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**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site in South-Western Germany

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Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Abstract

A new, two-channel instrument for simultaneous NO_3 and N_2O_5 monitoring was used to make the first comprehensive set of nocturnal NO_x measurements (NO , NO_2 , NO_3 and N_2O_5) at the Taunus Observatory, a rural mountain site (Kleiner Feldberg) in South-western Germany. In May 2008, NO_3 and N_2O_5 mixing ratios were well above the instrumental detection limit (a few ppt) on all nights of the campaign and were characterised by large variability resulting from inhomogeneously distributed sinks. The concentrations of NO_3 , N_2O_5 and NO_2 were consistent with the equilibrium constant, K_2 , defining the rates of formation and thermal dissociation of N_2O_5 . A steady-state lifetime analysis showed that nocturnal NO_x losses were generally dominated by reaction of NO_3 with volatile organic compounds in this forested region, with N_2O_5 uptake to aerosols of secondary importance. Analysis of a limited dataset obtained at high relative humidity indicated that the loss of N_2O_5 by reaction with water vapour is less efficient ($>$ factor 3) than derived using laboratory kinetic data. The fraction of NO_x present as NO_3 and N_2O_5 reached $\approx 20\%$ on some nights, with night-time losses of NO_x competing with daytime losses.

1 Introduction

Daytime oxidation processes (e.g. of volatile organic trace gases, VOC) are dominated by the photochemically generated hydroxyl radical (OH), which is absent (or present at much reduced levels) at night. At night-time, the nitrate radical, NO_3 , is considered the major initiator of oxidation of certain classes of gas-phase organic compounds such as biogenic terpenes and dimethyl sulphide (Wayne et al., 1991). NO_3 is formed predominantly in the reaction of NO_2 with ozone (Reaction R1) and is converted to N_2O_5 via further reaction with NO_2 (Reaction R2a). Due to the thermal decomposition of N_2O_5 to NO_2 and NO_3 (Reaction R2b), the relative concentrations of NO_3 and N_2O_5 are closely linked (Brown et al., 2003a) and are a strong function of temperature and

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



[NO₂].



5 As a consequence of its rapid photolysis and reaction with NO (Reaction R4), the NO₃ radical is absent or at significantly reduced concentration during the day and the rapid equilibrium (Reaction R2a, R2b) ensures very low concentrations of N₂O₅ also. Apart from regions impacted by strong anthropogenic NO emissions or very close to the surface where soil emissions of NO are important, NO is rapidly converted to NO₂
10 via Reaction (R3) at night enabling a build up of NO₃ and N₂O₅. In rural areas NO₂, NO₃ and N₂O₅ are thus the only nocturnal nitrogen oxides apart from long lived, reservoir species such as HNO₃ or PAN.



15 The lifetime of NO₃ is then controlled mainly by its reactions with certain VOC, whereas N₂O₅ (an acid anhydride) is lost mainly by heterogeneous hydrolysis on aerosol surfaces to result in aqueous phase nitrate formation:



20 Close to ground level, dry deposition could also be important for both NO₃ and N₂O₅. The sequential oxidation of NO to NO₂ to NO₃ to N₂O₅ and finally to particulate nitrate thus represents a change in the partitioning of nitrogen oxides between the NO_x

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



(NO + NO₂) and NO_y families (where NO_y is the sum of all nitrogen oxides and includes long lived reservoir species such as HNO₃) and also the partitioning of NO_y between the gas and particulate phases. Both the modification of the NO_x/NO_y ratio and the oxidation of VOCs by NO₃ impact on daytime photochemical rates.

5 Given sufficient time, a stationary state is reached for NO₃ at night in which its production (the rate of which is given by $k_1[\text{NO}_2][\text{O}_3]$) is approximately balanced by the sum of direct losses and indirect loss via conversion to N₂O₅ and subsequent heterogeneous removal. The turnover lifetime of NO₃ in steady state, $\tau_{ss}(\text{NO}_3)$, which is defined as the inverse of the sum of the direct and indirect loss frequencies
 10 ($\tau_{ss}(\text{NO}_3) = 1/(f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3) + f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3))$), is given by:

$$\tau_{ss}(\text{NO}_3) = \frac{[\text{NO}_3]}{k_1[\text{NO}_2] \cdot [\text{O}_3]} \quad (1)$$

In the absence of both light and NO the direct losses of NO₃ are dominated by reactions with organic trace gases (Reaction R5) so that, to a good approximation, $f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3) = \sum(k_i [\text{VOC}]_i)$ where k_i is the rate coefficient for reaction of NO₃ with a specific VOC of concentration [VOC]. The rate of indirect loss of NO₃ via its conversion to
 15 N₂O₅ depends on the equilibrium constant (K_2) that defines the relative concentration of NO₃ and N₂O₅ for any given temperature and amount of NO₂.

$$K_2 = \frac{[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5]}{[\text{NO}_2] \cdot [\text{NO}_3]} = \frac{k_2}{k_{-2}} \quad (2)$$

The frequency of indirect loss of NO₃ is thus given by $f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3) = K_2[\text{NO}_2](f_{\text{het}} + f_{\text{homo}})$. Where f_{het} is the loss frequency for N₂O₅ due to irreversible, heterogeneous uptake to aerosol surfaces and f_{homo} is the loss frequency of N₂O₅ due to gas-phase reaction with water vapour. Combining the definitions of $f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3)$ and $f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3)$ with
 20 Eq. (1) and ignoring loss of NO₃ or N₂O₅ by dry deposition, we derive (Geyer et al.,

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



2001; Aldener et al., 2006):

$$\tau_{ss}(\text{NO}_3) \approx \frac{1}{f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3) + f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3)} \approx \frac{1}{f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3) + K_2[\text{NO}_2](f_{\text{het}} + f_{\text{homo}})} \quad (3)$$

For aerosol particles of diameter less than ≈ 1 micron, f_{het} is given by:

$$f_{\text{het}} \approx \frac{\gamma \cdot \bar{c} \cdot A}{4} \quad (4)$$

5 where A is the aerosol surface area density ($\text{cm}^2 \text{cm}^{-3}$), \bar{c} is the mean molecular velocity of N_2O_5 ($23\,500 \text{ cm s}^{-1}$ at 280 K) and γ is the dimensionless uptake coefficient. The presently recommended kinetic expression (IUPAC) for gas-phase reaction between N_2O_5 and H_2O contains terms both linear and quadratic in H_2O concentration:



with $k_{7a} = 2.5 \times 10^{-22} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ and $k_{7b} = 1.8 \times 10^{-39} [\text{H}_2\text{O}] \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$. As $[\text{H}_2\text{O}] \gg [\text{N}_2\text{O}_5]$, pseudo first-order kinetics are applicable so that

$$f_{\text{homo}} = k_{7a}[\text{H}_2\text{O}] + k_{7b}[\text{H}_2\text{O}]^2 \quad (5)$$

15 with the H_2O concentration in units of molecule cm^{-3} . The relative importance of direct and indirect loss mechanisms for NO_3 depends on several factors including the concentrations of NO_2 and VOCs, the available surface area (A) and the temperature, which strongly influences both K_2 , emission rates of biogenic VOCs (Geyer and Platt, 2002) and available H_2O -vapour. For this reason, the direct and indirect loss mechanisms can show large regional and seasonal dependencies, with NO_3 lifetimes close
20 to the surface varying from minutes in areas impacted by anthropogenic or biogenic emissions to hours in remote regions (Heintz et al., 1996; Allan et al., 2000).

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



In this paper we describe the first deployment of a new, two-channel optical cavity based instrument for detection of NO_3 and N_2O_5 , and also the first measurements of NO_3 or N_2O_5 at the Taunus Observatory, a rural mountain site in South-western Germany. Ancillary measurements of NO , NO_2 , O_3 and aerosol surface area enabled us to calculate NO_3 and N_2O_5 lifetimes and assess some aspects of nocturnal chemistry at this site.

2 Experimental

2.1 Site description

The measurements were made at the Taunus Observatory, located at $50^\circ 13' 25''$ N, $8^\circ 26' 56''$ E and 825 m above sea level at the summit of the “Kleiner Feldberg” a mountain in the Taunus range in South-western Germany (Fig. 1). The area directly around the observatory is mainly coniferous forest (predominantly spruce). The hill top itself (50 m in radius) has been cleared of trees for meteorological measurements several times, the last time about half a century ago and only a couple of willows and some birch trees remain between the cleared area and the spruce trees. The direct vicinity of the measurement containers is covered by shrubs and blueberry plants. Because of its elevation the station is known for its quite remote character for central Germany with a few main roads and some small towns within 5 km. The observatory is impacted by pollution from the heavily populated Rhein-Main area (pop. ≈ 2 million) including a dense motorway system and large cities such as Frankfurt (pop. $\approx 700\,000$, 30 km SE), Wiesbaden (pop. $\approx 300\,000$, 20 km SW) and Mainz (pop. $\approx 200\,000$, 25 km SSW). The area 50–100 km north of Kleiner Feldberg is lightly populated and devoid of major industry. Wind flow patterns are influenced by the presence of two similar sized mountains: Altkönig (798 m) and Großer Feldberg (878 m) in the direct vicinity (2.7 km and 1.3 km distant, respectively). Previous measurements have shown that highest CO levels at the Taunus Observatory were associated with Easterly winds containing air

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



from the Frankfurt region which have been channelled between the Großer Feldberg and Altkönig mountains (Wetter, 1998) with highest levels of O_3 arriving with wind from the east to southeast during fine weather (Handisides, 2001). As well as the Taunus Observatory, the meteorological garden of the German weather service (DWD) and the measurement container of the State of Hessen environmental agency (HLUG) are also located at the summit of the Kleiner Feldberg.

2.2 Instrumentation

The instruments were located in the upper container of a two-container tower, with the inlet ≈ 4.5 m above the ground. In order to avoid trace gas losses (especially of NO_3) the inlet was constructed from a 1.4 m long, glass tube of internal diameter 10.4 cm, which was internally coated with a thin film of Teflon (FEP 100a). An industrial fan attached to the exit of the glass tube maintained a flow (at circa 700 Torr) of $\approx 20 \text{ m}^3 \text{ min}^{-1}$ through the tube, resulting in residence times of ≈ 0.1 s to the sampling line. 18 L min^{-1} air was sampled (at 90° to the main flow) from the centre of the large diameter tube via a short piece of $1/4''$ PFA-Teflon tubing (≈ 15 cm) and a $2 \mu\text{m}$ pore Teflon filter to the NO_3/N_2O_5 instrument. A ≈ 4 m length of $1/4''$ PFA-Teflon tubing, sampling at $\approx 3 \text{ L/min}$ from the centre of the inlet, transferred air to the $NO/NO_2/O_3$ detector (see below). Physical characterisation of the aerosol size distribution and aerosol number concentration was performed via inlets from the same container used for NO_3 and N_2O_5 measurements. Smaller particles were sampled through a 1 m long Tygon tube, which was mounted horizontally straight out of the container window in order to keep sampling losses as small as possible. Larger particles were sampled via a vertical glass tube extending above the roof of the upper container. This inlet was covered by a cap to prevent rain from entering.

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



2.2.1 NO₃ and N₂O₅ measurements

NO₃ and N₂O₅ mixing ratios were measured using a two-channel, off axis cavity-ring-down system (OA-CRD). A single channel prototype of this device was described recently (Schuster et al., 2009) and took part in a major NO₃/N₂O₅ inter-comparison at an environmental chamber in 2007 (Apodaca et al., 2009; Dorn et al., 2009). The major modification of the device for the present campaign was the introduction of a second cavity to enable simultaneous measurement of NO₃ and N₂O₅. This is the first implementation of the two-channel device in the field and it is therefore described in some detail.

The instrument and inlet configuration is shown in Fig. 2. The NO₃ cavity (PFA tubing, 70 cm long, volume 79 cm³) was operated close to ambient temperature, whereas the summed concentration of NO₃ + N₂O₅ was measured in a Teflon coated Pyrex cavity (70 cm long, volume 165 cm³) heated to 80 °C. The heated cavity was located behind a ≈20 cm section of Teflon coated glass tubing heated to 85 °C to quantitatively convert N₂O₅ to NO₃. Laboratory tests showed that, at the given flow rates and residence time in the converter, this temperature was sufficient to quantitatively dissociate N₂O₅. Note that the cavity temperature was cooler than in our prototype device, (Schuster et al., 2009) which was operated at 95 °C. The flow rates through the cavities were 10 L(std)min⁻¹ (NO₃) and 8 L(std)min⁻¹ (N₂O₅ + NO₃), resulting in residence times of ≈0.4 s and 0.8 s, respectively.

The light source used was a ≈100 mW laser diode operated at 662 nm, close to the peak of the NO₃ absorption spectrum. Light exiting the cavity was filtered by a 662 nm interference filter prior to detection by a PMT. The pre-amplified PMT signal was digitised and averaged with a 10 MHz, 12 bit USB scope (Picoscope 3424) which was triggered at the laser modulation frequency of 100 Hz. Typically 256 ring-down events were recorded to result in a time resolution of ≈3 s. The cavity loss due to absorption at 662 nm was calculated from the change in ring-down constant in the presence of an absorber and converted to a concentration of NO₃ using the effective cross section of

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



NO_3 at the experimental temperature and the established relation (Berden et al., 2000; Mazurenka et al., 2005)

$$[\text{NO}_3] = \frac{\Delta k_{rd} L}{\sigma_{\text{NO}_3} c d} \quad (6)$$

where $[\text{NO}_3]$ is the concentration of NO_3 (molecule cm^{-3}), k_{rd} is the ring-down constant (a first-order rate coefficient with units of s^{-1}), Δk_{rd} is the difference in the ring-down decay constant with and without NO_3 , L is the distance between the cavity mirrors (70 cm), d is the length of the cavity which is filled with absorber, σ_{NO_3} is the effective absorption cross section of NO_3 and c is the speed of light $\approx 2.998 \times 10^{10} \text{ cm s}^{-1}$). Temperature dependent values of σ_{NO_3} were taken from (Yokelson et al., 1994; Orphal et al., 2003) and convoluted with the laser emission profile to obtain effective cross sections as described previously (Schuster et al., 2009).

The ring-down constant in the absence of NO_3 was derived by adding $\approx 10^{12}$ molecule cm^{-3} of NO (8 sccm of a 100 ppm mixture of NO in N_2) to the air above the filter every 100 s for a period of ≈ 20 s (duty cycle of 80%). Slight drifts in the ring-down constant over the course of an hour were then removed from the dataset by fitting a polynomial to the ≈ 36 titration points obtained in the presence of NO. Typically, for the NO_3 channel the standard deviation in the fit was ≈ 1 ppt, whereas for the sum channel it was ≈ 2.5 ppt.

By variation of the mirror purge gas flow whilst monitoring the ring-down signal due to a constant flow of NO_2 into the cavity (NO_2 also absorbs at 662 nm), we were able to calculate a value of L/d of 1.01 ± 0.03 . Note that the ring-down time constant, τ , is equal to $1/k_{rd}$ and for a cavity free of absorbing species was typically close to 80 μs , indicating an effective optical path length of ≈ 25 km.

Loss of NO_3 to the filter was determined in the laboratory as described previously (Schuster et al., 2009) by flowing NO_3 or N_2O_5 (generated in the reaction of NO_2 with O_3) into the cavities with and without a filter in place. Repeated tests resulted in a clean

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



filter transmission of $90\pm 3\%$ for NO_3 and $98\pm 2\%$ for N_2O_5 . During the campaign, the filter was usually changed at 1 h intervals to prevent significant build up of a reactive surface. We show later that leaving the filter for two hours did on one occasion result in loss of NO_3 transmission (but not N_2O_5).

The data also required correction for loss of NO_3 during transport through the cavities. This was achieved by carrying out pre- and post-campaign experiments in the laboratory in which a 11 SLM flow of air containing stable concentrations of N_2O_5 and NO_3 was passed through both cavities. By varying the relative flow rate through each cavity whilst maintaining the total flow and thus $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ concentration, the residence time of gas in each cavity was varied. As described previously (Schuster et al., 2009) an exponential dependence of the NO_3 signal on residence time was observed, allowing loss terms of $0.25\pm 0.05\text{ s}^{-1}$ (cold cavity) and $0.11\pm 0.05\text{ s}^{-1}$ (hot cavity) to be derived. Based on known cavity residence times when sampling from the atmosphere, the corrections to the field data for cavity losses were calculated as $11\pm 2\%$ for both channels.

Other corrections that can be applied to the data result from chemistry within the cavities. The addition of NO to titrate NO_3 whilst measuring the ring-down constant in the absence of NO_3 (chemical zero) disturbs the equilibrium between NO_3 and N_2O_5 , and leads to N_2O_5 dissociation to NO_3 . The magnitude of this effect (essentially an error in the determination of the chemical zero) can be estimated in a steady state analysis from the amount of N_2O_5 , the cavity temperature and the NO added as:

$$[\text{NO}_3]_{\text{extra}} = \frac{k_{-2} [\text{N}_2\text{O}_5]}{k_4 [\text{NO}]} \quad (7)$$

At a typical cavity temperature of 292 K, k_{-2} is $\approx 0.02\text{ s}^{-1}$ and k_4 is $3.6\times 10^{-11}\text{ cm}^3\text{ molecule}^{-1}\text{ s}^{-1}$. The extra NO_3 formed in this process is $\approx 0.2\text{ ppt}$ at N_2O_5 mixing ratios of 200 ppt. As such N_2O_5 mixing ratios were always associated with NO_3 mixing ratios of 20 ppt or more, this represents an insignificant effect (sub percent).

**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



In addition to titrating NO_3 , the addition of NO can lead to NO_2 formation via its reaction with ambient O_3 . As both NO_2 and O_3 absorb weakly at 662 nm, (cross sections are $\approx 2 \times 10^{-21} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$ for NO_2 and $1 \times 10^{-21} \text{ cm}^2 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$ for O_3) this can also have an impact on the retrieved chemical zero. The amount of NO_2 formed during titration, $\delta[\text{NO}_2]$, may be approximated by:

$$\delta[\text{NO}_2] = [\text{O}_3] \left\{ 1 - \exp(-k_3[\text{NO}]t) \right\} \quad (8)$$

where t is the cavity residence time (0.88 s in the $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5 + \text{NO}_3$ cavity and 0.44 s in the NO_3 cavity). k_3 is equal to $4.3 \times 10^{-14} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at 80 °C (hot cavity) and $1.8 \times 10^{-14} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at $\approx 290 \text{ K}$ (cold cavity). We assume O_3 is 80 ppb (the largest value measured in the campaign). For the hot cavity $\delta \text{NO}_2 = 3 \text{ ppb}$, and for the cold cavity just 0.6 ppb. Given the values of the NO_2 and O_3 cross sections listed above, this represents an error of just 0.15 ppt equivalents ($\text{N}_2\text{O}_5 + \text{NO}_3$ cavity) and 0.03 ppt (NO_3 cavity) which are much lower than noise levels and fluctuations in the chemical zero.

Although the cold cavity was heavily insulated, we measured temperatures within the cavity that were $\approx 4\text{--}5^\circ \text{C}$ warmer than ambient. A warming of the cavity compared to ambient air can potentially impact on the NO_3 measurement as a new equilibrium between N_2O_5 and NO_3 may be established, leading to an overestimation of the true NO_3 concentration and also the $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ ratio. As a first approximation, an upper limit to the size of this effect can be estimated from the concentration of N_2O_5 , the known dissociation rate constant (k_{-2}) at the temperature of the cavity and the average residence time (t) of N_2O_5 in the cavity.

$$\delta[\text{NO}_3] = \delta[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5] = [\text{N}_2\text{O}_5]_0 \exp(-(k_{-2}t)) \quad (9)$$

At 290 K (typical ambient temperatures were 280–285 K), the thermal dissociation rate constant for N_2O_5 is $1.4 \times 10^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$. The average residence time is taken as the time for gas to be transported half way between the T-piece connector to the centre

**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

of the cavity and the exit and is ≈ 0.26 s. This estimation of the residence time takes into account the fact that we “integrate” the NO_3 concentration over the entire cavity length. These values of k_{-2} and t result in $\approx 0.4\%$ conversion of the N_2O_5 to NO_3 , which represents a maximum correction of 1.6 ppt for NO_3 when N_2O_5 was close to 400 ppt (the largest values measured in the campaign). This calculation does not take into account the fact that the formation and loss rates of N_2O_5 are not de-coupled at this temperature. As typical values of NO_2 were 1–2 ppb ($\approx 2\text{--}4 \times 10^{10}$ molecule cm^{-3}) the instantaneous first-order constant for N_2O_5 formation ($k_2[\text{NO}_2]$) is $2.5\text{--}5 \times 10^{-2} \text{ s}^{-1}$, i.e. similar to its thermal dissociation rate constant. More accurate correction factors were thus obtained by numerical simulation (Curtis and Sweetenham, 1987) of the effect of a 5°C temperature jump in $\text{NO}_2/\text{NO}_3 / \text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ mixtures at equilibrium and at similar concentrations to those measured in the campaign. The results showed that the maximum change in NO_3 or the $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ ratio was $\approx 1\text{--}1.5\%$. This effect was considered too small to warrant correction to the data, though it is worth noting that long cavity residence times and larger temperature increases between ambient and cavity will result in significant systematic overestimation of NO_3 under some conditions.

The random noise limited detection limits (3 s integration per datapoint) were 1–2 ppt (NO_3) and 4–5 ppt (N_2O_5). As summarised by Schuster et al. (2009), when considering the above and taking into account estimated errors in the NO_3 cross section at both cavity temperatures (Yokelson et al., 1994; Orphal et al., 2003) we estimate the uncertainty to be $\pm 15\%$ for NO_3 and at least 2 ppt. For the N_2O_5 channel these values are $\pm 15\%$ and at least 3 ppt.

2.2.2 NO , NO_2 and O_3 measurements

The measurements of NO , NO_2 and O_3 were based on the chemiluminescence of the reaction between NO and O_3 (Fontijn et al., 1970). The instrument is a modified commercial Chemiluminescence Detector (CLD 790 SR) originally manufactured by ECO Physics (Duernten, Switzerland). The original instrument housed two CLD chan-

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



nels, that were used for the detection of NO and NO₂. The quantitative detection of NO₂ is based on its photolytic conversion (Blue Light Converter, Droplet Measurement Technologies, Boulder, CO, USA) to NO, which was subsequently detected in the CLD (Kley and McFarland, 1980). A third channel was added for the measurements of O₃ following the design described by Ridley et al. (1992). In the present study data were obtained at a time resolution of 2 s.

In-field calibrations for NO were made on a regular basis by adding a secondary standard (2 ppmv NO in N₂, Air Liquide, Germany) diluted by zero air to a mixing ratio of approximately 2 ppbv. The zero air, that was also used for regular background measurements, was produced from synthetic air (Air Liquide, Germany), that was additionally filtered through a catalytic air purifier (Pt/Pd) and charcoal and purafil (KMnO₄/Al₂O₃) cartridges. The secondary NO standard used in the field was traced to a primary standard (NIST, USA). The efficiency of the Blue Light Converter for NO₂ measurements was determined by gas phase titration of NO (from the secondary standard) using an excess of O₃. This procedure yielded a conversion efficiency of (46.6±2)% over the campaign. The ozone channel was calibrated using a commercial O₃ calibrator (model TE49C, Thermo Instruments, Germany).

The detection limits for the NO and NO₂ measurements were 10 ppt and 80 ppt, respectively for an integration period of 2 s. The total uncertainties for the measurements of NO, NO₂, and O₃ were determined to be 10%, 10% and 5%, respectively, based on the reproducibility of in-field background measurements, calibrations, the uncertainties of the standards and the conversion efficiency of the photolytic converter.

2.2.3 Particle measurements

Aerosol number and size distribution was monitored using a scanning mobility particle sizer (TSI 3936), consisting of an electrostatic classifier with a ⁸⁰Kr source for particle equilibrium charging and a long differential mobility analyser (TSI 3081) with a condensation particle counter (TSI 3025A) for particle detection. The sheath flow inside the electrostatic classifier was set to 6 L min⁻¹ and the sample flow of the ultra fine

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[⏪](#)[⏩](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

particle counter was set to its maximum value of 1.5 L min^{-1} (high flow). This set-up allowed particle detection within the size range between 9.8 and $\approx 300 \text{ nm}$ in diameter. Each size distribution measurement took 135 s, i.e. 120 s for up scan and 15 s for down scan. Four consecutive measurements were averaged afterwards to obtain a smooth result with a time resolution of ten minutes. In the absence of information regarding composition, a particle density of 1.2 g cm^{-3} was assumed. Larger particles with a diameter between 360 nm and $19 \mu\text{m}$ were detected occasionally by an aerosol particle sizer (APS, TSI 3321) using a sampling flow rate of 1 L min^{-1} . Typical night-time particle concentrations as measured by the SMPS were 2000–5000 particle cm^{-3} with a bi-modal distribution (maxima at ≈ 35 and 120 nm) with most surface area contained in particles of radius ≈ 200 – 250 nm . The APS particle measurements only functioned sporadically and revealed low concentrations of coarse particles (10 – 20 particle cm^{-3} , with a mean diameter $\approx 600 \text{ nm}$). The APS measurements indicate that particles measured by the SMPS account for at least 65% of the total aerosol surface area and generally close to 80%.

2.2.4 Meteorological data

Atmospheric pressure and temperature, wind direction/speed and relative humidity were available as 10 min averaged data from the German weather service station (DWD), located $\approx 20 \text{ m}$ away from the container. Global radiation was available from the local environmental agency station (HLUG) as 30 min averaged data. These measurements were also located just a few metres away. The HLUG also provided O_3 measurements (30 min averages) using a UV-absorption instrument (API 400).

3 Observations and analysis

The measurements were carried out in May 2008, with almost complete coverage for NO and NO_2 from the 9th until the 20th. O_3 was measured over the same period, but

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[⏪](#)[⏩](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

with a break for instrument repair between the 14th and 15th. The $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ instrument was operated on one night prior to and 6 nights within this period. The complete trace gas and meteorological data set is displayed in Fig. 3. $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ measurements typically started just before local sunset and stopped after the signals had returned to baseline levels following sunrise. The early part of the campaign (up to 15th of May) was characterised by easterly winds (12–25 km/h) cloud-free skies and daytime maximum temperatures up to 18 °C. Temperatures at night generally sunk to $\approx 9\text{--}12$ °C with relative humidities of 30–45% and no precipitation. After the 15th of May, the wind direction was more variable with components from the Southwest bringing clouds and rain. NO_2 was present at concentrations of typically between 1 and 2 ppb at night, with excursions up to 4 ppb. Daytime mixing ratios were generally less than 10 ppb. O_3 was present at levels between 30 and 75 ppb, with maximum mixing ratios of $\approx 55\text{--}75$ ppb encountered in the late afternoon, which usually decreased steadily (by 10–20 ppb) during the night. The HLUG O_3 mixing ratios have been multiplied by a factor 0.82 to bring them into line with the MPI measurements, which are considered to be more reliable due to frequent calibration.

The high levels of night-time O_3 ensured that NO levels were low and usually close to the instrumental detection limit. The conditions were therefore conducive for NO_3 chemistry (sufficient NO_x and O_3 to drive formation and no NO) and both NO_3 and N_2O_5 were detected on all nights in which the instrument was operated, with maximum mixing ratios of ≈ 500 ppt and 60 ppt observed for N_2O_5 and NO_3 , respectively. A more detailed view is given in Fig. 4, which displays data from one night only (12–13th of May). On this night, NO_3 and N_2O_5 mixing ratios increased above the detection limit shortly after local sunset (at $\approx 21:00$) when both photolysis and NO levels were sufficiently reduced. The lifetime of NO in the presence of ≈ 60 ppb of O_3 is only about 1 min, so that the slow decrease in NO after 19:00 simply reflects the decrease in light intensity and the decreasing photolysis rate of NO_2 . Maximum values of ≈ 25 and 70 ppt were reached by NO_3 and N_2O_5 , respectively, both displaying great temporal variability, with fluctuations of 15–20 ppt (i.e. up to 50% signal modulation) in one minute. The

short term variability (minutes) of NO_3 and N_2O_5 is typical of a ground site (Brown et al., 2003b) and is driven by the sampling of air masses with different chemical histories and variable loss processes encountered by both species during transport to the site from the NO_x emission region(s).

5 On a slightly longer time scale (10–15 min) there is evidence for variability driven by fluctuations in the NO_2 mixing ratio (e.g. between ≈ 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. on the 13th) which, together with O_3 , defines the production rate of NO_3 and N_2O_5 . At sunrise ($\approx 05:30$ local time) both NO_3 and N_2O_5 are rapidly depleted as J_{NO_3} increases. The direct photolysis of NO_3 depletes N_2O_5 via the equilibrium (Reaction R2a, R2b) and
10 also releases NO to further remove NO_3 . NO is also generated in the photolysis of NO_2 at roughly the same time, and both NO_3 and N_2O_5 return to below detection limit within 1 h. The blue, vertical lines indicate at which times the Teflon filter was changed. Filter changing was conducted manually, and took ≈ 1 – 2 min. On this night, there was no evidence for loss of N_2O_5 or NO_3 on the filter, which would have been observable
15 as an increase in the NO_3 or N_2O_5 signal directly after filter changing.

3.1 Equilibrium between NO_2 , NO_3 and N_2O_5

According to Reaction (R2a) and (R2b), the relative concentrations of NO_3 and N_2O_5 should be controlled by the temperature dependent equilibrium constant (K_2) and the concentration of NO_2 . The time for a chemical system to relax to equilibrium is the sum
20 of the inverse forward and back rate constants, i.e., with NO_2 in large excess over NO_3 :

$$\tau_{eq} = \frac{1}{k_2[\text{NO}_2] + k_{-2}} \quad (10)$$

At pressures close to 1 bar, the rate constant for the forward reaction (k_2) is circa $10^{-12} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$, which when combined with typical NO_2 concentrations of 1.5 ppb ($\approx 4 \times 10^{10} \text{ molecule cm}^{-3}$), gives a first-order N_2O_5 formation rate constant of
25 0.04 s^{-1} . The thermal dissociation rate constant for N_2O_5 (k_{-2}) is 0.0064 s^{-1} at the average night-time temperature of $11 \pm 1.5^\circ \text{C}$. This results in a relaxation time to thermal

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



equilibrium of ≈ 100 s and implies that, in the absence of very local sources or sinks of NO_3 or N_2O_5 , these species should be in thermal equilibrium. Qualitative confirmation of this could be observed during measurements as even rapid changes in NO_3 and N_2O_5 (see discussion of variability above) closely tracked each other.

Whether equilibrium was acquired could be tested by making a point-by-point comparison of the measured NO_2 mixing ratio (interpolated onto the same time grid as the $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ data) with that calculated from the NO_3 and N_2O_5 observations, the temperature and the literature value for $K_2(T)$, which is recommended as $K_2 = 3.0 \times 10^{-27} \exp(10\,990/T)$ (Sander et al., 2006). The results are shown for the night 8th–9th of June in Fig. 5. As data filter, only NO_3 mixing ratios greater than 7 ppt were considered. The black data points in the upper panel of Fig. 5 are the calculated NO_2 mixing ratios ($\text{NO}_2\text{-calc}$). The grey data points were calculated using the upper and lower bounds of the propagated overall uncertainty in $\text{NO}_2\text{-calc}$, which arises from uncertainty in the NO_3 and N_2O_5 mixing ratios and the uncertainty in K_2 at 285 K (factor of 1.3). The red line is the CLD measurement of NO_2 . There is good agreement between the measured and calculated NO_2 mixing ratios on this night, with the major features in NO_2 around midnight, when variations between 0.5 and 3 ppb are apparent, nicely captured.

From expression (Eq. 2), a plot of the product of the NO_2 and NO_3 mixing ratios versus the N_2O_5 mixing ratio should be a straight line with the slope equal to K_2 . Such a plot is shown (Fig. 6) for the same dataset (night 8th–9th of June, 01:00–03:00, $\text{NO}_3 > 7$ ppt). The measured NO_2 mixing ratio was converted to a concentration so that the slope is an equilibrium constant in the usual units of inverse concentration ($\text{cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$). The temperature for each $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5/\text{NO}_2$ datapoint varied from ≈ 284 to 287 K during the night (see colour scale). Even though the difference between maximum and minimum temperature was only ≈ 3 K, it is apparent that the data points obtained at the coolest temperatures result in the largest slope (largest values of K_2), reflecting the strong temperature dependence in K_2 . The solid black lines represent the expected slopes at the extremes of the small temperature range covered, and should therefore encompass all the data. The dotted black lines use the values of K_2 at the

**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



outer bounds of the recommended uncertainty in this parameter. Essentially all of the data is encompassed by the dotted lines. The relevant temperature for calculating the equilibrium constant is not necessarily that at the inlet, but that experienced by the air mass during the last ≈ 100 s (approximate relaxation time to equilibrium for the conditions at the Kleiner Feldberg) prior to entering the inlet. As our temperatures are those measured by the German weather service station ≈ 20 m distant from our inlet this represents a source of uncertainty in our calculations. In this context, the night-time temperatures reported by the local environmental agency (HLUG) are $\approx 0.5^\circ\text{C}$ lower than reported by the DWD.

Nonetheless, by selecting data within small temperature windows we were able to derive values of $K_2 = 1.95 \times 10^{-10} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$ ($284 > T > 283$ K, average temperature 284.3 K) and $K_2 = 1.44 \times 10^{-10} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$ ($287 > T > 286$ average temperature 286.8 K) with a proportional fit to the data. The uncertainty associated with these values of K_2 derived from the field data are related to uncertainty in the NO_3 , N_2O_5 and NO_2 measurements, which propagate to a value of $\approx 23\%$. and, more significantly, are impacted by the unknown temperature history of the air mass directly before sampling (see above). The statistical errors associated with the fit were less than 1%.

The values of K_2 listed above are in very close agreement (within 2%) with recent measurements made in the field using simultaneous detection of NO_2 , NO_3 and N_2O_5 (Osthoff et al., 2007). They also agree (within 7%) with literature evaluations (Sander et al., 2003) of 1.89 and $1.35 \times 10^{-10} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1}$ at these respective temperatures. We note that a later evaluation by the same panel and using the same database (Sander et al., 2006) results in slightly worse, but, given the uncertainties involved, acceptable, agreement.

In Fig. 7, we present equilibrium constants calculated from measured mixing ratios of NO_2 , NO_3 and N_2O_5 for the each night of the campaign. To avoid systematic error at low mixing ratios, data were selected so that the NO_3 mixing ratio was always greater than 5 ppt.

**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

The temperature dependent values of K_2 thus calculated are compared with evaluations (JPL, 2003 and 2006) and recent field determinations (Osthoff et al., 2007). Despite significant scatter in the data it is apparent that, even when neglecting the 30% overall error in our measurements of NO_3 and N_2O_5 , the calculated values of K_2 are consistent with the recommended values, with slightly better agreement with the field data of (Osthoff et al., 2007).

To date, there have been only a few simultaneous measurements of NO_2 , NO_3 and N_2O_5 . Our data at the Kleiner Feldberg support observations (Brown et al., 2003b; Aldener et al., 2006; Osthoff et al., 2007) that thermal equilibrium exists at night between these three trace gases under most conditions, the possible exception being at low temperatures. Our data may also be considered to provide confirmation of the laboratory derived equilibrium constant K_2 , which has usually been obtained by measuring individual rate constants for the forward and backward processes (Reaction R2a and R2b) via pseudo first-order analysis rather than measurement of equilibrium concentrations, which is difficult to achieve in laboratory set-ups with reactive surfaces. The notable exception to this being the work of (Osthoff et al., 2007), in a well characterised, multi-channel cavity apparatus, whose laboratory derived equilibrium constants agree very well with ours (within 6%).

Conversely, assuming that the laboratory derived equilibrium constant is accurately known, we can conclude that our two-channel set-up for NO_3 and N_2O_5 (used for the first time in this campaign) and the associated data correction procedure can accurately measure ambient NO_3 and N_2O_5 mixing ratios. Poor agreement between calculated NO_2 concentrations (via NO_3 , N_2O_5 and K_2) and those measured directly were however occasionally observed. This occurred when NO_3 was reactively lost at an aged Teflon filter, resulting in falsification of the $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5/\text{NO}_3$ ratio and subsequent overestimation of the NO_2 concentration. Although small, post filter-change discontinuities in the NO_3 signals were usually concealed by their large natural variability, they were clearly evident in the calculated NO_2 mixing ratio as short term variability in NO_3 and N_2O_5 were closely matched and thus cancelled. Evidence for NO_3 filter loss was seen in the

dataset from the 9th–10th when filter changes were performed only every two hours. Similarly, on one night (13th–14th May) the high-volume flow inlet was replaced by a 3/8" PFA tube of ≈ 550 cm length. This resulted in a $\approx 30\%$ increase in the calculated, equilibrium amount of NO_2 over a period when NO_2 was actually stable, indicating that $\approx 30\%$ of the NO_3 had been lost in the inlet. Note that the residence time in the 550 cm length of tubing was ≈ 0.9 s. Loss of $\approx 30\%$ of the NO_3 is thus broadly consistent with the loss rate coefficient of 0.25 s^{-1} in PFA tubing reported in the experimental section.

3.2 NO_3 and N_2O_5 lifetimes and loss rates

The NO_3 turnover lifetime (see E3) at the Taunus Observatory was highly variable with maximum values of ≈ 1500 s. Generally, the NO_3 lifetime was longest after $\approx 03:00$ following a slow increase from dusk. This is most apparent (Fig. 8) on the nights of the 9th, 12th and 13th, in which the lifetime directly after dusk (at $\approx 20:00$) remained under ≈ 200 s for the next ≈ 3 h. Figure 8 also shows the instantaneous NO_3 production ($k_1[\text{NO}_2][\text{O}_3]$) rates during each night (red lines), which were typically between 100 and 300 ppt/h and fairly constant but with some excursions to larger values due to influxes of NO_2 .

Recall that the NO_3 lifetime is determined by both direct losses (e.g. gas-phase reaction with biogenic organics) and indirect loss processes involving N_2O_5 . The slow increase in NO_3 lifetime after dusk may thus have been due to either a decrease in gas-phase reactivity after dusk or due to a decrease in surface area or reactivity of aerosol. As the NO levels were reduced to below the detection limit in just a few minutes after dusk, the slow rate of build up of NO_3 and N_2O_5 was not due to a reduction in its concentration during this period. Alternatively, an increase in lifetime could also be related to a stabilisation of the lower atmosphere by adiabatic cooling, which would reduce turbulence and thus dry deposition rates. The observation on most nights of the campaign of a clear increase in wind speed following sunset, does however not support this possibility.

Before examining aspects of the NO_3 lifetime in more detail it is worthwhile es-

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

establishing whether a stationary state analysis was applicable for this dataset. Stationary state is formally achieved when the rate of change of NO_3 and N_2O_5 are zero, i.e. $d\text{NO}_3/dt = k_1[\text{NO}_2][\text{O}_3] + k_{-2}[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5] - k_2[\text{NO}_2][\text{O}_3] - f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3)[\text{NO}_3] = 0$ and $d\text{N}_2\text{O}_5/dt = k_2[\text{NO}_2][\text{NO}_3] - k_{-2}[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5] - (f_{\text{het}} + f_{\text{homo}})[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5] = 0$. The approximate time to acquire stationary state thus depends on the production and loss rates of both NO_3 and N_2O_5 .

Time dependent values of $d\text{NO}_3/dt$ and $d\text{N}_2\text{O}_5/dt$ were determined by numerical simulation in a manner similar to that described by Brown et al. (2003a). Input parameters to the simulations were the measured NO_2 and O_3 concentrations and temperature dependent kinetic expressions for reactions R1, R2 (together defining the production rates of NO_3 and N_2O_5) and variable first order loss terms for removal of NO_3 and N_2O_5 . The first-order loss terms for NO_3 and N_2O_5 ($f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3)$, f_{het} , f_{homo}) were adjusted until the simulated NO_3 and N_2O_5 mixing ratios were similar to those measured. In conjunction with NO_3 and N_2O_5 lifetimes of the order of minutes, the relatively warm night-time temperatures and low NO_2 concentrations at the Kleiner Feldberg in May, meant that stationary state was achieved within 1–2 h after dusk. Given the distance to local emission regions (see above) and wind speeds of between 10 and 20 km/h this suggest that a steady state analysis was appropriate.

The slow increase in NO_3 lifetime early in the night could have been caused by a reduction in the mixing ratio of biogenic trace gases in the hours following dusk. Using rate coefficients of 7.0×10^{-13} and $6.2 \times 10^{-12} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ for reaction of NO_3 with isoprene and α -pinene, respectively (IUPAC, 2009) and initially ignoring indirect loss processes, we calculate that a NO_3 lifetime of ≈ 100 s would be associated with isoprene levels of 0.60 ppb or α -pinene levels of ≈ 68 ppt. Emissions of biogenic organics are temperature and light-intensity dependent (Fehsenfeld et al., 1992) and the levels mentioned above would appear reasonable for moderate, spring-time emissions of biogenic organics in a forested area.

As we did not take measurements of organic compounds during the campaign we have no data which confirm efficient removal of NO_3 by e.g. isoprene or α -pinene.

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

There appear to be no published datasets on measurements of gas-phase biogenic trace gases at the Kleiner Feldberg, though some data taken with a proton transfer mass spectrometer over a 4 day period in June of 2005 confirmed the expected presence of isoprene and terpenes in this forested area (V. Sinha and J. Williams, personal communication, 2009). Furthermore, these datasets indicate that both isoprene and terpene concentrations decreased slowly after sundown, only returning to baseline levels in the early hours of the next morning. This is thus consistent with the observed slow increase in NO_3 lifetimes over the same period.

A further indication for the presence of biogenic volatile organic compounds (VOCs) is the observation of new particle formation at the Kleiner Feldberg; indeed April–May was the most intense nucleation period during 2008. New particle formation took place during the measurement period on the following days: 8th–13th and 15th of May (day-time events) as well as during the evening of the 7th and the 14th of May (night-time events). Temperatures were moderately high and the nocturnal boundary layer rather shallow to facilitate accumulation of emitted VOCs. From the 15th onward the relative humidity increased substantially causing drizzle or rain and prevented the occurrence of nucleation. During this time the vegetation experienced a reduced drought stress resulting (presumably) in lower emission rates. At the same time aerosol mass and surface area declined because of wash out from the atmosphere.

On the last two days of the campaign, the NO_3 lifetime did not show a slow increase to a max value, but had already reached ≈ 300 – 400 s by 23:00 h (Fig. 8). As shown in Fig. 3, the last two days were meteorologically distinct from the first 4 as the wind direction changed to southwest, bringing cloud cover, lower temperatures and later in the night, rain and fog. The longer lifetime of NO_3 early on these nights was presumably related to reduced biogenic emissions. The periodic strong reductions in lifetime on the night 15th–16th May was coincident with precipitation at the site, presumably resulting in loss of N_2O_5 on large droplets (not monitored as the aerosol cut off was $\approx 0.5\mu\text{m}$) or deposition to moist surfaces. Further, indirect processes leading to a reduction in the NO_3 lifetime are the loss of N_2O_5 on aerosol surface and with H_2O vapour. By inverting

expression Eq. 3 we obtain:

$$f_{ss}(\text{NO}_3) \approx f_{\text{dir}} + K_{\text{eq}}[\text{NO}_2](f_{\text{het}} + f_{\text{homo}}) \quad (11)$$

The relative importance of direct (gas-phase) and indirect (gas-phase and heterogeneous) losses of NO_3 are displayed for the nights of 13th and 16th May in Fig. 9. The heterogeneous loss rate of N_2O_5 (f_{het}) was calculated from the measured aerosol surface area using expression E4 and scaled by $K_2[\text{NO}_2]$ and is presented in Fig. 9 (red line). The value used for the uptake coefficient, γ , was 0.01, which is within the very large range of values derived from field observations. For example, low values of $0.5\text{--}6 \times 10^{-3}$ have been reported by (Brown et al., 2009) in aircraft measurements over Texas, which are consistent with $\approx 3 \times 10^{-3}$ reported by (Allan et al., 1999; Ambrose et al., 2007) in marine air masses but much lower than values of 0.02–0.03 (Aldener et al., 2006; Ambrose et al., 2007) also obtained in marine environments. The uptake coefficient used is also smaller by a factor ≈ 3 than measured for loss of N_2O_5 to dilute H_2SO_4 aerosol in the laboratory (Hallquist et al., 2000), though further laboratory studies have shown that the presence of organics can reduce this number significantly (Folkers et al., 2003). Although no aerosol composition data is available, some indication for the type of aerosol encountered at the Taunus Observatory was obtained by observing loss of NO_3 on an aged Teflon filter. In this case, an increase in NO_3 mixing ratio was seen directly after a filter change but was not accompanied by an increase in N_2O_5 . This implies that the aerosol gathered on the filter contained a large organic fraction providing a reactive surface for NO_3 but one that did not support efficient hydrolysis of N_2O_5 . On the 13th of May, it is clear from Fig. 9 that heterogeneous loss of N_2O_5 would have contributed only insignificantly to NO_3 removal even if $\gamma = 0.03$ had been used in the calculation. A similar picture emerges for the other nights before the 15th when the wind direction was predominantly Easterly and daytime temperatures were highest. In this period, the calculated maximum NO_3 loss rates due to heterogeneous loss of N_2O_5 were between 1.5 and $6 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at the end of the night when the NO_3 lifetime was longest. Even then, the heterogeneous loss of N_2O_5 contributed

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



between only 7 and 28%. When averaged over the whole night, this figure becomes insignificantly small.

The frequency of NO_3 loss from stationary state caused by the homogeneous reaction of N_2O_5 with water vapour ($f_{\text{homo}}K_2[\text{NO}_2]$) was initially calculated using the rate coefficients (k_{7a} and k_{7b}) preferred by IUPAC (2009), with H_2O vapour concentrations calculated from the RH and temperature/pressure measurements of the DWD. The loss of NO_3 via this indirect route contributes to its overall loss only later in the night when the overall reactivity of the air has decreased.

Note that the indirect losses of NO_3 via homogeneous and heterogeneous N_2O_5 reactions are constrained by measurements of H_2O vapour and aerosol surface area which do not show a significant trend during the night, thus ruling them out as source of the reduction in reactivity (factor of 10) observed after dusk. In order to reproduce the time dependence of the NO_3 turnover lifetime on the night 12th–13th May, $f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3)$ was calculated for an initial total reactivity (at dusk) equal to about 200 ppt α -pinene equivalents, which was reduced during the night to ≈ 10 ppt (at 03:00) in a quasi-exponential manner, thus increasing the lifetime from ≈ 50 s at 21:00 on the 13th of May to ≈ 1000 s at 03:00 the next morning (grey line, Fig. 9).

For the night 16–17th May a slightly different picture emerges. On this night the NO_3 turn-over lifetime was longer, a result of a decrease in the concentration of VOC and aerosol surface area following a rainy period. Under these conditions and with an increase in RH to close to 100% the reaction of N_2O_5 with H_2O gains importance and, at 02:00 on the 17th would account for the entire reactivity of the $\text{NO}_3 / \text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ system, i.e. $f_{\text{homo}}K_2[\text{NO}_2] \approx (\tau_{\text{SS}}(\text{NO}_3))^{-1}$ if the IUPAC values were used.

The NO_3 losses can be separated into direct and indirect routes by using the fact that the NO_3 turnover lifetime depends non-linearly on the NO_2 concentration if N_2O_5 losses are significant. This is apparent from expression Eq. 3, which has been utilised previously to extract e.g. the N_2O_5 hydrolysis contribution to NO_3 loss (Heintz et al., 1996; Geyer et al., 2001; Aldener et al., 2006; Brown et al., 2006, 2009). Plotting the inverse of the NO_3 life-time versus $K_2[\text{NO}_2]$ (with $[\text{NO}_2]$ in units of molecule cm^{-3}) should give

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



a straight line with slope equal to the N_2O_5 loss rate constant, $f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3)$ and intercept equal to the NO_3 loss rate constant $f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3)$. This analysis requires selection of data in which $f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3)$ and $f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3)$ are relatively constant, but for which there is sufficient variation in NO_2 to separate the direct and indirect NO_3 loss terms. On most nights this analysis resulted in strongly curved plots due to the slowly changing lifetime of NO_3 due to reaction with biogenic organics (see above). By selection of a small portion of the data (01:00 to 03:00) on the night of the 16th–17th of May in which significant variation on NO_2 was observed, a linear relationship was obtained (Fig. 10) with a slope ($f_{\text{indir}}(\text{NO}_3)$) very close to zero ($5 \pm 5 \times 10^{-6} \text{ s}^{-1}$) and intercept of $f_{\text{dir}}(\text{NO}_3) = 1.6 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$ (red line). Setting N_2O_5 loss to aerosol to zero ($f_{\text{het}} = 0$), we take the literature data for k_{7a} and k_{7b} and the water vapour concentration of $2.8 \times 10^{17} \text{ molecule cm}^{-3}$ to calculate a value of $f_{\text{homo}} = 2 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$ for this period. As shown in Fig. 10 (black line), this value clearly overestimates the true contribution of indirect losses by at least a factor of 3–4. By separating the contributions to f_{homo} from Reaction (R7a) and (R7b) we can show that the second term (quadratic in $[\text{H}_2\text{O}]$) dominated the homogeneous gas-phase loss of N_2O_5 during the whole campaign with the ratio $k_{7b}[\text{H}_2\text{O}]^2/k_{7a}[\text{H}_2\text{O}]$ equal to unity only at a low RH of $\approx 30\%$, but increasing to ≈ 2.5 at RH = 100%.

This analysis has thus far ignored loss of N_2O_5 (or NO_3) by dry deposition. Aldener et al. (2006) used a N_2O_5 deposition velocity (V_{dep}) of 1 cm s^{-1} to calculate the contribution of dry deposition to the total loss of N_2O_5 . This value was based on estimates for HNO_3 and is not necessarily accurate. Adopting the same value and assuming a boundary layer height of 100 m would result in a frequency for dry deposition of N_2O_5 of $1 \times 10^{-4} \text{ s}^{-1}$, which when multiplied by $k_2[\text{NO}_2]$ (usually close to 10) would result in a significant fraction of NO_3 loss throughout the campaign. There are however many uncertainties associated with this calculation as neither the true value of V_{dep} nor the boundary layer height are known. In addition this calculation ignores the strong vertical stratification often seen in the nocturnal boundary layer (Brown et al., 2007). The true factor by which k_7 is overestimated is thus most probably larger than 3–4 as N_2O_5 loss by dry deposition would serve to increase it further. One caveat to this approach is

**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



however the assumption that there is no correlation between NO_2 mixing ratios and the major sink process(es) for NO_3 and N_2O_5 , which is difficult to prove. The result is however consistent with the conclusions of Brown et al. (2006, 2009), who used airborne measurements of NO_3 and N_2O_5 to indicate that k_7 may be up to a factor 10 smaller than derived from laboratory data.

The blue line in Fig. 10 is the slope expected for equivalent direct and indirect losses of NO_3 and indicates that, for this limited dataset, N_2O_5 destruction plays only a minor role in controlling the NO_3 lifetime. This conclusion is broadly consistent with other measurements at continental, forested sites in Germany, where NO_3 has been found to be removed mainly by reaction with monoterpenes emitted by coniferous trees (Geyer and Platt, 2002).

3.3 NO_x partitioning and daytime versus night-time loss of NO_x

The conversion of NO_2 to NO_3 and N_2O_5 followed by reactive losses either with gas-phase species or with aerosols and other surfaces represents a conversion of gas-phase NO_x traces gases to NO_y in both gas and particle phases. Assuming that NO is absent, the fraction of NO_x , $F(\text{NO}_x)$, which is present in reactive form at night can be simply expressed as:

$$F(\text{NO}_x) = \frac{[\text{NO}_3] + 2[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5]}{[\text{NO}_3] + 2[\text{N}_2\text{O}_5] + [\text{NO}_2]} \quad (12)$$

The partitioning of NO_x to NO_3 and N_2O_5 is favoured by large O_3 concentrations (which increase to NO_2 oxidation rate) and low losses of NO_3 and N_2O_5 . Figure 11 displays the variation of $F(\text{NO}_x)$ on the nights of 13th and 15th May. The amount of NO_x partitioned as NO_3 and N_2O_5 is initially negligible as the NO_3 and N_2O_5 lifetimes are short. Only later do NO_3 and N_2O_5 reach appreciable concentrations, with $F(\text{NO}_x)$ reaching a maximum value of $\approx 20\%$ on the 13th and $\approx 15\%$ on the 15th May. The slow build up to larger values of $F(\text{NO}_x)$ is due to the small rate coefficient for $\text{NO}_2 + \text{O}_3$

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



($\approx 2 \times 10^{-17} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ at 295 K) resulting in NO_2 half lives in the order of hours at 70 ppb O_3 and also due to a slow decline in reactivity of NO_3 in the early part of the night. NO_3 and N_2O_5 remaining at the end of the night are rapidly converted photolytically/thermally back to NO_2 at dawn, hence the rapid reduction in $F(\text{NO}_x)$ at circa 06:00 on the 14th. On this particular night the nocturnal mean value of $F(\text{NO}_x)$ was $\approx 9\%$. The same value was obtained as average over all nights of the campaign on which there was no precipitation. The average value of $F(\text{NO}_x)$ was only $\approx 3\%$ on the night 15th–16th, presumably due to efficient loss of N_2O_5 on aqueous surfaces. As the lifetimes of NO_3 and N_2O_5 were much shorter than the duration of the night, and only a small fraction of NO_2 that has been converted to NO_3 and N_2O_5 is converted back to NO_2 at dawn, we can assume that all NO_2 which was oxidised by O_3 at night represents an irreversible loss of NO_x to either organic or inorganic nitrates. In this case, the loss rate of NO_x (L_{NO_x}) is given by:

$$L_{\text{NO}_x} \approx n \cdot k_1 [\text{NO}_2] [\text{O}_3] \quad (13)$$

where the factor n is 1 if NO_3 is lost only directly (e.g. by reaction with VOC) and is 2 if NO_3 is lost indirectly via N_2O_5 formation and reaction as two NO_2 are required to make each N_2O_5 molecule. For the present campaign we have shown that NO_3 is lost predominantly by direct routes, so that n should be close to 1. Figure 12 shows the N_2O_5 and NO_2 mixing ratios over a two night period, for which average night-time values were 1.65 ppb NO_2 with O_3 close to 60 ppb. From Eq. (13), nocturnal loss of NO_x proceeded at a rate of ≈ 250 ppt/h over these two nights. The daytime loss of NO_x is dominated by reaction of NO_2 with the OH radical



with the rate of loss of NO_2 via this route approximately given by $k_8 [\text{OH}] [\text{NO}_2]$, which is also the production rate of HNO_3 . There appears to be only one set of measurements HNO_3 mixing ratios at the Tausus Observatory, in which values of ≈ 0.1 – 1 ppb were reported in November of 1990 (Fuzzi et al., 1994).

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Using a value of $1.0 \times 10^{-11} \text{ cm}^3 \text{ molecule}^{-1} \text{ s}^{-1}$ for k_8 the average daytime NO_2 concentration of ≈ 3 ppb for the 9th of May and assuming a daytime average OH concentration of $4 \times 10^6 \text{ molecule cm}^{-3}$, we calculate a loss rate of ≈ 400 ppt/hour. As no measurements of OH were made during the campaign, the value of $4 \times 10^6 \text{ molecule cm}^{-3}$ for the daytime average OH concentration was calculated using the parameterisation of (Ehhalt and Rohrer, 2000) with daily averaged values of $J_{\text{O}_1\text{D}}$ ($\approx 3 \times 10^{-5} \text{ s}^{-1}$) and J_{NO_2} ($\approx 9 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$) measured at the Feldberg at a similar time of year (June 1999) and under similar insolation (Handisides, 2001). The present measurements of relatively large O_3 mixing ratios and previous measurements of peroxy radical mixing ratios of several 10 s of pptv in June in previous years at the site (Handisides, 2001) indicate an active photochemistry and imply that this OH concentration is reasonable. It is also consistent with daytime measurements of OH at another forested mountain site under very similar levels of insolation and with comparable levels of O_3 (Handisides et al., 2003).

The simple calculations above show that day- and night-time losses of NO_x are similar. However, as the ratio of night-time to day-time losses depends on insolation at the site, night-time losses will be favoured still more in the colder months as O_3 photolysis and OH production rate drop significantly. The fact that the night-time boundary layer is shallower than in the daytime will however have the converse effect and favour daytime oxidation. We can conclude that night-time loss of NO_x due to NO_3 (and N_2O_5) formation is at least comparable to daytime loss driven by OH at the Taunus Observatory, confirming speculation that nitrate driven acidity in cloud water at the Kleiner Feldberg could be caused either by HNO_3 or N_2O_5 uptake (Fuzzi et al., 1994).

Although no VOCs were measured during the campaign, the persistently high night-time mixing ratios of NO_3 indicate an important role for the oxidation of VOCs at the site. An average daytime OH concentrations of $\approx 4 \times 10^6 \text{ molecule cm}^{-3}$ and an average night-time mixing ratio of 10 pptv for NO_3 result in a concentration ratio that favours NO_3 by a factor of ≈ 60 . The ratios of rate coefficients ($k_{\text{OH}}/k_{\text{NO}_3}$) for reaction of OH and NO_3 with isoprene and several monoterpenes favour OH and may be calculated

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

from reviewed kinetic data (Atkinson and Arey, 2003) as: isoprene (147), α -pinene (8.5), limonene (13.4), sabinene (11.7). These numbers indicate that whereas NO_3 will contribute significantly to isoprene removal, it would dominate for the mono-terpenes listed above. The simple calculation does not take the diurnal changes in VOC emission rates mixing ratios into account and a more detailed understanding of the relative importance of daytime versus night-time removal of boundary layer NO_x and the fate of reactive VOCs at this site would require diel measurements of both the major oxidants (OH and NO_3) and the VOCs.

4 Conclusions

A complete set of nocturnal nitrogen oxides, O_3 and aerosol surface area was measured for the first time at the Taunus Observatory. The measurements provided both a test of the new $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ instrument and delivered valuable information concerning night-time oxidation at the site. Both NO_3 and N_2O_5 were present above the detection limits on all nights and the relative concentrations were in accord with the temperature, NO_2 and the equilibrium constant for N_2O_5 formation and thermal dissociation. The major sink of NO_x was found to be direct loss of NO_3 by reaction with biogenic hydrocarbons and nocturnal chemistry at this site was shown to contribute significantly both to the conversion of NO_x to NO_y and likely to the oxidation of biogenic VOCs. A steady state analysis was used to estimate direct and indirect losses of NO_3 and N_2O_5 and revealed shortcomings in the laboratory derived kinetics of the reaction of N_2O_5 with water-vapour.

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Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

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Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



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Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



**Nocturnal nitrogen
oxides at a rural
mountain-site**

J. N. Crowley et al.

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion

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Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

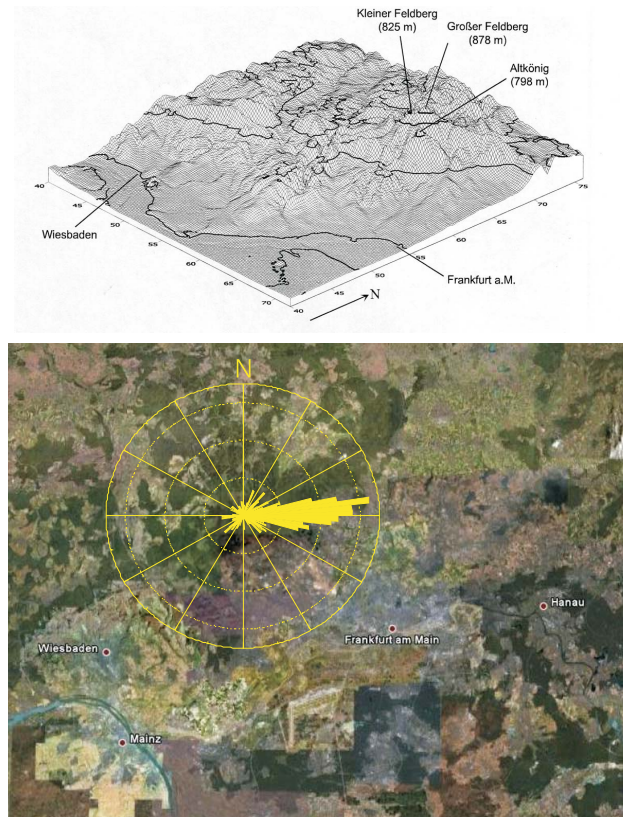


Fig. 1. Upper: Topographic map indicating the location of the Taunus Observatory at the summit of the Kleiner Feldberg (from PhD thesis of G. M. Handisides). Lower: Relation of site to local cities indicating predominant wind directions during the campaign.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

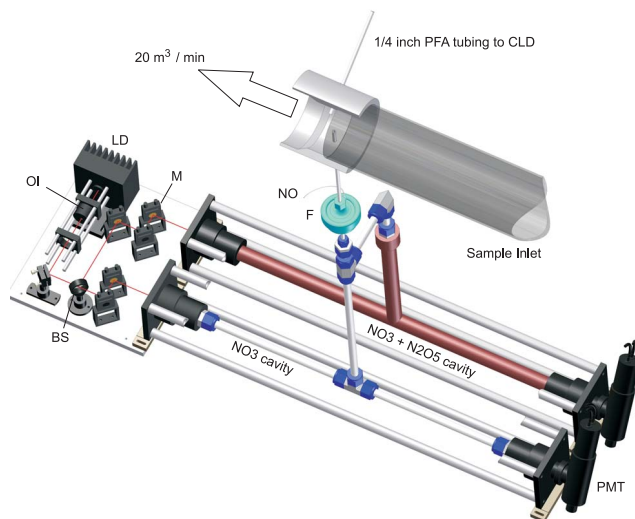


Fig. 2. Two-channel $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ Instrument. The sample inlet was a 1.4 m long Teflon coated glass tube (ID 104 mm). Gas was sampled from the centre of the tube to the $\text{NO}_3/\text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ and $\text{NO}/\text{NO}_2/\text{O}_3$ instruments. The NO_3 cavity was made of PFA tubing and fittings (thermal insulation not shown), the $\text{N}_2\text{O}_5 + \text{NO}_3$ cavity was made of Teflon (FEP) coated glass (heating elements and insulation not shown). NO = NO addition point for NO_3 titration. F = PFA filter folder with $2\ \mu\text{m}$ PTFE filter. OI = optical isolator. BS = beam splitter (70% for NO_3 cavity, 30% for $\text{NO}_3 + \text{N}_2\text{O}_5$ channel). PMT = housing with photomultiplier and interference filter. M = Aluminium coated mirror. LD = Laser diode in temperature controlled housing. CLD = chemiluminescence instrument for NO , NO_2 and O_3 .

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

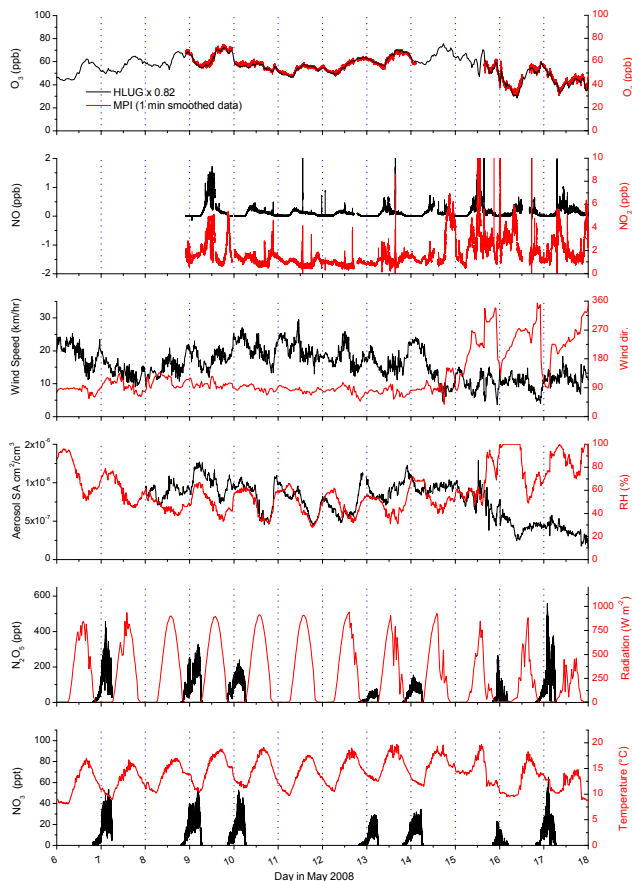


Fig. 3. Trace gas and meteorological overview. Temperature, wind speed and relative humidity were taken measured by the German weather service. Global radiation and wind direction were measured by the Hessen environmental agency (HLUG) who also monitored O_3 . The HLUG O_3 values have been scaled by a factor 0.82 to bring them into line with the MPI measurements.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

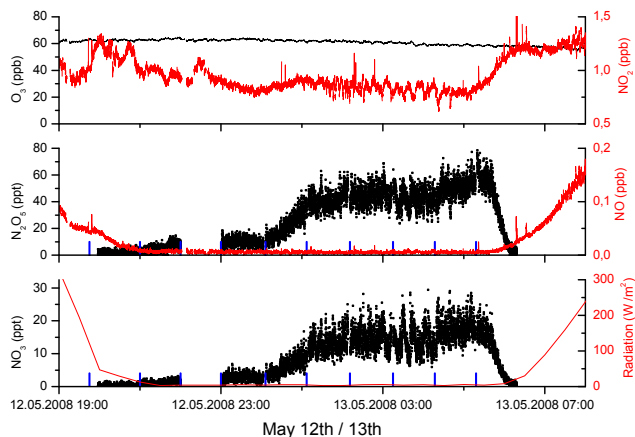


Fig. 4. Data from 12th–13th as exemplary night-time dataset. Great variability in the NO_3 and N_2O_5 mixing ratios is apparent. The approximate time of local sunrise and sunset may be obtained from the half-hourly measurements of global radiation at the site.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

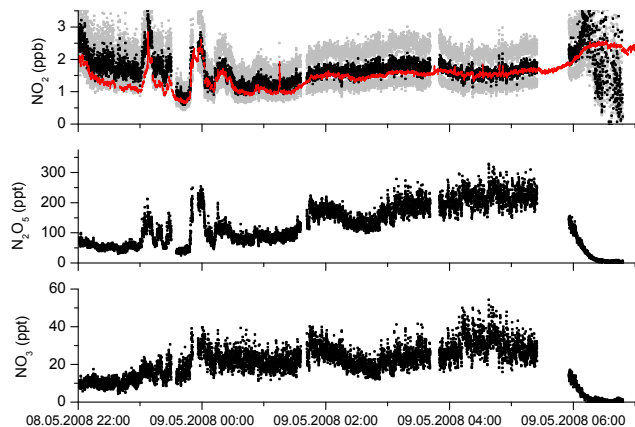


Fig. 5. Measured mixing ratios of NO_2 , (upper panel, red line) NO_3 (lower panel) and N_2O_5 (centre). The calculated NO_2 mixing ratios (black line in upper panel with grey error bounds) used evaluated, temperature dependent values of K_2 (Sander et al., 2003).

Title Page

Abstract

Introduction

Conclusions

References

Tables

Figures

◀

▶

◀

▶

Back

Close

Full Screen / Esc

Printer-friendly Version

Interactive Discussion



Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

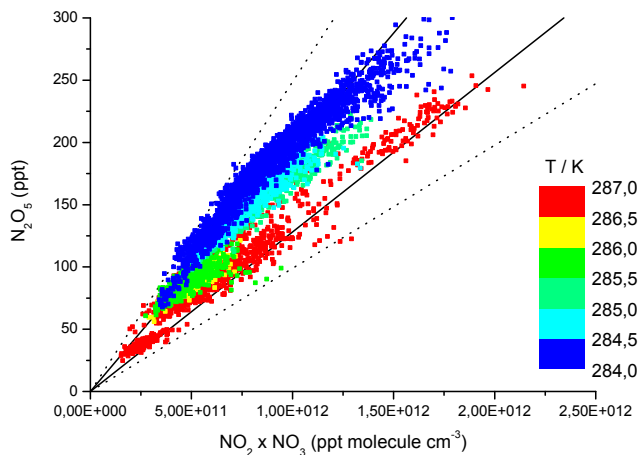


Fig. 6. Determination of the equilibrium constant, K_2 . The NO_2 , N_2O_5 and NO_3 data used were gathered over a ≈ 3 h period (01:00 to 03:00) on the 9th of May when the NO_3 level was above 7 ppt.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

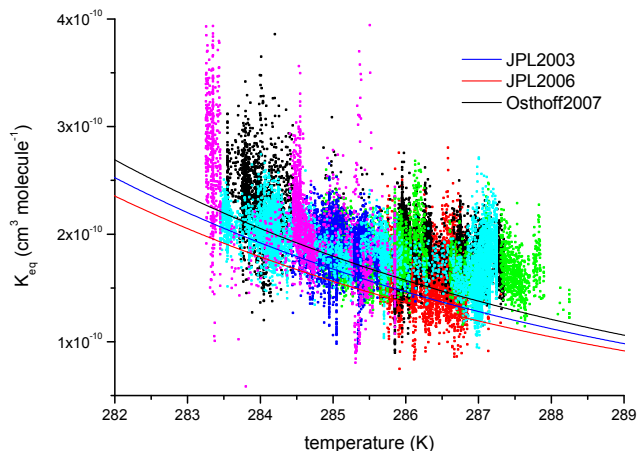


Fig. 7. Determination of the equilibrium constant, K_2 throughout the campaign plotted versus temperature. Data were selected so that NO_3 was always greater than 5 ppt. The red and blue solid lines are recommended values for K_2 from evaluations of laboratory data. The black line is taken from the analysis of (Osthoff et al., 2007), based on their field measurements. Different colours are data from different days. JPL2003 = (Sander et al., 2003), JPL2006 = (Sander et al., 2006), Osthoff2007 = (Osthoff et al., 2007).

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

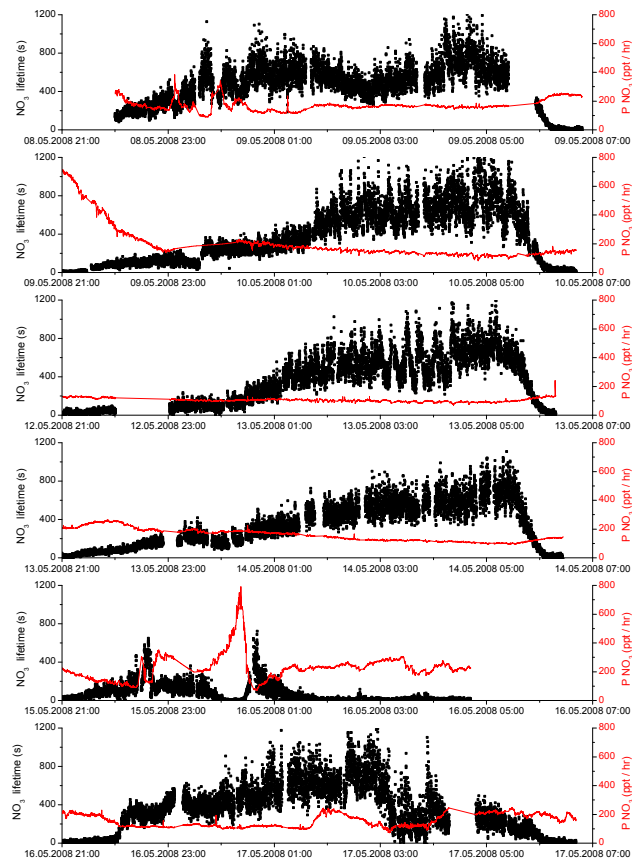


Fig. 8. NO_3 turn-over lifetimes and production rates (red lines) for NO_3 on each night of the campaign.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

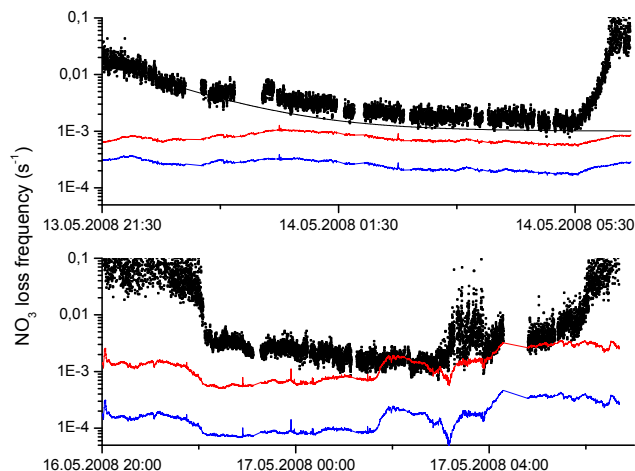


Fig. 9. Measured NO_3 turnover loss frequencies (black datapoints) and calculated loss frequencies due to direct and indirect loss processes on two different nights. Grey line (upper panel only): Hypothetical (direct) loss of NO_3 due to reaction with VOC. Blue line: Indirect loss due to N_2O_5 uptake to aerosol ($f_{\text{het}}K_2[\text{NO}_2]$). Red line: Indirect loss due to reaction of N_2O_5 with water vapour ($f_{\text{homo}}K_2[\text{NO}_2]$).

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

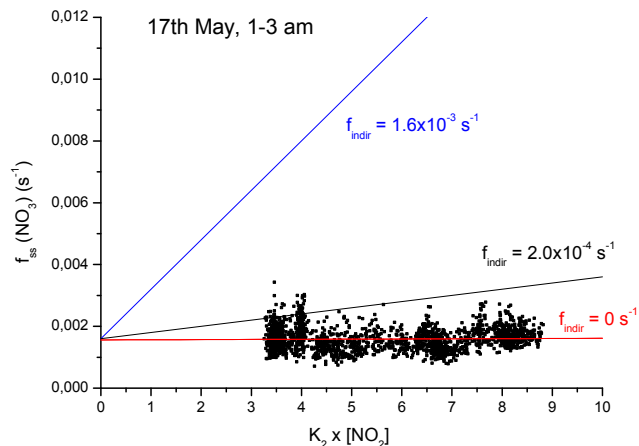


Fig. 10. Separation of direct and indirect loss of NO_3 on the night 16th–17th of May. The red solid line is the fitted value indicating close to zero indirect loss of NO_3 . The black line was obtained by setting heterogeneous N_2O_5 loss to zero and accounting only for reaction with water vapour. The blue line represents equivalency of the direct and indirect losses of NO_3 (intercept = slope = $1.6 \times 10^{-3} \text{ s}^{-1}$).

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

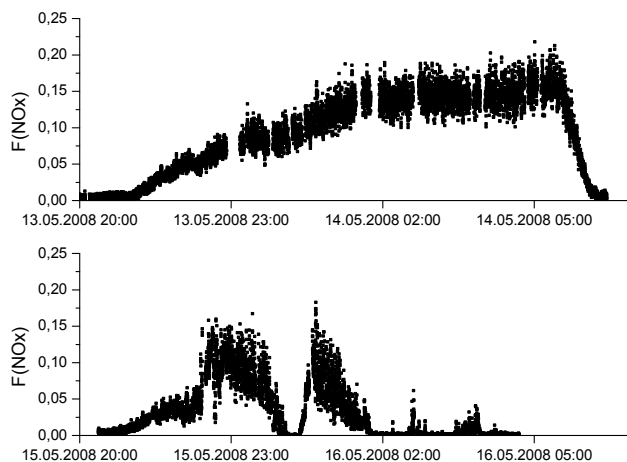


Fig. 11. Fraction of night-time NO_x as NO_3 and N_2O_5 on two meteorologically distinct campaign nights. 13th–14th: warm preceding day and wind from the east. 15th–16th: Wind from the southeast accompanied by rain.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)

Nocturnal nitrogen oxides at a rural mountain-site

J. N. Crowley et al.

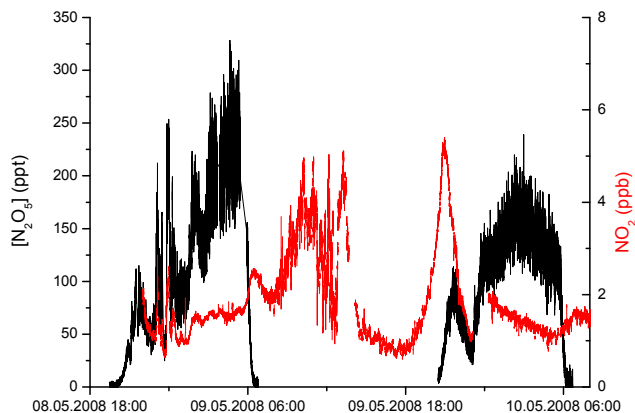


Fig. 12. Daytime versus night-time loss of NO_x . Night-time N_2O_5 (black lines) and day/night-time NO_2 (red line) on the 8th–10th of May.

[Title Page](#)[Abstract](#)[Introduction](#)[Conclusions](#)[References](#)[Tables](#)[Figures](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[◀](#)[▶](#)[Back](#)[Close](#)[Full Screen / Esc](#)[Printer-friendly Version](#)[Interactive Discussion](#)