

The forecast presented here is for January and the average of the January-February-March period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for January will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 29 December 2014.

This forecast is based on information from observations, several numerical models and expert judgement.

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

Latest predictions for UK-mean precipitation favour near- to below-average rainfall for January. For January-February-March as a whole, although uncertainty is large, there is a slight preference for near- to above-average precipitation.

The probability that UK precipitation for January-February-March will fall into the driest of our five categories is between 15% and 20% and the probability that it will fall into the wettest category is around 20% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

As already mentioned in the temperature section, there is a fairly consistent signal from computer models for the current positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) to wane by January, increasing the probability of blocking patterns developing across northwestern Europe. At this time of year, blocking patterns are typically associated with drier, colder conditions. However, it is worth noting that although the chance of drier episodes is higher than earlier in the winter, it is not significantly higher than climatology; this can be seen in the left hand curve of figure P2, where the shift towards drier-than-average conditions is only slight.

For January-February-March as a whole, although near- to above-average precipitation is slightly favoured, uncertainty is large; this is highlighted in figure P2, where there is broad range of outcomes. There is disagreement between models over which atmospheric pattern will dominate, although there is a slight preference in the majority of models for below-average pressure near the UK, which is generally associated with wetter-than-average conditions. The chances of the period being as wet as last year are very low.

Fig P2

1-month and 3-month UK outlook for precipitation in the context of observed climatology

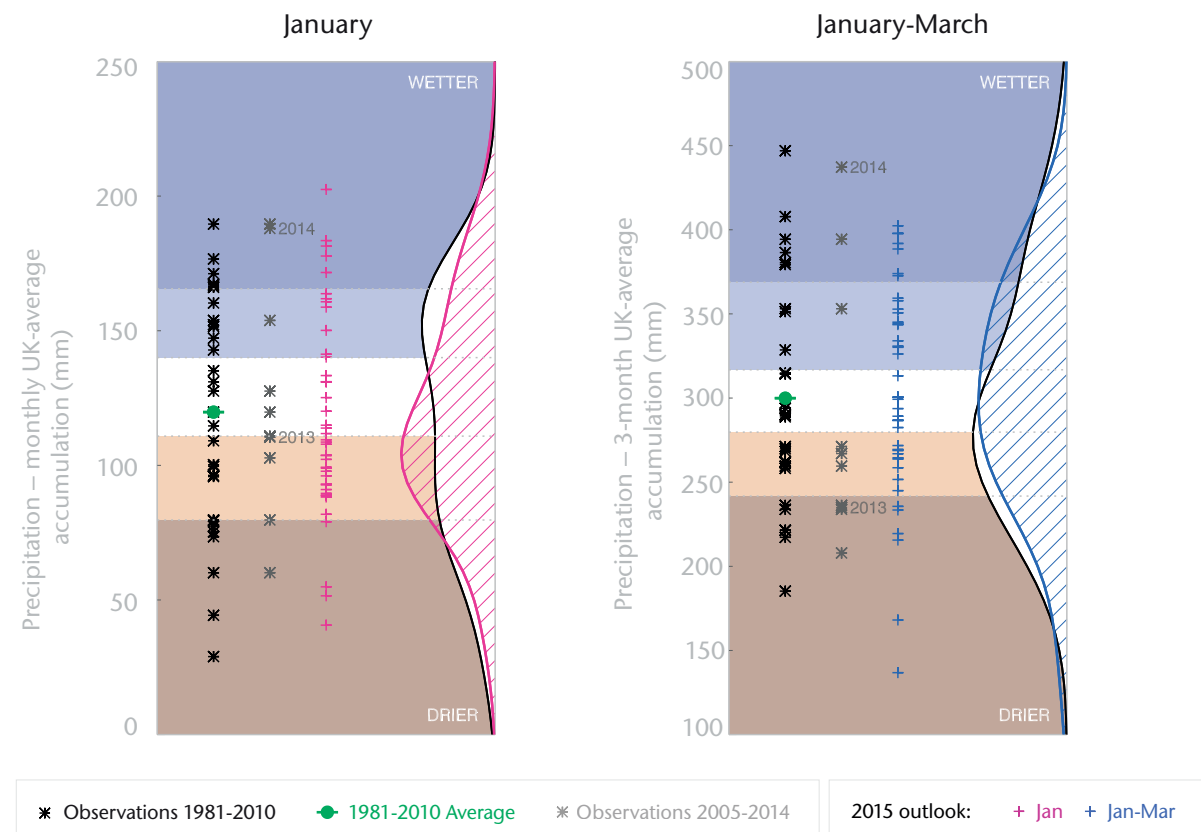


Fig P1

3-month UK outlook for precipitation in the context of the observed annual cycle

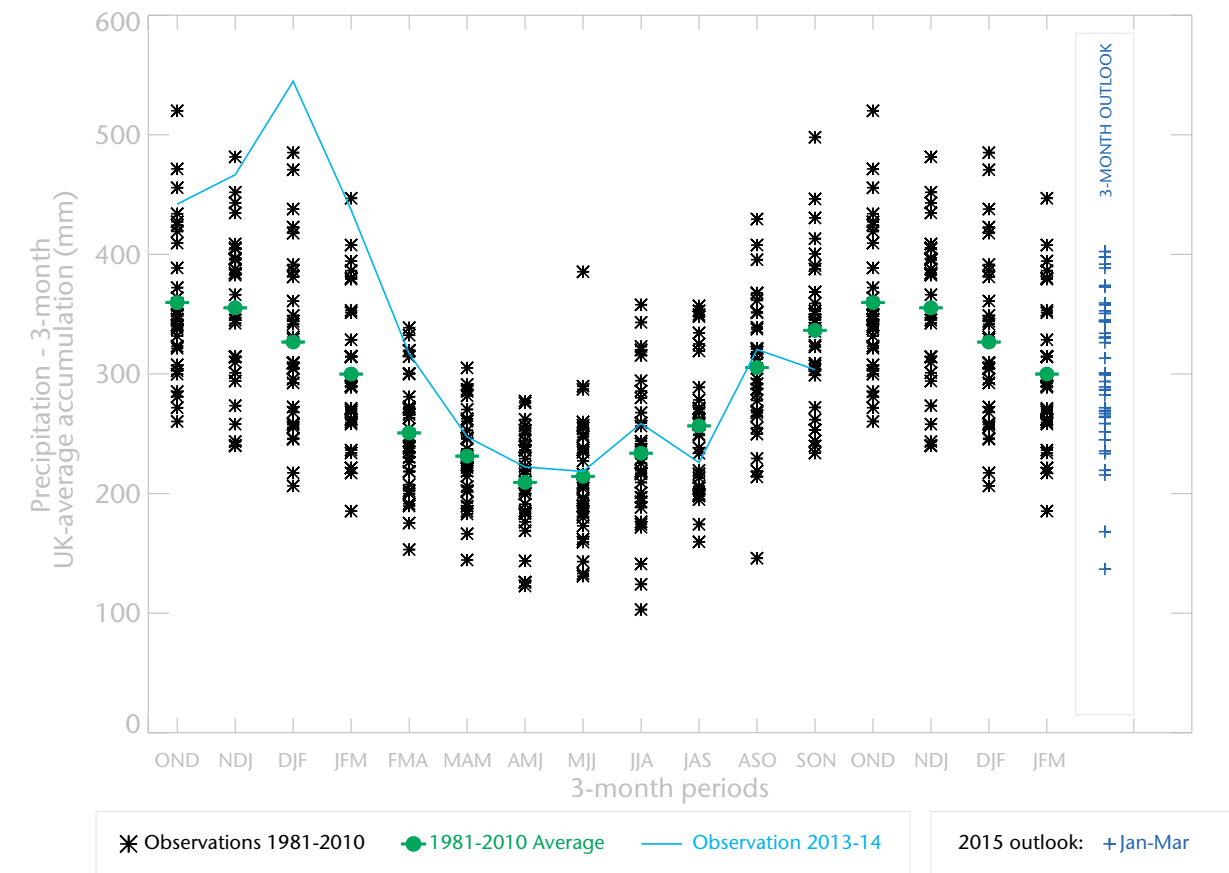
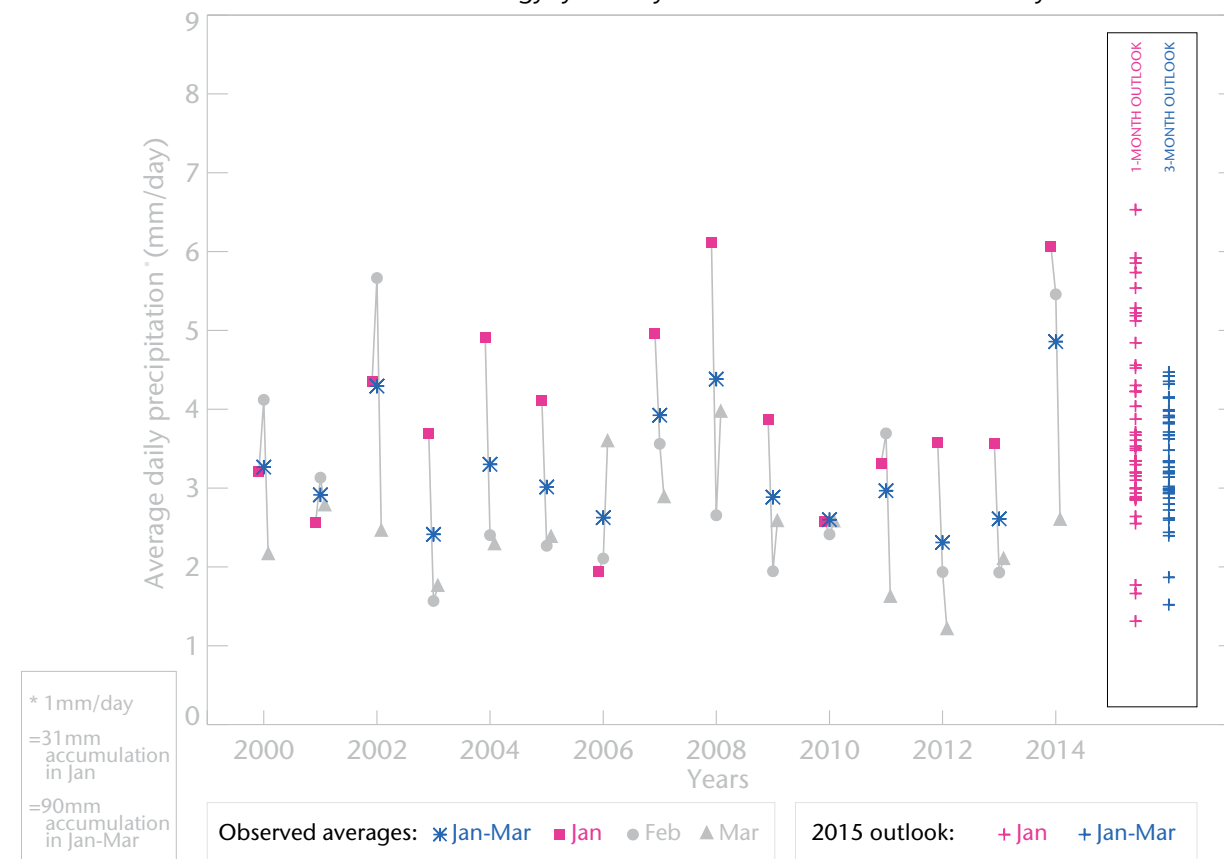


Fig P3

1-month and 3-month UK outlook for precipitation in the context of recent climatology: year-to-year and within-season variability



This Outlook provides an indication of possible temperature and rainfall conditions over the next 3 months. It is part of a suite of forecasts designed for contingency planners.

The Outlook should not be used in isolation but should be used with shorter-range and more detailed (30-day, 15-day and 1-to-5-day) forecasts and warnings available to the contingency planning community from the Met Office.