

# WorldView-3 satellite maps methane plumes at very high spatial resolution



Elena Sánchez-García<sup>1</sup>, Javier Gorroño<sup>1</sup>, Itziar Irakulis-Loitxate<sup>1</sup>, Daniel Varon<sup>2</sup>, Luis Guanter<sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup>Universitat Politècnica de València, <sup>2</sup>Harvard University







## Table of contents



### Introduction

- Background
- Objectives





### Materials & methods

- Methane retrieval
- Plume detection
- Estimating flux rates
- End-to-end simulations



### Results

- Simulated plumes
- Real plumes



### Summary

- Research answers
- Further research

Sánchez-García et al. (in review at AMT) https://doi.org/10.5194/amt-2021-238

## Table of contents



#### Introduction

- Background
- Objectives





- Methane retrieval
- Plume detection
- Estimating flux rates
- End-to-end simulations



### Results

- Simulated plumes
- Real plumes



- Research answers
- Further research

INTRODUCTION

## Methane

Substantial advances towards the detection and quantification of methane point emissions from space.

#### ✓ Up to date:

Can focus on the detection

of single emitters

**GHGSat**: optimized for the monitoring of methane point emissions  $\rightarrow$  Varon et al. (2019, 2020).

Hyperspectral imagers covering 400-2500 nm (ZY1 AHSI, GF5 AHSI, & PRISMA) → Irakulis-Loitxate et al. (2021a; 2021b) and Guanter et al. (2021).

**Multispectral missions** (S2, Landsat-7 & L8) originally developed for land applications spatial and temporal resolution (20-30 m, & 5-15 days), can help to overcome this limitation with frequent and spatially-continuous observations (Varon et al., 2021), albeit with a substantially lower sensitivity to methane.

- High sensitivity.

- Spatial sampling (25-50 m).

- ... but acquisitions sparse in time and space.



## Methane

Substantial advances towards the detection and quantification of methane point emissions from space.

#### ✓ Up to date:

**GHGSat**: optimized for the monitoring of methane point emissions  $\rightarrow$  Varon et al. (2019, 2020).

Hyperspectral imagers covering 400-2500 nm (ZY1 AHSI, GF5 AHSI, & PRISMA) → Irakulis-Loitxate et al. (2021a; 2021b) and Guanter et al. (2021).

**Multispectral missions** (S2, Landsat-7 & L8) originally developed for land applications spatial and temporal resolution (20-30 m, & 5-15 days), can help to overcome this limitation with frequent and spatially-continuous observations (Varon et al., 2021), albeit with a substantially lower sensitivity to methane.

- High sensitivity.

- Spatial sampling (25-50 m).

- ... but acquisitions sparse in time and space.

Identify **regions** of strong concentrations

INTRODUCTION

Can focus on the detection

of single emitters







### Methane

... new breakthrough of emission detection thresholds using VHR SWIR measurements from WorldView-3 satellite. Until now, only possible for airborne instruments, like AVIRIS & AVIRIS-NG spectrometers operated by NASA JPL.

---- Accurate identification of the particular infrastructure elements responsible for the emissions and more precise quantification of emission rates (spatial resolution of 3.7 m).





WV-3: High spatial resolution, high SNR and rich spectral coverage of the strong methane absorption feature ~2300 nm. Furthermore, **pointing capabilities** able to deliver a daily revisit or better over critical infrastructure.

Unique features to fill an important observational gap in international satellite methane monitoring capabilities.

INTRODUCTION

## Aims of the work

 $\sqrt{}$  We report on the great **potential of** the WorldView-3 (**WV-3**) satellite mission for methane mapping

#### Working objectives

- Propose a retrieval methodology based on the calculation of methane concentration enhancements from pixel-wise estimates of methane transmittance at WV-3 SWIR band 7 (2235-2285 nm), which is positioned at a highly-sensitive methane absorption region.
- Carry out a sensitivity analysis based on end-to-end simulations to understand retrieval errors and detection limits.
- Show through the simulated results the good performance of WV-3 for methane mapping, especially over bright and homogeneous areas.
- Positive plume detections obtained from the study sites: O&G extraction fields in Algeria and Turkmenistan, and the Shanxi coal mining region in China.



## Table of contents



#### Introduction

- Background
- Objectives





### Materials & methods

- Methane retrieval
- Plume detection
- Estimating flux rates
- End-to-end simulations



### Results

- Simulated plumes
- Real plumes

### Summary

- Research answers
- Further research

### Methane retrieval

V Estimate methane concentration enhancement:

- → for *hyperspectral*, by fitting highly-resolved obsv in the SWIR spectral region to a modelled radiance spectrum.
- → for *multispectral*, from **increases in** <u>methane transmittance</u> within the image.

#### **1. Normalize** the radiance affected by methane absorption by a "methane-free" reference band.

In the absence of multi-temporal data, this reference can be built from one or several neighboring channels mostly "methane-free".



### Methane retrieval

#### √ Estimate methane concentration enhancement:

- → for *hyperspectral*, by fitting highly-resolved obsv in the SWIR spectral region to a modelled radiance spectrum.
- → for *multispectral*, from **increases in** <u>methane transmittance</u> within the image.

#### **1. Normalize** the radiance affected by methane absorption by a "methane-free" reference band.

In the absence of multi-temporal data, this reference can be built from one or several neighboring channels mostly "methane-free".



### Methane retrieval

 $\sqrt{}$  Estimate methane concentration enhancement:

- → for hyperspectral, by fitting highly-resolved obsv in the SWIR spectral region to a modelled radiance spectrum.
- → for *multispectral*, from **increases in <u>methane transmittance</u>** within the image.
- **1. Normalize** the radiance affected by methane absorption by a "methane-free" reference band.
- **2.** Methane plume quantification by isolating  $\Delta XCH_4$  in:  $T_{plume}(\lambda) \sim \frac{L}{L_{ref}} = e^{-AMF \cdot \sigma_{CH_4} \cdot \Delta XCH_4}$

 $\Delta XCH_4 = \frac{-\log(\mathbf{L}/\mathbf{L_{ref}})}{\mathrm{AMF} \cdot \sigma_{CH_4}}$ 

- Then,  $\Delta XCH_4$  becomes a function of the AMF and the radiance ratio  $L/L_{ref}$  of SWIR B7 (2235-2285 nm).
- A Look-Up Table is generated so that the relationship between these two quantities and the  $\Delta XCH_4$  is established  $\longrightarrow$



LUT relationship between  $T_{plume}$ &  $\Delta XCH_4$  for the methane absorption bands (~2300 nm) of S2A, WV-3 B7 and WV-3 B8.

Curves given for 3 different AMF values representing angular conditions for both SZA and VZA: 0,0; 60,0 and 60,60 (labels 2 to 4).



## Detection of methane plumes

1°. Visual inspection of the retrieved  $\Delta XCH_4$  maps  $\rightarrow$  distinguish plume characteristic shape from background.







## Detection of methane plumes

**1º. Visual inspection of the retrieved**  $\Delta$ **XCH4 maps**  $\rightarrow$  distinguish plume characteristic shape from background.

**2º. Consistency with** GEOS-FP **wind speed & direction data**  $\rightarrow$  gas plume origin at high  $\Delta$ XCH<sub>4</sub> values & decrease progressively downwind.

**3º.** Collocate with high spatial resolution true color images (Google Earth & B1 WV-3) to **identify the underlying infrastructure** responsible for the emission.







## Detection of methane plumes

4<sup>o</sup>. Zooms in on each real plume to isolate it from the background & compute the total area covered by the emission → semi-automatic process:

- Mask at the 95% confidence level and a square dilation mask of several pixels.
- Finally, the **detected outliers** in the vicinity of the plumes are removed through feature recognition.



## Estimating emission flux rates

V Once the plumes are correctly defined, the associated flux rate Q is obtained by applying the so-called IME model ~ measure of the total excess mass of observed methane.

#### 1º. $\Delta$ XCH<sub>4</sub> values (ppm) $\rightarrow$ (Kg)

**2º. Compute IME in kg for each plume** as the total sum of the  $\Delta$ XCH4 pixels enclosed by the plume mask.

3º. Relate the Q emission flux rate with the calculated IME & obtain its associated uncertainty based on a Monte Carlo propagation:  $\begin{bmatrix} \text{if } L < 200 \text{ m} \rightarrow U_{eff} \left(\frac{m}{s}\right) = 0.12 \cdot U_{10} + 0.38\\ \text{if } L > 200 \text{ m} \rightarrow U_{eff} \left(\frac{m}{s}\right) = 0.34 \cdot U_{10} + 0.44 \end{bmatrix}$ 

$$\boldsymbol{Q}\left(\frac{kg}{h}\right) = \frac{\boldsymbol{U}_{eff}\left(\frac{m}{s}\right) \cdot \text{IME}\left(kg\right) \cdot 3600}{L\left(m\right)}$$

 $U_{eff}$  = effective wind speed derived from WRF-LES according to Varon et al. (2018) methodology & tuned at ~4 m WV-3 resolution

and 1-sigma white noise (120 to 370 ppb depending on the site).





## Sensitivity analysis based on end-to-end simulations

 $\sqrt{\text{Simulation generated by convolving WV-3 TOA radiance}}$  scenes with synthetic methane plumes generated with the WRF-LES. Effects such as instrument noise or angular pixel dependencies from the real scenes are also in the resulting simulations.

End-to-end simulations for three different sites whose spectral response behave differently regarding their surface conditions:



## Table of contents



 $\sqrt{\text{Best approach to calculate a "methane-free" reference band?}} \rightarrow \text{resulting } \Delta XCH_4 \text{ maps}$ 



**RESULTS** 





 $\sqrt{\text{retrieval detection limit?}} \rightarrow \Delta XCH_4$  maps obtained with the selected methodology:



As expected, best results in Turkmenistan & Algeria.

- The **Algeria** maps show a discontinuity on the right side of the image.
- The **China** map presents many features that alter the retrieval and require higher methane plume signals in order to positively detect them.

 $\sqrt{\text{retrieval detection limit?}} \rightarrow \Delta XCH_4$  maps obtained with the selected methodology:



WorldView-3 satellite maps methane plumes at very high spatial resolution monitoring

## Distribution of the retrieved $\Delta XCH_4$ maps

- 1-sigma retrieval errors sensibly larger than hyperspectral missions due to the increased surface variability.
- Non-normal behavior already present in the radiance ratio  $L/L_{\rm ref.}$



#### $\sqrt{1}$ Test of methane detection limits.

Figure displays the relationship between retrieved IME & known reference input values for the simulations at the 3 sites.



#### $\sqrt{1}$ Test of methane detection limits.

Figure displays the relationship between retrieved IME & known reference input values for the simulations at the 3 sites.



- The results highlight a **general underestimation** of the retrieved IME values.
- The missing fractions of the total IME are larger for China & lowest for Algeria.
- This reinforce the importance of surface heterogeneity on the performance retrieval.

 $\sqrt{}$  We work with **7 SWIR WV-3 images** covering four different areas (known regional methane hotspots).

 $\sqrt{\text{Precise locations of 26 different point source emissions}}$  over the 275 km<sup>2</sup> analyzed:

Site	Emitter location	Date	n⁰pix	L (m)	u <sub>10</sub> (m/s)	u <sub>eff</sub> (m/s)	IME (kg)	Q (kg/h)
Hassi Messaoud Oil field (Algeria)	Pipeline (31.778°N, 5.995°E)	2020/12/29	3363	215	6.14	2.53 —	74	$3100 \pm 1300$
	Pipeline (31.768°N, 6.000°E)		3155	208			57	$2500\pm1000$
	Pipeline (31.797°N, 6.011°E)		924	112		1.12	13	$500\pm200$
	Pipeline (31.742°N, 5.895°E)	2021/01/17	1846	159	2.37	0.66	41	$600 \pm 100$
Korpezhe O&G field	Ground Flare (38.494°N, 54.198°E)	2021/03/29	16956	482	- 3.93	1.78 —	1353	$13000 \pm 4800^{*}$
(Turkmenistan South)	Ground Flare (38.557°N, 54.200°E)		13188	425			287	$3100\pm1100^{\ast}$
Goturdepe field (Turkmenistan	Pipeline (39.474°N, 53.743°E)	2021/04/10	20786	533	9.63	3.71	1390	$35000 \pm 15000$
	Pipeline (39.462°N, 53.775°E)		7424	319			118	$5000\pm2200$
Goturdepe field (Turkmenistan North); Western image	Two-point emitters (39.498°N, 53.636°E & 39.497°N 53.638°E)	2021/03/29	44689	782	- - 1.84 - -	1.07	496	$2400\pm700$
	Four plumes around (39.485°N, 53.663°E)		8900	349			105	1200 ± 300
	Pipeline (39.480°N, 53.671°E)		3957	233			11	$200 \pm 60$
	Two small plumes around (39.480°N, 53.671°E)		185	50		0.6	0.8	$30 \pm 10$
			198	52			0.9	$40\pm20$
	Five smaller southern plumes around (39.469°N, 53.649°E)		116	40			3	$200 \pm 30$
			105	38			3	$200 \pm 30$
			537	86			14	$400 \pm 70$
			1842	159			61	$800 \pm 200$
			1020	118			27	$500 \pm 90$
Coal mines in Shanxi (China)	Xiligaocun (36.257°N, 112.923°E)	2021/04/27	6470	298	- 5.89	_	129	$3800 \pm 1600$
	Wangzhuang Beili two-point emitters (36.247°N, 112.989°E & 36.246°N, 112.989°E).		7042	310		1.09	126	3600 ± 1500
	Taoyuancun (36.234°N, 112.946°E)		1278	132		2.44	24	$700 \pm 200$
	RESULTS							



RESULTS



Angular configuration scheme

## $\sqrt{}$ Importance of geometric considerations for high-spatial methane quantification:

- ΔXCH₄ map from <u>Turkmenistan South</u> on 29th March 2021 showing two plumes with a particular shape, dual-plume structure, as a consequence of the orthogonal alignment of the sun-to-satellite plane with respect to the wind direction → 1/2 plume mask to Q estimate.
- Despite the geometric and soil morphology effects (NW-SE noise pattern), both emission sources are easily distinguished by the high  $\Delta XCH_4$  values & the unmistakable diffuse shape of the tail downwind.

This massive southern plume extends up to 3 km, but our retrieved mask to calculate Q only takes the most integral part...

WorldView-3 satellite maps methane plumes at very high spatial resolution monitoring

RESULTS

 $\sqrt{0\&G}$  ground flare emitters often used in the burning of gaseous waste (already reported by Irakulis-Loitxate et al. 2021):

b) panel — Plume emerging from a gas pipeline near the compressor station. Despite the first announcement in Varon et al. (2019) and subsequent shutdown of the leak, this emitter source is once again spreading methane.

a) panel  $\rightarrow$  Plume with a flux rate four times smaller.



RESULTS

 $\sqrt{\text{The area with the largest number of emitters}}$  corresponds to the Goturdepe O&G field in <u>North Turkmenistan</u>. A total of 16 different plumes are detected throughout this basin, one of the oldest oil piping systems.

#### Eastern image on 10th April 2021:

Two elongated plumes (consequence of strong wind). Originate from two-point sources registered also in Irakulis-Loitxate et al. (2021b).



 $\sqrt{\text{The area with the largest number of emitters}}$  corresponds to the Goturdepe O&G field in North Turkmenistan. A total of 16 different plumes are detected throughout this basin, one of the oldest oil piping systems.

#### Eastern image on 10th April 2021:

Dark color of the soil in the images indicate that oil burning works are taking place in the area.

The biggest plume a) emerges from a thin pipeline coming out of the oil power plant adjoining.

RESULTS

- The origin of the other plume b) is not so obvious, likely caused by leakage from the **piping system** of the area.





*Western image* on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 — high number of small methane leakages that WV-3 has been able to reveal.

- 1. At a first glance, an apparent single plume northwest of the image & another towards the center.
- 1. However, by zooming in closer and considering the wind direction is possible to disentangle each of the underlying and independent emitting points, even unfolding those principal sources.



RESULTS

*Western image* on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 — high number of small methane leakages that WV-3 has been able to reveal.

- 1. At a first glance, an apparent single plume northwest of the image & another towards the center.
- 2. However, by zooming in closer and considering the wind direction is possible to disentangle each of the underlying and independent emitting points, even unfolding those principal sources.

3.7 m/pix



At 30 m/pix the  $\neq$  point leakages are not identified, registered as a single plume instead of four independent sources.

RESULTS



3.7 m/pix

*Western image* on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021 — high number of small methane leakages that WV-3 has been able to reveal.

- 1. At a first glance, an apparent single plume northwest of the image & another towards the center.
- 1. However, by zooming in closer and considering the wind direction is possible to disentangle each of the underlying and independent emitting points, even unfolding those principal sources.



WorldView-3 satellite maps methane plumes at very high spatial resolution monitoring

RESULTS





ΔXCH4 (ppm) 0.0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 1.0

 $\sqrt{}$  Some of these small leaks would go unnoticed by most satellites with lower spatial resolution and worse specifications for methane detection.

WorldView-3 satellite maps methane plumes at very high spatial resolution monitoring

RESULTS



#### 2020/12/29

#### √ <u>Algeria</u> 29/12/2020:

- Three elongated plumes emerging from different pipelines perfectly aligned with wind direction, with and emission concentration values steadily decreasing due to the relatively high wind speed (6.14 m/s).
- Fast dispersion of the plume at about 500 m travel, blurring until the plume tail disappears.

#### √ On 17/01/2021:

With low wind speed (2.37 m/s) the high concentrations of the gas remain concentrated near the emitting point defining а shorter plume.

#### $\sqrt{10}$ To further demonstrate the value of methane plume detection at 3.7 m pixel resolution:

Comparing  $\Delta XCH_4$  map obtained from the Algeria image on 29/12/2020 with this same result but upsampled to 30 m resolution:



RESULTS

<u>Coarser resolution</u>  $\rightarrow$  apart from blurring the emitter point, the plumes become more difficult to define, especially the smaller one which is easily confused amid the background noise.



 $\sqrt{10}$  And some emissions in the Shanxi coal mining (west of the Zhangze reservoir) in China; image on 27/04/2021:

- Most **challenging site** for methane plume detection due to its **higher** spectral and spatial **heterogeneity** as simulations shown:



## Table of contents





### Summary

- Research answers
- Further research

### Conclusions

 $\sqrt{1}$  This study reveals the previously undocumented capability of WV-3 for mapping methane point source emissions at VH spatial resolution.

 $\sqrt{10}$  The **potential of WV-3** has been further tested under real-case studies with a positive **detection** of **26 independent point source emissions** covering different methane hotspot regions.

√ Under these real scenarios, we have proven the usefulness of the unique spatial resolution of the mission to even pinpoint to very small leaks (<100 kg/h) from oil pipelines in Turkmenistan that would be missed by most satellites</li>
→ game-changing potential of WV-3 to map industrial methane emissions from space.

 $\sqrt{\text{The retrieval methodology is based on the MLR of 6 SWIR}}$  bands against B7  $\rightarrow$  weak sensitivity of the retrieval to the SRF of B7 and a negligible effect to the atmospheric WV column.

 $\sqrt{1000}$  The end-to-end sensitivity analysis has helped to understand retrieval errors and detection limits  $\rightarrow$  results over homogeneous surfaces with 21% IME loss ~10 Kg for a Q 1000 kg/h & 63% ~153 Kg for Q 1000 kg/h in highly heterogeneous areas such as the scene in China.

 $\sqrt{1}$  The Q uncertainties range 15-45% largely dominated by the uncertainty on the wind speed data.



### Further research

 $\sqrt{\text{High spatial resolution}}$  not only helpful to identify small sources of methane emissions but also to detect outliers (feature detection)  $\rightarrow$  methane plume ~ soft edges whereas features (such as buildings and roads) ~ sharp edges.

 $\sqrt{\text{Despite the promising results:}}$ 

- Diminish the impact of the surface background and the plume parallax effects on the ΔXCH<sub>4</sub> maps → critical due to the higher variability of the surface at 3.7 m sampling and its orbit pointing capabilities that can result in large viewing zenith angles.
- A combination of the SWIR images with the VNIR data could improve both the regression and the identification of emission infrastructure.

 $\sqrt{}$  The ability to precisely locate and identify these emitting points could help steer the decision-making process for repairing such pipeline leaks, delivering strong environmental and socioeconomic impacts  $\rightarrow$  definition of a future CH<sub>4</sub> observing system as proposed by EU regulations.



### References

- Guanter, L., Irakulis-Loitxate, I., Gorroño, J., Sánchez-García, E., Cusworth, D.H., Cogliati, S., Colombo, R., 2021. Mapping methane point emissions with the PRISMA spaceborne imaging spectrometer. Remote Sens. Environ. https://doi.org/10.31223/X5VC9C
- Irakulis-loitxate, I., Guanter, L., Liu, Y., Varon, D.J., Joannes, D., Zhang, Yuzhong, Thorpe, A.K., Duren, R.M., Lyon, D., Hmiel, B., Cusworth, D.H., Zhang, Yongguang, Segl, K., Gorroño, J., Sánchez-García, E., Sulprizio, M.P., Cao, K., Zhu, H., Liang, J., Li, X., Aben, I., Jacob, D.J., 2021a. Satellite-based Survey of Extreme Methane Emissions in the Permian Basin.
- Irakulis-Loitxate, I., Guanter, L., Maasakkers, J.D., Zavala-Araiza, D., Aben, I., 2021b. Satellites unveil easily-fixable super-emissions in one of the world's largest methane hotspot regions [preprint] 1–32.
- Lauvaux, T., Giron, C., Mazzolini, M., Duren, R., Cusworth, D., Shindell, D., Ciais, P., 2021. Global Assessment of Oil and Gas Methane Ultra-Emitters.
- Varon, D.J., Jacob, D.J., Jervis, D., Mckeever, J., 2020. Quantifying Time-Averaged Methane Emissions from Individual Coal Mine Vents with GHGSat D Satellite Observations. https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.0c01213.
- Varon, D.J., Jacob, D.J., Mckeever, J., Jervis, D., Durak, B.O.A., Xia, Y., Huang, Y., 2018. Quantifying methane point sources from fine-scale satellite observations of atmospheric methane plumes 5673–5686.
- Varon, D.J., Jervis, D., McKeever, J., Spence, I., Gains, D., Jacob, D.J., 2021. High-frequency monitoring of anomalous methane point sources with multispectral Sentinel-2 satellite observations. Atmos. Meas. Tech. 14, 2771–2785. https://doi.org/10.5194/amt-14-2771-2021.
- Varon, D.J., McKeever, J., Jervis, D., Maasakkers, J.D., Pandey, S., Houweling, S., Aben, I., Scarpelli, T., Jacob, D.J., 2019. Satellite discovery of anomalously large methane point sources from oil/gas production. Geophys. Res. Lett. 2019GL083798. https://doi.org/10.1029/2019GL083798.

## Thank you for your attention!!

### Contact us: https://hiresch4.upv.es/

There is one planet, one chance...

