

Unsupervised Ensemble Kalman Filtering with an Uncertain Constraint for Land Hydrological Data Assimilation

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Abstract

1 The standard ensemble data assimilation schemes often violate the dynamical balances of hydro-
2 logical models, in particular, the fundamental water balance equation, which relates water storage
3 and water flux changes. The present study aims at extending the recently introduced Weak Con-
4 strained Ensemble Kalman Filter (WCEnKF) to a more general framework, namely unsupervised
5 WCEnKF (UWCEnKF), in which the covariance of the water balance model is no longer known,
6 thus requiring its estimation along with the model state variables. This extension is introduced
7 because WCEnKF was found to be strongly sensitive to the (manual) choice of this covariance. The
8 proposed UWCEnKF, on the other hand, provides a more general unsupervised framework that
9 does not impose any (manual, thus heuristic) value of this covariance, but suggests an estimation
10 of it, from the observations, along with the state. The new approach is tested based on numerical
11 experiments of assimilating Terrestrial Water Storage (TWS) from Gravity Recovery and Climate
12 Experiment (GRACE) and remotely sensed soil moisture data into a hydrological model. The
13 experiments are conducted over different river basins, comparing WCEnKF, UWCEnKF, and the
14 standard EnKF. In this setup, the UWCEnKF constrains the system state variables with TWS
15 changes, precipitation, evaporation, and discharge data to balance the summation of water storage
16 simulations. In-situ groundwater and soil moisture measurements are used to validate the results of
17 the UWCEnKF and to evaluate its performances against the EnKF. Our numerical results clearly
18 suggest that the proposed framework provides more accurate estimates of groundwater storage
19 changes and soil moisture than WCEnKF and EnKF over the different studied basins.

Keywords: Constrained data assimilation, Ensemble Kalman Filter (EnKF), Unsupervised Weak
Constrained Ensemble Kalman Filter (UWCEnKF), Water budget closure, Hydrological modeling.

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20 1. Introduction

21 Hydrological models play important roles in environmental studies and are crucial for hy-
22 drological applications. Due to a variety of factors, such as model structural errors, data deficiency,
23 and uncertainty in inputs and parameters, the outputs of these models can be far from perfect.
24 Data assimilation techniques offer a framework to improve the models simulations by constraining
25 their outputs to the observations. However, the application of assimilation schemes could intro-
26 duce an imbalance between water fluxes, namely precipitation \mathbf{p} , evaporation \mathbf{e} , discharge \mathbf{q} , and
27 changes in water storage, $\Delta\mathbf{s}$, through the water balance equation $\Delta\mathbf{s} = \mathbf{p} - \mathbf{e} - \mathbf{q}$. The water
28 balance equation is applied in land hydrological models to describe the relationships between these
29 fluxes (Sokolov and Chapman, 1974). The model structure governs variations in the water state
30 changes due to the incoming and outgoing hydrological water fluxes. Data assimilation of any wa-
31 ter storages, e.g., soil moisture and/or terrestrial water storage (TWS), breaks the existing balance
32 because the assimilated state does not satisfy the water balance property (Khaki et al., 2017a).

33 Existing data assimilation methodologies under water budget enforcement rely on a “perfect
34 observations” assumption in the closure constraint (e.g., Pan and Wood, 2006; Sahoo et al., 2011;
35 Pan et al., 2012). For example, Pan and Wood (2006) proposed a constrained ensemble Kalman
36 filter (CEnKF) that imposes regional water balance constraint to improve the filtering results.
37 The CEnKF involves two successive EnKF-like updates. The first update uses the observations
38 to update the state forecast, following an EnKF-like step, while the second update imposes the
39 balance constraint via another EnKF-like correction, yet with a different form. Other studies have
40 applied data merging algorithms along with the CEnKF (see, e.g., Sahoo et al., 2011; Pan et al.,
41 2012; Zhang et al., 2016) to provide the flux datasets from various resources for water balance
42 control. Although these improved datasets have resulted in better state estimates over different
43 river basins by incorporating more accurate information about the constraints, the assumption
44 of perfect observations is still problematic. This assumption leads to a strong constraint, which
45 is unrealistic and may cause various issues. Simon and Chia (2002) suggested that even though
46 it does not present any theoretical problems, the assumption can result in a singular covariance
47 matrix, which in practice increases the possibility of numerical issues. Furthermore, by neglecting
48 errors associated with flux observations, one can expect more estimation errors because of the
49 strong water budget enforcement, which could also lead to over-fitting issues (Tangdamrongsub et
50 al., 2017).

51 In a recent study, [Khaki et al. \(2017a\)](#) proposed a new two-update ensemble Kalman-based
52 scheme, a weak constrained ensemble Kalman filter (WCEnKF), that involves uncertainties in the
53 water budget balance enforcement equation. Unlike previous studies (e.g., [Pan and Wood, 2006](#);
54 [Sahoo et al., 2011](#); [Pan et al., 2012](#); [Khaki et al., 2017a](#)), water balance uncertainty is added to
55 the equality constraint formulation, which allows for a more realistic water balance control during
56 filtering. This has been framed in a supervised framework, i.e., by assigning approximate error
57 covariance to the water balance observations before filtering, which may not allow for an optimal
58 estimation of corrections (in the second step of the filter) to be applied to results from the first step
59 of the filter. The present study aims to extend the work of [Khaki et al. \(2017a\)](#) to the case where
60 the covariance associated with flux observations is unknown, proposing an unsupervised framework
61 to estimate it along with the hydrology state variable. The proposed Unsupervised WCEnKF
62 (UWCEnKF) introduces an iterative scheme in the second update step of the WCEnKF.

63 In order to assess the performance of the UWCEnKF, numerical experiments are carried out
64 to assimilate the Gravity Recovery And Climate Experiment (GRACE) derived terrestrial wa-
65 ter storage (TWS), as well as soil moisture products from the Advanced Microwave Scanning
66 Radiometer-Earth Observing System (AMSR-E) and Soil Moisture and Ocean Salinity (SMOS)
67 into a hydrological model. Assimilating GRACE TWS data has been performed in a number of
68 previous studies to constrain the mass balance of hydrological models over different river basins
69 (e.g., [Zaitchik et al., 2008](#); [van Dijk et al., 2014](#); [Eicker et al., 2014](#); [Reager et al., 2015](#); [Schu-
70 macher et al., 2016](#); [Khaki et al., 2018a,b](#)). Several studies already demonstrated a great capability
71 of AMSR-E and SMOS datasets to constrain model estimates through data assimilation (e.g., [De
72 Jeu et al., 2008](#); [Renzullo et al., 2014](#); [Leroux et al., 2016](#); [Tian et al., 2017](#)). It has also been shown
73 that simultaneous assimilation of the different datasets generally leads to better results in terms of
74 state estimates (e.g., [Zhang et al., 2014](#); [Renzullo et al., 2014](#); [Han et al., 2016](#); [Tian et al., 2017](#);
75 [Lievens et al., 2017](#)) as compared to individual assimilation of the different datasets. This motivates
76 the current study to simultaneously assimilate GRACE TWS and soil moisture observations from
77 AMSR-E and SMOS. We also apply the standard EnKF to compare its results with the proposed
78 UWCEnKF filter. This enables to evaluate the relevance of the proposed approach for enforcing
79 the water budget closure.

80 We further consider multiple observations of the water components in the water budget equation.
81 This is done to achieve the best estimates of \mathbf{p} and \mathbf{e} over different basins (see Figure 1). Multi-

82 mission products for precipitation and evaporation are used in the data merging approach of [Sahoo](#)
83 [et al. \(2011\)](#) to derive a single data set for each observation type (i.e., \mathbf{p} and \mathbf{e}). The approach
84 estimates uniform datasets independently for each basin. The merged data, as well as the water
85 discharge measurements from various ground stations, are then applied to constrain the water
86 balance equation in the UWCEnKF's second update. This experiment is undertaken over eight
87 globally distributed basins; Amazon, Indus, Mississippi, Orange, Danube, St. Lawrence, Murray-
88 Darling, and the Yangtze, to better explore the capability of the proposed filter.

89 The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. We first describe the data and model in
90 Section 2. The UWCEnKF algorithm and experiments set up are described in Sections 3 and 4,
91 respectively. We illustrate and discuss the experiments results in Section 5 and conclude the study
92 in Section 6.

93 **2. Model and data**

94 *2.1. Hydrological model*

95 Vertical water compartments of the globally distributed World-Wide Water Resources As-
96 sessment system (W3RA) model, developed in 2008 by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial
97 Research Organisation (CSIRO; Australia), are used to simulate water storages. W3RA is a one-
98 dimensional system that simulates landscape water stored in the vegetation and soil systems ([van](#)
99 [Dijk, 2010](#)). Here, we use the $1^\circ \times 1^\circ$ version of the model to represent the water balance of the
100 soil, groundwater and surface water storage, in which each cell is modeled independently from
101 its neighbors ([van Dijk, 2010](#)). Groundwater dynamics in the model includes recharge from deep
102 drainage, capillary rise (estimated with a linear diffusion equation), evaporation from groundwa-
103 ter saturated areas, and discharge. The model assumes that redistribution between grid cells can
104 be ignored. Groundwater and river water dynamics are simulated at grid cell level and hence
105 parameters are equal across the grid cell. Meteorological data sets of minimum and maximum
106 temperature, downwelling short-wave radiation, and precipitation products provided by Princeton
107 University (<http://hydrology.princeton.edu>) are used to force the W3RA model between 2003 and
108 2013. The model state is composed of the top, shallow and deep root soil water, snow, vegetation,
109 groundwater, and surface water storage.

110 2.2. Assimilated observations

111 Observations are assimilated in two steps. The first step assimilates GRACE TWS and
112 satellite soil moisture observations, which are used to update the forecast state, while the second
113 step enforces the water balance constraints, based on water flux observations.

114 2.2.1. Data used in the first update

115 GRACE level 2 (L2) gravity field data provided by the ITSG-Grace2016 (Mayer-Gürr et al.,
116 2014) is used to compute monthly TWS after applying a few standard corrections. These include
117 replacing degree 1 (C10, C11, S11) and degree 2 (C20) coefficients by more accurate coefficients
118 from Swenson et al. (2008) and the Satellite Laser Ranging solutions (Cheng and Tapley, 2004),
119 respectively. The gravity fields are then converted to $3^\circ \times 3^\circ$ TWS fields (Wahr et al., 1998). Khaki
120 et al. (2017b) showed that implementing GRACE TWS with this spatial resolution exploits better
121 impacts of GRACE TWS mainly because of larger correlation errors in the higher spatial resolution
122 fields, which can be problematic during assimilation (see also Eicker et al., 2014; Schumacher et al.,
123 2016). Colored/correlated noise and leakage errors are reduced using the Kernel Fourier Integration
124 (KeFIn) filter, as proposed by Khaki et al. (2018c). The KeFIn filter works through a two-step
125 post-processing algorithm: in the first step it mitigates the measurement noise and the aliasing of
126 unmodelled high-frequency mass variations, and in the second step it decreases the leakage errors.
127 Note that, here, rather using model outputs, fixed signal to noise ratio is applied during the KeFIn
128 filtering (see Khaki et al., 2018c, for details). The application of the KeFIn filter was shown in
129 Khaki et al. (2018c) to outperform a number of existing GRACE filtering techniques, e.g., land-
130 grid-scaling method applied in Mass Concentration blocks (Mascons) products justifying its use in
131 the current study.

132 Furthermore, soil moisture products from the Advanced Microwave Scanning Radiometer for
133 EOS (AMSR-E) and ESA’s Soil Moisture Ocean Salinity (SMOS) Earth Explorer mission are
134 used to update soil storage variations. AMSR-E measures surface brightness temperature that
135 corresponds to surface soil moisture content of 2 cm depth (Njoku et al., 2003). SMOS, on the
136 other hand, measures microwave emissions from Earth’s surface at about 5 cm depth. Here we
137 use descending passes (see, e.g., De Jeu and Owe, 2003) of gridded Level-3 land surface product
138 AMSR-E (Njoku, 2004) between 2003 and 2011, and Level 3 CATDS (Centre Aval de Traitement
139 des Données SMOS) on ascending passes (see, e.g., Draper et al., 2009) for the period of 2011

140 to 2013. These passes are selected due to their higher agreement with in-situ measurements (see
141 also [Jackson and Bindlish, 2012](#); [Su et al., 2013](#)). Both data products are rescaled to a monthly
142 $1^\circ \times 1^\circ$ scale for the present study. Cumulative distribution function (CDF) matching ([Reichle
143 and Koster, 2004](#); [Drusch et al., 2005](#)) is applied to rescale the observations and remove the bias
144 between the model simulations and observations. These measurements are mainly used to constrain
145 the model variability, and not its absolute values. CDF matching relies on the assumption that
146 the difference between observed soil moisture and that of the model is stationary and guarantees
147 that the statistical distribution of both time series is the same ([Draper et al., 2009](#); [Renzullo et al.,
148 2014](#)).

149 *2.2.2. Data used in the second update*

150 Multiple data sets are used for flux net observations. Details of these products are outlined
151 in Table 1. For precipitation, we use the Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM-3B43;
152 [Huffman et al., 2007](#)), NOAA CPC Morphing Technique (CMORPH; [Joyce et al., 2004](#)), the Global
153 Precipitation Climatology Project (GPCP) Version 2.3 ([Adler et al., 2003](#)), Global Precipitation
154 Climatology Centre (GPCC; [Schneider et al., 2008](#)), and CPC unified gauge dataset ([Chen et al.,
155 2002](#)). TRMM-3B43, CMORPH, and GPCP are used to generate the merged precipitation for
156 data assimilation, while GPCC and CPC are applied for uncertainty analysis (cf. Section 4.1).
157 Evaporation data are collected from MODIS Global Evapotranspiration Project (MOD16; [Mu et
158 al., 2007](#)), Global Land Evaporation Amsterdam Model (GLEAM; [Miralles et al., 2011](#)), ERA-
159 interim ([Simmons et al., 2007](#)), and Variable Infiltration Capacity (VIC) land surface model ([Liang
160 et al., 1994](#)). Similar to precipitation, an uncertainty analysis is undertaken for evaporation with
161 respect to ERA-interim and VIC products. All of these products are rescaled into a monthly $1^\circ \times 1^\circ$
162 spatial resolution. Various data sources are considered for discharge (see Table 1) to achieve the
163 maximum amount of coverage within the basins of Amazon, Indus, Mississippi, Orange, Danube,
164 St. Lawrence, Murray-Darling, and Yangtze (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

165 *2.3. In-situ measurements*

166 Monthly in-situ groundwater and soil moisture measurements are used to validate the results.
 167 The groundwater stations are located in the Mississippi, St. Lawrence, and Murray-Darling basins.
 168 Specific yield values provided by the literature (e.g., [Gutentag et al., 1984](#); [Strassberg et al., 2007](#);
 169 [Seoane et al., 2013](#); [Khaki et al., 2017a](#)) are used to convert well measurements into groundwater
 170 storage anomalies. We further use in-situ soil moisture measurements over the Mississippi, St.
 171 Lawrence, Danube, Yangtze, and Murray-Darling basins to assess the estimated soil moisture.
 172 These data are collected from the International Soil Moisture Network (ISMN) and the moisture-
 173 monitoring network. It is worth mentioning that the temporal averages from the in-situ time
 174 series are removed before using them to validate the assimilation results. The distribution of both
 175 groundwater and soil moisture in-situ products are displayed in Figure 1. Details of the datasets
 176 are outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1

177 **3. Methodology**

178 *3.1. Problem formulation*

179 Our discrete-time state-space system is represented as,

$$\begin{cases} \mathbf{x}_t &= \mathcal{M}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}) + \nu_t, \\ \mathbf{y}_t &= \mathbf{H}_t \mathbf{x}_t + \mathbf{w}_t, \end{cases} \quad (1)$$

180 where $\mathbf{x}_t \in \mathbb{R}^{n_x}$ and $\mathbf{y}_t \in \mathbb{R}^{n_y}$ stand for the system state and the observation at time t and of sizes
 181 n_x and n_y , respectively. In system (1), $\mathcal{M}_{t-1}(\cdot)$ is a nonlinear operator integrating the system state
 182 from time $t - 1$ to t , and \mathbf{H}_t is the observational (design) operator at time t , which is linear in our
 183 application. Note, however, that the proposed scheme can be easily extended to the nonlinear case
 184 ([Liu and Xue, 2002](#)). The model process noise, $\nu = \{\nu_t\}_{t=0}^T$, and the observation process noise,
 185 $\mathbf{w} = \{\mathbf{w}_t\}_{t=0}^T$, are assumed to be independent in time, jointly independent, and independent of the
 186 initial state, shown by \mathbf{x}_0 . Furthermore, ν_t and \mathbf{w}_t are assumed to be Gaussian with zero means
 187 and covariances \mathbf{Q}_t and \mathbf{R}_t , respectively. The model time step, t , is considered to be equal to the

188 assimilation time step. More details about the state-space formulation (i.e., about the structures
189 of \mathbf{x}_t , \mathbf{y}_t , \mathcal{M}_t and \mathbf{H}_t) of our application can be found in [Khaki et al. \(2017a\)](#).

190 The ensemble Kalman filter update step does not constrain the water fluxes and this likely
191 distorts their balance ($\Delta \mathbf{s} = \mathbf{p} - \mathbf{e} - \mathbf{q}$). This was enforced by [Khaki et al. \(2017a\)](#), up to a weak
192 constraint:

$$\mathbf{d}_t = -\mathbf{x}_t + \mathbf{x}_{t-1} + \mathbf{p}_t - \mathbf{e}_t - \mathbf{q}_t + \boldsymbol{\xi}_t, \quad (2)$$

193 accounting for the uncertainty in the different water fluxes data through a noise term $\boldsymbol{\xi}_t$, which we
194 assume here to be Gaussian with zero mean and covariance, $\boldsymbol{\Sigma}$, and independent of $\boldsymbol{\xi}_{t' \neq t}$, $\{\nu_t\}_{t=0}^T$,
195 $\{\mathbf{w}_t\}_{t=0}^T$ and \mathbf{x}_0 . Considering Eq. (2), one can see that changes in the water storage at two
196 successive time steps is equal to the difference between precipitation and summation of evaporation
197 and discharge up to uncertainties in the involved data. The constraint in Eq. (2) can be rewritten
198 as another observation equation in the state-space formulation, Eq. (3), which also involves the
199 state at the previous time,

$$\mathbf{z}_t = \mathbf{G}\mathbf{x}_t + \mathbf{L}\mathbf{x}_{t-1} + \boldsymbol{\xi}_t, \quad (3)$$

200 where $\mathbf{z}_t \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} \mathbf{d}_t - \mathbf{p}_t + \mathbf{e}_t + \mathbf{q}_t$ plays the role of a “pseudo-observation”, \mathbf{L} is an $n_z \times n_x$ identity
201 matrix, and $\mathbf{G} = -\mathbf{L}$ (here, $n_z = n_x$). Define $\mathbf{r}_t = [\mathbf{y}_t^T, \mathbf{z}_t^T]^T$ and $\mathbf{r}_{0:t} = \{\mathbf{r}_0, \mathbf{r}_1, \dots, \mathbf{r}_t\}$. In the
202 state-space system (1)-(3), a generic filtering algorithm has been recently introduced by [Khaki](#)
203 [et al. \(2017a\)](#), recursively computing the analysis pdf of the state \mathbf{x}_t from the history of the
204 augmented observations, $\mathbf{r}_{0:t}$, $p(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$. The computation of $p(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ from $p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1})$ proceeds
205 in a succession of a forecast step and two Bayesian update steps. The forecast step consists of moving
206 from $p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1})$ to the forecast pdf, $p(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1})$, based on the state transition pdf $p(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{x}_{t-1})$
207 (which is described by the state model). The resulting forecast pdf is then updated, based on the
208 likelihood of the observations, $p(\mathbf{y}_t | \mathbf{x}_t)$ (which is represented by the observation model), resulting
209 in an unconstrained analysis pdf², $p(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}, \mathbf{y}_t)$. The latter is, in turn, updated in the second
210 Bayesian step, based on the likelihood of the pseudo-observation, $p(\mathbf{z}_t | \mathbf{x}_{t-1}, t)$ (which is represented
211 by the constraint Eq. (3)), leading to the desirable analysis pdf at the current time t , $p(\mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$.
212 Details about these steps can be found in ([Khaki et al., 2017a](#)).

213 In a supervised framework, where the parameters of the constrained state-space system (includ-

²The term *unconstrained* comes from the fact that these pdfs are not based on the pseudo-observation, \mathbf{z}_t , that “represents” the equality constraint.

ing Σ) are known, the above generic algorithm was implemented by [Khaki et al. \(2017a\)](#) through Monte Carlo approximation of the posterior mean (PM) estimate of the state and its covariance, which led to the ensemble Kalman-type WCEnKF. [Khaki et al. \(2017a\)](#) noticed that the WCEnKF is sensitive to the choice of Σ , which can strongly affect the filter behaviors. Here, we design a more general unsupervised framework in which Σ is an unknown diagonal covariance matrix, which thereby needs to be estimated concurrently with the state.

3.2. The Unsupervised Weak Constrained Ensemble Kalman Filter (UWCEnKF)

3.2.1. The generic algorithm

The UWCEnKF shares the same forecast and first update steps as the WCEnKF, but computes the posterior distribution of both state and pseudo-observation noise covariance in the second update step, instead of only that of the state. In a Bayesian framework, this consists in viewing the covariance, Σ , as another random variable with a given prior pdf; the goal is then to compute its posterior pdf jointly with the state³, $p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$. However, the statistical dependencies between the states, $\mathbf{x}_{t-1:t}$, and the covariance, Σ , makes its computation quite tricky. One way to overcome this difficulty is to resort to the variational Bayesian (VB) approach and approximate $p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ with a separable pdf $q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) = q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})q(\Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$, under the Kullback-Leibler divergence (KLD) minimization criteria ([Jaakkola and Jordan, 2000](#); [Smidl and Quinn, 2008](#); [Ait-El-Fquih and Hoteit, 2015, 2016](#)). This reads,

$$\begin{aligned} q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) &= \underset{\phi(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}{\operatorname{argmin}} \operatorname{KLD}(\phi(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) || p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})), \\ &= \underset{\phi(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}{\operatorname{argmin}} \mathbb{E}_{\phi(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})} \left[\ln \left(\frac{\phi(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}{p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})} \right) \right], \end{aligned} \quad (4)$$

where $\mathbb{E}_{\phi(u)}[f(u)]$ denotes the expected value of $f(u)$ with respect to (w.r.t.) the pdf $\phi(u)$. The solution of Eq. (4) can be obtained from (the proof can be found for instance in [Smidl and Quinn, 2006](#), pages 28-31):

$$q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) \propto \exp \left(\mathbb{E}_{q(\Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})} [\ln (p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma, \mathbf{r}_{0:t}))] \right), \quad (5)$$

$$q(\Sigma | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) \propto \exp \left(\mathbb{E}_{q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})} [\ln (p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \Sigma, \mathbf{r}_{0:t}))] \right). \quad (6)$$

³For the sake of clarity, the inclusion of both \mathbf{x}_t and \mathbf{x}_{t-1} in the joint posterior pdf of interest is due to the fact that both these states appear in the pseudo-observation model Eq. (3), which necessitates estimating both of them.

235 According to Eqs. (5) and (6), the independence that is inserted between the marginal posteriors,
 236 $q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ and $q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$, is partially compensated by the fact that each of these pdfs remains
 237 dependent on the expected value of $\ln(p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}, \mathbf{r}_{0:t}))$ w.r.t. the other. However, this property
 238 of “cyclic” dependence between $q(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ and $q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ makes it impossible to exactly evaluate
 239 these pdfs, or any of their statistics, such as for instance their means, which are taken as the PM
 240 estimates of the states and the covariance, $\boldsymbol{\Sigma}$, respectively. A standard approximation is to proceed
 241 with cyclic iterations between (5) and (6), evaluating one pdf after the other, until convergence is
 242 reached (Smidl and Quinn, 2008; Sato, 2001; Massoud et al., 2018). Based on the factorization,

$$p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}, \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) \propto p(\mathbf{z}_t | \mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}) p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}, \mathbf{y}_t) q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}), \quad (7)$$

243 which stems from the conditional independence properties of the state-space system (1)-(3), the
 244 iterative form of Eqs. (5)-(6) becomes,

$$q^{(\ell)}(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) \propto \exp\left(\mathbb{E}_{q^{(\ell-1)}(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})} \left[\ln\left(p^{(\ell-1)}(\mathbf{z}_t | \mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})\right)\right]\right) p(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}, \mathbf{y}_t), \quad (8)$$

$$q^{(\ell)}(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}) \propto \exp\left(\mathbb{E}_{q^{(\ell)}(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})} \left[\ln\left(p^{(\ell-1)}(\mathbf{z}_t | \mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma})\right)\right]\right) q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}), \quad (9)$$

245 where $p^{(\ell)}(\cdot)$ and $q^{(\ell)}(\cdot)$ respectively denote the pdfs $p(\cdot)$ and $q(\cdot)$ at iteration ℓ . As can be seen below
 246 (cf. Section 3.2.2), iterating over the pdfs Eqs. (8)-(9) amounts in practice to iterate over their
 247 (approximate) parameters, thereby leading to an unsupervised ensemble-based filtering scheme,
 248 which iterates in its second step over the PM estimates of the states and the pseudo-observation
 249 noise covariance.

250 3.2.2. Practical implementation

251 For the sake of simplicity, we first focus on the case of a homogeneous noise with a covariance
 252 matrix,

$$\boldsymbol{\Sigma} = \lambda \times \mathbb{I}_{n_z}, \quad (10)$$

253 where λ is the variance value and \mathbb{I}_{n_z} denotes the $n_z \times n_z$ identity matrix. The more general
 254 inhomogeneous case will be discussed later. The prior probability distribution $p(\lambda)$ is chosen as an
 255 inverse-Gamma distribution (as a natural choice for variances), with shape and scale parameters
 256 $\hat{\alpha}_0$ and $\hat{\beta}_0$, respectively (Smidl and Quinn, 2006). In the case of non-informative priors, one could
 257 take $\hat{\alpha}_0 = \hat{\beta}_0$ relatively small. At each iteration $(\ell - 1) \rightarrow (\ell)$, inserting in Eqs. (8) and (9) the

258 Gaussian pdf,

$$p^{(\ell-1)}(\mathbf{z}_t | \mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}) = \mathcal{N}_{\mathbf{z}_t}(\mathbf{G}\mathbf{x}_t + \mathbf{L}\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}^{(\ell-1)}),$$

259 one obtains a posterior $q^{(\ell)}(\lambda | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ that is also an inverse-Gamma distribution with parameters, $\hat{\alpha}_t$
 260 and $\hat{\beta}_t^{(\ell)}$, given in Eqs. (17)-(18) below. Likewise, $q^{(\ell)}(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}, \mathbf{x}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$ is Gaussian with an ensemble
 261 representation given in Eqs. (14)-(16).

262 **The UWCE n KF.** Starting at time $t - 1$ from an analysis ensemble, $\{\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{a,(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$, and shape and
 263 scale parameters $(\hat{\alpha}_{t-1}, \hat{\beta}_{t-1})$ of the inverse-Gamma posterior pdf $p(\lambda | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1})$, these at the next
 264 time t can be computed following a succession of a forecast and two update steps. The forecast
 265 step, which computes the forecast ensemble, $\{\mathbf{x}_t^{f,(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$, and the first update step (with \mathbf{y}_t), which
 266 computes the unconstrained analysis and smoothing ensembles, $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$ and $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$, are
 267 identical to those in Khaki et al. (2017a), namely,

$$\mathbf{x}_t^{f,(i)} = \mathcal{M}_{t-1}(\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{a,(i)}) + \nu^{(i)}, \quad (11)$$

$$\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(i)} = \mathbf{x}_t^{f,(i)} + \mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}_t^f} \mathbf{H}^T \underbrace{[\mathbf{H}\mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}_t^f} \mathbf{H}^T + \mathbf{R}_t]^{-1} [\mathbf{y}_t + \epsilon^{(i)} - \mathbf{H}\mathbf{x}_t^{f,(i)}]}_{\mu_t^{(i)}}, \quad (12)$$

$$\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(i)} = \mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{a,(i)} + \mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^a, \mathbf{x}_t^f} \mathbf{H}^T \times \mu_t^{(i)}, \quad (13)$$

268 where $\mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}_t^f}$ is the sample forecast error covariance and $\mathbf{P}_{\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^a, \mathbf{x}_t^f}$ represents the sample cross-covariance
 269 between the previous analysis and current forecast errors, $\nu^{(i)} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{Q}_t)$, and $\epsilon^{(i)} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \mathbf{R}_t)$.

270 As for the second update step (with \mathbf{z}_t), which applies the adjustment to enforce the water
 271 budget balance constraint, it involves iterations to compute Eqs. (8)-(9). Let $\hat{\alpha}_t = \hat{\alpha}_{t-1} + \frac{n_z}{2}$,
 272 the iteration begins with the initialization $\hat{\lambda}_t^{(0)} = \frac{\hat{\beta}_{t-1}}{\hat{\alpha}_t}$ and correspondingly $\hat{\boldsymbol{\Sigma}}_t^{(0)} = \hat{\lambda}_t^{(0)} \times \mathbb{I}_{n_z}$. For
 273 $\ell = 0 \cdots L$, the state members are first updated as,

$$\mathbf{z}_t^{f,(i,\ell)} = \mathbf{G}\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(i)} + \mathbf{L}\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(i)} + \boldsymbol{\xi}_t^{(i,\ell)}; \quad \boldsymbol{\xi}_t^{(i,\ell)} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \hat{\boldsymbol{\Sigma}}_t^{(\ell)}), \quad i = 1, \dots, m, \quad (14)$$

$$\mathbf{x}_t^{a,(i,\ell)} = \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(i)} + \mathbf{P}_{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^a, \mathbf{z}_t^{f,\ell}} \underbrace{[\mathbf{M}\mathbf{P}_{\boldsymbol{\eta}_t} \mathbf{M}^T + \hat{\boldsymbol{\Sigma}}_t^{(\ell)}]^{-1} [\mathbf{z}_t - \mathbf{z}_t^{f,(i,\ell)}]}_{\nu_t^{(i,\ell)}}, \quad i = 1, \dots, m, \quad (15)$$

$$\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{s,(i,\ell)} = \tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(i)} + \mathbf{P}_{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^s, \mathbf{z}_t^{f,\ell}} \times \nu_t^{(i,\ell)}, \quad i = 1, \dots, m, \quad (16)$$

274 where $\mathbf{M} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} [\mathbf{G}, \mathbf{L}]$; $\mathbf{P}_{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^a, \mathbf{z}_t^{f,\ell}}$ and $\mathbf{P}_{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^s, \mathbf{z}_t^{f,\ell}}$ are the sample cross-covariances computed using the

275 ensembles $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$, $\{\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$ and $\{\mathbf{z}_t^{f,(i,\ell)}\}_{i=1}^m$; and $\mathbf{P}_{\boldsymbol{\eta}_t}$ is the sample covariance of the ensemble
 276 $\{\boldsymbol{\eta}_t^{(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$ with $\boldsymbol{\eta}_t^{(i)} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} [(\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(i)})^T, (\tilde{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(i)})^T]^T$. Based on the resulting ensembles, the observation noise
 277 variance is then updated as,

$$\hat{\beta}_t^{(\ell+1)} = \hat{\beta}_{t-1} + \frac{1}{2}[\|\mathbf{z}_t - \mathbf{G}\hat{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(\ell)} - \mathbf{L}\hat{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(\ell)}\|^2 + \text{Trace}(\mathbf{M}\mathbf{P}_{\boldsymbol{\gamma}_t^\ell}\mathbf{M}^T)], \quad (17)$$

$$\hat{\lambda}_t^{(\ell+1)} = \hat{\beta}_t^{(\ell+1)} / \hat{\alpha}_t, \quad (18)$$

$$\hat{\Sigma}_t^{(\ell+1)} = \hat{\lambda}_t^{(\ell+1)} \times \mathbb{I}_{n_z}, \quad (19)$$

278 where $\hat{\mathbf{x}}_t^{a,(\ell)}$ and $\hat{\mathbf{x}}_{t-1}^{s,(\ell)}$ are the (empirical) means of the ensembles $\{\mathbf{x}_t^{a,(i,\ell)}\}_{i=1}^m$ and $\{\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{s,(i,\ell)}\}_{i=1}^m$, re-
 279 spectively; and $\mathbf{P}_{\boldsymbol{\gamma}_t^\ell}$ is the sample covariance of the ensemble $\{\boldsymbol{\gamma}_t^{(i,\ell)}\}_{i=1}^m$ with $\boldsymbol{\gamma}_t^{(i,\ell)} \stackrel{\text{def}}{=} [(\mathbf{x}_t^{a,(i,\ell)})^T, (\mathbf{x}_{t-1}^{s,(i,\ell)})^T]^T$.
 280 The $\hat{\Sigma}_t^{(L)}$ and $\{\mathbf{x}_t^{a,(i,L)}\}_{i=1}^m$ are then considered as the analysis covariance and state estimates, re-
 281 spectively, that will be used in the next assimilation cycle. In our numerical experiments, only few
 282 iterations (less than 10) were needed to reach convergence based on the variance estimate. Note
 283 that instead of pre-setting the number of iterations, L , one may use an alternative stopping crite-
 284 ria based, for instance, on the relative squared error norm (RSEN) of the estimated state and/or
 285 variance(s), or the evidence lower bound (ELB), defined as (Blei et al. , 2017),

$$\mathcal{E}_1 = \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\xi}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(p(\mathbf{v}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma}, \mathbf{r}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}))] - \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\xi}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(q(\mathbf{v}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}))], \quad (20)$$

286 with $\mathbf{v}_t = [\mathbf{x}_t^T, \mathbf{x}_{t-1}^T]^T$. Note that it is not possible to use the KLD as this requires the knowledge
 287 of the target pdf, $p(\mathbf{v}_t, \boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$, which, indeed, is not known. Furthermore, minimizing the KLD
 288 amounts to maximizing the ELB (Blei et al. , 2017). However, a problem occurs in practice with
 289 ELB (20) in case of large dimensional systems (i.e., when $n_x > m$). In such a case, the covariance
 290 $\mathbf{P}_{\boldsymbol{\gamma}_t}$, whose inverse is involved in the expression of the (assumed Gaussian) pdf, $q(\mathbf{v}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})$, is a
 291 low-rank matrix, and thus not invertible. To overcome this limitation, we propose to remove the
 292 variable, \mathbf{v}_t , from the ELB, by rather using pdfs that are conditional on this variable (i.e., for
 293 which \mathbf{v}_t is a fixed known value). Since the iterations' process occurs in the second update step
 294 (i.e., which uses \mathbf{z}_t), we assign to \mathbf{v}_t the mean $\hat{\boldsymbol{\eta}}_t$ of $\{\boldsymbol{\eta}_t^{(i)}\}_{i=1}^m$, which, indeed, is an approximation
 295 of $\mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\xi}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}, \mathbf{y}_t)}[\mathbf{v}_t]$ (i.e., the unconstrained analysis mean of \mathbf{v}_t). The resulting ELB reads,

$$\begin{aligned} \mathcal{E}_2 &= \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(p(\boldsymbol{\Sigma}, \mathbf{r}_t | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}, \hat{\boldsymbol{\eta}}_t))] - \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}))], \\ &\approx \text{cte} + \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(p(\mathbf{z}_t | \boldsymbol{\Sigma}, \hat{\boldsymbol{\eta}}_t))] + \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t-1}))] - \mathbb{E}_{q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t})}[\ln(q(\boldsymbol{\Sigma} | \mathbf{r}_{0:t}))], \end{aligned} \quad (21)$$

296 where the term “cte” encompasses all the terms that do not depend on Σ . This suggests that the
 297 convergence of the proposed scheme can be monitored based either on the change in \mathcal{E}_2 only, the
 298 change in RSEN of the state only, the change in \mathcal{E}_2 and RSEN of the state, or, as stated above,
 299 the change in RSEN of both state and Σ . Finally, based on the Gaussian expression of $p(\mathbf{z}_t|\Sigma, \hat{\boldsymbol{\eta}}_t)$
 300 and the inverse-Gamma expression of $q(\Sigma|\mathbf{r}_{0:t-1})$ and $q(\Sigma|\mathbf{r}_{0:t})$, one readily shows that Eq. (21) at
 301 iteration $(\ell) \rightarrow (\ell + 1)$ is given as,

$$\mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell)} \approx \text{cte} + \frac{\hat{\alpha}_t}{\hat{\beta}_t^{(\ell+1)}} \left[\hat{\beta}_t^{(\ell+1)} - \hat{\beta}_{t-1} - \|\mathbf{z}_t - \mathbf{M}\hat{\boldsymbol{\eta}}_t\|^2/2 \right] - \ln(\hat{\beta}_t^{(\ell+1)}), \quad (22)$$

302 where cte gathers the terms that do not vary with iterations (i.e., independent of (ℓ)).

303 The adaptation of the algorithm above to the case of an inhomogeneous noise with a covariance
 304 is straightforward,

$$\Sigma = \text{diag}(\lambda^1, \dots, \lambda^{n_z}), \quad (23)$$

305 where $\text{diag}(\mathbf{v})$ denotes a diagonal matrix with diagonal \mathbf{v} . More specifically, Eqs. (11)-(16) that
 306 compute the state ensembles are kept unchanged, and only those related to the noise variance
 307 will be updated (i.e., Eqs. (17)-(19) for each λ^j). Each variance λ^j , $j = 1, \dots, n_z$, is estimated
 308 separately from the others, λ^k , $k \neq j$, by a direct application of Eqs. (17)-(19) and (22), which,
 309 correspond to the $n_z \times 1$ vectorial model (3), on the scalar (marginal) model,

$$\mathbf{z}_{t,j} = \mathbf{G}(j, :)\mathbf{x}_t + \mathbf{L}(j, :)\mathbf{x}_{t-1} + \boldsymbol{\xi}_{t,j}, \quad (24)$$

310 where $\mathbf{z}_{t,j}$ and $\boldsymbol{\xi}_{t,j}$ respectively denote the j^{th} component of \mathbf{z}_t and $\boldsymbol{\xi}_t$ (i.e., $\boldsymbol{\xi}_{t,j} \sim \mathcal{N}(\mathbf{0}, \lambda^j)$), and
 311 $\mathbf{G}(j, :)$ and $\mathbf{L}(j, :)$ are the j^{th} rows of \mathbf{G} and \mathbf{L} , respectively. A schematic illustration of this
 312 algorithm is presented in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2

313 4. Experimental setup

314 4.1. Data merging

315 A single product for each water flux term of precipitation (\mathbf{p}) and evaporation (\mathbf{e}) is required
 316 to close the water balance in the second update step of UWCEnKF. One can use only one data
 317 product for each flux components, e.g., only TRMM-3B43 for \mathbf{p} for the filtering process. However,
 318 this may introduce errors because various products are subject to a different rate of uncertainty
 319 over different areas. Alternatively, the different data products for each component can be merged
 320 into a unique \mathbf{p} and \mathbf{e} to better represent the water balance over the globally distributed basins
 321 (Sahoo et al., 2011). Here, we merge various datasets of precipitation and evaporation prior to
 322 data assimilation. To this end, we follow Sahoo et al. (2011) and merge the data considering their
 323 relative error levels w.r.t. non-satellite products. This combination is done in a way that satellite-
 324 based products are merged to be used in data assimilation while other products are only applied
 325 for the merging objective. For \mathbf{p} , the average of GPCC and CPC unified gauge over each basin
 326 is assumed as the truth and is used to estimate the error level of each satellite-based product,
 327 i.e, TRMM-3B43, CMORPH, and GPCP. A similar strategy is applied for evaporation, where
 328 ERA-interim and VIC products are used to quantify the error level associated with the data of
 329 MOD16 and GLEAM outputs that are based on satellite products (Miralles et al., 2011). It is
 330 worth mentioning that a more robust merging process can be achieved by involving ground-based
 331 measurements as a reference rather than ERA-interim and VIC. Obtaining and analyzing such an
 332 enhanced evaporation dataset from in-situ stations over all tested basins is however very difficult
 333 and is out of the scope of this study. Therefore, we use these model outputs to merge satellite-based
 334 datasets into a single \mathbf{e} . Once the references are calculated, we use a multiplicative error model to
 335 estimate the offset, scale parameter, and error variance for each data product. These variances are
 336 then used to compute the observations weights as,

$$w_i = \frac{1}{\sigma_i^2} / \sum_{k=1}^{n_p} \frac{1}{\sigma_k^2}. \quad (25)$$

337 For each data product (i), using the error variances of that specific product σ_i^2 and all products
 338 (σ_k^2) in the same data type (with the total number of n_p), weight w_i can be calculated. Eq. (25) is
 339 applied for both precipitation and evaporation to provide merged data with reduced error (Luo et
 340 al., 2007; Sahoo et al., 2011). Note that the above approach is applied only to merge the various

341 data products and to obtain uniform precipitation and evaporation datasets prior to assimilation.
 342 The estimated errors (e.g., σ_i^2 in Eq. (25)) are used only for this objective and are not related to
 343 the water flux error covariance calculation in the filtering procedure (cf. Section 3.2).

344 4.2. Data assimilation

345 To start the assimilation process, the initial ensemble is generated by perturbing the forcing
 346 fields. To this end, we use Monte Carlo sampling to perturb the precipitation, shortwave radiation,
 347 and temperature field considering a Gaussian multiplicative error of 30% for precipitation, an
 348 additive Gaussian error of $50Wm^{-2}$ for the shortwave radiation, and a Gaussian additive error of
 349 $2^\circ C$ for temperature (Jones et al., 2007). The system state includes top soil, shallow soil, deep soil
 350 water, snow, vegetation, surface, and groundwater storages. Except for groundwater and surface
 351 storage, all the other components are simulated with two hydrological response units (HRU) of tall,
 352 e.g., deep-rooted vegetation and short, e.g., shallow-rooted vegetation. This leads to a state vector
 353 of dimension $(2 \times 5 + 1 + 1) \times 1695$ (corresponding to 1695 grid points over all basins).

354 All observations, including GRACE TWS, satellite soil moisture data, and water fluxes are
 355 assimilated monthly. The monthly increment is then be added to each day of the current month,
 356 which guarantees that the update of the monthly mean is identical to the monthly mean of the daily
 357 updates. Here, the differences between the predictions and the updated state variables are added
 358 as offsets to the state variables at the last day of each month to generate the ensembles for the
 359 next month assimilation step (see Eicker et al., 2014, for more details). The observation operator
 360 aggregates different water storages at each grid point to update with GRACE TWS and scales the
 361 top-layer soil storage by the field capacity value to provide a relative wetness for updating with the
 362 soil moisture products of AMSR-E and SMOS (Renzullo et al., 2014).

363 In addition, observation error covariances for the first update step are required. Full error
 364 information about the Stokes' coefficients are used to construct the TWS error covariance matrix.
 365 This is done by converting GRACE spherical harmonic error coefficients to TWS error covariances
 366 following Khaki et al. (2017c). Since such an information is not available for soil moisture products,
 367 we assume their error covariances to be uncorrelated with standard deviations of $0.04 m^3m^{-3}$ for
 368 SMOS (as suggested by Leroux et al., 2016) and $0.05 m^3m^{-3}$ for AMSR-E (as suggested by De Jeu
 369 et al., 2008). We further apply two common auxiliary techniques of ensemble variance inflation and
 370 covariance localization to mitigate for the ensemble spread collapse and rank deficiency (Anderson

371 [et al., 2001](#); [Houtekamer and Mitchell, 2001](#)). These include an ensemble inflation with a coefficient
 372 factor of 1.12 and Local Analysis (LA) with a localization length scale of 5° (see [Khaki et al., 2017b](#),
 373 for more details).

374 5. Results

375 The results are discussed in three parts. UWCEnKF implementation is first presented and
 376 discussed in Section 5.1.1. The validation of the proposed approach against in-situ groundwater and
 377 soil moisture measurements is then presented in Section 5.2. The relevance of the second update
 378 step in UWCEnKF and its overall effects on the assimilation system performance is finally analyzed
 379 in Section 5.3. UWCEnKF estimates are also compared with the results of WCEnKF and EnKF.
 380 UWCEnKF is tested with both constant (*Structure in Eq. (10)*, indicated by UWCEnKF-1) and
 381 spatially varying (*Structure in Eq. (23)*, indicated by UWCEnKF-2) error variances for the water
 382 balance equation. While UWCEnKF-1 assigns a fixed error variance to water fluxes at all points,
 383 different values for individual points are calculated by UWCEnKF-2.

384 5.1. Implementation results

385 5.1.1. Iteration impacts

386 We first study the sensitivity of UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2 to the iteration procedure.
 387 As mentioned, in contrast with WCEnKF, which assumes that these uncertainties are known,
 388 UWCEnKF estimates the error covariance through an iteration process. To show how this iteration
 389 works, we compare the convergence of UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2, based on Eq. (22), in
 390 Figure 3. The average evolutions of $\mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell+1)} - \mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell)}$ (the difference between Eq. (22) in each two
 391 successive iterations) from both filters for $\ell = 0 \dots 10$ are shown in this figure. After few iterations,
 392 generally less than 8, both UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 converge. Faster convergence and lower
 393 differences $\mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell+1)} - \mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell)}$ are also generally achieved by UWCEnKF-2 compared to UWCEnKF-1. It
 394 can be seen that after 5 iterations, UWCEnKF-2 decreases to a value below the selected arbitrary
 395 threshold of $\mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell+1)} - \mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell)} = 10mm$. This is due to the fact that UWCEnKF-2 enables more degree
 396 of freedom in the optimization process by using different error variance for each grid point as
 397 compared to UWCEnKF-1, which tries to fit a single value for the entire domain.

FIGURE 3

398 In order to demonstrate the relevance of the UWCEnKF, we compare its results against those
 399 of the WCEnKF with various preselected values of error variances. The sensitivity of the WCEnKF
 400 to the choice of Σ can be seen in Figures 4. The various implementations of the WCEnKF result
 401 in different performances in terms of imbalance and the Root-Mean-Squared Error (RMSE), which
 402 is calculated based on the assimilation results and groundwater in-situ measurements over the
 403 Murray-Darling Basin. The estimated groundwater time series from the WCEnKF and UWCEnKF
 404 are spatially interpolated to the nearest gauge stations. The difference between in-situ and filtered
 405 time series are then used to calculate the RMSE.

FIGURE 4

406 Each circle in Figures 4 refers to the average results of an independent implementation of
 407 WCEnKF. It can be seen that the results of this filter largely vary depending on the selection of
 408 the error variance. Overall, lower imbalance and RMSE are obtained by assuming 20 to 30 mm^2 .
 409 UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2, on the other hand, achieve better results, shown by the triangle
 410 and cross, respectively, in a single implementation. The optimization algorithms used in UWCEnKF
 411 cause this independence of the error variance choice. It can also be seen that WCEnKF can achieve
 412 comparable results to that of UWCEnKF-1 in few cases. UWCEnKF-2, however, generally leads
 413 to the minimum RMSE and imbalance.

414 5.1.2. Spatial and temporal balance error variance

415 The performance of the proposed UWCEnKF in estimating water balance error variance
 416 and their effects on the imbalance between water fluxes are discussed in this section and is further
 417 compared with WCEnKF results. Both spatial and temporal variabilities are examined. Figure
 418 5 shows the temporally averaged error variances assigned to the observations for WCEnKF, as
 419 well as those estimated by UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 over the Amazon Basin. It can be
 420 seen that UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 estimate different errors at each iteration. The error
 421 variance maps in WCEnKF, on the other hand, is fixed to what has been assigned prior to data
 422 assimilation. After eight iterations, it is observed that the error estimated by UWCEnKF-1 is
 423 closer to the average of UWCEnKF-2 results (34.70 mm^2), i.e., 41.19 mm^2 for UWCEnKF-1 and,
 424 in comparison to 68.74 mm^2 for WCEnKF. This indicates that both UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-
 425 2 result in uncertainties with close magnitude for water balances and the implemented algorithms

426 allow for such an adjustment during iteration steps. Furthermore, Figure 5 depicts the spatial
 427 variability characteristics of error variances estimated by UWCEnKF-2. This property allows for
 428 more flexibility for error adjustment in UWCEnKF-2. These flexibilities in the UWCEnKF filtering
 429 method, as illustrated in Figure 6, result in a smaller imbalance.

430 **FIGURE 5**

FIGURE 6

431 The better performances of UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 compared to WCEnKF in min-
 432 imizing imbalance errors are clear in Figure 6, where each map shows the estimated imbalance
 433 corresponding to Figure 5 setups. Figure 6 shows that the iteration algorithm effectively reduces im-
 434 balance errors, even after only few iterations (e.g., four). In addition, it can be seen that the applied
 435 algorithm in UWCEnKF provides the opportunity for error variances to be adjusted with no super-
 436 vision as in WCEnKF. UWCEnKF-2, with more flexibility for such adjustment than UWCEnKF-1
 437 (cf. Figure 5), leads to the smaller imbalance, that is ~ 6 mm (absolute average of all values)
 438 against ~ 13 mm (on average) for UWCEnKF-1. This larger improvement for UWCEnKF-2 results
 439 is achieved by estimating different error variance values over each grid point, and correspondingly
 440 applying different rate of adjustments (based on the estimated water balance uncertainty) from the
 441 equality constraint to the points.

442 An example of the abovementioned spatially varying error variance in UWCEnKF-2 can be
 443 seen in Figure 7. Figure 7a depicts the average imbalance over Murray-Darling basin after jointly
 444 assimilating GRACE TWS and satellite soil moisture in the first analysis step of UWCEnKF. It is
 445 worth mentioning that we find larger impacts of GRACE TWS data (approximately 7.5 times for
 446 all the basins) on the imbalance between fluxes compared to the satellite soil moisture products,
 447 which could be explained by the fact that contrary to the soil moisture assimilation, GRACE
 448 data influences all compartments. The temporally averaged estimated variances are displayed in
 449 Figure 7b. It can be seen that both estimated maps exhibit similar spatial patterns in some areas.
 450 One can also see in Figure 7b that, in general, a larger variance is estimated over the areas with
 451 larger imbalance. Figure 7c shows the average applied increments in the second analysis step of
 452 UWCEnKF-2 to account for the above imbalances. It is clear that larger increments are applied
 453 over the areas with larger imbalances, e.g., the north, southeast, and southwest parts of the basin.

454 The areas such as the central parts, which display smaller imbalance in Figure 7a, are also assigned
 455 smaller increments as shown in Figure 7c.

FIGURE 7

456 Similar flexibilities for error variance estimation in UWCEnKF can also be seen from the tem-
 457 poral variabilities of error variances as demonstrated in Figure 8. The water balance error variances
 458 at each assimilation step are estimated from UWCEnKF-1 for the entire Orange Basin and from
 459 UWCEnKF-2 for each grid point (green shaded area) of the basin. The figure also plots that of
 460 UWCEnKF-2 derived spatially averaged values, as well as errors used in WCEnKF. Again, it is
 461 clear from Figure 8 that UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 allow for larger variations in error es-
 462 timations than WCEnKF. It can also be seen that errors at each point can vary independently
 463 in UWCEnKF-2, which results in a better uncertainty adjustment. This can help for optimal
 464 imbalance minimization in the filter.

FIGURE 8

465

FIGURE 9

466 Both spatial and temporal variabilities of error variances are summarized in Figure 9 over all
 467 basins, which shows variation ranges of water balance covariance in time (vertical lines) and space
 468 (horizontal lines) for WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2. In contrast to WCEnKF and
 469 UWCEnKF-1, spatial variabilities can be observed in UWCEnKF-2 results. As discussed, this helps
 470 for a better error adjustment during the filtering process. In terms of temporal variations, both
 471 UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 perform comparably well representing a larger range of changes
 472 than WCEnKF over all basins. The unsupervised error estimation algorithm in UWCEnKF enables
 473 to estimate an “optimal” water balance error calculation, which as it will be shown in Section 5.3
 474 (cf. Figure 15) leads to smaller imbalance errors. In cases where assigned error to WCEnKF is
 475 close to what is calculated by UWCEnKF, e.g., Indus Basin, the final achieved imbalance from the
 476 filters are also close. In other cases with larger differences between assigned and estimated errors,
 477 there are larger discrepancies in imbalances.

478 *5.2. Validations with in-situ measurements*

479 The performances of the EnKF and UWCEnKF are compared with in-situ measurements.
 480 UWCEnKF was tested with both constant (UWCEnKF-1) and spatially varying (UWCEnKF-2)
 481 error variances for the water balance equation. Figure 10 shows the average groundwater time
 482 series over the Mississippi, Murray-Darling and the St. Lawrence basins, estimated by the open-
 483 loop run (without assimilation), EnKF, WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2. Remarkable
 484 improvement can be seen from the different filters compared to the open-loop time series. In this
 485 regard, WCEnKF and UWCEnKF generally perform better than EnKF. This is more evident when
 486 a considerable trend exists in the time series, e.g., within the Murray-Darling basin after 2009 and
 487 St. Lawrence between 2010 and 2012. It can also be seen that UWCEnKF groundwater time series
 488 in most of the times better match to those of in-situs. A clear example of this can be found in
 489 Murray-Darling basin 2011–2013. Furthermore, comparing UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2, better
 490 agreements between in-situ and estimated groundwater changes are achieved for UWCEnKF-2 over
 491 all three basins, particularly in the Mississippi basin.

FIGURE 10

492 To better monitor how UWCEnKF improves the groundwater estimates, their results are com-
 493 pared with in-situ measurements and against those of EnKF. RMSE and standard deviation (STD)
 494 are calculated for groundwater error time series, i.e., the difference between in-situ and filtered
 495 groundwater time series, at the location of each in-situ station. Figures 11 and 12 display the
 496 results over the Murray-Darling and Mississippi basins, respectively.

FIGURE 11

497

FIGURE 12

498 One can see that the filters successfully reduce RMSE and STD w.r.t. the open-loop run.
 499 This indicates the relevance of assimilation for decreasing state estimate errors. The groundwa-
 500 ter estimate improvements are different for each filter. UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 suggest
 501 more (18% on average) error reduction than EnKF. Overall, more pronounced error reductions are
 502 achieved over the Mississippi basins, which could be attributed to larger model errors within the

503 basin. Slightly better performances ($\sim 4\%$) in terms of groundwater error reduction are obtained
 504 with UWCEEnKF-2 compared to UWCEEnKF-1. We also compute the correlations (at 0.05 signifi-
 505 cance level) between the filtered and in-situ groundwater time series. Similarly, larger correlations
 506 result from the filter estimates compared to the open-loop run, namely, 14% from EnKF, 26% for
 507 UWCEEnKF-1, and 29% for UWCEEnKF-2. The correlation results also confirm that UWCEEnKF
 508 provides better estimates of the groundwater time series.

509 In-situ soil moisture measurements are also used to assess the assimilation impact on soil storage.
 510 To this end, similar to groundwater assessment, filtered soil moisture time series at the stations' lo-
 511 cations are compared with their in-situ counterpoints at different layers. Figure 13 shows root-zone
 512 soil moisture variation time series as estimated by the various filters, as well as in-situ measure-
 513 ments over the Mississippi, Murray-Darling, St. Lawrence, Danube, and the Yangtze basins. It
 514 can be seen that all filters decrease the misfits between estimated and measured soil moisture vari-
 515 ations. In some cases, however, UWCEEnKF, and to a lesser degree WCEEnKF, performs better,
 516 e.g., Mississippi (2009), Murray-Darling (2004 and 2008), and Danube (2006). There are also var-
 517 ious occasions during which the WCEEnKF and UWCEEnKF-1 results are very close, such as St.
 518 Lawrence 2010–2012 and Yangtze 2005–2006. This can be explained by the fact that both methods
 519 use a single error variance value for water balance uncertainties, so whenever a good approximation
 520 is used to assign this value prior to data assimilation in WCEEnKF, close to what is estimated in
 521 UWCEEnKF-1, the corresponding state estimates seen to be also close. UWCEEnKF-2, on the other
 522 hand, performs relatively better, being more successful in matching soil moisture estimates to the
 523 in-situ soil moisture variations.

FIGURE 13

524 The correlation results between the monthly soil moisture estimates for all filters w.r.t. the
 525 monthly in-situ measurements are presented in Table 2. Note that different soil moisture estimates
 526 of various soil layers are compared to soil moisture measurements at corresponding layers and
 527 their average are reported in the table. For instance, the model top layer is compared with 0-8
 528 cm measurements over the Murray-Darling basin and 0-10 cm over Mississippi basin, summations
 529 of the model top, shallow, and a small portion of deep-root soil layers are tested against 0-30
 530 cm and 0-50 cm measurements over the Murray-Darling and Mississippi basins, respectively, and

531 summations of the model’s soil layers are compared to 0-90 cm (for Murray-Darling) and 0-100
 532 cm (for Mississippi) soil measurements. Due to a difference between the soil moisture estimates
 533 (i.e., column water storage measured in mm) and the in-situ measurements (i.e., volumetric soil
 534 moisture), only a correlation analysis is conducted. Additionally, in order to statistically assess the
 535 results, a significance test for the correlation coefficients is applied based on the t-distribution. The
 536 estimated t-value and the distribution at 0.05 significant level are used to calculate the p-value,
 537 which is assumed to be significant if it lies under 5%.

TABLE 2

538 The results indicate that assimilation significantly improves soil storages regardless of the ap-
 539 plied filter. All the filters have positive effects on soil moisture estimates. UWCEnKF performs
 540 better than both WCEnKF and EnKF with respectively 6% and 11% higher correlations with
 541 the in-situ measurements. It can also be seen that in some cases, e.g., Mississippi basin, the fil-
 542 ters generally perform comparably, especially WCEnKF and UWCEnKF-1. This indicates that
 543 WCEnKF is capable of improving soil moisture estimates as UWCEnKF subject to using an ac-
 544 curate water balance uncertainty because this is the only difference between the two approaches.
 545 The largest improvement with an average 20.28% for all basins is achieved by UWCEnKF-2, better
 546 than UWCEnKF-1 (17.75% on average) and noticeably larger than EnKF (7.85%).

547 We further examine the assimilation results against independent discharge data over different
 548 basins. It is worth mentioning that these discharge datasets are not assimilated. The average corre-
 549 lations between the estimated water discharge time series and those from the in-situ data over each
 550 basin are presented in Table 3. Improvements are achieved for all assimilation experiments w.r.t.
 551 the open-loop run. The EnKF increases the correlation by 4% (on average), while UWCEnKF-1
 552 and UWCEnKF-2 increase the correlation by approximately 23% and 24%, respectively. Again,
 553 UWCEnKF provides better results than EnKF over all basins. The largest correlation values are
 554 obtained for the Murray-Darling and Amazon basins, while the largest correlation improvements
 555 are achieved over the Orange, Amazon, and the Yangtze basins.

TABLE 3

556 *5.3. Impact of the equality constraint*

557 To further investigate the relevance of the second analysis step of UWCEnKF, we calculate
 558 correlations between the filters estimates and assimilated observations at the forecast and analysis
 559 steps for all basins. The average correlations improvements w.r.t. the open-loop run are plotted
 560 in Figure 14. As expected, larger correlations are obtained in the analysis step. In general, apply-
 561 ing EnKF results in larger correlations between the estimates and assimilated observations (e.g.,
 562 GRACE TWS and AMSR-E+SMOS) because during the EnKF assimilation the full magnitude
 563 of the update is applied to the variables regardless of the water balance. However, the WCEnKF
 564 and UWCEnKF take into account the water balance in a second update, which leads to the most
 565 improvements regarding \mathbf{p} , \mathbf{e} , and \mathbf{q} . This is due to the fact that the first update in the WCEnKF
 566 and UWCEnKF corrects the state variables with the observations, and the second update corrects
 567 the water balance. This suggests that water budget constraint slightly degrades the effects of ob-
 568 servations in the (second) update step in both WCEnKF and UWCEnKF filters, which is generally
 569 due to the observation overfitting problem, when no constraint is applied (e.g., standard EnKF) in
 570 data assimilation (see also [Tangdamrongsub et al., 2017](#); [Khaki et al., 2017a](#)). Furthermore, there
 571 is a degree of disagreement between TWS changes and other flux observations (e.g., precipitation,
 572 evaporation, and discharge), which could be attributed to different sources of uncertainties in the
 573 observations (see, e.g., [Aires, 2014](#); [Munier et al., 2015](#)). The water budget constraint applied to
 574 data assimilation (i.e., the second update of UWCEnKF) accounts for this effect by further cor-
 575 recting the estimated states from the first update step based on GRACE TWS. The second step
 576 partly removes the artifacts from data assimilation of GRACE in the first step. It can clearly be
 577 seen that UWCEnKF provides higher correlations to the flux observations than WCEnKF. This
 578 improvement is more pronounced by using UWCEnKF-2. UWCEnKF's both variants remarkably
 579 increase the correlations between TWS estimates and water fluxes compared to EnKF. Overall, a
 580 better performance is observed for UWCEnKF-2 in comparison to UWCEnKF-1.

FIGURE 14

581 The results of water budget closure resulting from each filter for every basin are shown in Figure
 582 15. UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 clearly reduce water budget imbalances for all basins compared
 583 to WCEnKF and especially EnKF. It can also be seen that UWCEnKF-2 better enforces the balance

584 between water components after assimilation. The absolute imbalance from UWCEnKF-2 is 15.28
 585 mm, 8.26% smaller than UWCEnKF-1, 17.84% smaller than WCEnKF, and 36.47% smaller than
 586 EnKF. Note that these average values are computed for all basins. The imbalance reductions can
 587 also be seen from the reported STD values for each time series in Figure 15. In all basins, the largest
 588 STD results from the EnKF and the least from the UWCEnKF-2. In some cases such as Indus,
 589 and to a lesser degree Amazon, WCEnKF performs comparably to UWCEnKF-1. UWCEnKF-2,
 590 on the other hand, achieves the largest water budget imbalance reduction, in terms of amplitude
 591 and STD, which confirms the results of Figure 14, as well as the validation results against in-situ
 592 measurements.

FIGURE 15

593 6. Conclusions

594 This study introduced an Unsupervised Weak Constrained Ensemble Kalman Filter (UW-
 595 CEnKF) to mitigate for water budget imbalance while accounting for uncertainties in the inputs
 596 of the water balance components. UWCEnKF is an extension of the previously proposed Weak
 597 Constrained Ensemble Kalman Filter (WCEnKF) to a more general (unsupervised) framework, in
 598 which the covariance associated with the water balance model is estimated along with the system
 599 state. Numerical experiments were carried out to assess the performance of the UWCEnKF against
 600 WCEnKF, as well as the standard Ensemble Kalman Filter (EnKF). The filters' results examina-
 601 tions against available in-situ measurements indicated that UWCEnKF performs best in terms of
 602 groundwater error reduction and soil moisture estimate improvements. In general, UWCEnKF
 603 reduced groundwater errors (w.r.t. groundwater in-situ measurements) by 18% (on average), and
 604 11% (on average) more than EnKF and WCEnKF, respectively. UWCEnKF-2 also achieved 4%
 605 (on average) smaller groundwater RMSE than UWCEnKF-1. Furthermore, UWCEnKF increased
 606 the correlation values between soil moisture estimates and those of the in-situ measurements by
 607 6% more than WCEnKF and 12% more than EnKF. Again, UWCEnKF-2 performed better than
 608 UWCEnKF-1 with larger soil moisture correlations w.r.t. the in-situ soil moisture measurements,
 609 i.e., 20.28% against 17.75%. UWCEnKF also achieved larger correlations to independent discharge
 610 datasets, e.g., respectively 6% and 11% larger correlations with the in-situ measurements than
 611 WCEnKF and EnKF. The experiments results also suggested that the UWCEnKF using spatially

612 varying error variances for the water balance equation provides better groundwater and soil mois-
613 ture estimates than applying a constant error variance. A similar performance was also obtained
614 for the water budget imbalance reduction, where the prior variant better mitigated the imbalance
615 problem than the latter case.

616 Overall, UWCEnKF achieved maximum correlations with the flux observations, both during
617 the forecast and analysis steps. The largest imbalance reduction was also obtained using UW-
618 CEnKF. More specifically, the absolute imbalance for UWCEnKF-2 is 15.28 mm, 8.26% smaller
619 than UWCEnKF-1, 17.84% smaller than WCEnKF, and 36.47% smaller than EnKF. These results
620 demonstrate the relevance of the new proposed unsupervised scheme, which is straightforward to
621 implement and computationally not intensive. Future work will consider extending the proposed
622 framework to jointly estimate the model biases with the state and the observation error variance.

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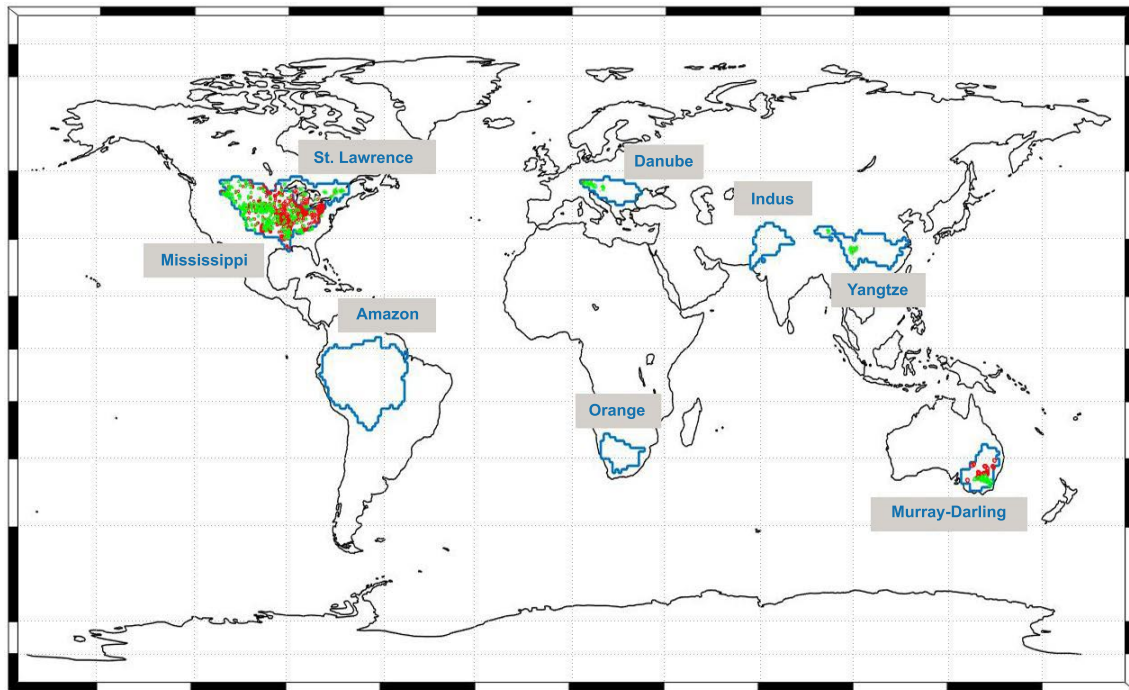


Figure 1: The location of study basins. The figure also contains the distribution of in-situ groundwater (red) and soil moisture (green) gauge stations.

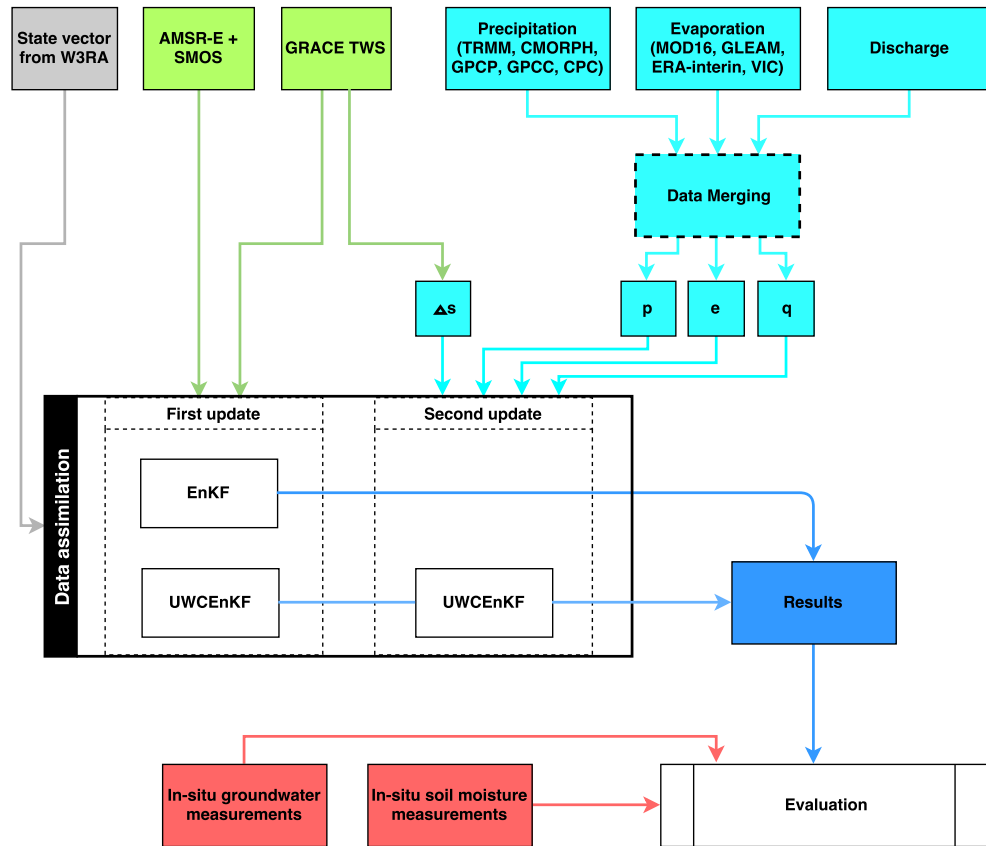


Figure 2: A schematic illustration of the UWCEnKF steps applied for data assimilation, as well as data merging process.

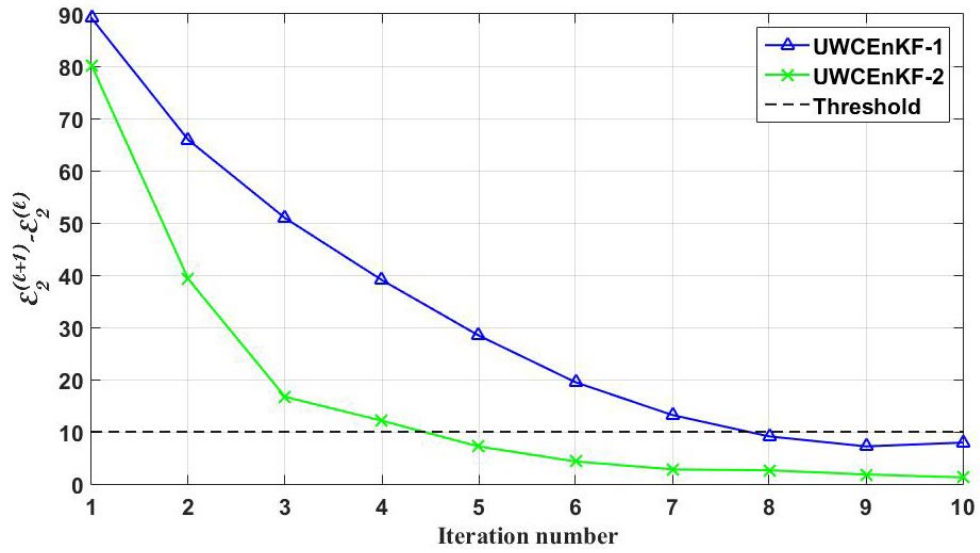


Figure 3: Average $\mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell+1)} - \mathcal{E}_2^{(\ell)}$ estimates (unit is mm) from UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 filters during assimilation in each iteration (for $\ell = 0 \cdots 10$). The threshold value (10mm) is chosen arbitrary based on a trial and error procedure.

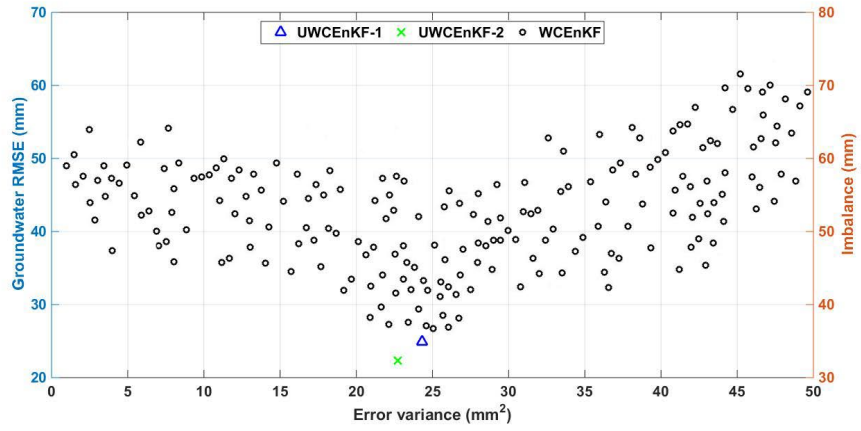


Figure 4: Average groundwater RMSE and imbalance for various implementations of the WCEnKF filter using different error variance assumed (circles) considering different error variance. UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2 results are indicated by triangle and cross, respectively.

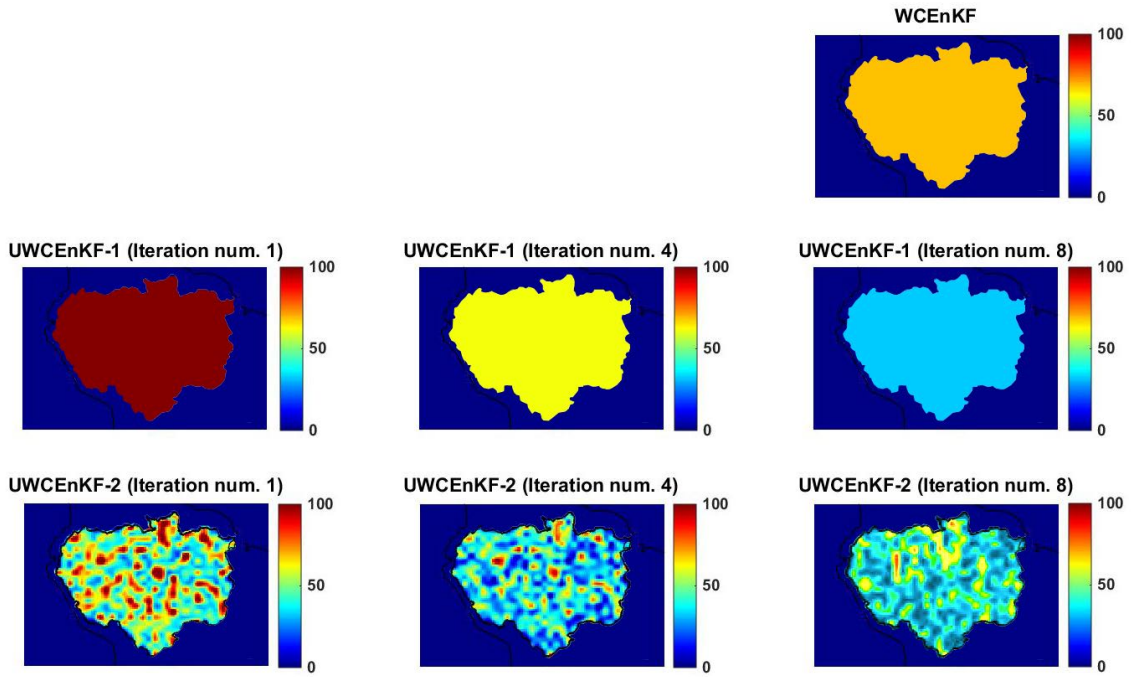


Figure 5: Spatial variability of error variances estimated by WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2. The corresponding results for different iterations are also demonstrated for WCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2.

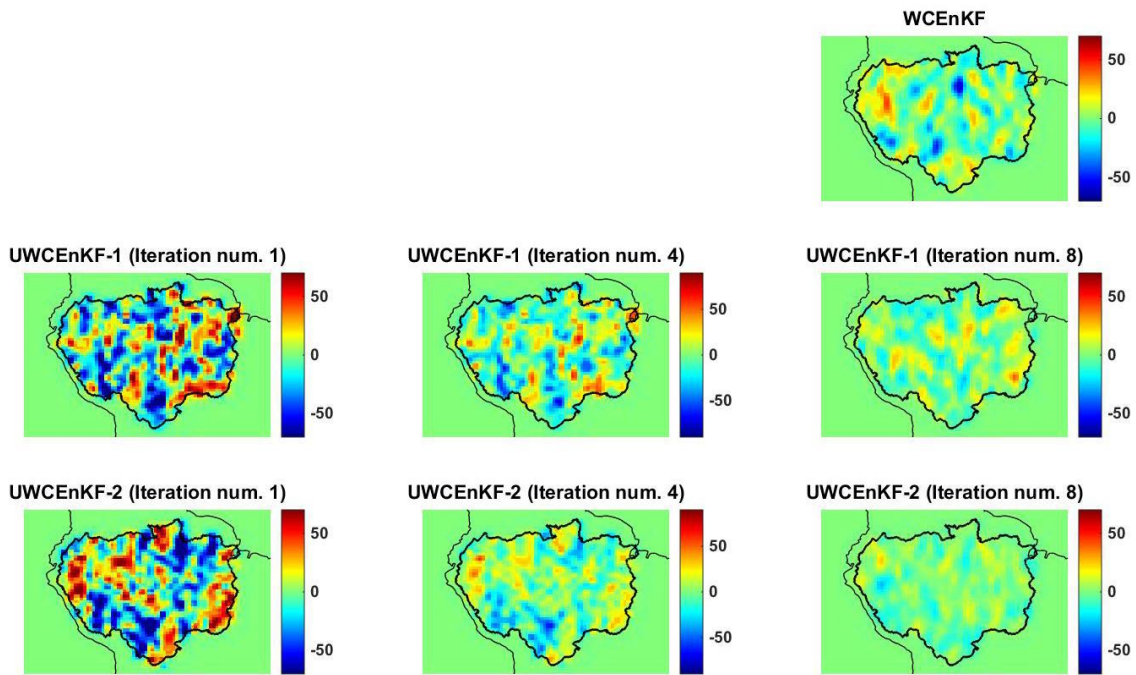


Figure 6: Spatial variability of imbalances from WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2 corresponding to the errors presented in Figure 5.

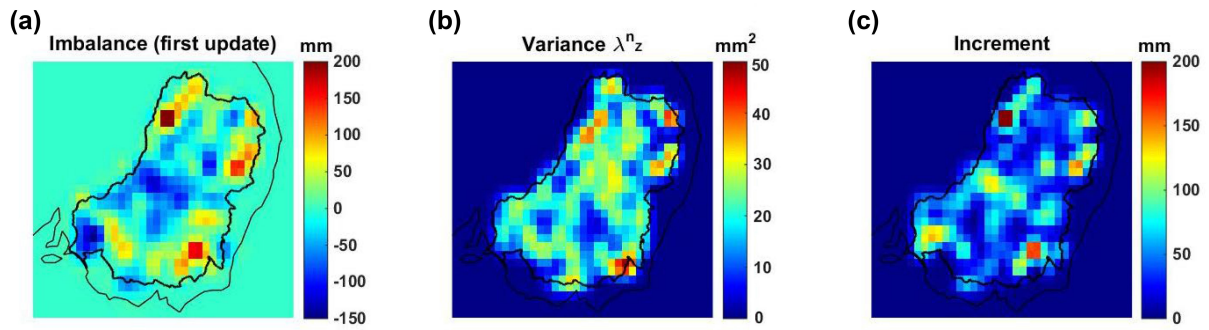


Figure 7: Temporarily averaged maps of imbalances from UWCEnKF-2's first update (a), estimated error variance (b), and increments applied in the second analysis step of UWCEnKF-2 (c).

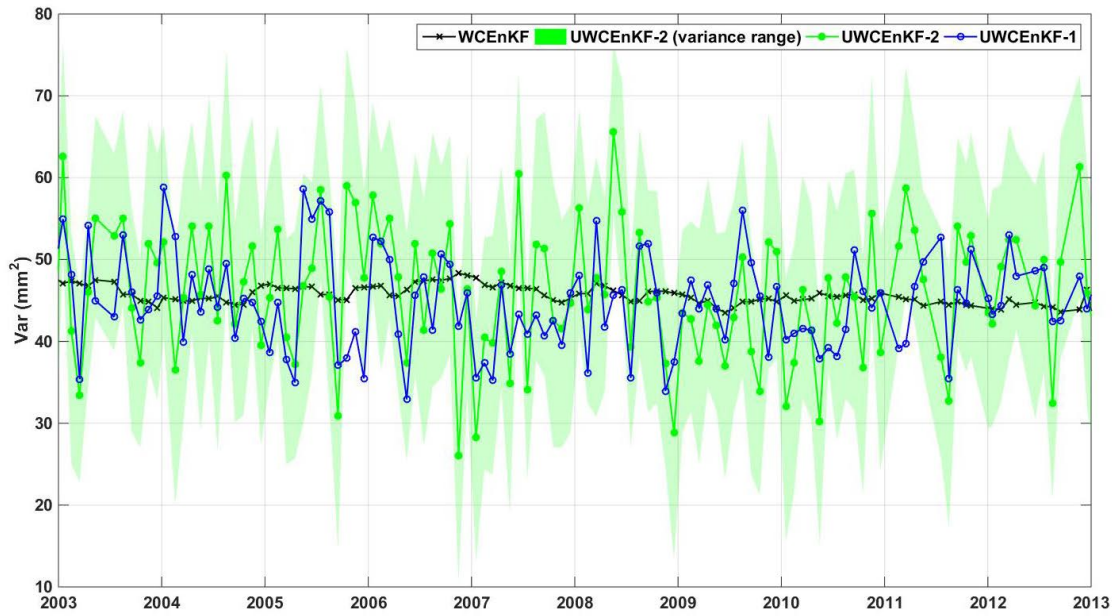


Figure 8: Average water balance variances estimated by UWCEnKF-1 and UWCEnKF-2. The plots also contains the assigned variance values for WCEnKF implementation.

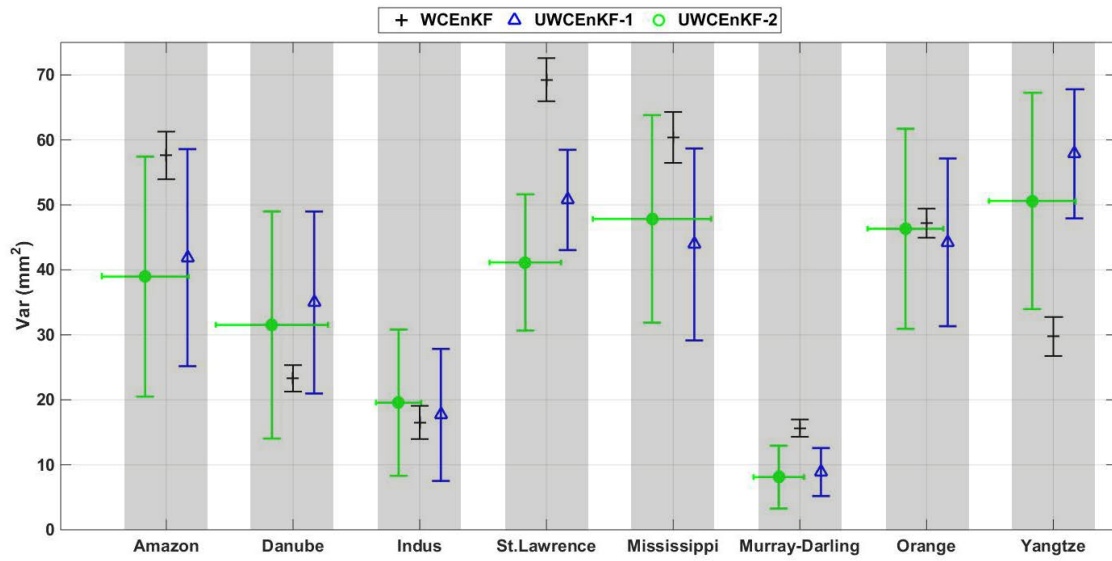


Figure 9: Variation ranges of water balance covariance in time (vertical lines) and space (horizontal lines) for WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2.

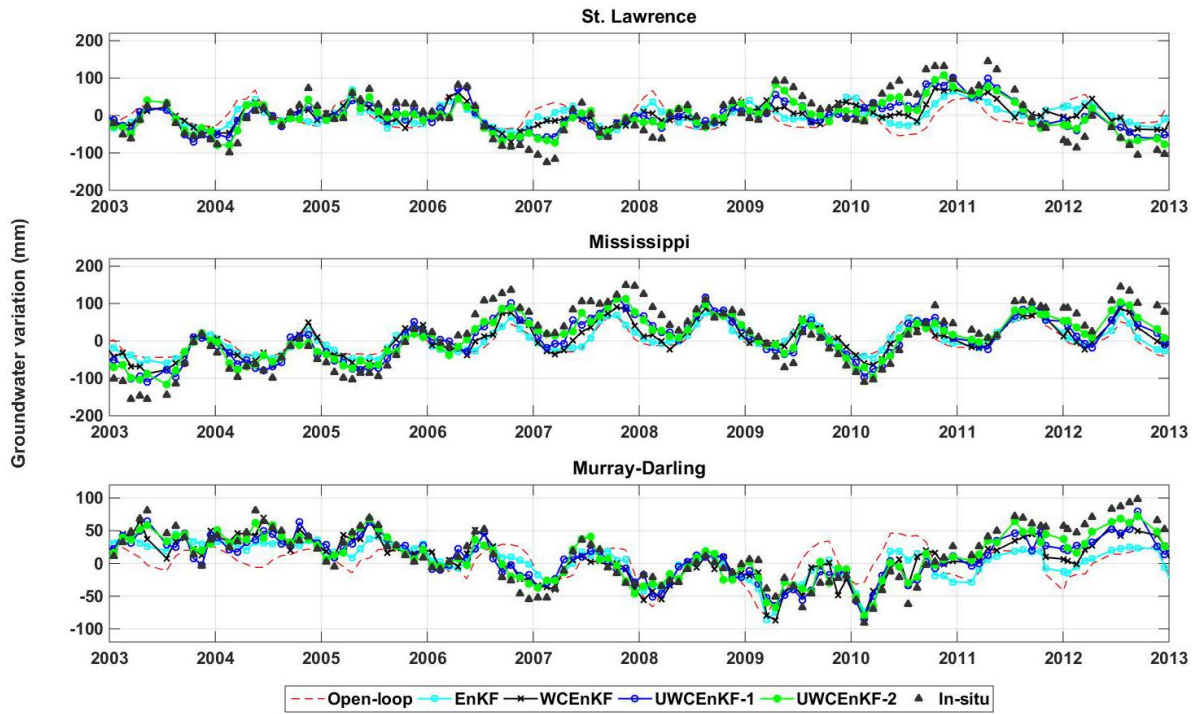


Figure 10: Average groundwater variation time series by the open-loop run, EnKF, WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2 over St. Lawrence, Mississippi, and Murray-Darling basins.

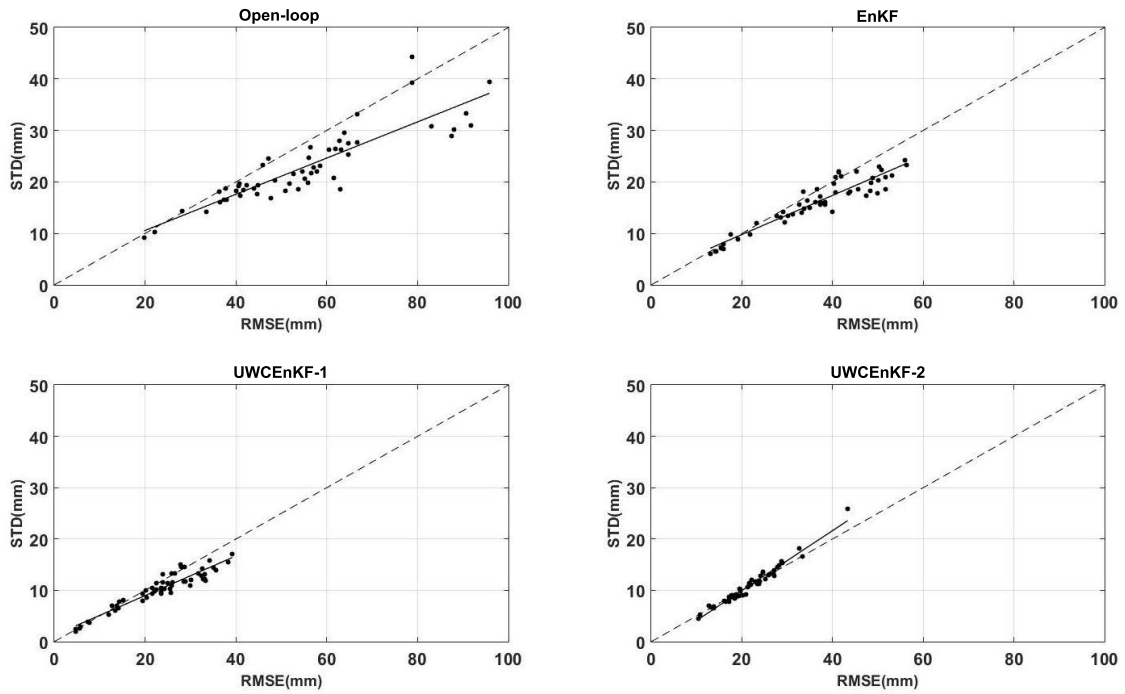


Figure 11: Average RMSE and STD of the groundwater results from the EnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2 filters over the Murray-Darling basin regarding the in-situ groundwater measurements.

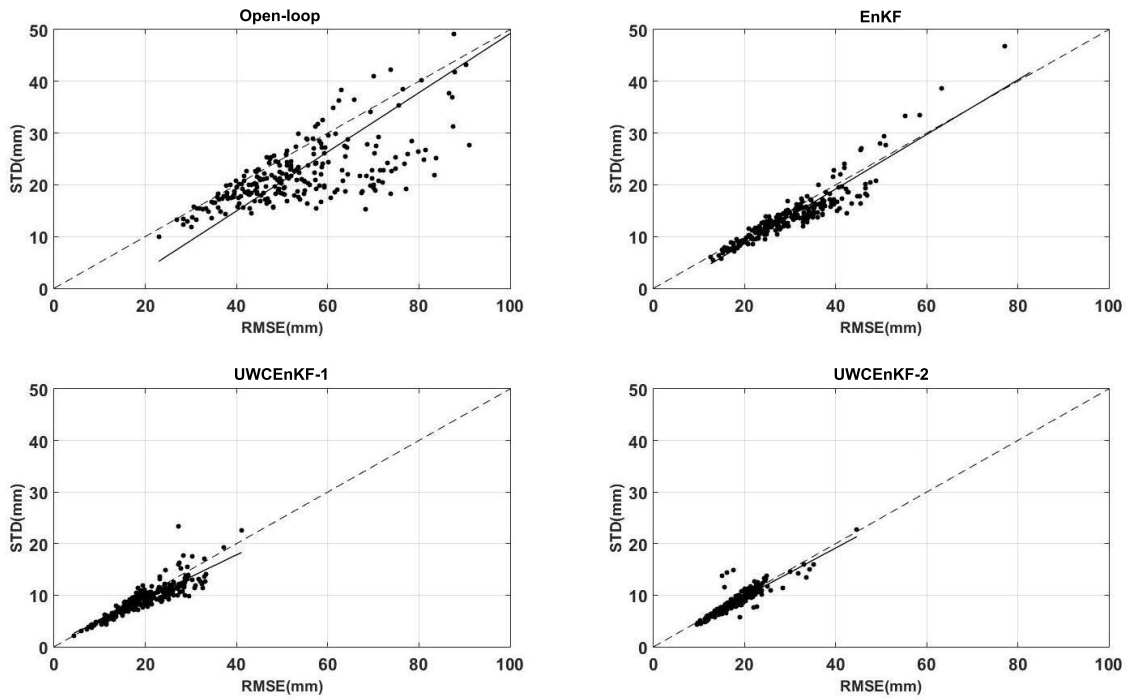


Figure 12: Average RMSE and STD of the groundwater results from the EnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2 filters over the Mississippi basin regarding the in-situ groundwater measurements.

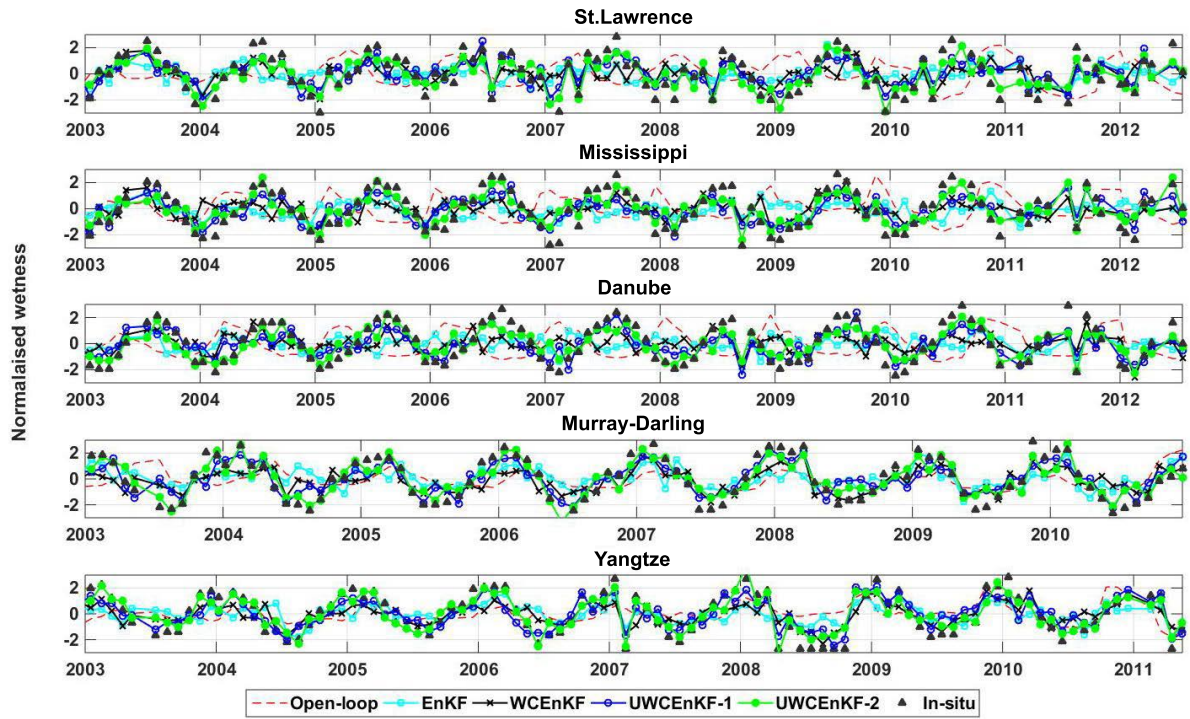


Figure 13: Average soil moisture variation time series by the open-loop run, EnKF, WCEnKF, UWCEnKF-1, and UWCEnKF-2 over St. Lawrence, Mississippi, Danube, Yangtze, and Murray-Darling basins.

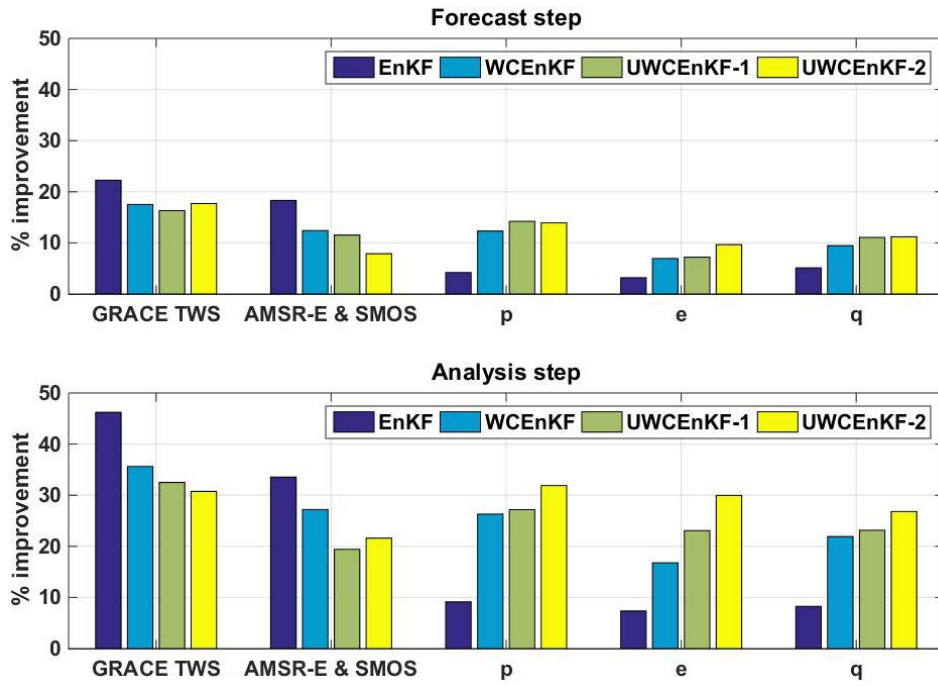


Figure 14: Average correlation improvements of filtered TWS time series to GRACE TWS, p , e , and discharge q with respect to open-loop run in forecast and analysis steps. For AMSR-E+SMOS correlation, filtered top soil storage estimates are used.

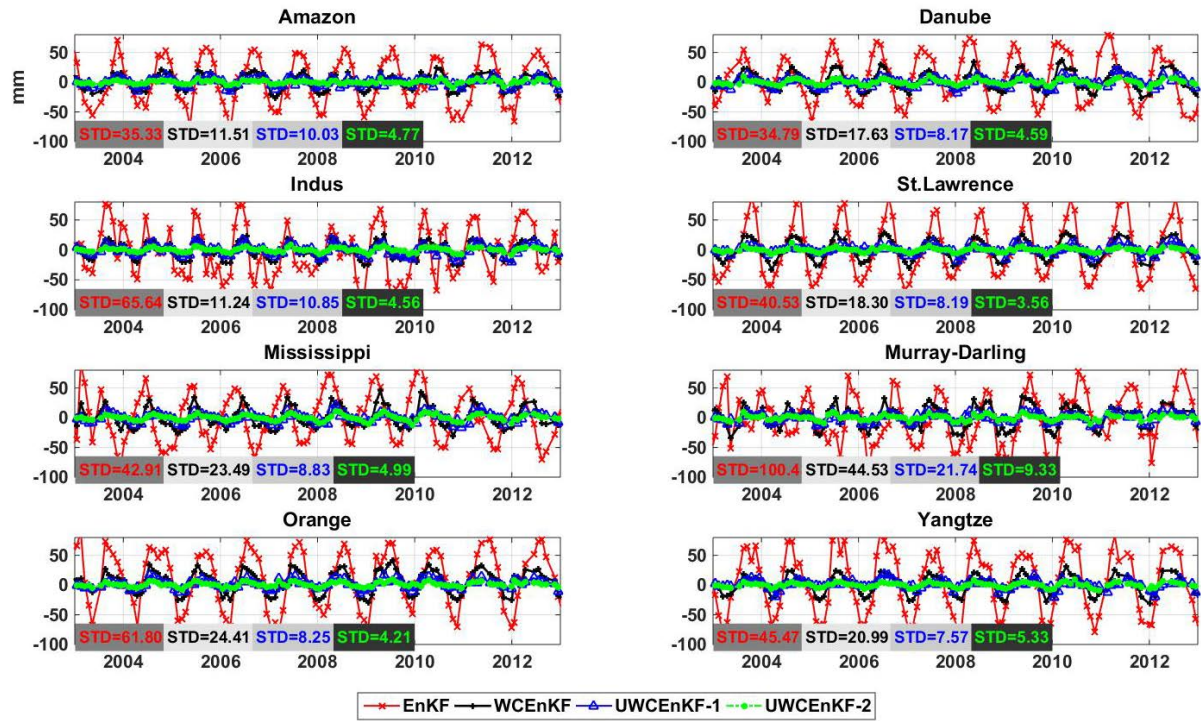


Figure 15: Average water budget imbalance time series calculated using EnKF, WCEnKF, and UWCEnKF variants for each basin (units are mm).

Table 1: A summary of the datasets used in this study.

Product	Platform	Reference
Terrestrial water storage (TWS)	GRACE	Mayer-Gürr et al. (2014)
Soil moisture	AMSR-E	Njoku (2004)
Soil moisture	SMOS	Draper et al. (2009)
Precipitation (p)	TRMM-3B42	Huffman et al. (2007)
Precipitation (p)	CMORPH	Joyce et al. (2004)
Precipitation (p)	GPCP	Adler et al. (2003)
Precipitation (p)	GPCC	Schneider et al. (2008)
Precipitation (p)	CPC	Chen et al. (2002)
Evapotranspiration (e)	MOD16	Mu et al. (2007)
Evapotranspiration (e)	GLEAM	Miralles et al. (2011)
Evapotranspiration (e)	ERA-interim	Simmons et al. (2007)
Evapotranspiration (e)	VIC	Liang et al. (1994)
Water discharge (q)	GRDC	http://www.bafg.de/GRDC/EN/Home/homepage_node.html
Water discharge (q)		http://www.hydrosciences.fr/sierem/consultation/choixaccess.asp?lang=en
Water discharge (q)	USGS	https://waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/sw
Water discharge (q)		http://www.bom.gov.au/waterdata/
Water discharge (q)	NRFA	http://nrfa.ceh.ac.uk/data/
Water discharge (q)		http://www.ore-hybam.org/
Water discharge (q)		http://www.hydrology.gov.np/new/bull13/index.php/hydrology/home/main
Hydrological model	W3RA	http://www.wenfo.org/wald/data-software/
Groundwater in-situ measurements	NSW	http://waterinfo.nsw.gov.au/pinneena/gw.shtml
Groundwater in-situ measurements	USGS	https://water.usgs.gov/ogu/data.html
Soil moisture in-situ measurements	OzNet	Smith et al. (2012)
Soil moisture in-situ measurements	ISMN	https://ismn.geo.tuwien.ac.at/

Table 2: Average correlations between in-situ and soil moisture estimates from various methods. Improvements in the assimilation results are calculated as $[(assimilation - open-loop\ run)/open-loop\ run] \times 100(\%)$.

Basin	Open-loop	EnKF	WCEnKF	UWCEnKF-1	UWCEnKF-2
Danube	0.67	0.74	0.79	0.81	0.82
St. Lawrence	0.69	0.72	0.76	0.84	0.87
Mississippi	0.72	0.81	0.85	0.86	0.88
Murray-Darling	0.76	0.83	0.86	0.89	0.91
Yangtze	0.73	0.75	0.78	0.80	0.81
Improvements (%)	–	7.85	13.22	17.75	20.28

Table 3: Average correlations between the filtered water discharge and independent observations over different basins.

Basin	Open-loop	EnKF	UWCEnKF-1	UWCEnKF-2
Amazon	73.62	78.04	95.26	96.58
Danube	76.13	76.28	90.77	90.60
Indus	77.08	74.71	84.48	85.37
St. Lawrence	68.55	80.65	87.41	89.17
Mississippi	71.91	73.78	94.29	93.32
Murray-Darling	79.36	83.12	96.31	96.89
Orange	69.47	71.82	93.42	94.05
Yangtze	71.15	75.49	92.69	93.91