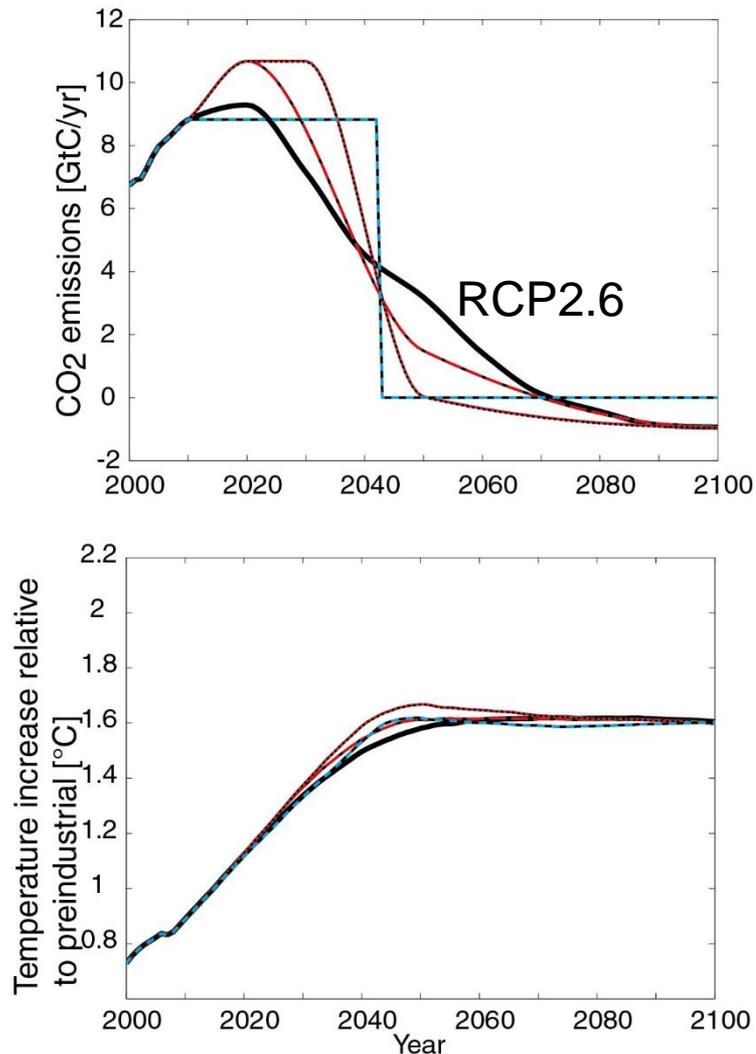
- Zero CO₂ emissions lead to near constant surface temperature.
- A large fraction of climate change persists for many centuries.
- Depending on the scenario, about 15-40% of the emitted carbon remains in the atmosphere for 1000 yrs.

Cumulative carbon determines warming



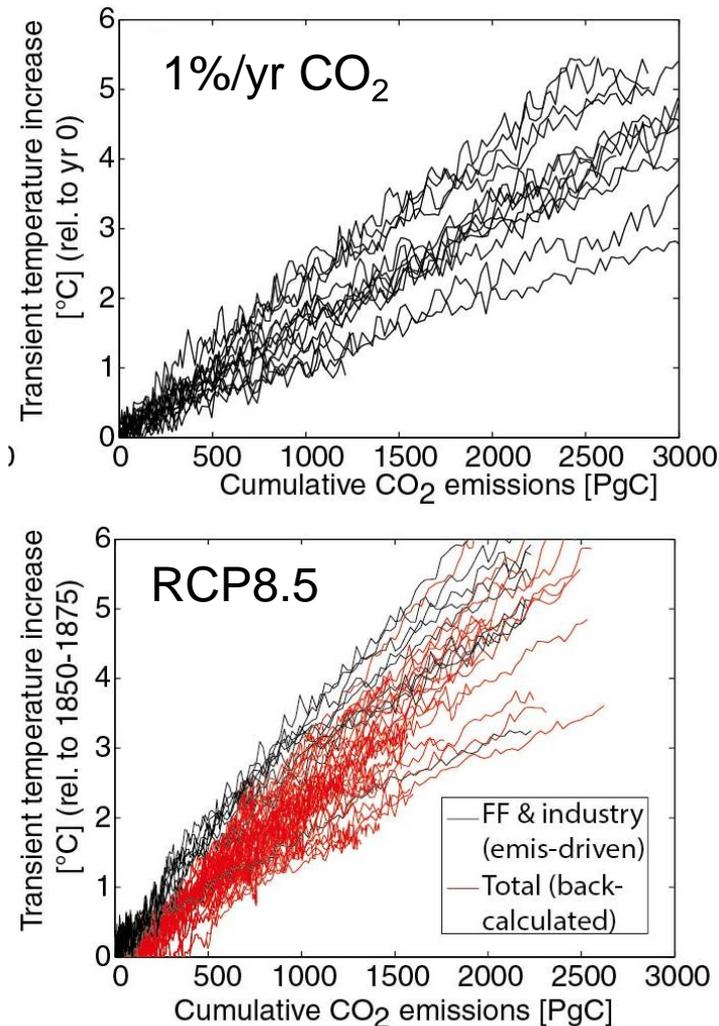
- Peak warming is approximately proportional to cumulative (total) emissions.
- Transient climate response to cumulative carbon emissions $TCRE = \text{Warming per } 1000 \text{ PgC}$

Cumulative carbon determines warming



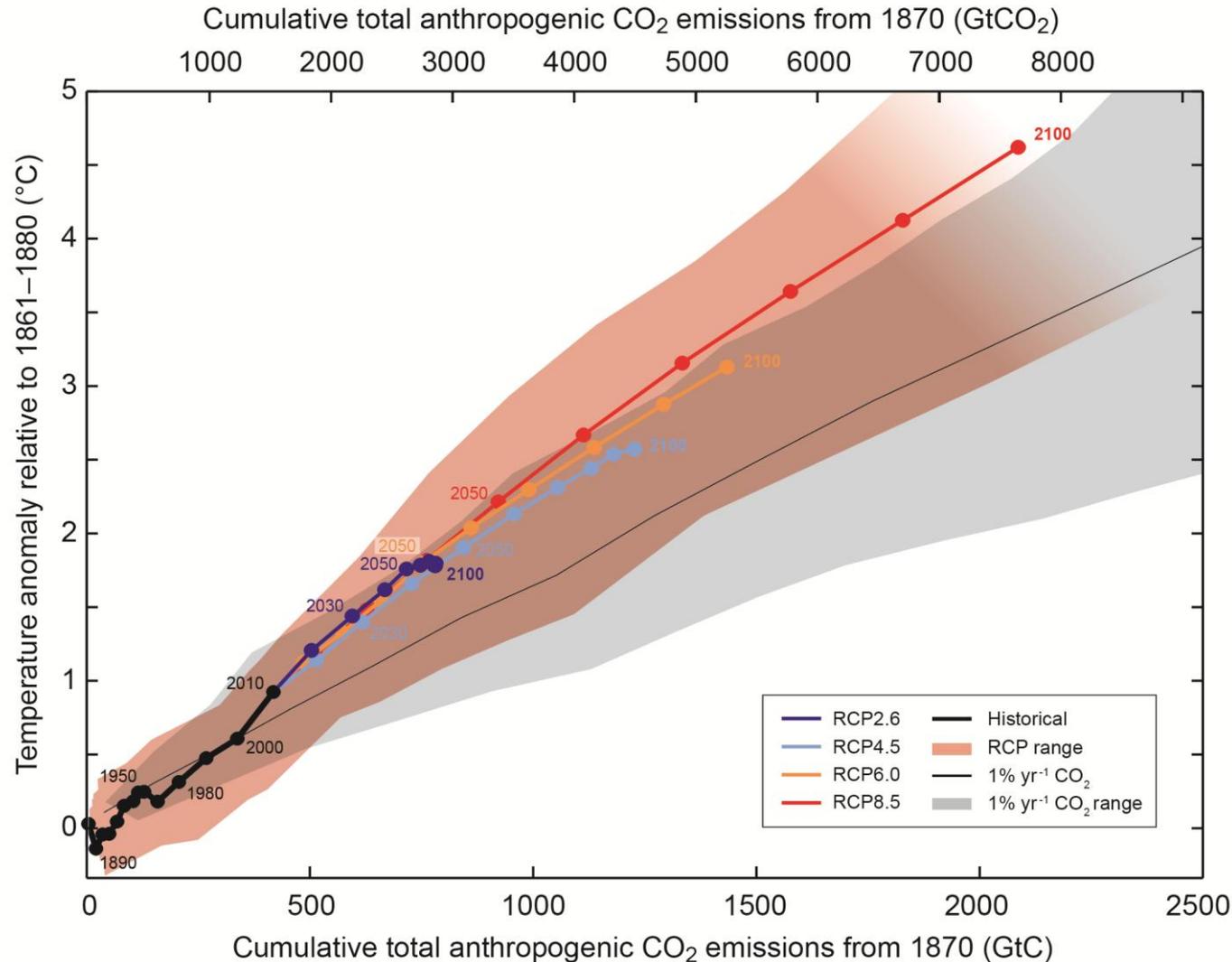
- Warming is largely independent of the emission profile. Only the total matters.
- More emissions early imply stronger reductions later.
- Any temperature target implies a maximum in cumulative CO₂ emissions. This is purely a physical and carbon cycle problem.
- Allocation over time is a economic and policy question.
- Overshooting the budget will overshoot the target.

Cumulative carbon determines warming



- Evidence from observations, and from simple to complex models for many scenarios.
- Near linear in all models, but the slope is uncertain.
- Any temperature target implies a maximum amount of carbon that can be emitted.
- Due to non CO₂, RCP warming is larger than from CO₂ only.

Cumulative carbon determines warming



SPM.10

Summary

- “Continued emissions of greenhouse gases will cause further warming and changes in all components of the climate system. Limiting climate change will require substantial and sustained reductions of greenhouse gas emissions.”
- Changes are projected throughout all climate components, in most cases exceeding natural variations by far. Changes in AR5 are similar to those in AR4 for similar scenarios.
- Every ton of CO₂ causes about the same amount of warming, no matter when and where it is emitted.
- To limit warming to *likely* less than 2°C as in RCP2.6 requires total emissions since preindustrial to be limited to less than about 790 PgC. 515 PgC were emitted by 2011.

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Further Information
www.climatechange2013.org

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