

1 Slowdown of Shirase Glacier, East Antarctica, caused by strengthening alongshore winds

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12

13 Abstract

14 Around large parts of West Antarctica and in Wilkes Land, East Antarctica, increased wind-forced
15 intrusions of modified Circumpolar Deep Water (mCDW) onto the continental shelf have been
16 associated with mass loss over the last few decades. Observations have also confirmed relatively high
17 basal melt rates of up to 16 m a⁻¹ underneath the Shirase ice tongue in Enderby Land, East Antarctica.
18 These high basal melt rates are also caused by intrusions of mCDW onto the continental shelf, but
19 the catchment of Shirase Glacier has been gaining mass, a trend often attributed to increased
20 precipitation. Here, we document the dynamical ocean-driven slowdown, ice surface thickening and
21 grounding line advance of Shirase Glacier, in response to strengthening easterly winds that reduce
22 mCDW inflow and decrease basal melt rates. Our findings are significant because they demonstrate
23 that warm ice shelf cavity regimes are not universally associated with glacier acceleration and mass
24 loss in Antarctica, and they highlight the overlooked role of the impact of easterly winds in the recent
25 mass gain of the Shirase Glacier catchment.

26

27 1. Introduction

28 Shirase Glacier is one of the fastest flowing outlet glaciers in East Antarctica, reaching speeds in
29 excess of 2,200 m a⁻¹ across its grounding line, before flowing into Lützow-Holm Bay (Fig. 1). Its

30 annual ice discharge approaches 15 Gt a^{-1} (Rignot et al., 2019) and it drains a catchment containing
31 1.2 m of sea level equivalent (Fig.1, Morlighem et al., 2020). This rapid ice flow speed is associated
32 with vigorous melt underneath its floating tongue, where basal melt rates were observed to vary over
33 the course of the year between 7 and 16 m a^{-1} in 2018, 16 km downstream of the glacier's grounding
34 line (Hirano et al., 2020). These high melt rates are caused by warm modified Circumpolar Deep
35 Water (mCDW) intruding onto the continental shelf and being transported directly to the glacier via
36 bathymetric troughs (Fig. 1; Moriwaki & Yoshida, 1983; Hirano et al., 2020), a process referred to
37 as Mode 2 melting (Jacobs et al., 1992). Elsewhere in Antarctica, most regions that experience this
38 mode of oceanic melt have been losing mass e.g. the Amundsen Sea (Jenkins et al., 2018; Mouginit
39 et al., 2014), the Western Antarctic Peninsula (Cook et al., 2016) and Wilkes Land (Rintoul et al.,
40 2016; Greene et al., 2017; Stokes et al., 2022); and hinting that intrusions of mCDW have become
41 more potent over recent decades in these locations. However, mass loss has not been observed in the
42 Shirase Glacier catchment and, between 2003 and 2019, its drainage basin (sometimes referred to as
43 drainage basin 7 in Antarctic-wide studies (e.g. Smith et al., 2020) gained mass at a rate of $+25 \pm 6$
44 Gt a^{-1} , which is the largest magnitude of imbalance of all drainage basins in East Antarctica (Smith
45 et al., 2020), including the comparatively well studied drainage basin 13 in Wilkes Land ($-20 \pm 14 \text{ Gt}$
46 a^{-1}).

47 The mass gain and thickening in the Shirase catchment over the past two decades (Schröder et al.,
48 2019; Smith et al., 2020) has been hypothesized to have been caused by increased precipitation across
49 the wider Dronning Maud and Enderby Land regions (Smith et al., 2020). Prior to this, however,
50 earlier field-based estimates, using repeat triangulation surveys in 1969 and 1973, demonstrated ice
51 surface lowering of around 0.7 m a^{-1} around 100-200 km inland of the Shirase Glacier grounding line
52 (Mae & Naruse, 1978; Naruse, 1979; Nishio et al., 1989). Furthermore, repeat GPS surveys in 1980
53 and 1988 revealed a thinning rate of around 0.5 m a^{-1} around 100-150 km inland of the grounding
54 line (Toh et al., 1992). These rates of surface lowering during that time are comparable with some of
55 the fastest rates of thinning observed across Antarctica over the past decade and occurred at similar
56 distances inland of the grounding line (Smith et al., 2020). Moreover, this surface lowering in the
57 1970s and 1980s may have been part of a much longer-term signal with ice core records estimating
58 a surface lowering of 350 m over the past 2000 years of the Mizuho Plateau (Kameda et al., 1990),
59 which is located around 200 km inland of the Shirase coastline. The surface lowering over the past
60 2000 years is also coincident with an increase in ice discharge from the Lützow-Holm Bay, which
61 has been estimated from subglacial erosion rates (Sproson et al., 2021).

62 Oceanographic observations in Lützow-Holm Bay in 2018 have revealed a two-layered structure with
63 a cool and relatively fresh layer of Winter Water overlying a warm and saline layer of mCDW, where

64 temperatures near the ice front seasonally exceed the *in situ* melting point by 2.7 °C (Hirano et al.,
65 2020). Observations and modelling demonstrate a strong seasonal variation in the basal melt rate of
66 the Shirase ice tongue (Hirano et al., 2020; Kusahara et al., 2021), which is caused by seasonal
67 variations in the depth of the thermocline forced by the strength of the alongshore easterly winds near
68 the continental shelf (Ohshima et al., 1996). To date, there is no evidence of large seasonal variations
69 in ice flow speed at the grounding line, but observations show some seasonal variation in ice flow
70 speed on the floating tongue that could be connected to external forcing (Nakamura et al., 2007;
71 2010).

72 There have been several studies analysing the ice flow dynamics of the Shirase Glacier, largely
73 covering short sub-decadal time periods (Pattyn & Derauw, 2002; Pattyn & Naruse, 2003; Nakamura
74 et al., 2010; Aoyama et al., 2013). However, the longer-term geological signal of ice sheet thinning
75 and increased ice discharge (Sproson et al., 2021), along with observations of thinning in the 1970s
76 and 1980s (Mae & Naruse, 1978; Naruse, 1979; Nishio et al., 1989; Toh et al., 1992), followed by
77 thickening from the 2000s (Schröder et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2020) raise some important questions
78 into the processes causing this switch from mass loss to mass gain. In this study, we produce a time
79 series of ice flow speed that spans 47 years and show that long-term ice speed trends coincide with
80 alongshore wind speeds and their impact on intrusions of mCDW. We then discuss how these
81 observations may relate to wider hemispheric trends in atmospheric circulation and what this may
82 mean for the future mass balance of the Shirase catchment and the wider Dronning Maud and Enderby
83 Land sectors.

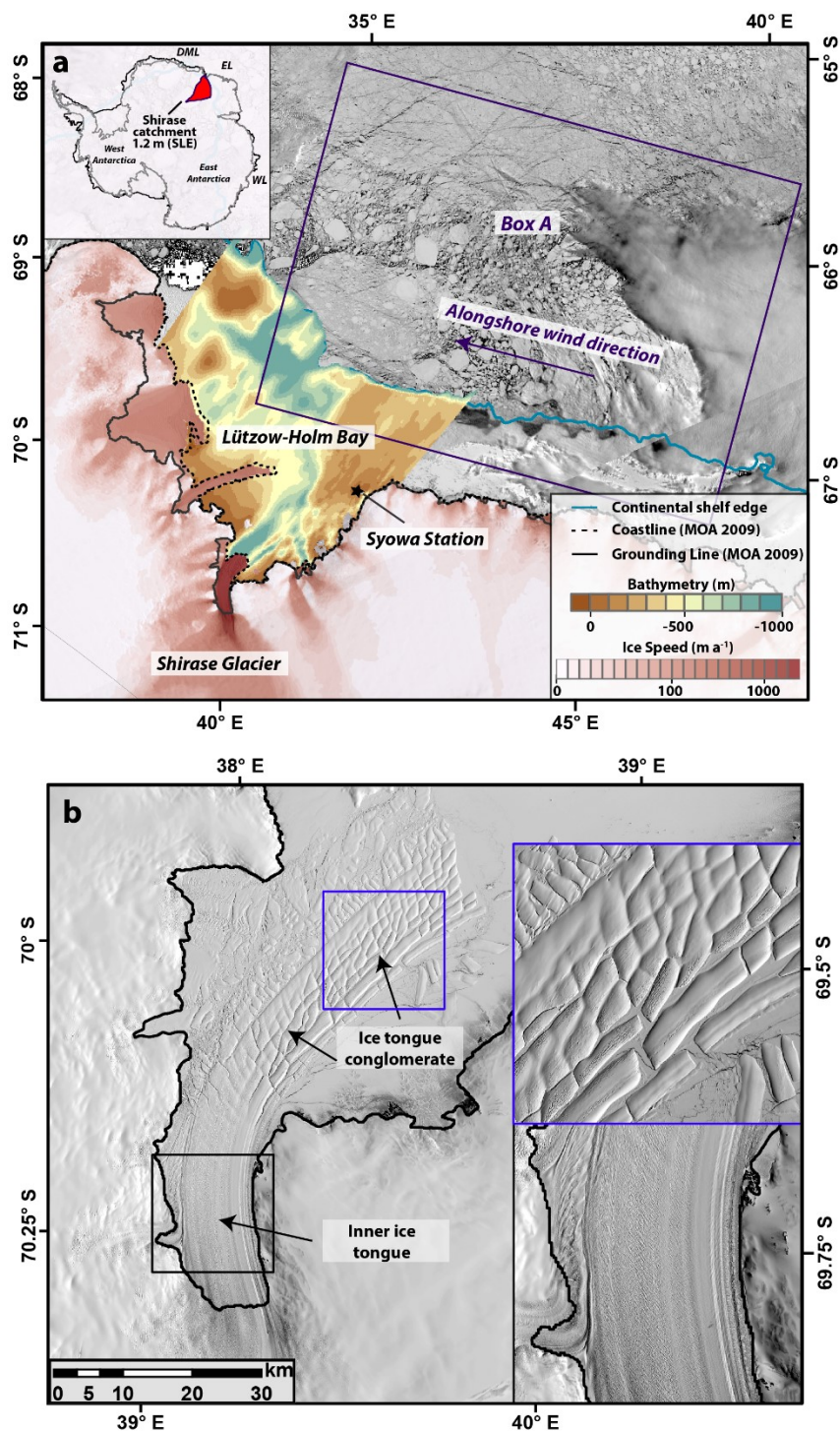
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85 **2. Data and Methods**

86 **2.1 Ice-front position, ice speed, grounding line and ice thickness**

87 We create a time series of ice-front positions between 1963 and 2020 using a variety of different
88 sources including: ARGON imagery from 1963, Landsat-1 imagery from 1973, Landsat-5 imagery
89 from 1984, Landsat-4 imagery from 1988, RADARSAT RAMP mosaic from 1997 (Jezek et al.,
90 2013), and MODIS imagery from 2000-2020, with the spatial resolution of the satellite data ranging
91 from 15-250 m. In each case, we map the outer limit of the collection of loosely bound icebergs that
92 form the Shirase ice tongue that are typically surrounded by a smoother surface of fast ice (Fig. 1 &
93 2a). Errors associated with this mapping are insignificant in the context of the ice tongue typically
94 advancing 2,500 m a⁻¹, or retreating in short-lived calving events typically greater than 10 km.

95 We calculate 18 ice speed estimates for Shirase Glacier between 1973 and 2020. For 1973 we use a
 96 pair of Landsat-1 (band 7) images from the 25th January 1973 and the 21st January 1974 that we
 97 manually co-register to each other, before co-registering to a Landsat-8 image. The combination of
 98 the relatively coarse Landsat-1 imagery (60 m) and the development of surface melt ponding over the
 99 fast-flowing section of the glaciers between the two images prevented the automatic extraction of ice
 100 speed. Instead, we extract an ice speed estimate by manually tracking the displacement of a prominent
 101 rift ~24 km downstream of the grounding line (Fig. 2c). Errors associated with the manual tracking
 102 of this rift stem from the co-registration between the two image pairs which we estimate to be one



104 **Figure 1: a)** MODIS image of Lützow-Holm Bay and Shirase Glacier from the 4th November 2019
105 obtained from NASA WorldView. Overlain is the ITS_LIVE composite velocity product in
106 logarithmic scale (Gardner et al., 2018; 2020), 1000 m bathymetric contour obtained from
107 BedMachine (Morlighem et al., 2020) which is taken as the continental shelf boundary and
108 bathymetry of the Lützow-Holm Bay (Kusahara et al., 2021). Note the deep trough connecting Shirase
109 Glacier to the open ocean. The location of the Syowa research station and Box A, the region where
110 ERA5 derived winds were extracted are also shown. The initials in the inset refer to the following,
111 DML (Dronning Maud Land), EL (Enderby Land), WL (Wilkes Land). **b)** Landsat 8 image from
112 November 2020 showing the structure of the Shirase ice tongue. The blue box is a zoomed in section
113 of the ice tongue conglomerate that is unconstrained. The black box is a zoomed in section of the
114 inner section of the ice tongue that is constrained by fjord walls on either side. The black line on both
115 images is the MODIS 2009 grounding line and coastline (Scambos et al., 2007; Harran et al., 2019).
116 Landsat images are courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey.

117

118 pixel (60 m; Animation S1). For 1988, we use a pair of Landsat-4 (band 3) images from the 14th
119 January 1988 and the 15th February 1988 that we also co-register to a Landsat-8 image. The quality
120 of the Landsat-5 images (30 m resolution) is superior to that of the Landsat-1 imagery and, in the
121 absence of significant surface melt ponding, we use the feature tracking software COSI-CORR
122 (Leprince et al., 2007; Scherler et al., 2008) to extract ice speed. For these images, co-registration
123 error is negligible (Animation S2) and error in the feature tracking is estimated at <0.5 pixels (e.g.
124 Heid and Kääb, 2012). Because of the close time separation of the image pairs this results in a larger
125 error of $\pm 171 \text{ m a}^{-1}$.

126 For 2000-2018 we use 14 annual ice speed mosaics from the ITS_LIVE dataset which cover Shirase
127 Glacier (Gardner et al., 2018) and use the corresponding error grids for error values, which range
128 from ± 1 to $\pm 32 \text{ m a}^{-1}$. For 2019 ($n = 27$) and 2020 ($n = 19$) we take an average of all GoLIVE generated
129 ice speed fields (Fahnestock et al., 2016; Scambos et al., 2016) with a time separation of 16-320 days
130 from scene ID's 149_109 and 150_109. Taking an average of multiple ice speed grids reduces error
131 and, as such, we prescribe a nominal error of 16 m a^{-1} , based on the average value from the ITS_LIVE
132 mosaics. We extract ice speed profiles from each time period across a transect, T1 (Fig. 2a), and also
133 produce a time-series of ice speed change where T1 crosses the grounding line. In 1973, the only
134 possible observation of ice speed was extracted 24 km downstream of the grounding line (Point x;
135 Fig. 2a) and there are no observations directly at the grounding line. To account for this, we estimate
136 ice speed at the grounding line in 1973 using the average difference between point x, 24 km
137 downstream of the grounding line, and where T1 crosses the grounding line in each of the other 17
138 ice speed profiles (1988-2020). Across these profiles, ice speed was on average 2% slower (ranging
139 from 1% to 4%) at the grounding line, compared to ice speed at point x. Therefore, to estimate ice
140 speed at the grounding line in 1973 we reduce the ice speed observed 24 km downstream of the

141 grounding line by $2 \pm 1\%$. We also include the measurements of ice speed from Nakamura et al. (2007)
142 at the grounding line derived from the JERS-1 satellite in 1996, 1997 and 1998.

143 To estimate the direction and magnitude of any migration in the Shirase Glacier grounding line we
144 compare time stamped digital elevation model (DEM) strips with a spatial resolution of 2 m from the
145 6th January 2013 and the 8th October 2015 from the REMA project (Howat et al., 2019). We select
146 these strips because they cover the complete Shirase Glacier grounding line and represent the longest
147 time gap in the record. This is in addition to a SPOT5-HRS DEM from the SPIRIT project (Korona
148 et al., 2009) from the 8th February 2008, with a spatial resolution of 40 m. Elevation uncertainty is
149 estimated at around 4 m by comparing derived elevations from exposed bedrock between the two
150 REMA DEM's and a larger uncertainty of around 7 m between the SPOT5-HRS and REMA DEM's.
151 The tidal amplitude of the region is limited to 0.2 m (Aoki et al., 2000) and is deemed insignificant.
152 We extract elevation profiles along transect T1 (Fig. 2a) from these dates. A comparison of elevation
153 profiles cannot provide a location of the true grounding line position, but any horizontal migration of
154 these elevation slopes can provide reasonable estimates in both the direction and rate of grounding
155 line migration (Fricker et al., 2009; Brunt et al., 2010).

156 We also extract an ice thickness change time-series from the dataset presented in Schröder et al.
157 (2019) from point IT, which is around 20 km inland of the grounding line (Fig. 2a). This multi-
158 mission dataset spans between 1978 and 2017 and contains data from a variety of satellites. We use
159 the accompanying uncertainty estimates described in Schröder et al. (2019). We also utilize modelled
160 basal melt rate anomalies of the Shirase ice tongue that are derived by an ocean model that is forced
161 by ERA-Interim wind reanalysis between 2008 and 2018 by Kusahara et al. (2021). The basal melt
162 rate dataset contains melt anomalies that have been simulated with fast ice cover and a hypothetical
163 no fast ice scenario (see Fig. 20; Kusahara et al., 2021). We use the melt rates with fast ice cover
164 because persistent fast ice cover remained throughout our observational period, aside from a few
165 sporadic partial breakouts in the summer months.

166

167 **2.2 Climatological data**

168 We extract mean monthly ERA5 (Hersbach et al., 2020) 10 m zonal (U) and meridional winds (V)
169 speeds with a gridded 30 km spatial resolution between 1979 and 2021 from a box approximately
170 340 x 250 km adjacent to the coastline (Box A; Fig. 1a). We do not extend the box all the way into
171 Lützow-Holm Bay because it is semi-permanently covered with landfast sea-ice (Fig. S1) that
172 dampens the impact of winds on ocean circulation. We then calculate alongshore easterly wind speed
173 using an alongshore angle of 80° from due north:

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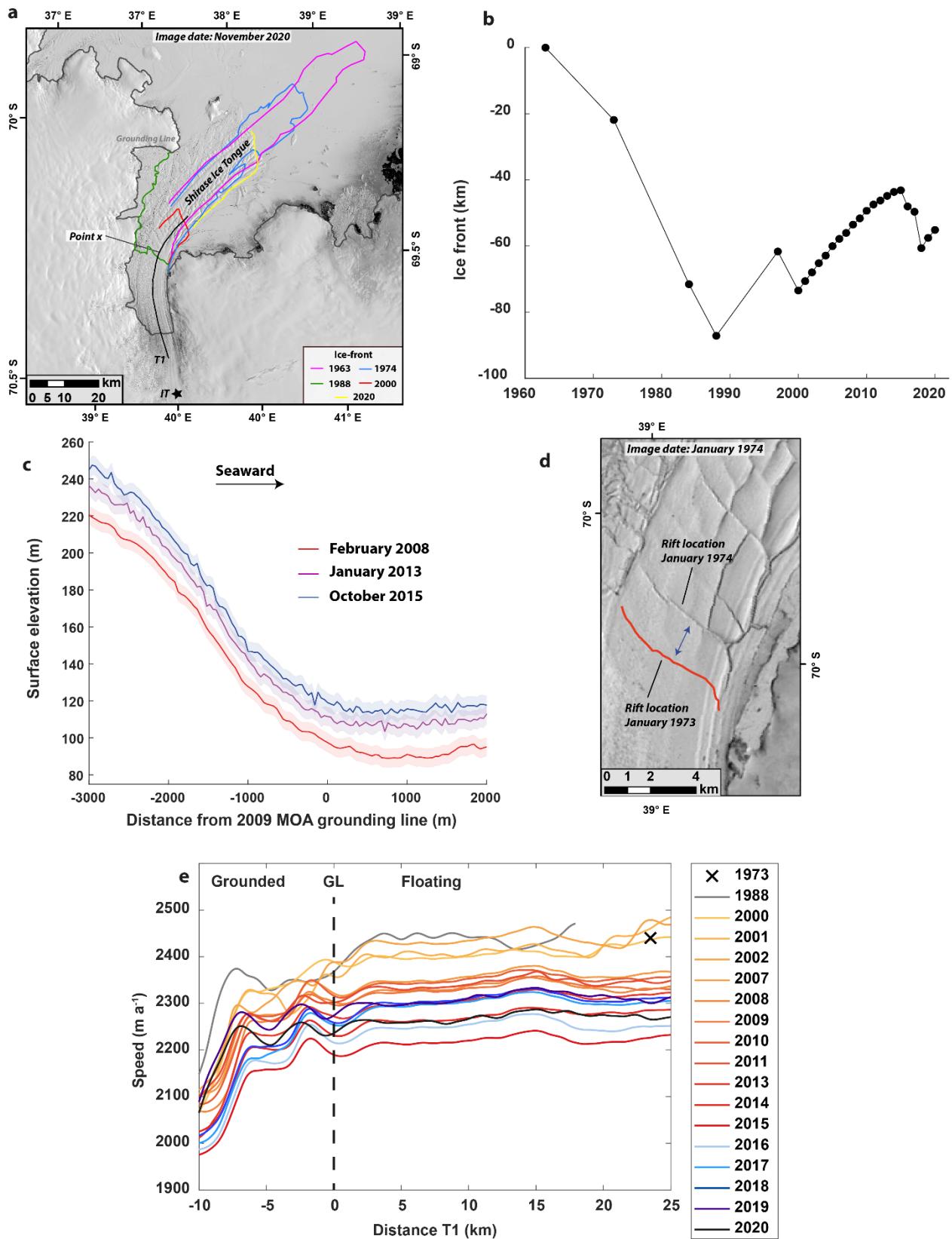
$$A = W \cos(\theta - 80)$$

175 Where W is wind speed and θ is wind direction. Using the ERA5 data, we also calculate the linear
176 trend in zonal wind between 1979 and 2021 across a wider region of the Dronning Maud and Enderby
177 Land coastlines. We also extract a precipitation time series across Shirase Glacier using the regional
178 climate model MAR between 1979 and 2019 (Kittel et al., 2021).

179

180 **3. Results**

181 We observe a total range of nearly 90 km in the ice-front position of the Shirase ice tongue between
182 1963 and 2020 (Fig. 2b). Its maximum length was in 1963, before retreating to its minimum extent
183 in 1988 (Fig. 2a, b). Since 1988 there has been a general pattern of advance with a few sporadic
184 calving events (Fig. 2a, b). Most of the variation in the extent of the Shirase ice tongue is in the
185 heavily fractured and unconstrained ice tongue conglomerate (Fig. 1b; Fig. 2a). The only exception
186 to this was in 1988 when the ice tongue retreated to the entrance of the narrow and more constrained
187 section of its fjord, 24 km advanced of its 2009 grounding line (Fig. 2a).



188

189 **Figure 2:** a) Landsat-8 image from November 2020 showing the Shirase ice tongue. Overlain are
 190 selected ice-front positions from 1963, 1974, 1988, 2000 and 2020; along with the transect, T1, used
 191 to extract ice speed profiles and point x, which is the location of the 1973/74 ice speed estimate on
 192 the floating tongue. Point IT is the location of the ice thickness time-series. The grey line is the
 193 MODIS 2009 grounding line (Scambos et al., 2007, Harran et al., 2021). b) Change in ice-front extent

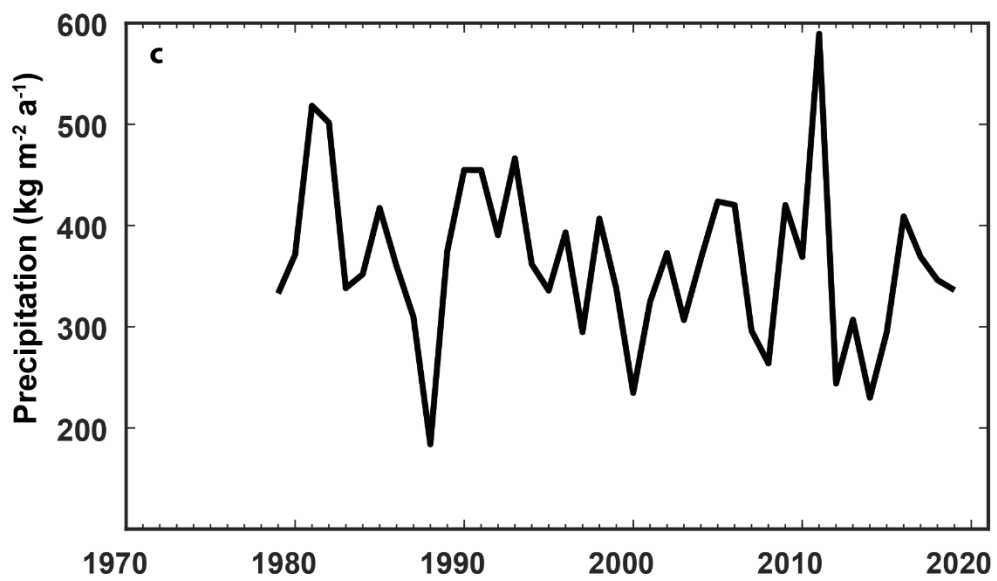
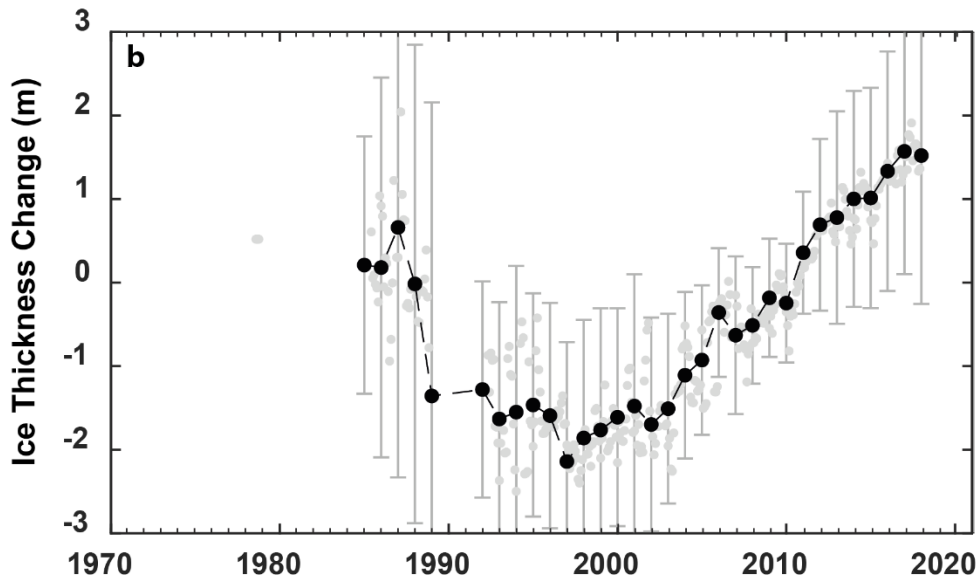
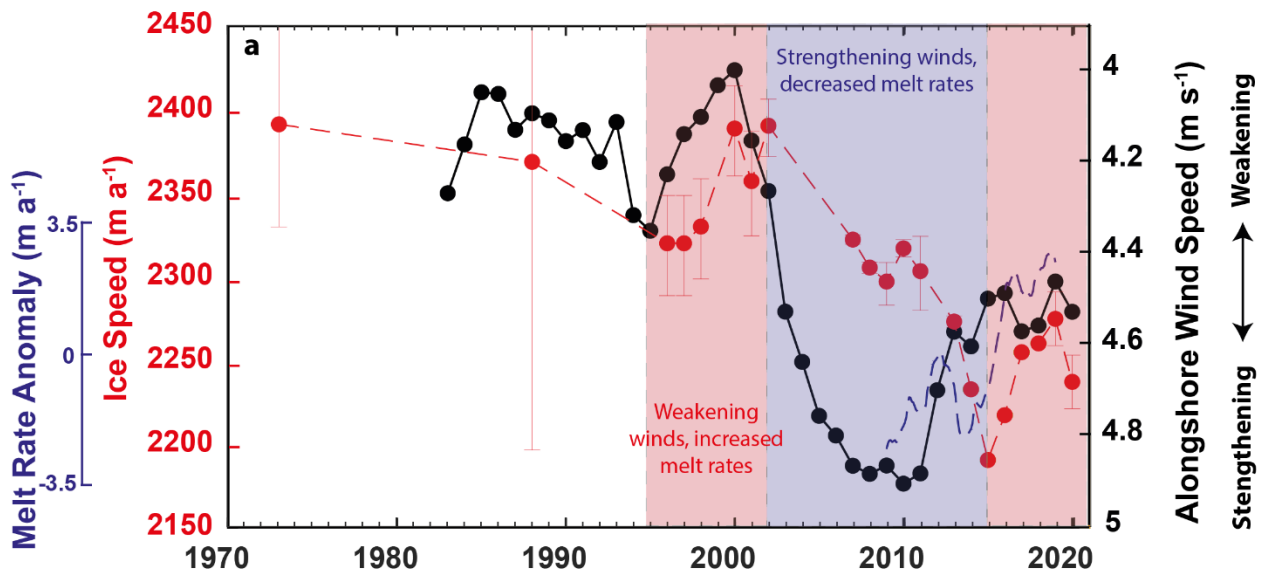
194 relative to 1963. **c)** Surface elevation profiles along a small section of T1 as it intersects the grounding
195 line from February 2008, January 2013 and October 2015 showing a seaward migration of the surface
196 slope **d)** Landsat-1 image showing the rift used to estimate ice speed in 1973/74. The red line is the
197 digitized rift from January 1973. **e)** Ice speed profiles from transect T1 between 1973 and 2020. The
198 black cross represents the ice speed measurement from 1973/74. Landsat images are courtesy of the
199 U.S. Geological Survey.

200

201 Ice speed profiles along the transect (T1, Fig. 2a) show a uniform pattern of change across both the
202 grounded and floating sections of Shirase Glacier (Fig. 2e). At the grounding line, we observe little
203 change in ice speed between 1973 and 1988, although we note the larger uncertainty in the 1988
204 estimate of $\pm 171 \text{ m a}^{-1}$ (Fig. 3b) and we cannot rule out interannual variations in ice speed within this
205 date range. Between 1988 and 1996 we observe a $2 \pm 7\%$ slowdown and a $2 \pm 1\%$ increase in ice speed
206 between 1997 and 2000 (Fig. 3a). Post-2000 we observe a slowdown, with an $8 \pm 1\%$ decrease in ice
207 speed between 2000 and 2015 (Fig. 3b). Between 2015 and 2019 ice speed increased by $4 \pm 1\%$ (Fig.
208 3a). Elevation profiles along a section of T1 in 2008, 2013 and 2015 show a seaward migration of the
209 surface slope as it approaches the grounding line (Fig. 2d), which is indicative of grounding line
210 advance and can be visualised in animation S3. Between February 2008 and October 2015 we
211 estimate that the grounding line advanced around 400 m ($\sim 50 \text{ m yr}^{-1}$) from measuring the seaward
212 displacement of the surface slope, an estimate that is broadly consistent with CryoSat based
213 observations of seaward grounding line migration between 2010 and 2016 ($\sim 30 \text{ m a}^{-1}$; Konrad et al.,
214 2018). Observations of ice thickness change 20 km inland of the grounding line show a thinning trend
215 of $0.27 \pm 0.33 \text{ m a}^{-1}$ between 1987 and 1997, before reversing to a thickening trend of $0.19 \pm 0.10 \text{ m}$
216 a^{-1} between 1997 and 2017 (Fig. 3b).

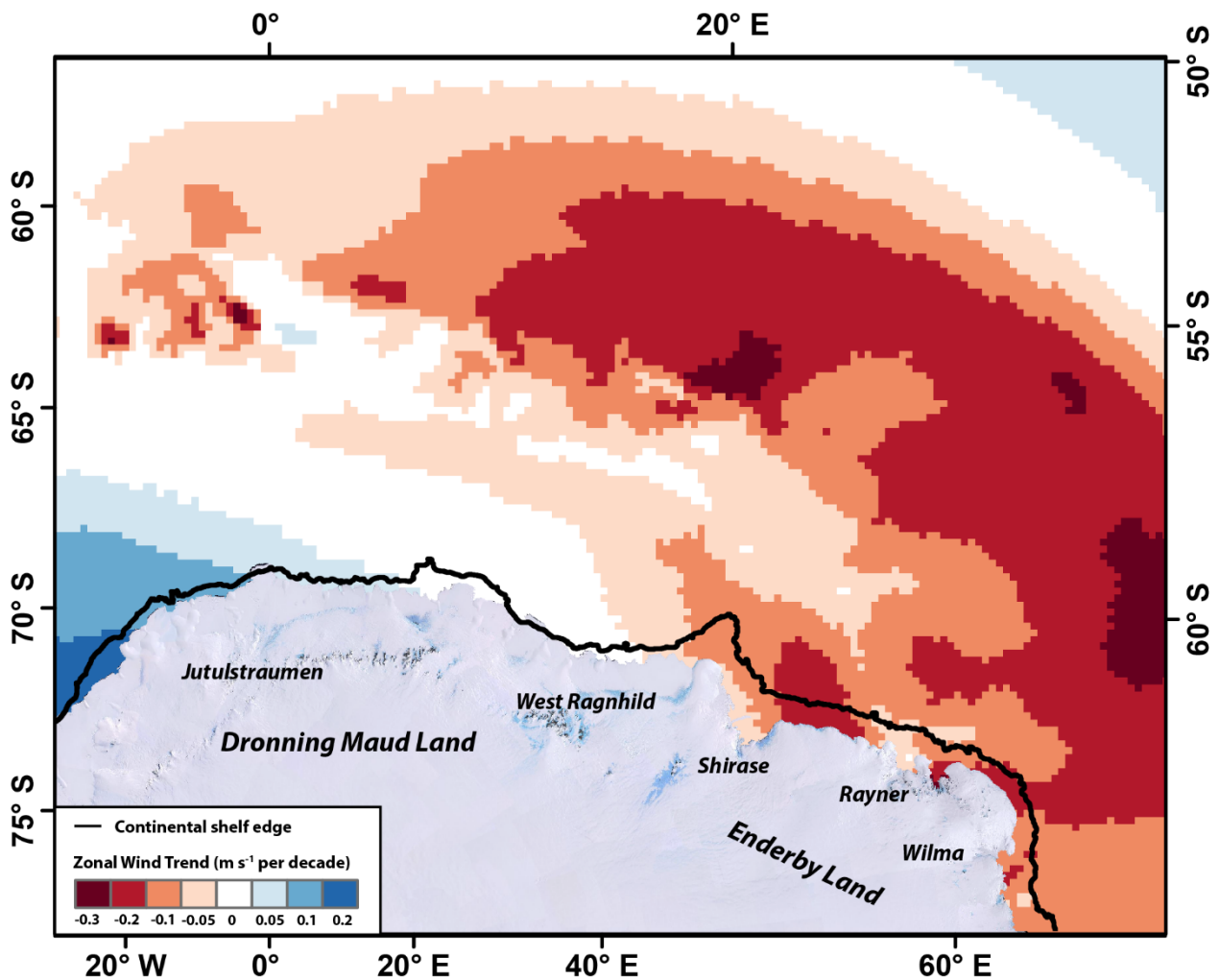
217 ERA5 derived estimates of alongshore easterly wind speed between 1979 and 2020 show limited
218 variation between 1984 and the early 1990s (Fig. 3a). In the early 1990s there was a small increase
219 in alongshore wind speed, before a more marked increase from 2000-2010 where alongshore wind
220 speed increased from around 4 m s^{-1} to 4.8 m s^{-1} (Fig. 3a). This is before falling slightly to around 4.5
221 m s^{-1} between 2010 and 2018, which is coincident with an increase in basal melt rate anomalies (Fig.
222 3a). The multidecadal trend in zonal wind shows a trend for a strengthening of wind in an easterly
223 direction at the continental shelf boundary over much of Enderby Land (Fig. 4). There is no trend in
224 zonal wind speed over large parts of Dronning Maud Land, with the exception of near Jutulstraumen
225 Glacier where there is a trend for strengthening wind in the westerly direction (Fig. 4). There is large
226 interannual variability in precipitation over Shirase Glacier (Fig. 3c) and no obvious link to
227 observations in ice speed or ice thickness.

228



230 **Figure 3:** a) Annually averaged ERA5 derived alongshore wind speed from Box A (See Fig. 1) and
 231 plotted as a 5-year rolling mean (black), ice speed at the Shirase Glacier grounding line along T1
 232 (red) and modelled melt rate anomaly of the Shirase ice tongue between 2008 and 2018 (blue;
 233 Kusahara et al., 2021). Periods of weakening winds cause increased mCDW transport, increased basal
 234 melt and acceleration. Periods of strengthening winds result in relatively less mCDW transport,
 235 decreased basal melt rates and glacier slowdown. Note that alongshore wind speed is plotted with an
 236 inverted axis. b) Annually averaged ice thickness change at point IT (see Fig. 2a) extracted from the
 237 Schröder et al. (2019) dataset, where there are at least 6 data points in the calendar year. The error
 238 bars are annually averaged errors. The background grey points are the raw monthly data points. c)
 239 Annual averaged precipitation over Shirase Glacier from the MAR regional climate model (Kittel et
 240 al., 2021).

241



242

243 **Figure 4:** Linear zonal wind trend 1979-2021 with data smoothed with 60 month moving average
 244 prior to extracting the trend. Negative values indicate a trend for zonal winds in a more easterly
 245 direction and positive values indicate a trend for winds in a more westerly direction. Major outlet
 246 glaciers have been labelled.

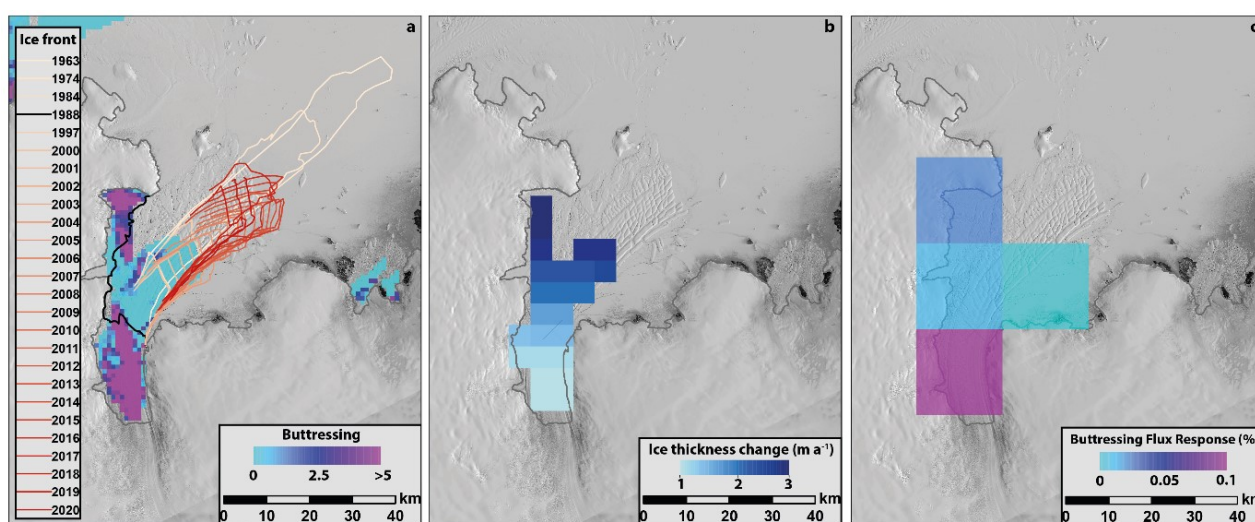
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248 **4. Discussion**

249 **4.1 Slowdown and thickening caused by strengthening alongshore winds**

250 Calculations indicate that the heavily fractured and unconstrained section of the Shirase ice tongue
251 offers little buttressing force (Fig. 5a; Durrand et al., 2016; Fürst et al., 2016). Therefore, it is unlikely
252 that any variations in the extent of the Shirase ice tongue have had a direct effect on the ice speed
253 trends we have observed. The only possible exception to this is in 1988 where the ice tongue briefly
254 retreated to the edge of its more confined embayment (Fig. 2a), closer to where the extent of the ice
255 tongue might be expected to exert buttressing and impact on inland flow speed, were it to be removed
256 (Fig. 5a).

257



258

259 **Figure 5: a)** Simulated maximum buttressing potential of the Shirase ice tongue (Durand et al., 2016).
260 Light blues mean the ice is passive, purples mean the floating ice is dynamically important. Note how
261 the ice tongue conglomerate is not important for buttressing, but parts of the inner shelf are important.
262 No dynamically important ice has calved over the past over the past 57 years. **b)** Ice tongue thickness
263 change between 2003 and 2019 showing thickening of the Shirase ice tongue (Smith et al., 2020). **c)**
264 Simulated response of ice flux to thinning of floating ice in each grid cell by 1 m (Reese et al., 2018),
265 the constrained inner tongue near the grounding line is important for buttressing. Note there is no
266 change in ice tongue buttressing in response to observed changes in ice tongue extent, but increased
267 buttressing expected in response to observed ice tongue thickening. Landsat images are courtesy of
268 the U.S. Geological Survey.

269

270 In agreement with previous work, we note that the observed fluctuations in ice tongue extent are
271 correlated with landfast sea-ice conditions in Lützow-Holm Bay (Aoki, 2017). Long periods of ice
272 tongue advance are associated with persistent landfast sea-ice in Lützow-Holm Bay, while ice tongue
273 retreat is associated with landfast sea-ice break-out events removing parts of the ice tongue
274 conglomerate (Aoki et al., 2017). While there are some sporadic partial break-outs in the landfast sea-

275 ice during the austral summer months (Fig. S1), there is no evidence of any major changes in fast ice
276 coverage over the course of our observational time period. It is important to note that fast ice only
277 helps control the length of the ice tongue conglomerate (Fig. 1b) and it is unlikely that the fast ice has
278 any major role in providing buttressing for Shirase Glacier. For example, we note that there was no
279 obvious increase in ice speed at the grounding line or over the ice tongue in 1988 when the fast ice
280 and ice tongue conglomerate were completely removed from the bay (Fig. 2a, S3). In addition,
281 Nakamura et al. (2010) recorded only a very modest $20 \pm 30 \text{ m a}^{-1}$ ($0.8 \pm 1.3 \%$) change in ice speed
282 at the grounding line after a partial fast ice break-out event in 1998.

283 Point IT, 20 km inland of the Shirase Glacier grounding line was thinning at a rate of $-0.27 \pm 0.33 \text{ m}$
284 a^{-1} between 1987 and 1997 (Fig. 3c), a pattern consistent with field observations up to 200 km further
285 inland in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (Mae and Naruse, 1978; Naruse, 1979; Nisho et al., 1989; Toh
286 and Shibuya, 1992). However, in ~ 2000 there was a slowdown in Shirase Glacier (Fig. 3a) and this
287 thinning trend reversed to thickening (Fig. 3b). This slowdown and thickening coincides with an
288 increase in alongshore wind speed adjacent to the Shirase coastline (Fig. 3a). The seasonal
289 strengthening in alongshore winds offshore of the Shirase coastline has been observed to deepen the
290 thermocline in Lützow-Holm Bay, limiting the inflow of mCDW onto the continental shelf and reduce
291 basal melt rates (Hirano et al., 2020). We suggest that this same process over annual to decadal
292 timescales has caused the slowdown of Shirase Glacier.

293 Increased alongshore wind speed from ~ 2000 enhanced Ekman convergence at the coast, deepening
294 the thermocline with a short lag and inhibited the inflow of warm mCDW into Lützow-Holm Bay.
295 The subsequent cooling of Lützow-Holm Bay reduced the basal melt rate of the Shirase ice tongue.
296 This reduction in basal melt caused the ice tongue to thicken and is confirmed by ICESat and ICESat-
297 2 observations of the of the Shirase ice tongue that show a mean thickening of 1.87 m yr^{-1} from 2003-
298 2019 (Fig. 5b; Smith et al., 2020). Instantaneous numerical modelling experiments show that ice
299 discharge is sensitive to thickness changes in the inner ice tongue (Reese et al., 2018; Fig. 5c).
300 Therefore, the dynamic thickening of the inner ice tongue would be expected to increase buttressing
301 through time (Fig. 5c) and ultimately drive the overall slowdown in ice speed, grounding line advance
302 and inland thickening that we observe. Importantly, our results show that wind-driven ocean forcing
303 is also contributing to mass gain in the Lützow-Holm Bay in addition to surface mass balance
304 processes across the wider region (Boening et al., 2012; Lenaerts et al., 2013).

305 Within the longer-term slowdown of Shirase Glacier between 1973 and 2020 we observe brief periods
306 of acceleration in response to short-lived periods of weakening alongshore winds. For example, both
307 of the accelerations in ice speed from 1997-2000 and 2015-2019 are preceded by brief periods of
308 weakening alongshore winds (Fig. 3a). These periods of weakening alongshore winds cause relatively

309 higher basal melt rates because they raise the thermocline closer to the ocean surface and enable a
310 greater influx of mCDW into Lützow-Holm Bay (Hirano et al., 2020). This is supported by the close
311 relationship between alongshore wind speed and modelled melt rate anomalies (Fig. 3a; Kusahara et
312 al., 2021). However, we would not expect a perfect relationship between alongshore wind, melt rates
313 and ice speed particularly over short interannual timescales. For example, an increase in melt rates
314 could cause the ice tongue to thin and accelerate or simply thicken at a lower rate and continue to
315 slowdown.

316 The interannual variability in ice flow speed at Shirase Glacier in response to wind-forced ocean
317 variability is analogous to other regions of Antarctica where mCDW periodically floods the
318 continental shelf e.g. Pine Island (Christianson et al., 2016), Thwaites (Miles et al., 2020) and Totten
319 glaciers (Greene et al., 2017). The pattern of change at Shirase Glacier is unique, however, in that it
320 is the only outlet glacier in Antarctica with a warm water regime that has been observed to be slowing
321 down and thickening during the 21st century, as opposed to accelerating and thinning (e.g. Mougnot
322 et al., 2014; Greene et al., 2017). As such, our results highlight that this oceanic mode of ice melt is
323 not universally associated with mass loss in Antarctica.

324

325 **4.2 Wider links to climate forcing and future implications**

326 In response to both increased greenhouse gas emissions and ozone depletion (Thompson et al., 2011;
327 Wang et al., 2014; Perren et al., 2020) the band of mid-latitude westerly winds that encircle Antarctica
328 have both strengthened and migrated southwards towards the ice sheet over recent decades
329 (Thompson & Solomon, 2002; Marshall, 2003; Turner, 2005; Bracegirdle et al., 2018). In the
330 Amundsen Sea sector of West Antarctica, this anthropogenically-driven migration has been linked to
331 westerly wind anomalies over the continental shelf (Holland et al., 2019), which have enabled a
332 greater influx of warm mCDW onto the continental shelf and have driven enhanced localized ice
333 sheet mass loss (Thoma et al., 2008). At Shirase Glacier, our observations of strengthening alongshore
334 easterly winds suggest any southward encroachment of the mid-latitude westerlies has yet to impact
335 the Shirase coastline. This may also be the case for parts of the wider Enderby Land coastlines where
336 alongshore easterlies have also been observed to have strengthened along the continental shelf edge
337 (Hazel & Stewart, 2019). However, it remains unknown what effect these strengthening easterly
338 winds may have had on other nearby outlet glaciers (e.g. Rayner and Wilma; Fig. 4), which are yet
339 to be studied in detail. The trend in strengthening alongshore easterlies might also be linked to
340 enhanced katabatic winds as low pressure systems track progressively further south and enhance the
341 pole to coast pressure gradient (Hazel & Stewart, 2019). It is unclear if the enhancement of the pole-

342 to-coast pressure gradient has been influenced by the anthropogenically-driven southerly migration
343 of the mid-latitude westerlies, or if it has been caused by inherent natural decadal variability within
344 the system.

345 Over the course of the 21st century, the southerly migration of the mid-latitude westerlies is projected
346 to continue in a warming climate (Yin, 2005; Perren et al., 2020). Along the Shirase coastline, this
347 continued southerly migration may ultimately result in a similar situation to the Amundsen Sea, such
348 that westerly wind anomalies offshore would result in enhanced mCDW transport into Lützow-Holm
349 Bay and cause mass loss. Alternatively, the westerly winds may never migrate close enough to the
350 Shirase coastline to impact alongshore winds, and instead, alongshore winds may continue to
351 strengthen as the pole to coast pressure gradient increases. This would result in further cooling of
352 Lützow-Holm Bay and ice tongue thickening, and further mass gain. In a wider context, an improved
353 understanding of the potential changes in ocean forcing in response to broader atmospheric patterns
354 expected over the coming decades is needed in the Enderby and Dronning Maud Land sectors.

355

356 **5. Conclusion**

357 Our observations of Shirase Glacier are a rare example of a glacier reversing a trend of mass loss
358 from at least the 1970s-1990s to mass gain over the last two decades. As far as we are aware this is
359 the only major fast flowing Antarctic outler glacier to display this pattern of behaviour. This reversal
360 has been driven by a slowdown of the Shirase Glacier upstream of the grounding line in response to
361 strengthening alongshore winds that have limited the inflow of warm mCDW into Lützow-Holm Bay,
362 reduced basal melt rates, and caused its ice tongue to dynamically thicken. Should this strengthening
363 of alongshore easterly winds continue into the future, the Shirase catchment will continue to
364 experience a positive mass balance due to both the slow-down in ice discharge, and to the predicted
365 increase in precipitation in response to atmospheric warming (e.g. Ligtenberg et al., 2013; Kittel et
366 al., 2021). Our results highlight the need for a greater consideration of the potential role of ocean
367 forcing in both the current and future mass balance of the wider Enderby and Dronning Maud Land
368 regions.

369

370 **Data Availability**

371 Landsat and ARGON imagery was provided free of charge by the US Geological Survey Earth
372 Resources Observation Science Center (<https://earthexplorer.usgs.gov/>). For the MODIS imagery we
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375 Information System (EOSDIS). Cosi-corr is an ENVI plug-in and can be downloaded from
376 http://www.tectonics.caltech.edu/slip_history/spot_coseis/download_software.html. The ITS_LIVE
377 velocity products are available from <https://doi.org/10.5067/IMR9D3PEI28U>. GoLIVE velocity
378 products are available from <http://dx.doi.org/10.7265/N5ZP442B>. ERA5 data is available from
379 <https://doi.org/10.24381/cds.adbb2d47>. Wind data from Syowa station is available via the SCAR
380 READER at <http://dx.doi.org/10.5285/569d53fb-9b90-47a6-b3ca-26306e696706>. The MOA
381 grounding line product is available at <https://doi.org/10.7265/N5KP8037>. BedMachine is available at
382 <https://doi.org/10.5067/E1QL9HFQ7A8M>. The ice shelf thickness change dataset from Smith et al.
383 (2020) is available at <http://hdl.handle.net/1773/45388>. REMA DEM strips are available at
384 <https://www.pgc.umn.edu/data/rema/>. Lützw-Holm Bay bathymetry is available at
385 <https://doi.org/10.17632/z6w4xd6s3s.1>. The RAMP mosaic is available at <https://doi.org/10.5067/8AF4ZRPULS4H>. Ice shelf extent buttressing dataset from Durand et al., 2016 is available at
386 <https://doi.org/10.5067/FWHORAYVZCE7>. SPIRIT DEM's are available from
387 <https://theia.cnes.fr/atdistrib/rocket/#/search?collection=spirit>. MAR precipitation data is available
388 from <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4459259>.
389

390

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402

403 **Author contributions:** All authors contributed to the design of the study. BWJM collected and
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405

406 **Competing interests:** The authors declare no competing interests

407

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