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www.hydrol-earth-syst-sci-discuss.net/9/C2995/2012/

Hydrology and Earth System Sciences Discussions

Interactive comment on "Measurement and modelling of evaporation from a coastal wetland in Maputaland, South Africa" *by* A. D. Clulow et al.

Anonymous Referee #3

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I have always regarded an abstract as a summary of the key findings and significance of a study, while the conclusions tend to be more speculative, open-ended, broader in perspective and outward looking. In this respect the abstract seemed more like a conclusion while the Conclusion seemed more like an abstract.

I am critical of the notion of an ecosystem being "sensitive", "fragile", "vulnerable" etc, because in many respects ecosystems are remarkable resilient. Therefore, I avoid the use of these words to describe ecosystems unless I am able to identify the factor to which an ecosystem is sensitive. Some ecosystems may be sensitive to fire (forests in Yellowstone National Park for example), others may be vulnerable to heavy grazing pressure (semi-arid grasslands perhaps), while others may be vulnerable to prolonged

droughts (peatlands may experience peat fires given prolonged droughts for instance). I would not raise this issue in the opening paragraph of this paper – rather tell the reader why this is an important study scientifically.

Use of terminology around wetlands and wetland types was generally not well handled in this MS. I suggest that the term "marsh" is better when describing wetlands dominated by Phragmites for instance (p 1744 line 2). Later in the MS the same community is described as a reedbed. Similarly, in the next paragraph on p 1744 I would use the term "permanently flooded" rather than "open water". The authors should check terms related to wetlands, marsh, mire etc throughout the MS.

Please also note the supplement to this comment:
http://www.hydrol-earth-syst-sci-discuss.net/9/C2995/2012/hessd-9-C2995-2012-supplement.pdf

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Interactive comment on Hydrol. Earth Syst. Sci. Discuss., 9, 1741, 2012.