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# An assessment of marine atmospheric boundary layer roll detection using Sentinel-1 SAR data

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## Abstract

The ability of high-resolution synthetic aperture radar (SAR) to detect marine atmospheric boundary layer (MABL) roll-induced roughness modulation of the sea surface wave field is well known. This study presents SAR measurements of MABL rolls using global coverage data collected by the European Space Agency's C-band Sentinel-1A satellite in 2016-2017. An automated classifier is used to identify likely roll events from more than 1.3 million images that were acquired at two incidence angles of 23° and 36.5° in either VV or HH polarization. Characteristics of the detected rolls are examined for different wind speeds, polarizations, incidence and relative azimuth angles. Roll detection counts are much higher at the higher incidence angle and nearly equivalent for VV and HH polarizations. Detection depends strongly on the relative azimuth with roll detection rates at crosswind being 3-10 times lower than for up- or downwind. All data show a low wind speed threshold near 2 m·s<sup>-1</sup> and that rolls are most commonly observed at wind speeds near 9 m·s<sup>-1</sup>. For all viewing configurations, we find that rolls induce a wide range of mean surface wind speed modulation with the most frequent value being 8% ( $\pm 3.5\%$ ). Roll detection at crosswind is associated with stronger roll-induced surface wind enhancement. Dependencies of roll detection on the incidence and relative azimuth angles are consistent with rapid short-scale wind-wave adjustments to the roll-induced surface wind gusts. These cm-scale waves are highly directional and provide limited crosswind backscatter at shallower incidence angles. The same roll-induced surface forcing is thus not equally detectable at all viewing geometries or polarizations. Stronger and possibly longer-duration wind forcing is likely needed to produce detectable roll-induced modulations at crosswind.

**Keywords:** Marine atmospheric boundary layer rolls, Surface wind perturbation, Synthetic

13 **1. Introduction**

14 The mean flow in the marine atmospheric boundary layer (MABL) frequently includes an or-  
15 ganized secondary circulation in the form of long helical rolls that are approximately aligned along  
16 the mean wind direction. They are sometimes made visible by the low-level cloud streets that form  
17 in the organized updrafts between rolls (Weston, 1980; Hein and Brown, 1988; Rowe and Houze,  
18 2015). However, rolls are a common feature of the MABL when shear production of turbulence  
19 plays an important role and are thus frequently present in the absence of clouds. Investigation  
20 of the phenomenon extends back decades, including field, theoretical, numerical, and experimen-  
21 tal efforts (Kuettner, 1959; LeMone, 1973; Brown, 1980; Etling and Brown, 1993; Atkinson and  
22 Wu Zhang, 1996; Young et al., 2002), and there is evidence that these coherent structures have  
23 a measurable impact on turbulent fluxes of heat and momentum across the MABL (Glendening,  
24 1996; Zhang et al., 2008; Zhu, 2008; Brilouet et al., 2017). This inhomogeneous contribution is  
25 seldom included in the standard boundary layer parameterizations used in weather forecast and  
26 climate models. This is largely because the process occurs at small horizontal length scales that  
27 are within the so-called numerical modeling grey zone of 1-10 km (Shin and Hong, 2013; Bauer  
28 et al., 2015). Moreover, because they are often invisible to standard remote or in situ sensors, even  
29 basic measures of roll characteristics over the oceans have not been established. The fundamental  
30 particulars are the frequency of occurrence, strength, wave length, alignment direction, and forma-  
31 tion conditions (Levy, 2001; Weckwerth et al., 1997; Zhao et al., 2016; Atkinson and Wu Zhang,  
32 1996; Young et al., 2002).

33 Synthetic aperture radar (SAR) ocean imagery is able to resolve the parallel backscatter streaks  
34 that are associated with the roll-induced surface wind stress changes in day-and-night and most  
35 weather conditions (Gerling, 1986; Alpers and Brümmer, 1994; Young, 2000; Vandemark et al.,  
36 2001). Case studies using ocean SAR measurements have been conducted to examine MABL  
37 rolls in numerous air-sea investigations (Alpers and Brümmer, 1994; Li et al., 2013; Zhao et al.,  
38 2016; Babin et al., 2003; Sikora et al., 2011; Alpers et al., 2016). These applications have been  
39 limited in scope and mostly dedicated to coastal regions because wide-swath ocean SAR imagery  
40 is not acquired routinely nor globally. But a narrow swath option with nearly global coverage,

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41 sufficient resolution and scene size has been available from the Sentinel-1 SAR satellites since  
42 2014 (Torres et al., 2012). The SAR Wave Mode (WV) extends a legacy of global ocean surface  
43 wave monitoring from previous satellite SAR missions. For the purposes of MABL studies, the  
44 two most important differences of S-1 WV compared to the legacy data is the increase in image  
45 size to 20 by 20 km, while retaining a high spatial resolution of 5 m pixels, and the addition  
46 of a higher incidence angle sample. The European Space Agency (ESA) currently operates two  
47 identical Sentinel-1 (S-1) satellites (A&B) for Copernicus that routinely collect ~130,000 images  
48 each month over most of the ocean surface. At the time of this writing, more than six million  
49 images have been acquired.

50 A required first step for MABL roll studies using SAR data is event detection (Weckwerth et al.,  
51 1997; Young et al., 2008). To date, visual inspection has been used to determine the presence of roll  
52 imprints in SAR images (e.g. Levy, 2001; Zhao et al., 2016). Given the large number of S-1 WV  
53 scenes, an automated method is required. A machine learning tool for S-1 WV image classification  
54 was developed from the Inception-v3 convolutional neural network (CNN) to classify each WV  
55 image into one of the ten different geophysical categories (Wang et al., 2019b). Note that this  
56 classifier very rarely tags non-roll events as rolls but can miss-categorize roll events into other  
57 classes. The present study uses only the images that are classified as roll events. More than 1.3  
58 million WV SAR scenes collected in 2016-2017 were analyzed for the presence of MABL rolls,  
59 resulting in ~155,000 roll cases in total. This far surpasses the largest previous SAR MABL roll  
60 study of Levy (2001), for which, 7150 SAR images were examined.

61 The S-1 WV SAR images are acquired at two fixed incidence angles of 23° (WV1) and 36.5°  
62 (WV2), and with two transmit and receive linear polarization configurations, VV (default) and HH  
63 (experimental). This provides an opportunity for rigorous evaluation of C-band SAR detection and  
64 imaging of MABL rolls for varied wind speeds and radar viewing geometries. These characteris-  
65 tics have received limited attention in most previous SAR-based MABL roll investigations (Alpers  
66 and Brümmer, 1994; Young, 2000; Sikora and Ufermann, 2004; Li et al., 2013; Zhao et al., 2016),  
67 and in ocean SAR studies where the surface wind direction is inferred from roll imprint analyses  
68 (Gerling, 1986; Koch, 2004; Christiansen et al., 2006; Lin et al., 2008; Li and Lehner, 2014; Zec-  
69 chetto, 2018). Alpers and Brümmer (1994) proposed that SAR backscatter due to the roll-induced  
70 wave-roughening can be interpreted using the empirical geophysical model functions (GMFs) that  
71 relate 20-40 km scale radar scatterometer measurements to surface wind speed and radar viewing  
72 geometry. However, field measurements have shown that surface wind-wave and radar backscatter  
73 changes during roll impacts are associated with short-duration and short length-scale wind forcing

74 (Vandemark et al., 2001). These roll-induced forces primarily affect the shortest and highly direc-  
75 tional wind waves, and not the whole spectrum of surface waves (LeMone, 1973; Lemone, 1976;  
76 Young, 2000; Mourad et al., 2000; Vandemark et al., 2001). This interpretation is used to explain  
77 the results regarding MABL roll detection and sea surface modulation using the global S-1 WV  
78 SAR data that are presented in this paper, and to explain the differences between WV observations  
79 and a GMF applied to these observations.

80 The paper is organized as follows. Data and methods are described in Section 2, includ-  
81 ing the S-1 WV SAR data, supporting surface environmental variables, and a description of the  
82 methods used to classify WV images and to estimate the radar backscatter modulation related to  
83 roll-induced wind perturbations. Statistics of the identified MABL roll events are given in Section  
84 3. Section 4 provides analyses of the extracted roll modulation parameters, and compared them to  
85 a GMF simulation. Discussion and conclusions follow in Section 5.

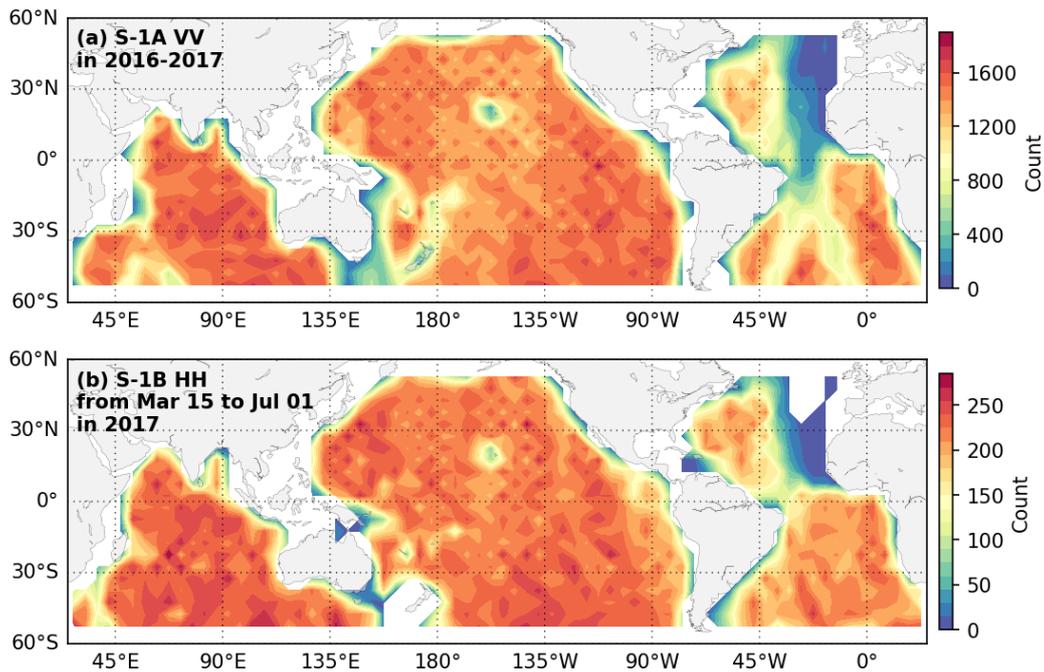
## 86 2. Data and methods

### 87 2.1. Sentinel-1 WV

88 Sentinel-1 is a polar-orbiting, sun-synchronous SAR satellite constellation mission designed  
89 for long-term operation extending into the next decades. Currently, two satellites (A&B), which  
90 share the same orbital plane offset by a  $180^\circ$  phase difference, were launched in April of 2014 and  
91 2016, respectively (Torres et al., 2012). The satellites are equipped with identical C-band SAR  
92 instruments that operate in four pre-programmed imaging modes: Interferometric Wide swath,  
93 Extra Wide swath, Strip Map and WaVe mode (WV). WV is the default mode over the world's  
94 ocean except in the Arctic, closed seas and coastal areas, or when S-1 has not been programmed  
95 to one of the other imaging modes. There is no WV data acquisition over land except the Amazon  
96 rainforest for calibration purposes. WV acquires small SAR image scenes (termed imagettes) at al-  
97 ternating incidence angles of  $23^\circ$  (WV1) and  $36.5^\circ$  (WV2). Both usually operate in linear vertical  
98 (VV) transmit and receive polarization and, during special phases, in horizontal (HH) polarization.  
99 Each WV image size is 20 km by 20 km, with 5 m pixel resolution. Neighboring images are spaced  
100 by 100-120 km. The orbital repeat cycle is 12 days. Approximately 65,000 imagettes per month  
101 are collected by each satellite. The S-1 WV SAR data used in this paper are the Level-1 Sin-  
102 gle Look Complex (SLC) repository, which are managed at IFREMER ([http://www.ifremer.](http://www.ifremer.fr/datavore/exp/dvor/#/s1quicklook)  
103 [fr/datavore/exp/dvor/#/s1quicklook](http://www.ifremer.fr/datavore/exp/dvor/#/s1quicklook)), and are also freely available at ESA's Sentinel Open  
104 Access Hub (<https://sentinel.esa.int/web/sentinel/sentinel-data-access>).

105 This study uses S-1A WV SAR data in VV polarization spanning 2016-2017, and S-1B WV  
 106 data in HH polarization from 15 March to 01 July 2017. Inland, near-coastal and poleward of 55°  
 107 to avoid possible sea ice images are removed. Fig. 1 illustrates the sample population for the VV  
 108 and HH datasets on a 5° by 5° global spatial grid. The typical S-1 WV coverage is nearly complete  
 109 over the Pacific, Indian and south Atlantic oceans. There is partial coverage for the eastern north  
 110 Atlantic because, by default, other standard imaging modes are in operation. The total numbers of  
 111 image evaluated from these S-1A and S-1B datasets are 1,182,540 and 197,442, respectively.

112 Each image is co-located in time and space with surface variables from the ERA5 hindcast  
 113 model, including 10 meter wind components, sea surface temperature, 2 meter air temperature,  
 114 2 meter dew-point temperature and surface pressure. ERA5 is the latest generation ECMWF  
 115 reanalysis product and provides these environmental variables hourly on a global spatial grid of  
 116 0.25° by 0.25°. The data are publicly available at: <https://cds.climate.copernicus.eu>.  
 117 From these variables, we estimate the bulk Richardson number  $Ri_B$  at 10 meter height, using the  
 118 COARE 3.0 air-sea flux algorithm (Fairall et al., 2003).



**Fig. 1.** Ocean SAR data coverage for S-1 study datasets, (a) S-1A in VV polarization in 2016-2017 and (b) S-1B in HH polarization, from 15 Mar to 01 Jul in 2017. Color denotes the number of WV images within each 5° by 5° spatial bin. The total number of images in these datasets is 1,182,540 and 197,442, respectively.

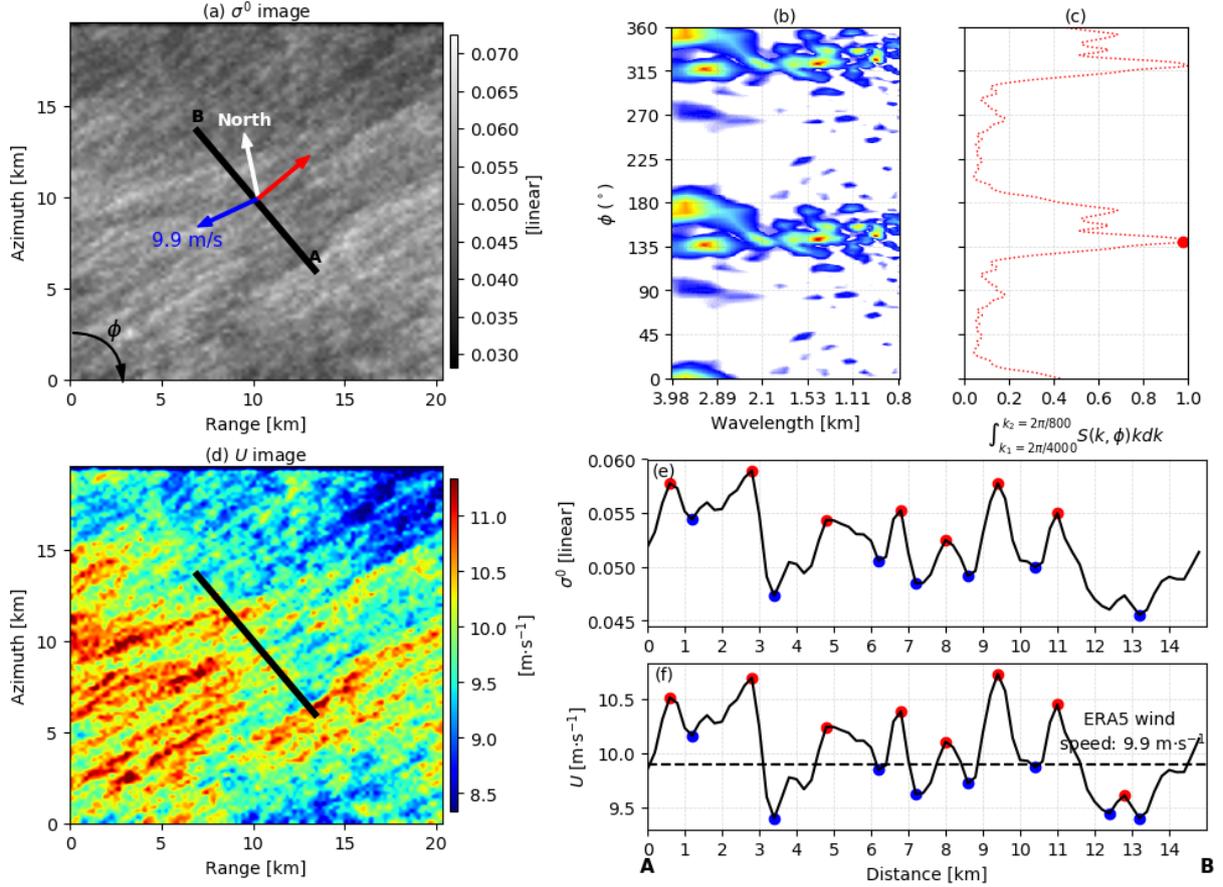
## 119 2.2. Automated WV image classification

120 Oceanic SAR images have been used to identify numerous oceanic, atmospheric, and sea ice  
121 features (e.g. Jackson et al., 2004; Wang et al., 2019a,b). The automated image classifier method  
122 applied to this WV data catalogue is briefly detailed here, with an emphasis on MABL roll iden-  
123 tification (Wang et al., 2019a,b). We first defined the ten most commonly observed geophysical  
124 phenomena in the WV image data (Wang et al., 2019a). These phenomena were ocean swell,  
125 wind streaks (induced by MABL rolls), micro-convective cells, rain cells, biological slicks, sea  
126 ice, icebergs, low wind areas, atmospheric fronts, and oceanic fronts. Visual selection was used to  
127 build a large representative collection for each class, leading to an open-access labelled database  
128 called TenGeoP-SARwv (Wang et al., 2018). We then developed an automated classification tool  
129 based on a deep learning pattern recognition approach. The tool, namely CMwv, was created by  
130 fine-tuning the Inception-v3 deep convolutional neural network (CNN) to discriminate between  
131 the ten input training sets (Szegedy et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2019b). Separate CMwv models  
132 were built for VV-pol WV1 and WV2 data, which are applicable for both S-1A and S-1B WV  
133 SAR data. Although the model skill has only been formally evaluated for the VV-polarized SAR  
134 images, results suggested that it performs similarly for the HH SAR data, at least for the task of  
135 MABL roll identification and analyses presented in this study.

136 CMwv assigns each WV image probability scores for the ten pre-defined classes. These prob-  
137 abilities add up to 1, and a WV image is considered to represent a case of visually-distinct MABL  
138 roll impacts (i.e. wind streaks) if the roll class score is the largest among the ten. The quantified  
139 skill for this approach has a Recall (sensitivity) of 83% for both modes (WV1 and WV2), and  
140 Precision (positive detection rate) of 77% and 96% for WV1 and WV2, respectively (Wang et al.,  
141 2019b). The precision difference between WV1 and WV2 is likely due to a weaker MABL roll  
142 imprint in WV1 images, which is one focus of this study. Wang et al. (2019a,b) documented that  
143 image contrasts due to roll imprints for WV2 were qualitatively stronger than for WV1 during the  
144 visual labelling procedure. Specific to the CMwv machine learning approach, the ability of this  
145 deep CNN model to differentiate between phenomena in each SAR image relies on the efficient  
146 extraction of optimal features into convolutional layers, and then to amplify feature differences  
147 through pooled layers (LeCun et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016). That is, distinct image features  
148 cannot be extracted if roll imprints are insufficiently clear. Even with these caveats, the overall  
149 CMwv precision scores are high. Potential study limitations due to the classification model are  
150 discussed in section 5.

151 2.3. Extraction of roll-induced backscatter modulation amplitude and direction

152 Prior to estimation of roll-induced SAR backscatter modulation for varying wind conditions, an  
 153 objective SAR backscatter recalibration method is used to correct S-1 SAR normalized radar cross-  
 154 section (NRCS,  $\sigma^0$ ) as described in Li et al. (2019b). Specific details are provided in Appendix  
 155 A.



**Fig. 2.** Analysis of roll modulations in S-1 WV sea surface roughness images. Panel (a) is a typical roll image after smoothing to a 200-m pixel resolution  $\sigma^0$  image. White, blue and red arrows indicate North, the ERA5 wind direction and extracted wind streak orientation, respectively. (b) 2-D FFT spectrum,  $S(k, \phi)$ , of the full resolution image within the expected wavenumber range of MABL patterns ( $\lambda = 0.8$  and 4 km). Angle  $\phi$  is in SAR image coordinates, i.e. clockwise rotating from the azimuth to range direction. (c) Integral of  $S$  at each  $\phi$ , maximum marked as a red dot. (d) SAR-estimated wind speeds derived using the C-SARMOD GMF. (e)  $\sigma^0$  transect profile along the black scan line in (a): from A to B. The profile (dashed line) has been smoothed with a 1 km length Hanning window. Red and blue dots indicate the detected local maximum and minimum. (f) similar to (e) but for SAR-retrieved local wind speed  $U$ .

156 Fig. 2 illustrates the process used to extract the roll-induced NRCS modulation from each WV  
 157 roll imagette. The full resolution  $\sigma^0$  image is box averaged to 200 m as shown in Fig. 2 (a), in order

158 to filter out most of the ocean swell features. The chosen 200 m scale follows recommendations  
 159 from previous studies (Koch, 2004; Horstmann and Koch, 2005; Christiansen et al., 2006). White  
 160 and blue arrows in Fig. 2 (a) indicate North and the ERA5 10-meter wind direction, respectively.

161 An image modulation spectrum  $S(k_x, k_y)$  is calculated using a 2-D FFT over the full resolution  
 162  $\sigma^0$  image. The spectrum  $S(k_x, k_y)$  is converted from Cartesian to Polar coordinates,  $S(k, \phi)$ . Fig.  
 163 2 (b) displays the partial spectrum in the 0.8-4.0 km wavelengths band. The angle  $\phi$  is in SAR  
 164 image coordinates.  $\phi = 0^\circ$  is in the increasing SAR azimuth direction along the satellite heading.  
 165  $\phi = 90^\circ$  is in the increasing SAR range direction (S-1 looks to the right). Since there is a  $180^\circ$   
 166 direction ambiguity in wind streak orientation, the spectral energy peak maximises near  $\phi=140^\circ$   
 167 and  $320^\circ$ . Note that multiple peaks are visible, principally associated with irregularities in the main  
 168 linear features throughout the image scene. Still a dominant azimuthal peak direction is apparent  
 169 and similar FFT methodologies have been used to extract the dominant orientation of MABL rolls  
 170 (Gerling, 1986; Mourad and Walter, 1996; Li et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2018). For the example  
 171 case of Fig. 2, panel (c) shows the corresponding profile of  $S(\phi) = \int_{k=2\pi/4000}^{k=2\pi/800} S(k, \phi) dk d\phi$  with the  
 172 maximum shown as a red dot. The red arrow in Fig. 2 (a) defines this dominant roll direction  $\phi_{WS}$   
 173 (with  $180^\circ$  ambiguity).

174 For each image, an estimate of the roll-induced  $\sigma^0$  modulation along a 15 km transect is ex-  
 175 tracted. This  $\sigma^0$  transect is located at the center of SAR scene and normal to the dominant wind  
 176 streak direction, as shown in Fig. 2 (a). Five parallel lines (1 km width) of the backscatter are av-  
 177 eraged and then smoothed using a Hanning window. As depicted in Fig. 2 (e), quasi-periodic  $\sigma^0$   
 178 variations along the cross-roll transect are shown. The local maxima (red dots) and minima (blue  
 179 dots) correspond to the alternating bright and dark bands on the backscatter image. The distance  
 180 between adjacent bright or dark (roll wavelength) varies from 1 to 3 km. It reveals local irregular  
 181 roughness modulations with local changes of the surface wind intensity and/or direction, consis-  
 182 tent with the multiple peaks present in the 2-D image spectrum. The modulation depth is defined  
 183 as the difference between the mean bright ( $\sigma_B^0$ ) and dark ( $\sigma_D^0$ ) NRCS. The relative modulation  
 184 depth, or contrast, is obtained after normalization by their average  $(\sigma_B^0 + \sigma_D^0)/2$ .

185 As shown in Fig. 2 (d), fine-scale ( $\sim 200$  m) surface wind speed is also retrieved from each  
 186 down-sampled WV  $\sigma^0$  imagette using the C-SARMOD GMF (Mouche and Chapron, 2015). Here  
 187 we used the co-located ERA5 wind direction instead of the extracted roll direction as input to the  
 188 GMF. Similar to above, a SAR-retrieved wind speed (U) cross-roll modulation transect is extracted  
 189 and smoothed in Fig. 2 (f). The obtained wind variations range from 0.5-1.5  $\text{m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ .

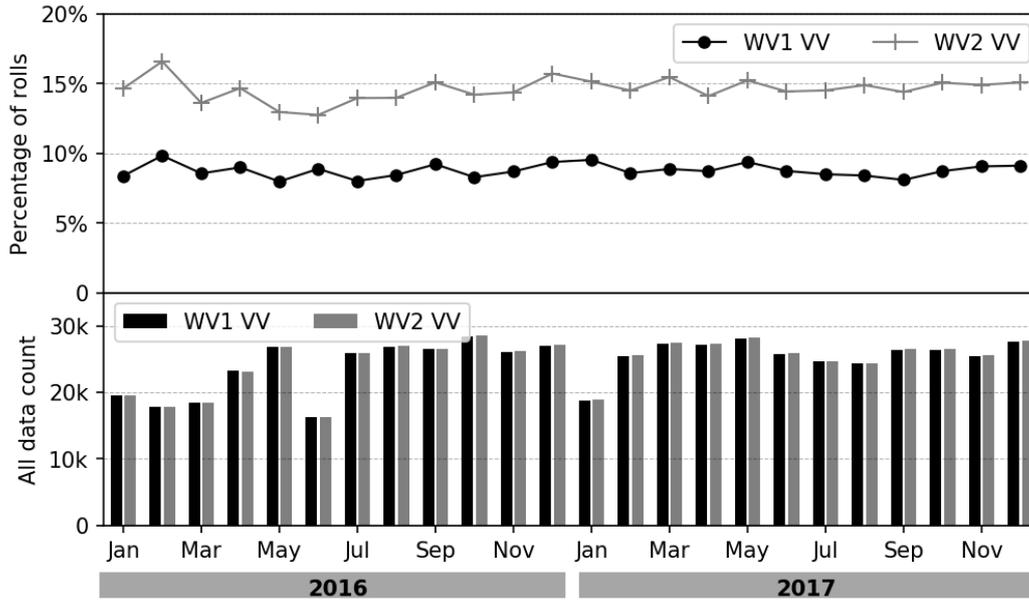
190 In summary, the following parameters relevant to roll-induced impacts on sea surface rough-

191 ness are extracted from each CMwv-identified MABL roll WV SAR scene:

- 192 1)  $\phi_{WS}$  [ $^{\circ}$ ]: Roll orientation with  $180^{\circ}$  ambiguity in image coordinates: clockwise rotating from  
 193 azimuth to range.  
 194 2)  $\sigma_B^0$  [linear]: Mean NRCS for brightest roll modulation peaks.  
 195 3)  $\sigma_D^0$  [linear]: Mean NRCS for the darkest roll modulation troughs.  
 196 4)  $d\sigma^0 = \sigma_B^0 - \sigma_D^0$  [linear]: Modulation depth.  
 197 5)  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0 = d\sigma^0/[(\sigma_B^0 + \sigma_D^0)/2]$  [linear]: Roll-induced NRCS perturbation.  
 198 6)  $U_B$  [ $ms^{-1}$ ]: Mean of the wind speed peaks.  
 199 7)  $U_D$  [ $ms^{-1}$ ]: Mean of the wind speed troughs.  
 200 8)  $dU/U = (U_B - U_D)/[(U_B + U_D)/2]$ : SAR-derived wind speed perturbation due to rolls.

### 201 3. MABL roll occurrence rates

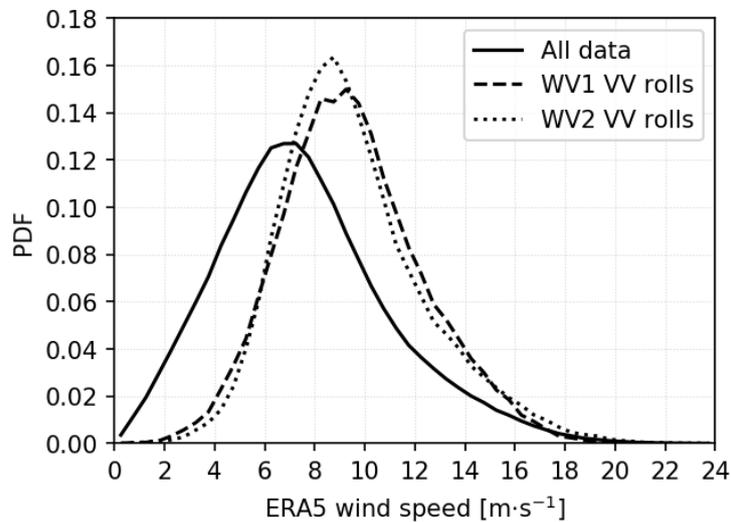
#### 202 3.1. Occurrence statistics



**Fig. 3.** Monthly statistics of detected roll events from all S-1A WV VV SAR imageries. The top and bottom panels provide the percent-detected and the total number of imageries examined in each month.

203 The automated classification considers a SAR imagerie as a MABL roll event if clear evidence  
 204 of organized quasi-linear wind streaks can be distinguished, and they dominate scene compared  
 205 to other possible geophysical phenomena. Fig. 3 shows the percentage of MABL roll events

206 relative to the total number of WV scenes acquired in each month. The image count per month  
 207 of approximately 20k is about the same for WV1 and WV2. The overall fraction of identified roll  
 208 events in WV2 is  $\sim 15\%$ , while that for WV1 is  $\sim 9\%$  with no apparent monthly variability in roll  
 209 frequency observed for either WV1 or WV2. The higher identification rate for WV2 compared  
 210 to WV1 is likely related to higher visibility of the roll-induced wind speed changes at the larger  
 211 incidence angle. The percentages of CMwv-classified roll events using the much smaller S-1B HH  
 212 SAR dataset are approximately 11% and 6% for WV2 and WV1, respectively (not shown). Note,  
 213 these detection rates are significantly lower than the reported average of 40-50% using visually-  
 214 selected images in coastal studies (Levy, 2001; Zhao et al., 2016).



**Fig. 4.** Wind speed distributions of all S-1A WV VV SAR data and the CMwv-identified roll WV1 and WV2 data.

215 The probability density functions (PDFs) of the ERA5 surface wind speed when rolls were  
 216 identified in the VV SAR data are shown in Fig. 4, along with the distribution for the entire S-1A  
 217 WV dataset. The distributions for WV1 and WV2 roll events are similar. The most likely wind  
 218 speed when rolls are identified is  $9\text{-}10\text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ , which is higher than the  $7\text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  mode for the entire  
 219 dataset. The low wind speed threshold for roll detection is near  $2\text{ to }3\text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  for both WV1 and  
 220 WV2. This is consistent with a postulated threshold of  $3\text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  (Weckwerth et al., 1997; Young  
 221 et al., 2002; Zhao et al., 2016). The probability for roll detection rises rapidly with wind speed  
 222 above this threshold. This is consistent with theoretical models that rolls usually form when shear  
 223 production is an important aspect of the MABL dynamics (Brown, 1980; Etling and Brown, 1993).

224 MABL roll identification versus wind speed and relative azimuth, which is the angle between

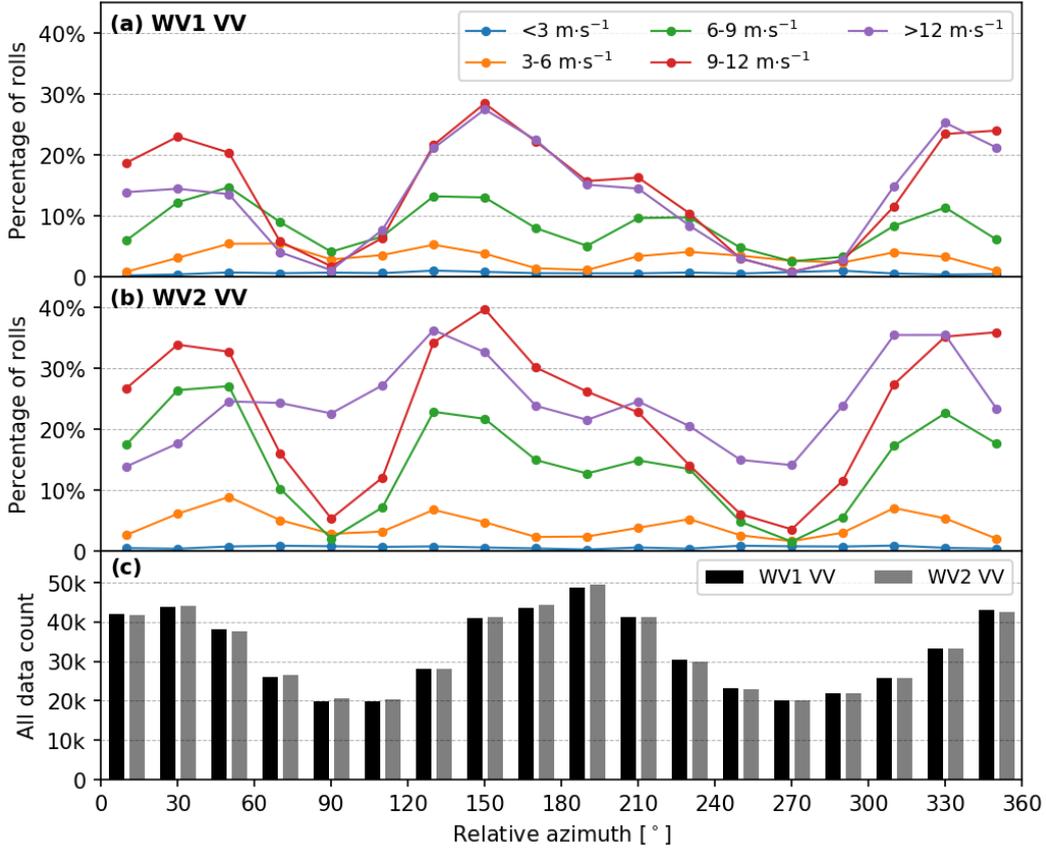
225 the radar beam and surface wind direction, is shown in Fig. 5. Data are averaged in 20° relative  
226 azimuth angle bins. Angles 0°, 90°/270° and 180° are indicative of upwind, crosswind and down-  
227 wind radar viewing directions. The bottom panel of Fig. 5 shows the S-1A WV sampling as a  
228 function of relative azimuth. Because S-1 SAR is right-side-looking and in a polar orbit, more  
229 data are acquired in upwind and downwind looks compared to crosswind due to the prevailing  
230 low-latitude easterlies and mid-latitude westerlies. However, thousands of roll images are col-  
231 lected at crosswind, which are mostly associated with the meridional flow around low and high  
232 pressure centers in the mid-latitudes.

233 Fig. 5 (a, b) show that, for wind speeds above 6 m·s<sup>-1</sup>, roll event detection rates are dramati-  
234 cally lower at crosswind for both incidence angles. Note that the roll detection rates for either  
235 WV1 or WV2 can reach 25-35%, which are above the average 9% and 15% rates shown in Fig. 3  
236 and are closer to the preciously reported detection rates (Levy, 2001; Zhao et al., 2016). While not  
237 shown, the detection rates of rolls from the smaller S-1B HH SAR dataset show similar behavior  
238 as S-1A VV for various wind speeds and relative azimuth. It is thus clear that the identification  
239 of roll events in S-1 SAR WV data depends strongly on all of incidence angle, wind speed and  
240 relative azimuth.

### 241 3.2. Case study investigation

242 To examine the MABL roll detection differences between WV1 and WV2, a section of Pacific  
243 Ocean (15°S-30°N, 170°E-180°E) data is extracted from a descending S-1A pass on Feb 2, 2017  
244 (Fig. 6). The SAR look direction is 287° clockwise from North. Wind information from ERA5  
245 shows that the wind field is fairly homogeneous at 9.5 m·s<sup>-1</sup> and about 80° direction in meteoro-  
246 logical convention, so the relative azimuth is 333°. The central locations of the WV1 and WV2  
247 imagettes reflect the standard leap-frog acquisition pattern. Concentrating on the 5°N to 18°N re-  
248 gion, seven consecutive WV2 imagettes are classified as rolls. The atmospheric stability parameter  
249  $Ri_B$  is slightly unstable at about -0.006, which indicates that conditions are favorable for MABL  
250 roll development (Brown, 1980; Etling and Brown, 1993; Young et al., 2002). Thus, one would  
251 expect S-1 to observe clear roll imprints in both WV1 and WV2. However, only one WV1 case is  
252 classified as a roll event.

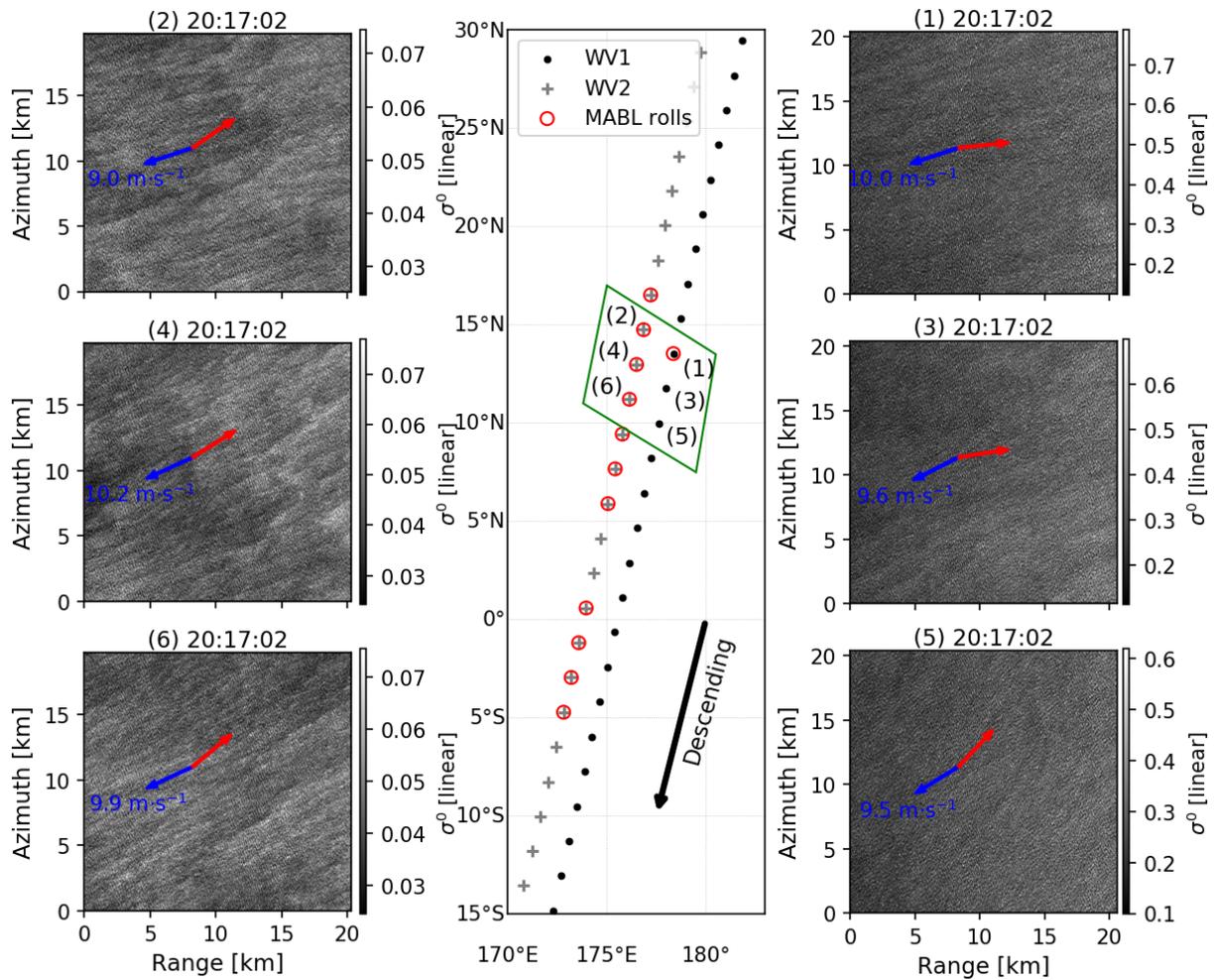
253 Fig. 6 shows the three pairs of WV1 and WV2 images that were acquired within a 2 minute  
254 span. WV2 images are displayed on the left column, and all these show clear periodic linear im-  
255 prints of rolls. They have the same orientation, which is close to the ERA5 surface wind direction  
256 (blue arrows on images). In contrast, roll imprints are almost invisible on the three neighboring



**Fig. 5.** Statistics of identified roll events from S-1A VV WV SAR images for different relative azimuth angles. (a) and (b) show the WV1 and WV2 percentages of identified rolls for selected wind speed ranges, and (c) gives the total of all images collected in each mode, respectively.

257 WV1 images shown in right column. Although one roll event was identified, the linear features on  
 258 that image are weaker than those in the nearby WV2 images.

259 The computed image modulation parameters for these six cases are given in Table 1. The  
 260 SAR-estimated wind speeds  $U_B$  and  $U_D$ , corresponding to  $\sigma_B^0$  and  $\sigma_D^0$ , are close to the mean ERA5  
 261 wind speed and approximately the same  $dU$  levels are found in all six WV imageries. However,  
 262 the modulation depths,  $d\sigma^0$ , extracted from WV1 images are larger than that from WV2 data.  
 263 When the modulation depth is normalized to contrast,  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$ , the three WV2 images have larger  
 264 values than the three neighboring WV1 cases. This indicates that even though a smaller NRCS  
 265 modulation is induced in WV2, it has a better roll detection capability than WV1 for the same  
 266 wind conditions. Visually, roll imprints are more easily visible in WV2 than WV1 images as  
 267 shown in Fig. 6. Roll detection is apparently sensitivity to the modulation contrast, which depends  
 268 on the relative change in NRCS induced by small wind perturbation and the mean NRCS. These



**Fig. 6.** Center panel shows center points of WV1 and WV2 acquisitions along an S-1A descending pass on 2017-02-02. Images identified by CMwv as roll events are shown with red circles. Three neighboring pairs WV2 and WV1 images (green box in the middle panel) are shown in the left and right panels. The blue and red arrows on the images indicate the ECMWF ERA5 surface wind and SAR backscatter-estimated roll directions, respectively.

269 two variables both vary as a function of wind speed, incidence and relative azimuth angles. Note,  
 270 however, that the sole WV1 image classified as rolls has the least  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  among the six cases. It  
 271 implies that the explanation for different roll detection rates between WV1 and WV2 is not simple.  
 272 A statistical analysis of roll-related modulation parameters is thus necessary and given in Section  
 273 4.

**Table 1** Environmental variables and extracted roll modulation parameters for the six S-1A WV1 (23°) and WV2 (36.5°) image cases in Fig 6.  $U_{10}$  and  $\phi_{U_{10}}$  are the ERA5 10 meter wind speed and direction in meteorological convention.  $Ri_B$  is the atmospheric stability parameter estimated from the ERA5 variables.  $\phi'_{WS}$  is the extracted roll orientation in the same coordinate as  $\phi_{U_{10}}$ .  $\sigma_B^0$  and  $\sigma_D^0$  are the mean NRCS over roll-induced bright and dark on SAR images.  $d\sigma^0$ ,  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  represent the roll-induced NRCS variation, relative NRCS variation (image contrast) and surface wind perturbation.

Case ID	Swath	$U_{10}$ [m·s <sup>-1</sup> ]	$\phi_{U_{10}}$ [°]	$Ri_B$ [×10 <sup>-3</sup> ]	$\phi'_{WS}$ [°]	$\sigma_B^0$ [linear]	$\sigma_D^0$ [linear]	$d\sigma^0$ [linear]	$\frac{d\sigma^0}{\sigma^0}$	$U_B$ [m·s <sup>-1</sup> ]	$U_D$ [m·s <sup>-1</sup> ]	$\frac{dU}{U}$
Fig 6 (1)	WV1	10.0	84	-6.98	96	0.346	0.326	0.021	0.06	10.35	9.82	0.05
Fig 6 (3)	WV1	9.6	75	-5.56	93	0.339	0.307	0.032	0.10	10.44	9.61	0.08
Fig 6 (5)	WV1	9.5	70	-6.99	55	0.302	0.278	0.024	0.08	9.54	8.99	0.06
Fig 6 (2)	WV2	9.0	84	-7.38	67	0.051	0.046	0.005	0.10	9.58	9.05	0.06
Fig 6 (4)	WV2	10.2	77	-6.29	70	0.053	0.047	0.006	0.12	10.09	9.39	0.07
Fig 6 (6)	WV2	9.9	77	-6.36	62	0.056	0.049	0.007	0.12	10.34	9.68	0.07

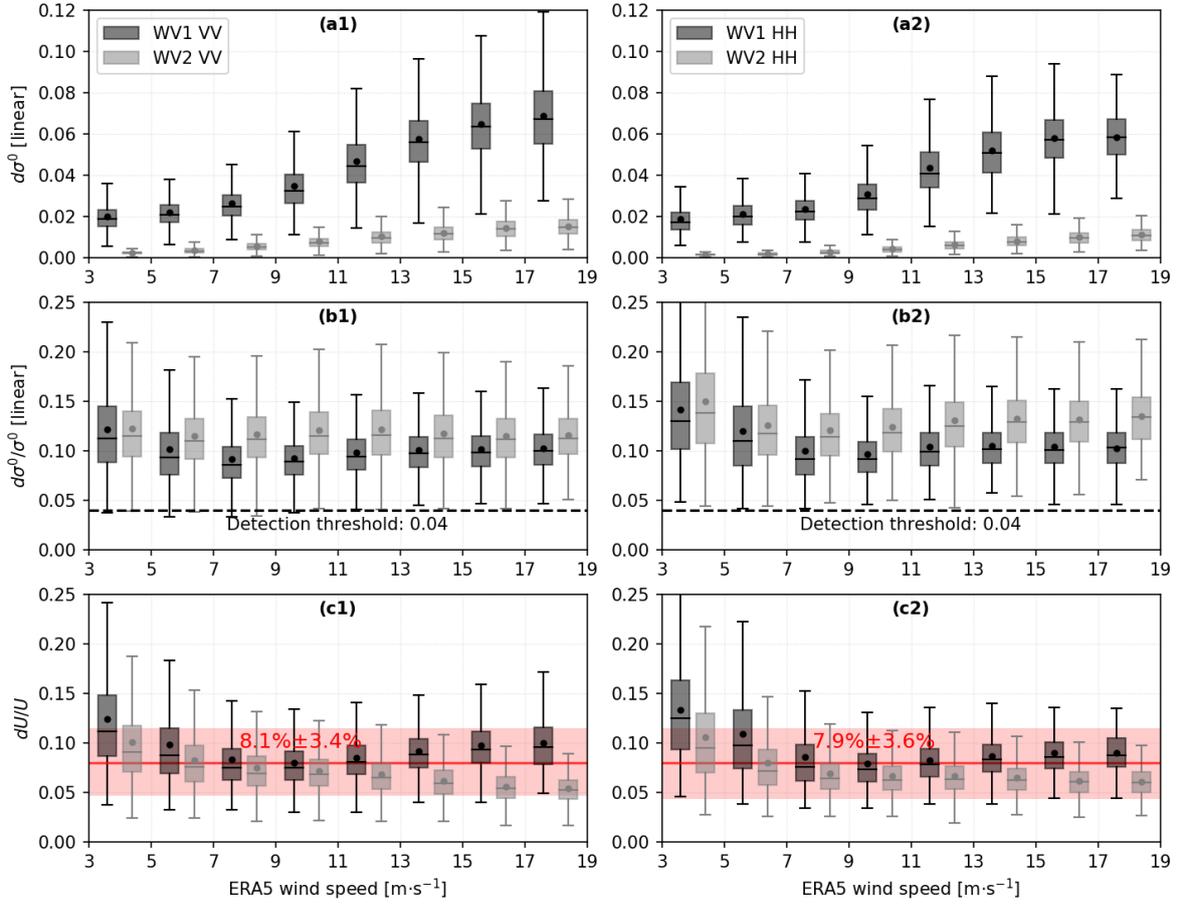
#### 274 4. S-1 WV NRCS response to roll imprints

275 In this section, we take advantage of the large dataset to address the question of roll detection  
276 systematically. The parameters  $d\sigma^0$ ,  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  are extracted from all the WV images that  
277 were identified as rolls by CMwv. The distributions of these quantities are binned as functions of  
278 ERA5 surface wind speed and relative azimuth for the different incidence angles and polarizations.

##### 279 4.1. Wind speed dependence

280 The roll-induced modulation depth  $d\sigma^0$  as a function of ERA5 wind speed for WV1 and WV2  
281 in VV and HH polarization states are shown in Fig. 7 (a1,2). Box-plots are used to show the  $d\sigma^0$   
282 distribution in 2 m·s<sup>-1</sup> bins from 3 to 19 m·s<sup>-1</sup>. Beyond this wind speed range, data are sparse  
283 particularly for HH. For both incidence angles and polarizations,  $d\sigma^0$  increases with wind speed.  
284 WV1  $d\sigma^0$  values are clearly larger than for WV2 for both VV and HH measurements. For winds  
285 larger than 13 m·s<sup>-1</sup>, VV  $d\sigma^0$  values exceed HH  $d\sigma^0$ . These observations consistently follow the  
286 fact that the implied slope,  $\partial\sigma^0/\partial U$ , is on average larger at the lower incidence angle for both VV  
287 and HH.

288 The SAR backscatter modulation contrast  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  is shown in Fig. 7 (b1,2). This roll-induced  
289 NRCS contrast is much less sensitive to surface wind speed than the modulation depth. One  
290 exception is the slightly larger values at low winds (3-7 m·s<sup>-1</sup>), particularly for HH data. This  
291 is likely because  $\sigma^0$  can be very low in light winds even  $d\sigma^0$  remains unchanged. A second  
292 observation is a likely roll identification threshold. For both WV1 and WV2 in either VV and  
293 HH polarization, the 10th percentile of  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  is almost constant near 0.04. We hypothesize that  
294 this value corresponds to the effective roll detection floor for the end-to-end S-1 SAR WV and



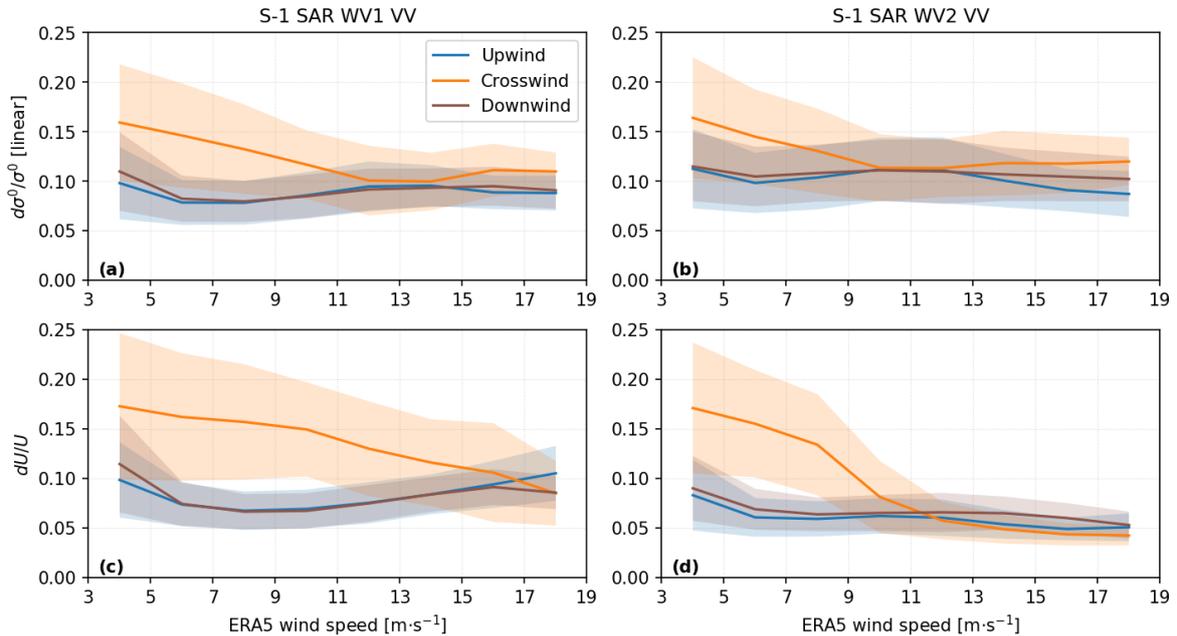
**Fig. 7.** Box plots of  $d\sigma^0$ ,  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  for identified roll events from WV1 and WV2 in VV polarization (left panel) and HH (right panel). Statistics were conducted within each  $2 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  bin from  $3$  to  $19 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . Boxes indicate the 25th to 75th percentiles in each bin. Data mean and median are denoted using the point and line. The 10th and 90th percentiles are given by whiskers. The red line and shaded red in bottom panels represents the overall average and standard deviation of  $dU/U$ .

295 automated CMwv model system. Roll cases with image contrasts below this 4% level might be  
 296 discernible by trained eyes, but by design, the non-supervised CMwv model was trained to only  
 297 identify clearly visible and delineated roll cases (Wang et al., 2019b).

298 Referring again to Fig. 7 (b1,2), it is clear that WV2  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  levels are generally higher than  
 299 these for WV1 in both VV and HH measurements. This difference is consistent with the detection  
 300 rate differences shown in Fig. 3 and Fig. 5. This indicates that roll-induced SAR backscatter  
 301 contrast is greater at the higher incidence angle, which improves the chances of CMwv to identify  
 302 roll events. Regarding polarization dependencies in the S-1 data, there is little  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  difference  
 303 between VV and HH measurements.

304 As noted earlier, ocean radar backscatter can be converted to wind speed using a GMF, which  
 305 provides a means to normalize the results across the four WV mode incidence angle and polar-  
 306 ization combinations. It also provides a geophysical quantification of MABL impact in terms of  
 307 the surface wind speed perturbation. Global statistics of SAR-derived wind modulations ( $dU/U$ )  
 308 versus mean wind speed are shown in Fig. 7 (c1) and (c2). Similar to the  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  measurements,  
 309  $dU/U$  mean values for WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH are relatively constant with wind speed.  
 310 The average level of wind perturbation is 8% (standard deviation of 3.5%). This value is con-  
 311 sistent with previous field measurements of 7-10% obtained using low-level aircraft observations  
 312 (Vandemark et al., 2001). The global ocean estimates show a slightly wider range of roll-induced  
 313 wind perturbations, and the maximum wind perturbation seldom exceeds 15%. For both VV and  
 314 HH, the  $dU/U$  levels are slightly larger at low winds ( $3-7 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ ), which is similar to the  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$   
 315 behavior. For wind speeds above  $13 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ , the detected rolls in WV1 (WV2) tend to be those with  
 316 stronger (weaker) roll-induced wind perturbations.

#### 317 4.2. Dependence of roll detection on relative azimuth



**Fig. 8.** Average  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  data from MABL roll events at up-, cross- and downwind SAR viewing angles as a function of wind speed. Data are from the 2016-2017 period with VV polarization. Statistics were computed for a  $\pm 15^\circ$  bin about the three relative azimuth angles, and within each  $2 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  wind speed bin from  $3$  to  $19 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . The line and shaded areas indicate the mean and one standard deviation.

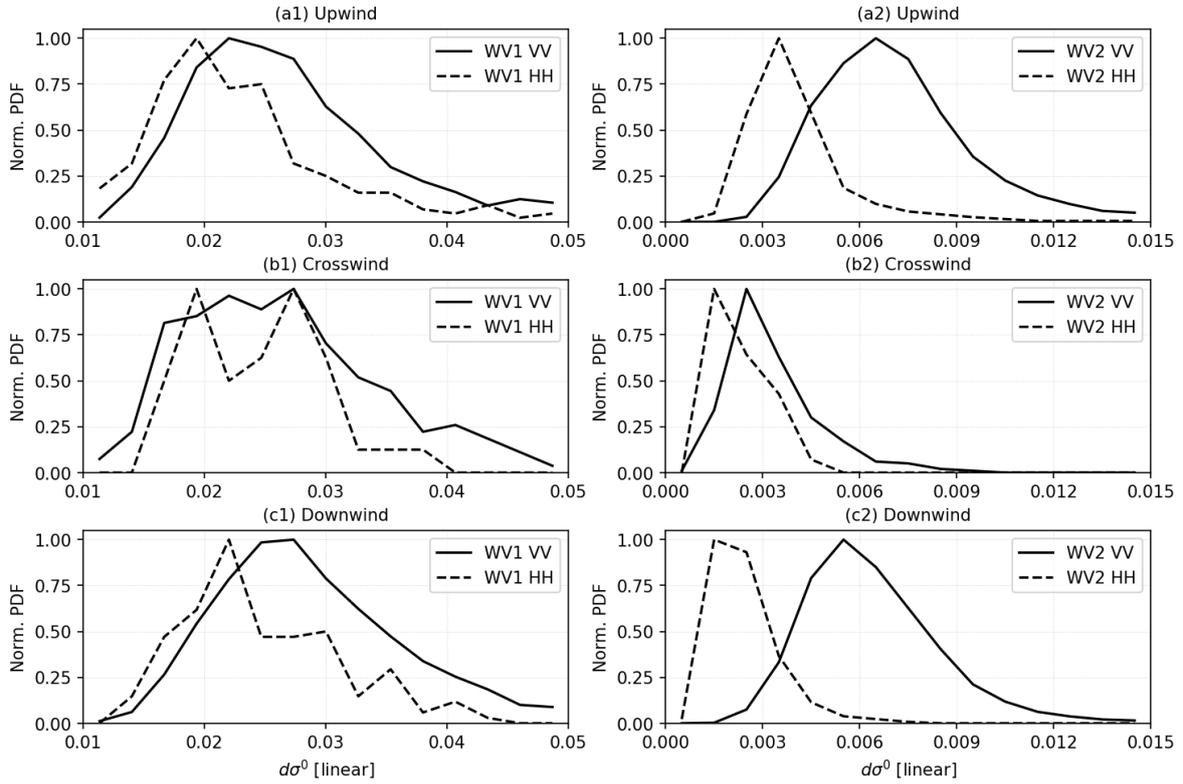
318 For a given wind speed, MABL roll event data show that the observed SAR backscatter and

319 wind speed perturbation estimates depend on the relative azimuth. Image contrast and wind pertur-  
 320 bations within  $\pm 15^\circ$  of the up-, cross- and downwind sectors for different wind speeds are shown in  
 321 Fig. 8. Up- and downwind  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  are comparable for all wind speeds. When the SAR  
 322 view is crosswind, both parameters markedly increase, particularly for WV1 measurements. For  
 323 winds below  $10 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ , the identified crosswind roll events are associated with perturbation levels  
 324 twice these for up- and downwind. These differences are largest at lower wind speeds. In terms of  
 325 wind perturbation, detected crosswind roll events suggest a level twice that for up/down looks at  
 326 speeds of  $6\text{-}8 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . It is worth noticing that the limited S-1B HH SAR data show similar results  
 327 with S-1A VV and thus not shown in the paper. The explanation for this is mostly a combination  
 328 of roll dynamics, SAR sampling and image processing. Most of the crosswind WV images come  
 329 from the flow around mid-latitude highs and lows and hence are in different thermal advection  
 330 regimes, which are known to affect the rolls differently (Foster and Levy, 1998). However, about  
 331 25% of crosswind roll detection with the strongest relative perturbation strength occur at very low  
 332 latitudes.

333 It is likely that this strong difference in directional radar sensitivity is related to short wind-  
 334 wave variability and Bragg-scattering from these waves, which is polarization dependent. Fig.  
 335 9 shows  $d\sigma^0$  distributions in VV and HH for both WV1 and WV2 at  $9\pm 1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . As expected,  
 336 the difference between polarizations is much more distinct at  $36^\circ$  (WV2) than at  $23^\circ$  (WV1),  
 337 and with larger NRCS variability at VV than at HH. The mean polarization difference (PD =  
 338  $\sigma_{VV}^0 - \sigma_{HH}^0$ ) is greater for WV2 observations (Quilfen et al., 1999; Kudryavtsev et al., 2013).  
 339 This is consistent with the increasing impact of resonant small scatters that have short space-time  
 340 relaxation scales, with increasing incidence angle (e.g. Mouche et al., 2007; Kudryavtsev et al.,  
 341 2014). The differences between  $d\sigma^0$  distributions at VV and HH are much less pronounced for  
 342 crosswind configurations in the WV2 results.

343 Quantitatively, Fig. 9 shows that VV downwind  $d\sigma^0$  levels are 3 times those of HH  $d\sigma^0$  at  $36^\circ$   
 344 (WV2). This is consistent with the pure-Bragg wave scattering theory prediction of a four times  
 345 VV-HH  $\sigma^0$  difference according to typical scattering coefficient formulations (e.g. Eq. 3 and 4  
 346 in Kudryavtsev (2003)). For WV1, pure-Bragg wave growth predicts a factor of 1.75 between  
 347 VV and HH  $\sigma^0$ , which is consistent with the global downwind WV1 observations in Fig. 9. But  
 348 at crosswind, the statistical distributions of HH and VV  $d\sigma^0$  are similar, and the mean levels are  
 349 much lower than the along-wind data. So for crosswind, the dominant radar scattering mechanism  
 350 must be almost scalar. That is because non-polarized scatters control the C-band radar-detected  
 351 contrasts at crosswind. These waves are likely to be steeper intermediate scale (10-50 cm) gravity

352 waves that require much stronger and longer duration wind forcing than for cm-scale Bragg waves  
 353 (Kudryavtsev, 2003; Kudryavtsev et al., 2014). The data then suggest that the roll-induced wind  
 354 perturbations must be significantly enhanced when the S-1 SAR detects roll events in crosswind.  
 355 This implication is that the crosswind roll detections are biased toward the strongest events.

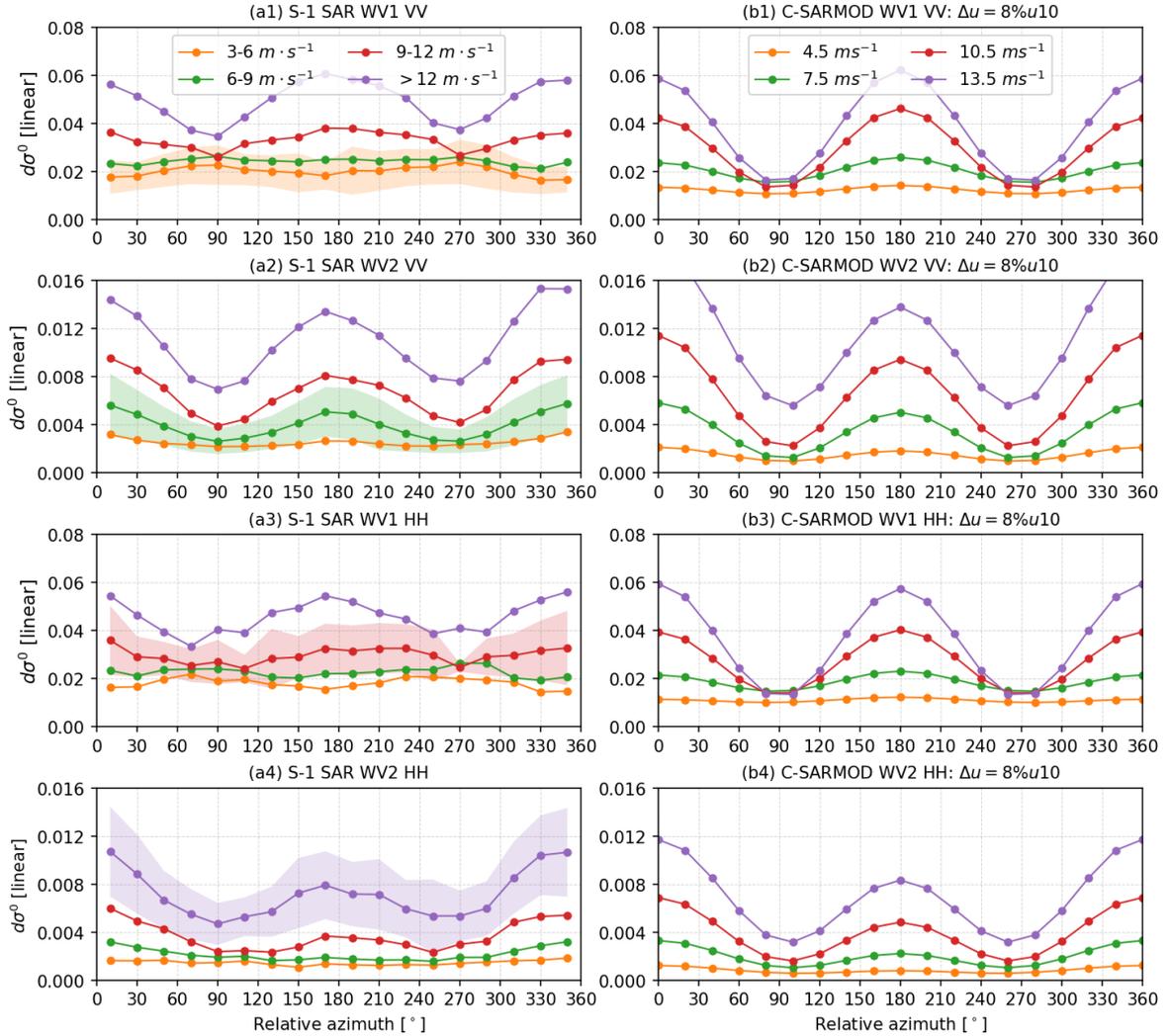


**Fig. 9.**  $d\sigma^0$  distributions at up-, cross- and downwind ( $\pm 15^\circ$  bin) for WV1 (left panel) and WV2 (right panel) in VV and HH with wind speed of  $9 \pm 1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . Azimuth averaging is the same as for Fig. 8

### 356 4.3. Comparison with C-band GMF simulations

357 To further examine the C-band SAR NRCS response to rolls with respect to wind speed and  
 358 relative azimuth, we interpret the S-1 WV  $d\sigma^0$  measurements with a simple GMF simulation in the  
 359 right column of Fig. 10. C-SARMOD calculations were performed assuming an 8% roll-induced  
 360 wind speed change ( $dU/U$ ) at each wind speed and direction for incidence angles of  $23^\circ$  and  $36.5^\circ$   
 361 over a wind speed range of  $4.5$  to  $13.5 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  across the full range of relative azimuth angle.

362 Corresponding SAR measurement statistics are collected in  $20^\circ$  relative azimuth and  $3 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$   
 363 wind speed bins (left column of Fig. 10). The modulation depth  $d\sigma^0$  is largest at upwind and  
 364 downwind. In light winds ( $3$ - $6 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ ), WV1 and WV2  $d\sigma^0$  are nearly constant for both VV and



**Fig. 10.** Observed vs. predicted  $d\sigma^0$  for roll events as function of wind speed and relative azimuth for WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH. Left panel are S-1 SAR WV results. Mean values are calculated for each  $20^\circ$  relative azimuth angle. For clarity, estimates of the standard deviation (shaded) are only shown for one wind speed in each panel. The right panel provides the C-SARMOD simulations under an assumed 8% wind speed change due to roll impacts.

365 HH with WV1 around 0.02 and WV2 about 0.002. With increasing wind speed, both VV and  
 366  $d\sigma^0$  increase, with largest variations at up- and downwind.

367 The observed  $d\sigma^0$  variations are generally similar, but there are some significant differences. In  
 368 light winds ( $3-6 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ ), C-SARMOD  $d\sigma^0$  is also nearly direction independent, but at a lower mag-  
 369 nitude than the SAR measurements. For moderate wind speeds, C-SARMOD predicts a stronger  
 370  $d\sigma^0$  dependence on the relative azimuth than we observe. For instance, within the  $9-12 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  wind

371 speed range, WV1 VV  $d\sigma^0$  varies from 0.036 at upwind to about 0.026 at crosswind, and 0.037  
372 at downwind. The corresponding C-SARMOD VV  $d\sigma^0$  are 0.042, 0.013 and 0.046, respectively.  
373 Similar discrepancies are found for other wind speed ranges. These differences between S-1 WV  
374 and C-SARMOD simulations are larger for WV1 than for WV2 in both VV and HH, and increase  
375 with increasing wind speed.

376 As might be expected from the results discussed in section 4.2, crosswind data show the largest  
377 differences with C-SARMOD. For WV1, the SAR  $d\sigma^0$  is larger than 0.02, and increases with  
378 wind speed. In contrast, the C-SARMOD  $d\sigma^0$  is less than 0.02, with no obvious wind speed trend.  
379 For WV2 at crosswind, both C-SARMOD and WV  $d\sigma^0$  increase with wind speed, although C-  
380 SARMOD increases less rapidly. It should be noted that the constant 8% wind modulation due to  
381 rolls will not be valid across the full scope of the model-data comparison.

## 382 5. Discussion and Conclusions

383 The combination of S-1 SAR WV data with automated image classification provides thousands  
384 of new MABL roll observations across most of the global ocean. Assessment results show that the  
385 36° incidence angle measurements have a clear benefit for MABL roll investigations and improve  
386 on wave mode data from the earlier ERS and Envisat SAR ocean missions. In particular, there is  
387 a nearly 50% increase in event detection for WV2 compared to WV1. While more roll events are  
388 detected at the larger incidence angle, the two incidence angles show several important similarities  
389 for MABL roll remote sensing. First, they share a lower detection threshold near 4% in NRCS  
390 contrast at wind speeds from 3 to 19 m·s<sup>-1</sup>. Estimates of the roll-induced surface wind speed  
391 perturbations at both incidence angles fall in the range of 5-10%. Finally, WV1 and WV2 SAR  
392 roll event detection rates are 3-10 times greater for up- and down-wind compared to crosswind  
393 (Fig. 5). These results generally hold for both VV and HH, although WV2 VV is slightly more  
394 sensitive than HH to wind streak signatures as seen in Figs. 7 and 9. It is thus apparent that the  
395 best option for S-1 SAR measurements of this process is the WV2 VV-pol configuration. These  
396 findings suggest that any ocean SAR investigations of MABL rolls should carefully consider the  
397 relative azimuth and SAR incidence angles.

398 The central geophysical explanation for the observed radar dependencies under MABL roll  
399 forcing appears to be the combination of surface wind stress impacts and adjustment to this forc-  
400 ing by highly directional short wind waves. As discussed in Section 4.2, roll imprints are best  
401 captured by WV2 VV in the up and downwind configurations. It demonstrates that the local  $d\sigma^0$   
402 changes due to the roll field are significantly polarized. Short-scale polarizing surface structures

403 correspond to the cm-scale Bragg waves. These waves have short relaxation times, and they quasi-  
404 instantaneously adjust to wind changes. Thus in the majority of cases, SAR-imaged rolls are likely  
405 to reflect this rapid adjustment in cm-scale waves for km-scale regions under the helical roll vortex  
406 field (Alpers and Brümmer, 1994; Young, 2000; Vandemark et al., 2001). Using a C-band radar  
407 GMF as a first-order model for this wind-wave adjustment, Fig. 7 (c1) and (c2) show that the  
408 global-averaged 8% ( $\pm 3.5$ ) level for wind speed fluctuations does a reasonable job of explaining  
409 the roll-induced NRCS modulation depth. This appears to be a robust observation, valid across  
410 most wind speeds, and consistent with previous aircraft wind measurements showing a range of  
411 7-10% (Vandemark et al., 2001). Results also indicate that the strength of the coherent secondary  
412 circulation scales with the intensity of the mean flow. These satellite-derived estimates of sur-  
413 face perturbation magnitude may help guide analytical and numerical models of eddy-impacted  
414 boundary layers.

415 An explanation for the largest difference of MABL roll detection between up and crosswind  
416 SAR viewing angles (see Figs. 5 and 8) is more nuanced. It is asserted that the dominant crosswind  
417 NRCS modulation mechanism under roll forcing must come from changes in steeper intermedi-  
418 ate scale breaking or nearly breaking surface scattering facets (Kudryavtsev, 2003; Kudryavtsev  
419 et al., 2013). This conclusion is consistent with VV and HH pol differences observed in Fig. 9.  
420 Accordingly, and particularly at lower incidence angles, roll-induced surface wind variations must  
421 be increasingly vigorous in magnitude and duration for wind streak detection under crosswind  
422 conditions, as seen in Fig. 8.

423 Looking forward, this discrepancy in roll-field detection may be related to other environmental  
424 conditions that accompany events classified as MABL rolls using CMwv. Because S-1 is polar-  
425 orbiting and right-looking, roll observations at crosswind will be primarily associated with flows  
426 around mid-latitude lows and highs. These conditions are associated with particular thermal  
427 advection regimes that induce first-order modulations of the rolls. So, crosswind rolls present  
428 complication in both remote sensing and in geophysical interpretation. More generally, this re-  
429 inforces the hypothesis that the forcing conditions needed to generate sufficient surface waves  
430 for wind streak detection may change, and be convolved with the SAR look direction and inci-  
431 dence angle. Further work is required to clarify this issue as it pertains to MABL roll process  
432 studies using S-1 data. Future investigations may also take advantage of these findings to focus  
433 on radar measurements under highly unstable atmospheric conditions, possibly using dual- and  
434 quad-polarized SAR measurements (Kudryavtsev et al., 2014, 2019; Fan et al., 2019).

435 It is certain that observed detection rates and thresholds depend to some extent on the per-

436 formance of the CMwv automated image recognition algorithm. In the case of MABL rolls, the  
437 model was intentionally trained to find scenes that were clearly visible by eye. Given the con-  
438 sistent roll detection statistics and results in Fig. 7, this visibly-evident criterion corresponds to a  
439 4 % threshold in backscatter modulation. This implies that conditions with weaker, less visible,  
440 roll imprints are not captured in the present analysis and datasets. This limitation suggests that  
441 the overall percentage of occurrence rates for MABL rolls over the ocean seen in Figs. 3 and 5  
442 represent conservative or lower-end estimates. In principle this may also affect the SAR-derived  
443 estimate of the low wind threshold for observed rolls ( $\sim 2 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ ) shown in Fig. 4, but this value is  
444 consistent with previous estimates from theory and observations (Etling and Brown, 1993; Weck-  
445 werth et al., 1997). CMwv model limitations are not expected to impact the study conclusions  
446 drawn above pertaining to radar sensitivity to MABL roll impacts with changing incidence angle,  
447 relative azimuth, or polarization.

448 These new S-1 WV observations open avenues for further studies. On one hand, the revealed  
449 differences in SAR sensitivity to waves generated by roll impacts, particularly for crosswind views,  
450 should be further investigated. This may lead to new approaches for identifying unstable condi-  
451 tions, and  $Ri_B$  retrieval methods. In that context, dual- and quad-polarized SAR observations (Fan  
452 et al., 2019), might be favored. In particular, short-scale polarized scatter contributions can be  
453 isolated to more precisely analyze local roll signatures. The growing number of quad-polarization  
454 observations, from Radarsat-2, Gaofen-3 and the new Radarsat Constellation Mission (RCM), are  
455 expected to serve this purpose. On the other hand, though the weak roll imprint cases are excluded  
456 in the present classified dataset, this S-1 SAR database is still state-of-the-art in terms of providing  
457 an overall global view of roll field characteristics (wavelength & orientation) as well as the ability  
458 to relate these data to near-surface forcing from the tropics to high latitudes. This massive classi-  
459 fied WV SAR images can thus be used to support boundary layer studies over the world’s ocean  
460 to advance understandings of km-scale MABL coherent roll structures on turbulent momentum  
461 fluxes.

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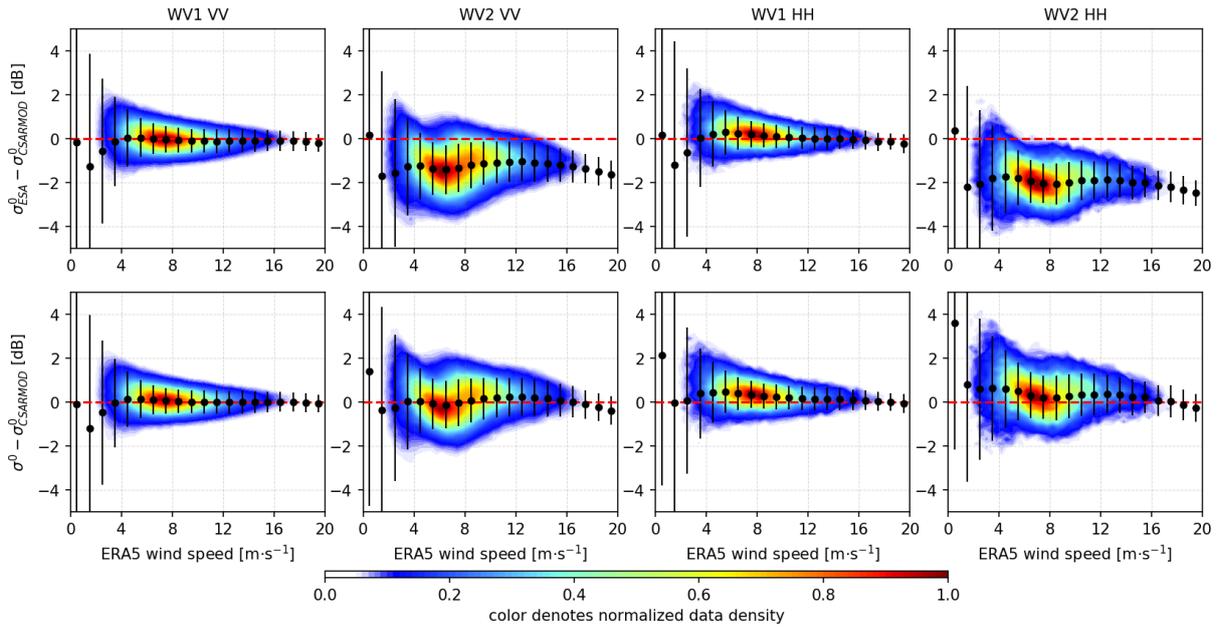
468 Council (CSC) for his PhD, and the French ISblue project (ANR-17-EURE-0015) for this work.

## 469 Appendix A. S-1 WV NRCS recalibration

470 For each WV SAR image, ESA's Level-1 SLC product provides the digital number  $DN =$   
 471  $\sqrt{I^2 + Q^2}$  per pixel ( $I$  and  $Q$  indicate the real and imaginary parts of SAR measurements). It can  
 472 be used to compute the NRCS through radiometric calibration and noise correction:

$$\sigma_{ESA}^0 = DN_i^2 / A_i^2 - NESZ \quad [Linear]$$

473 where  $A_i$  is the calibration lookup table (LUT) provided in the annotation files for each image  
 474 pixel. NESZ is the noise equivalent  $\sigma^0$  estimated from the mode of  $DN_i^2 / A_i^2$  histogram for wind  
 475 speeds less than  $1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  (Li et al., 2019a,b). The NESZ is 0.0014 and 0.0062 for S-1A WV1 and  
 476 WV2 in VV, and 0.0012 and 0.0040 for S-1B WV1 and WV2 in HH.



**Fig. A.11.** NRCS residual of pre- and post-recalibration (top and bottom) as function of wind speed for WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH. VV data are for S-1A in 2016-2017 and HH data are for S-1B from 15 Mar to 01 Jul in 2017. Color denotes the normalized data density. The red dashed line indicates the 0 dB baseline. Black dots are the mean residual within  $1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  bin and the error bars represent one standard deviation. The  $\sigma^0$  reference comes from the C-SARMOD model noted in the text.

477 The chosen NRCS reference, or benchmark, is the C-band SAR GMF of C-SARMOD  
 478 (Mouche et al., 2006). It is selected because of its applicable skill in both VV and HH polariza-

479 tions. NRCS comparisons between standard ESA WV data ( $\sigma_{ESA}^0$ ) and C-SARMOD predictions  
480 for WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH are given in the top panel of Fig. A.11. We then computed  
481 the mean  $\sigma_{ESA}^0$  per image for WV data and fed the collocated ERA5 wind speed and direction as  
482 well as image center incidence angle into C-SARMOD to derive the expected  $\sigma_{C-SARMOD}^0$ . Note  
483 that SAR data with mean  $DN_i^2/A_i^2$  less than the NESZ are excluded. The error bar plots show  
484 the mean and 1st standard deviation within each  $1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  bin and the color denotes the normalized  
485 data density. It is clear that the NRCS residual ( $\sigma_{ESA}^0 - \sigma_{C-SARMOD}^0$ ) for WV1 data in both VV and  
486 HH is nearly 0 dB for all wind speeds. However, the WV2 NRCS residual has a nearly constant  
487 negative bias at all wind speeds of about -1.6 dB for VV and -2 dB for HH. This is consistent with  
488 the NRCS assessment that discrepancies exist between S-1 WV data (after built-in calibration pro-  
489 cessing) and CMOD5.N predictions, particularly for measurements at the WV2 incidence angle  
490 of  $36^\circ$  (Li et al., 2019b,a).

491 A recalibration constant  $C_{OC}$  is calculated for each 12 day repeat cycle using C-SARMOD and  
492 ERA5 wind direction. This factor is then used to correct the WV NRCS as  $\sigma^0 = \sigma_{ESA}^0 / C_{OC}$  in  
493 linear space. This procedure is applied for both WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH. The bottom panel  
494 of Fig. A.11 displays the NRCS residuals after recalibration. As expected, the WV2 mean NRCS  
495 values now lie within 0.1-0.2 dB of the C-SARMOD prediction for most wind speeds.

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### 683 List of Figure Captions

- 684 • Figure 1: Ocean SAR data coverage for S-1 study datasets, (a) S-1A in VV polarization in  
685 2016-2017 and (b) S-1B in HH polarization, from 15 Mar to 01 Jul in 2017. Color denotes  
686 the number of WV images within each 5° by 5° spatial bin. The total number of imagettes  
687 in these datasets is 1,182,540 and 197,442, respectively.
- 688 • Figure 2: Analysis of roll modulations in S-1 WV sea surface roughness images. Panel  
689 (a) is a typical roll image after smoothing to a 200-m pixel resolution  $\sigma^0$  image. White,  
690 blue and red arrows indicate North, the ERA5 wind direction and extracted wind streak  
691 orientation, respectively. (b) 2-D FFT spectrum,  $S(k, \phi)$ , of the full resolution image within  
692 the expected wavenumber range of MABL patterns ( $\lambda = 0.8$  and 4 km). Angle  $\phi$  is in SAR  
693 image coordinates, i.e. clockwise rotating from the azimuth to range direction. (c) Integral  
694 of  $S$  at each  $\phi$ , maximum marked as a red dot. (d) SAR-estimated wind speeds derived using  
695 the C-SARMOD GMF. (e)  $\sigma^0$  transect profile along the black scan line in (a): from A to  
696 B. The profile (dashed line) has been smoothed with a 1 km length Hanning window. Red  
697 and blue dots indicate the detected local maximum and minimum. (f) similar to (e) but for  
698 SAR-retrieved local wind speed  $U$ .
- 699 • Figure 3: Monthly statistics of detected roll events from all S-1A WV VV SAR imagettes.  
700 The top and bottom panels provide the percent-detected and the total number of imagettes  
701 examined in each month.
- 702 • Figure 4: Wind speed distributions of all S-1A WV VV SAR data and the CMwv-identified  
703 roll WV1 and WV2 data.

- 704 • Figure 5: Statistics of identified roll events from S-1A VV WV SAR images for different  
705 relative azimuth angles. (a) and (b) show the WV1 and WV2 percentages of identified rolls  
706 for selected wind speed ranges, and (c) gives the total of all images collected in each mode,  
707 respectively.
  
- 708 • Figure 6: Center panel shows center points of WV1 and WV2 acquisitions along an S-1A  
709 descending pass on 2017-02-02. Images identified by CMwv as roll events are shown with  
710 red circles. Three neighboring pairs WV2 and WV1 images (green box in the middle panel)  
711 are shown in the left and right panels. The blue and red arrows on the images indicate the  
712 ECMWF ERA5 surface wind and SAR backscatter-estimated roll directions, respectively.
  
- 713 • Figure 7: Box plots of  $d\sigma^0$ ,  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  for identified roll events from WV1 and  
714 WV2 in VV polarization (left panel) and HH (right panel). Statistics were conducted within  
715 each  $2 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  bin from  $3$  to  $19 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . Boxes indicate the 25th to 75th percentiles in each bin.  
716 Data mean and median are denoted using the point and line. The 10th and 90th percentiles  
717 are given by whiskers. The red line and shaded red in bottom panels represents the overall  
718 average and standard deviation of  $dU/U$ .
  
- 719 • Figure 8: Average  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  data from MABL roll events at up-, cross- and down-  
720 wind SAR viewing angles as a function of wind speed. Data are from the 2016-2017 period  
721 with VV polarization. Statistics were computed for a  $\pm 15^\circ$  bin about the three relative az-  
722 imuth angles, and within each  $2 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  wind speed bin from  $3$  to  $19 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . The line and  
723 shaded areas indicate the mean and one standard deviation.
  
- 724 • Figure 9:  $d\sigma^0$  distributions at up-, cross- and downwind ( $\pm 15^\circ$  bin) for WV1 (left panel) and  
725 WV2 (right panel) in VV and HH with wind speed of  $9 \pm 1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$ . Azimuth averaging is the  
726 same as for Fig. 8
  
- 727 • Figure 10: Observed vs. predicted  $d\sigma^0$  for roll events as function of wind speed and relative  
728 azimuth for WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH. Left panel are S-1 SAR WV results. Mean  
729 values are calculated for each  $20^\circ$  relative azimuth angle. For clarity, estimates of the stan-  
730 dard deviation (shaded) are only shown for one wind speed in each panel. The right panel  
731 provides the C-SARMOD simulations under an assumed 8% wind speed change due to roll  
732 impacts.
  
- 733 • Figure A1: NRCS residual of pre- and post-recalibration (top and bottom) as function of

734 wind speed for WV1 and WV2 in VV and HH. VV data are for S-1A in 2016-2017 and HH  
735 data are for S-1B from 15 Mar to 01 Jul in 2017. Color denotes the normalized data density.  
736 The red dashed line indicates the 0 dB baseline. Black dots are the mean residual within  
737  $1 \text{ m}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}$  bin and the error bars represent one standard deviation. The  $\sigma^0$  reference comes  
738 from the C-SARMOD model noted in the text.

### 739 **List of Table Captions**

- 740 • Table 1: Environmental variables and extracted roll modulation parameters for the six S-1A  
741 WV1 ( $23^\circ$ ) and WV2 ( $36.5^\circ$ ) image cases in Fig 6.  $U_{10}$  and  $\phi_{U_{10}}$  are the ERA5 10 meter  
742 wind speed and direction in meteorological convention.  $Ri_B$  is the atmospheric stability  
743 parameter estimated from the ERA5 variables.  $\phi'_{WS}$  is the extracted roll orientation in the  
744 same coordinate as  $\phi_{U_{10}}$ .  $\sigma_B^0$  and  $\sigma_D^0$  are the mean NRCS over roll-induced bright and dark  
745 on SAR images.  $d\sigma^0$ ,  $d\sigma^0/\sigma^0$  and  $dU/U$  represent the roll-induced NRCS variation, relative  
746 NRCS variation (image contrast) and surface wind perturbation.