

CONTRIBUTION OF CONTINENTAL WATER TO SEA LEVEL VARIATION DURING THE 1997-1998 ENSO EVENTS

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From Topex-Poséidon satellite altimetry, which measures the annual variation of the global sea level, we can estimate the changes in water masses over the continents. These observations can be used to study the realism of the continental water storage in General Circulation Models. Our study is focussed on the interannual variation of continental water between two contrasted years: 1997, El Nino year and 1998, La Nina year. The observed drastic change between these two years is compared to the result obtained by a LMD GCM numerical experiment which simulates the interannual variation of climate, using prescribed SST. We emphasize the important role of tropical regions on this inter-annual signal.