The Journal of Marine Research, one of the oldest journals in American marine science, published important peer-reviewed original research on a broad array of topics in physical, biological, and chemical oceanography vital to the academic oceanographic community in the long and rich tradition of the Sears Foundation for Marine Research at Yale University.

An archive of all issues from 1937 to 2021 (Volume 1–79) are available through EliScholar, a digital platform for scholarly publishing provided by Yale University Library at https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/.

Requests for permission to clear rights for use of this content should be directed to the authors, their estates, or other representatives. The Journal of Marine Research has no contact information beyond the affiliations listed in the published articles. We ask that you provide attribution to the Journal of Marine Research.

Yale University provides access to these materials for educational and research purposes only. Copyright or other proprietary rights to content contained in this document may be held by individuals or entities other than, or in addition to, Yale University. You are solely responsible for determining the ownership of the copyright, and for obtaining permission for your intended use. Yale University makes no warranty that your distribution, reproduction, or other use of these materials will not infringe the rights of third parties.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/
Spectral Dissipation of Finite-depth Gravity Waves Due to Turbulent Bottom Friction

Klaus Hasselmann
Universität Hamburg

J. I. Collins
Tetra Tech, Inc.
Pasadena, California

ABSTRACT

The spectral dissipation of finite-depth random gravity waves is evaluated for a given empirical relationship between the local bottom stress and the wave field. The dissipation is quasilinear. Computations for a quadratic friction law yield satisfactory agreement with wave measurements at two stations in the Gulf of Mexico.

1. Introduction. The traditional parametrical approach to wave prediction is being widely subseded by more fundamental methods based on the numerical integration of the radiative transfer equation (cf. Gelci and Cazalé 1962, Fons 1966, Pierson et al. 1966, Barnett 1966). The central prediction problem has thereby become the determination of the source functions in the transfer equation. Although many transfer processes are now understood theoretically, many gaps remain, particularly in our knowledge of the dissipation.
pative processes, which at present are bridged by partly empirical, largely intuive, assumptions.

As a particular case, we consider here the dissipation due to turbulent bottom friction, which is known to be an important factor in wave prediction at coasts bounding extensive shallow-water areas, such as a continental shelf.

A rigorous treatment of the full problem, involving a nonstationary turbulent boundary layer at the ocean bottom, appears to be impossible at present. As a starting point, we assume therefore that a ‘friction law’ expressing the bottom wall stress, $\tau$, as a function of the wave field has been established empirically. The problem then is to evaluate the spectral distribution of the associated wave-energy dissipation. Clearly this will not contribute to our understanding of the basic wave-turbulence interaction process; we are concerned, rather, with the practical question of determining a spectral source (sink) function for a random wave field from a given deterministic force-field relationship.

As an application, we compute the local dissipation and decay of the wave spectrum for the quadratic friction law

$$\tau = -\rho c_f u^b |u^b|,$$  \hspace{1cm} (1.1)

where $\rho$ is the density of water, $u^b$ is the bottom velocity in the absence of a boundary layer (including a mean current component), and $c_f$ is a friction coefficient; $c_f$ is in general a slowly varying function of the characteristic flow parameters, but it is regarded as constant for a given wave field.

The computed cases for shallow water over a gently sloping beach agree well with wave observations at two stations in the Gulf of Mexico. Further examples illustrate the significance of bottom friction effects in larger and somewhat deeper areas typical of a continental shelf.

2. The Dissipation Function. To a first approximation, a homogeneous random gravity-wave field in water of constant depth, $H$, is given by the linear irrotational solution

$$\zeta = \sum \zeta_k,$$  \hspace{1cm} (2.1)

where $\zeta$ is the wave height,

$$\zeta_k = \tilde{\zeta}_k + \tilde{\zeta}_k^*, \hspace{1cm} (2.2)$$

$$\tilde{\zeta}_k = Z_k e^{i(k \cdot x - \sigma t)},$$

$$Z_k = \text{const},$$

$$\sigma = (gk \tanh kH)^{1/2},$$

and $x, k$ are horizontal coordinate and wave-number vectors, respectively.
The first and second moments of the random amplitudes, $Z_k$, are given by

$$\langle Z_k \rangle = 0,$$

$$\langle Z_k Z_k' \rangle = 0,$$

$$\langle Z_k Z_k^{*} \rangle = \frac{1}{2} \delta_{kk'} F(k) \Delta k,$$

where $\langle \ldots \rangle$ denotes the ensemble mean, $\Delta k$ is the wave-number increment of the Fourier sum (2.1), used here as a notational convenience in place of a Fourier-Stieltjes integral, and $F(k)$ is the wave spectrum, normalized so that

$$\langle \zeta^2 \rangle = \int F(k) dk.$$

The velocity field of the wave motion may be similarly written

$$u = \sum u_k,$$

where $u_k = \tilde{u}_k + u_k^{*}$, and $\tilde{u}_k$ is proportional to $\hat{\zeta}_k$. In particular,

$$\tilde{u}_k = \frac{gk}{\sigma \cosh kH} \hat{\zeta}_k$$

at the bottom, $z = -H$, (2.6)

where $z$ is the vertical coordinate, measured positive upward from the equilibrium free surface.

In the linear approximation, the wave field is Gaussian (cf. Hasselmann 1967). It is therefore completely specified statistically by the spectrum $F(k)$.

Consider now the modification of the free-wave solution due to the turbulent boundary layer at the ocean bottom. Interactions with a nonuniform current, $c = (c_1(z), c_2(z), \sigma)$, and with the atmosphere also affect the wave field, but we restrict our investigation here to the boundary-layer interactions. The mean current enters the problem only in so far as it affects the boundary layer. In this case, the wave motion outside the boundary layer remains a potential flow, $u$, which is uniquely determined by the surface displacement. The total velocity field is then $w = u + c + v$, where $v$ is a turbulent velocity field that is nonzero only in the bottom boundary layer, $-H \leq z < -H + \delta$. We assume $\delta \ll H$.

Since the wave field remains homogeneous, the representation (2.1) and the definition (2.4) of the spectrum remain valid. However, the amplitudes $Z_k$, and therefore the spectrum $F(k)$, become slowly varying functions of time.

The rate of change of the spectrum may be determined from energy considerations. If we multiply the equations of motion,

$$\rho \frac{\partial w_i}{\partial t} = -\frac{\partial p}{\partial x_i} - \rho \frac{\partial}{\partial x_j} (w_i w_j) + \nu \rho \nabla^2 w_i$$

($\nu =$ kinematic viscosity),
by \( u_{ik} \), integrate from \(-H\) to \( \zeta \), and take expectation values, we obtain, on allowing for the usual free-surface boundary conditions at \( z = \zeta \) and the orthogonality relationship (2.4),

\[
\Delta k \Phi \frac{\partial F(k)}{\partial t} = \langle \tau_i u_{ik} \rangle_{z=-H} + \int \langle T_{ij} \partial u_{ik} / \partial x_j \rangle \, dz - q \frac{\partial}{\partial t} \int \langle (v_i + \zeta) u_{ik} \rangle \, dz,
\]

where

\[
T_{ij} = -q w_i w_j + q v \left( \frac{\partial w_i}{\partial x_j} + \frac{\partial w_j}{\partial x_i} \right)
\]

and \( \tau_i = T_{3i} \).

For \( \delta \ll H \), the last two terms on the right side can be neglected, so that

\[
\Delta k \Phi \frac{\partial F(k)}{\partial t} \approx \langle \tau_i u_{ik} \rangle_{z=-H} = -\Theta(k) \Delta k.
\]

Hence, the energy loss, \( \Theta(k) \Delta k \), of the wave component, \( \zeta_k \), is given by the work done by the total bottom stress, \( \tau \), against the bottom velocity of the component \( u_k(z = -H) \), as may have been anticipated.

We assume now that \( \tau \) is given empirically as a function of the wave field and the mean current, \( \tau = \tau(\zeta, c) \). If the dissipation is weak, i.e., if

\[
\frac{\partial F}{\partial t} \ll \omega_c F,
\]

where \( \omega_c \) is a characteristic frequency of the spectrum, \( \Theta(k) \) can be evaluated to the first order by substituting the free-wave solution in the right side of (2.7).

To express the dissipation in terms of the free-wave spectrum, we expand the functional \( \tau \) about the wave field

\[
\zeta' = \zeta - \zeta_k,
\]

which differs from the wave field \( \zeta \) by an infinitesimal component. According to (2.4), all Fourier components of \( \zeta' \) are statistically orthogonal to \( \zeta_k \) (since the only-correlated \( k' \)th Fourier component is missing in \( \zeta' \)). Furthermore, since the fields \( \zeta' \) and \( \zeta_k \) are jointly Gaussian, it follows that \( \zeta' \) and \( \zeta_k \) are in fact statistically independent.

Hence

\[
\Theta(k) \Delta k = -\langle \tau_i u_{ik} \rangle,
\]

\[
= -\langle (\tau_i (\zeta') + \frac{\delta \tau_i}{\delta \zeta} (\zeta') \zeta_k + \ldots) u_{ik} \rangle,
\]

\[
= -\langle \frac{\delta \tau_i}{\delta \zeta} (\zeta') \rangle \langle \zeta_k u_{ik} \rangle + \ldots,
\]

where \( \delta \tau_i / \delta \zeta \) is the functional derivative. (Velocities here and in the following refer to bottom velocities).
Explicitly,

\[ \tau_i(\xi + d\xi; x, t) = \tau_i(\xi; x, t) + \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} K_i(\xi; x, x', t, t') \delta \xi(x', t') dx' dt' + \ldots, \quad (2.9) \]

where

\[ K_i = \frac{\delta \tau_i}{\delta \xi} \]

and (2.8) should be read

\[ \Theta(k) \Delta k = - \int \langle K_i(\xi'; x, x', t, t') \rangle \langle \xi_k(x', t') u_{ik}(x, t) \rangle dx' dt' \quad (2.10) \]


For a homogeneous time-independent physical system, the functional \( \tau \) is independent of space and time translations. It follows that the kernel, \( K_i \), depends only on the difference variables, \( \xi = x - x' \) and \( \lambda = t - t' \). Allowing for (2.4) and (2.6), eq. (2.10) then becomes

\[ \Theta(k) = - \frac{gk_i}{\sigma \cosh kH} F(k) \int K_i(\xi, \xi', \lambda) \cos(k, \xi - \sigma \lambda) d\xi d\lambda, \quad (2.11) \]

where the field \( \xi' \) in \( K_i \) has been replaced again by \( \xi \).

Alternatively, (2.9) may be written in the equivalent Fourier form

\[ \tau_i(\xi + d\xi; x, t) = \tau_i(\xi; x, t) + 2 \text{Re} \left\{ \sum_{k} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \tilde{K}_{ik}(\xi; t - t') \delta \xi_k(x, t') dt' \right\}, \quad (2.12) \]

where

\[ \tilde{K}_{ik} = \frac{\delta \tau_i}{\delta \xi_k} \]

This yields

\[ \Theta(k) = - \frac{gk_i}{\sigma \cosh kH} F(k) 2 \text{Re} \int_{-\infty}^{+\infty} \tilde{K}_{ik}(\xi, \lambda) e^{\sigma \lambda} d\lambda. \quad (2.13) \]

We note that the dissipation, \( \Theta(k) \), is quasilinear; it is proportional to the spectrum at \( k \), as in the case of laminar friction, but the proportionality factor depends now on the entire wave field.

3. Application to Specific Friction Laws. We apply (2.13) first to the quadratic friction law (1.1), which is known to be an acceptable though rather crude approximation for a wide variety of turbulent flows, including periodic boundary layers (cf. Savage 1953, Iwagaki et al. 1965, Jonsson 1965, Putnam and Johnson 1949, Bretschneider and Reid 1954, Kajiura 1964).
Since
\[
\frac{\partial \tau_i}{\partial \xi} \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial \xi} = \frac{\partial \tau_i}{\partial u^b_j} \frac{\partial \zeta}{\partial u^b_j},
\]
\[
= - \sum_k \frac{\partial u^b_i}{\partial u^b_j} k \left\{ u^b_i k_i + \frac{u^b_i u^b_j k_j}{u^b} \right\} \delta_{ik},
\]
we have
\[
\tilde{K}_{ik} (\lambda) = - \delta (\lambda) \frac{\partial u^b_i}{\partial \xi} \frac{2 \sigma \cosh k H}{2 \sigma \cosh k H} \left( u^b_i k_i + \frac{u^b_i u^b_j k_j}{u^b} \right)
\]
(3.1)
and
\[
\Theta (k) = v_{ij} k_i k_j \rho g F(k),
\]
(3.2)
with the anisotropic "viscosity" tensor
\[
v_{ij} = \frac{\partial u^b_i}{\partial \xi} \frac{2 \sigma \cosh k H}{2 \sigma \cosh k H} \left\{ \delta_{ij} \left\langle u^b_i \right\rangle + \left\langle u^b_i u^b_j \right\rangle \right\}.
\]
(3.3)

The mean quantities \( \left\langle u^b_i \right\rangle \) and \( \left\langle u^b_i u^b_j | u^b \right\rangle \) can be readily evaluated, since the joint distribution of the variables is Gaussian. The mean of the distribution is \( \left\langle u^b_i \right\rangle = c_i \) and the covariance matrix is given by the spectrum
\[
\left\langle (u^b_i - c_i)(u^b_j - c_j) \right\rangle = \left\langle u_i u_j \right\rangle = g^2 \int \frac{k_i k_j}{\sigma^2 \cosh^2 k H} F(k) d k.
\]
(3.4)

In the zero-current case, \( u^b = \mathbf{u} \), we obtain the closed expressions
\[
\left\langle u \right\rangle = \alpha \mathbf{E},
\]
\[
\left\langle u_i^2 \right\rangle = \alpha \left\{ \frac{\mathbf{E}}{\kappa^2} - \frac{\mathbf{K}}{\kappa^2} (1 - \kappa^2) \right\},
\]
\[
\left\langle u_2^2 \right\rangle = \alpha \frac{(1 - \kappa^2)}{\kappa^2} (\mathbf{K} - \mathbf{E}),
\]
where
\[
\alpha = \left( \frac{2 \left\langle u_1^2 \right\rangle}{\pi} \right)^{1/2}
\]

\[
\kappa = \left( 1 - \frac{\left\langle u_2^2 \right\rangle}{\left\langle u_1^2 \right\rangle} \right)^{1/2}
\]
and
\[
\mathbf{K} = K(\kappa), \quad \mathbf{E} = E(\kappa)
\]
are complete elliptic integrals of the first and second kind, respectively. The coordinate system is chosen such that
\[
\left\langle u_1 u_2 \right\rangle = 0, \quad \left\langle u_2^2 \right\rangle < \left\langle u_1^2 \right\rangle.
\]
The damping is a maximum in the mean propagation direction \( x_r \). In the extreme case of a unidirectional wave beam parallel to \( x_r \), \( v_{11} = 2v_{22} \). Generally, \( v_{22} < v_{11} < 2v_{22} \).

The friction law (1.1) can be modified in several ways. Boundary-layer measurements in stationary flows indicate that \( \epsilon_f \) is in general a slowly varying function of the boundary-layer parameters, which depend on the history of the boundary layer. Experiments in sinusoidal oscillating flows show a variation of \( \epsilon_f \) with the period and amplitude of the external flow; they also show a small phase shift in the relation (1.1) (cf. Jonsson 1965).

The experimental data for periodic flows could be generalized to random wave fields by defining a mean period and amplitude in terms of the wave spectrum and then regarding \( \epsilon_f \) in (3.3) as a function of these variables. Perhaps a more satisfactory approach is to modify the basic force-field relationship (1.1) to include a dependence on the past history of the flow. For example, a simple generalization of (1.1) that allows for memory and phase-shift effects is

\[
\tau(t) = -\int_{-\infty}^{t} c_{f}^{(0)} u^b \left\{ \epsilon_f^{(0)} u^b + \beta \epsilon_f^{(1)} \int_{-\infty}^{t} e^{\beta (t-t')} u(t') dt' \right\},
\]

where \( c_f^{(0)}, c_f^{(1)}, \) and \( \beta \) are empirical constants that depend on the average flow parameters.

In this case,

\[
\delta \tau_i = \delta \tau_i^{(0)} - \int_{-\infty}^{t} c_{f}^{(1)} \sum_{k} (\sigma \cosh kH)^{-1} \left\{ k_i u^b(t) \delta \zeta_k(t') + \frac{u_i(t') u_j(t')}{u^b(t)} \delta \zeta_k(t') \right\} dt',
\]

so that

\[
\langle \tilde{K}_{ik}(\lambda) \rangle = \langle \tilde{K}_{ik}^{(0)}(\lambda) \rangle - \frac{\sigma g c_f^{(1)} S(\lambda)}{2 \sigma \cosh kH} \left\{ k_i \langle u^b \rangle e^{-\beta \lambda} + 2 \text{Re} \left( \frac{\beta}{\beta-i\sigma} \tilde{u}_{ik} \right) \right\},
\]

where

\[
S(\lambda) = \begin{cases} 1 & \text{for } \lambda \leq 0 \\ 0 & \text{for } \lambda > 0 \end{cases},
\]

\[
\tilde{u}_i(t) = \int_{-\infty}^{\infty} u_i(t-\lambda) e^{-\beta \lambda} d\lambda = \sum_{k} 2 \text{Re} \left( \frac{\beta}{\beta-i\sigma} \tilde{u}_{ik} \right).
\]

The superscript \( ^{(0)} \) refers to the \( c_f^{(0)} \) term.

Applying (2.13), the dissipation function is again found to be of the form (3.2), with a modified viscosity tensor

\[
v_{ij} = v_{ij}^{(o)} + \frac{g c_f^{(1)} \sigma^2 \cosh^2 kH}{\beta^2 + \sigma^2} \left\{ \delta_{ij} \langle u^b \rangle e^{-\beta \lambda} + 2 \text{Re} \left( \frac{\beta}{\beta+i\sigma} \tilde{u}_i u^b \right) \right\}. \tag{3.6}
\]
Figure 1. Decay of a wave spectrum due to bottom friction for near-normal incidence on a constant-slope beach. (Hurricane Hilda, 1964).

The mean quantities \( \langle u^b \rangle \) and \( \langle \hat{u}_i u_j \rangle \) can be evaluated as before by noting that the joint distribution of the variables \( \hat{u}_i, u_j \) is Gaussian with a covariance matrix that is determined by the spectrum.

4. Computations. The spectral decay was computed for some typical cases by numerical integration of the radiative transfer equation

\[
\frac{\partial F}{\partial t}(\mathbf{k}, \mathbf{x}) + \dot{x}_i \frac{\partial F}{\partial x_i} + k_i \frac{\partial F}{\partial k_i} = S, \tag{4.1}
\]

where

\[
\dot{x}_i = \frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial k_i}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{k}),
\]

\[
k_i = -\frac{\partial \sigma}{\partial x_i}(\mathbf{x}, \mathbf{k})
\]
Figure 2. Decay of a wave spectrum due to bottom friction for near-glancing incidence on a constant-slope beach. The observed spectra for $f > 0.2$ cps are probably locally generated by offshore winds. A comparison with theory is meaningful only for $f < 0.2$ cps. (Hurricane Hilda, 1964).

The spectra are presented as energy densities with respect to frequency, $f$, and direction, $\varphi$,

$$F(k)dk = \tilde{F}(f, \varphi)df d\varphi = E(f)S(f, \varphi)df d\varphi, \quad (4.2)$$

where $E(f)$ is the one-dimensional frequency spectrum and $S(f, \varphi)$ is the spreading factor, with

$$\int_{-\pi}^{+\pi} S(f, \varphi)d\varphi = 1.$$

Fig. 1 shows the computed decay of a wave spectrum incident almost normally on a beach of constant slope, $6.5 \times 10^{-4}$. The topography and the positions of Sts. I and II correspond to wave-measuring installations in the Gulf of Mexico near Panama City, Florida. St. III is a hypothetical extrapolation; the beach actually shallowed more rapidly shoreward of St. II, the shore lying between Sts. II and III; see Kirst and Gaul (1964).

The initial frequency distribution at St. I corresponds to the observed
The frictional dissipation exceeds the increase in the frequency spectrum that would have resulted from refraction alone. However, the peaking of the spreading factor is almost entirely refractional. Some broadening may have been expected from the anisotropy of the viscosity tensor, but this is practically cancelled by the longer travel path of waves at larger angles of incidence; this applies also to the spreading factor in Fig. 3.

The variations in travel path result in a strong dependence of the normal-to-shore decay rate on the angle of incidence, particularly at large angles. Fig. 2 shows the decay of a spectrum for the same topography as in Fig. 1, but with a more tangential initial angular distribution,

$$S(f, \varphi) = \begin{cases} \text{const} & \text{for } 50^\circ < \varphi < 90^\circ \\ 0 & \text{for } -90^\circ < \varphi < 50^\circ. \end{cases}$$
The initial frequency spectrum is again the observed distribution. The predicted spectrum at St. II agrees reasonably well with the observed spectrum. The fit could clearly have been improved by choosing a slightly more tangential angular distribution initially (or by increasing \( \epsilon_f \)). However, the agreement has only qualitative significance in this case. The weather maps indicated approximately tangential angles of incidence, but the beam width could not be estimated accurately. Computations of the bottom-friction dissipation on a continental-shelf scale are shown in Figs. 3 and 4. The dimensions are characteristic of the North Sea. In Fig. 4, a constant mean current of 0.7 m/s is superimposed on the wave field at an angle of 45° to the mean wave propagation direction.

The value of \( \epsilon_f \) used in the previous examples was retained for the sake of comparison. In the case of Fig. 4, this is probably too high; the increase in dissipation due to the mean current may be offset by a smaller friction coefficient. However, the angular asymmetry induced by the current is not strongly affected by the value of \( \epsilon_f \).

Acknowledgments. This work was carried out while the authors were at the Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics of the University of California, San Diego (K.H.) and the National Engineering Science Co. (J.I.C., K.H. as consultant). This work was supported by the Office of Naval Research under contract NONR 4177(00). The computations were performed at the computation center at the University of California, San Diego.
REFERENCES

BARNETT, T. P.

BRETSCHNEIDER, C. L., and R. O. REID

COLLATZ, LOTHAR

FONS, C.

GELCI, R., and H. CAZALÉ

HASSELMANN, KLAUS

IwAGAKI, Y., Y. TSUCHIYA, and M. SAKAI

JONSSON, I. G.

Kajiura, KINJIRO

Kirst, ALFRED, JR., and R. D. GAUL

PIERSON, W. J., and L. MOSKOWITZ

PIERSON, W. J., L. J. TICC, and L. BAER
1966. Computer based procedures for preparing global wave forecasts and wind field analysis capable of using wave data obtained by a spacecraft. 6th Naval Hydrodyn. Symp., Washington; 20-1-20-40; vol. 2.

PUTNAM, J. A., and J. W. JOHNSON

SAVAGE, R. P.