



Met Office

Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: April-June 2016 Issue date: 23.03.16

The forecast presented here is for April and the average of the April-May-June period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for April will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 01 April 2016.

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

SUMMARY - TEMPERATURE:

For April, near-average temperatures are most likely. For the period April-May-June above-average temperatures are more probable than below-average.

Overall, the probability that the UK-average temperature for April-May-June will fall into the coldest of our five categories is around 15% and the probability that it will fall into the warmest of our five categories is around 30% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

A moderately strong, mature El Niño event in the tropical Pacific Ocean remains a significant feature during the early part of this forecast period, and is still expected to have wide-reaching global impacts. This El Niño peaked in early winter and was comparable in strength to the 1997-98 and 1982-83 events and ranks among the strongest on record. However, seasonal prediction systems agree that the current El Niño will continue to weaken as we enter the Northern Hemisphere summer. Furthermore, during this period, connections between El Niño and UK weather are less clear.

In the North Atlantic Ocean, the persistent area of below-normal sea surface temperature has intensified somewhat over the last few weeks, and has the potential to reduce UK temperatures slightly in the latter part of the period.

A Sudden Stratospheric Warming (SSW) event occurred in early March, and the stratospheric polar vortex is now forecast not to re-establish before autumn. The influence of SSW events is to increase the likelihood of blocking of the westerly winds over the North Atlantic Ocean. This suggests the potential for colder episodes interspersed between milder spells in April. The influence of the stratosphere is expected to wane markedly, however, as we move into May.

The Met Office seasonal prediction system, along with systems from other forecast centres, shows an increase in the chances of near-normal conditions on average for April (Fig T2, left), with colder spells tending to be balanced by milder spells overall. These colder spells still present a risk of impacts, however, especially in the northern parts of the UK. For April-May-June as a whole, above-average temperatures are more likely than below-average temperatures (Fig T2, right).

Fig T1

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

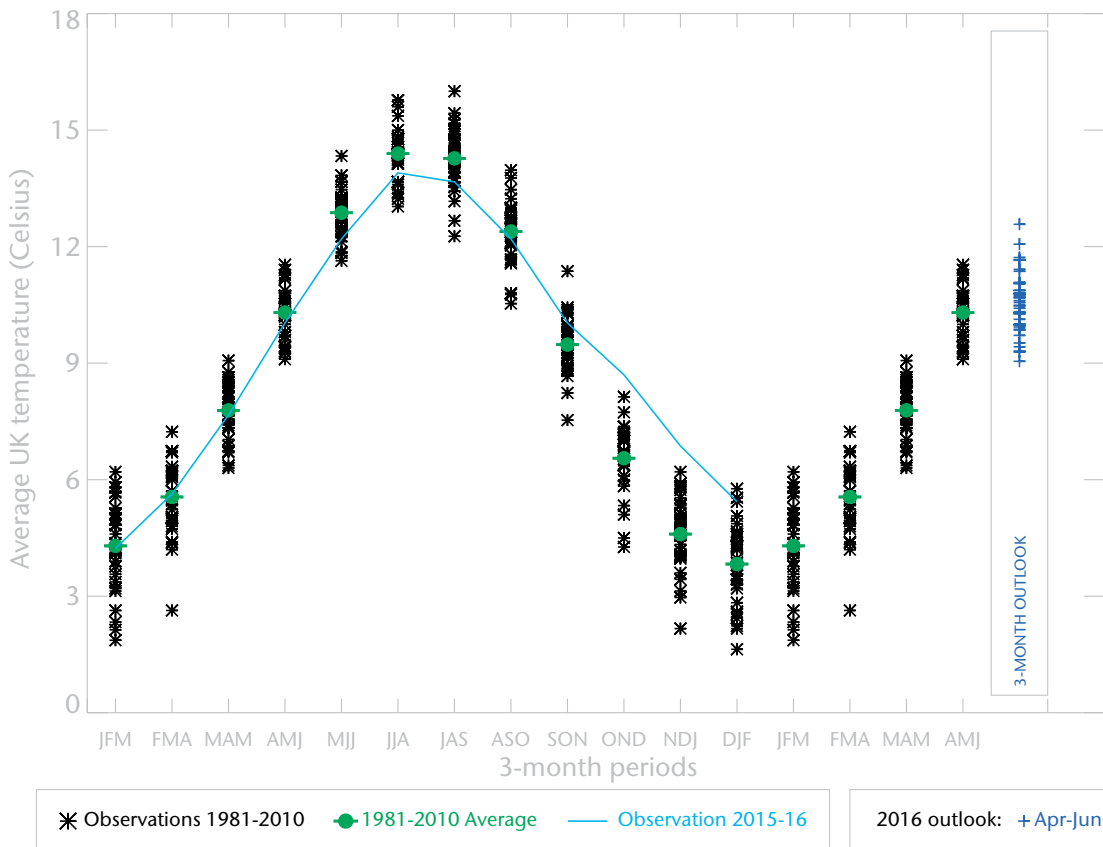


Fig T2

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

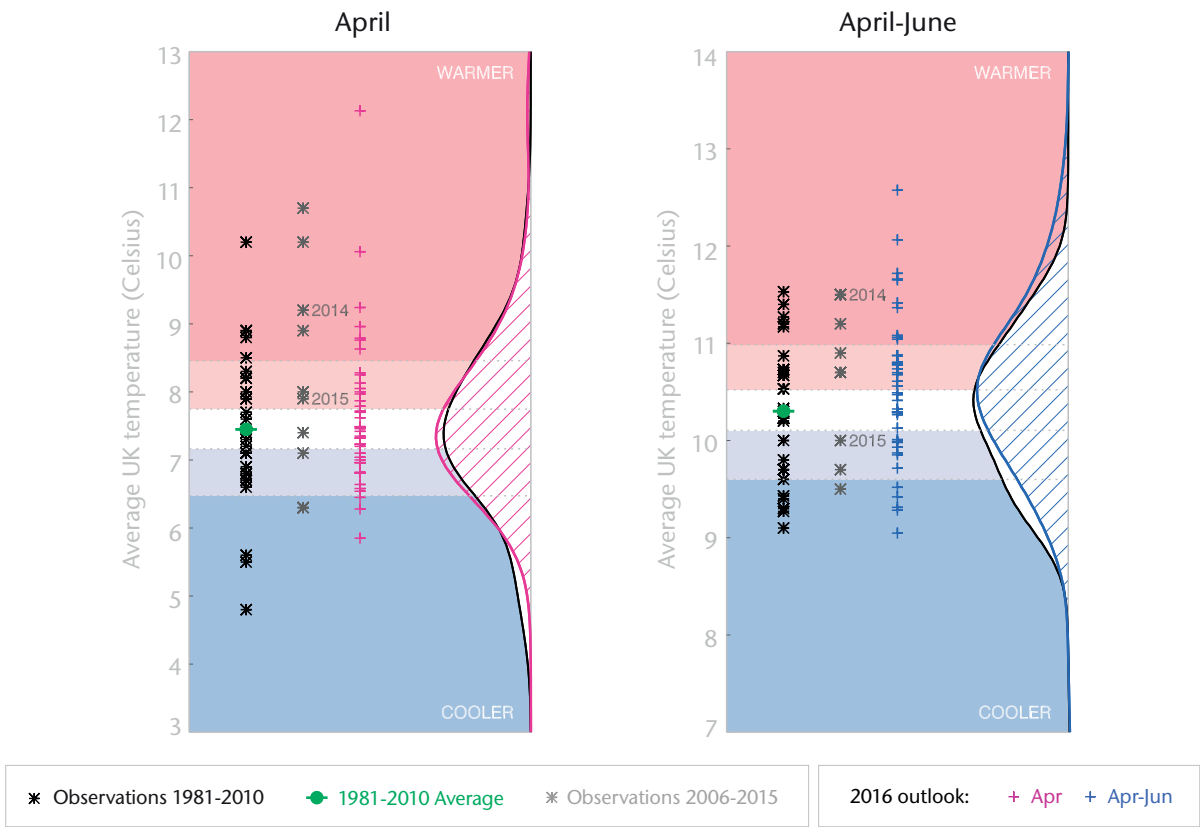
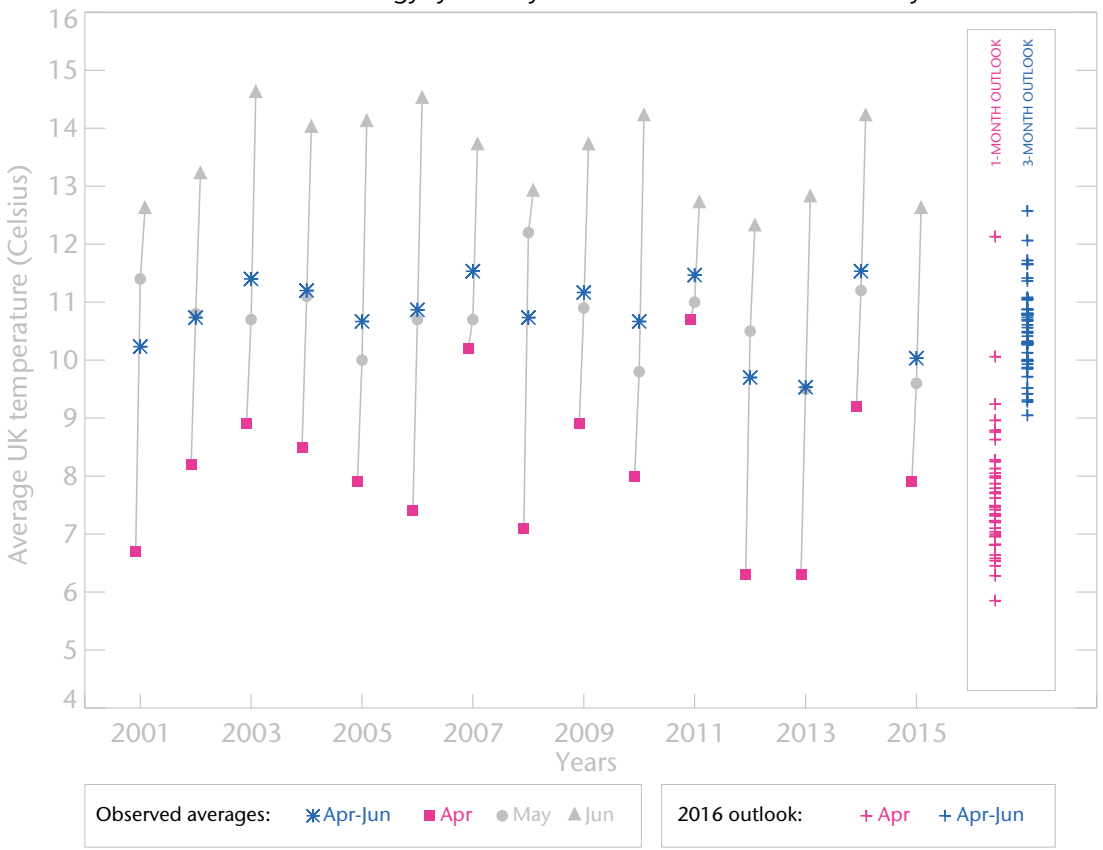


Fig T3

1-month and 3-month UK outlook for temperature 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.