Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: March – May 2020 Issue date: 20.02.20

The forecast presented here is for March and the average of the March-April-May period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for March will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk /public/ weather/ forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 1st March 2020.

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

SUMMARY – PRECIPITATION:

For March, below-average precipitation is slightly more likely than above-average precipitation. For March-April-May as a whole, above-average precipitation is slightly more likely than below-average precipitation.

The probability that UK-average precipitation for March-April-May will fall into the driest of our five categories is around 15% and the probability that it will fall into the wettest of our five categories is 25% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

During the Outlook period there is a greater-than-usual likelihood of a positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) (see Temperature Outlook). This implies increased chances of moist westerly winds from the Atlantic Ocean and wetter-than-usual conditions. Long-range prediction systems additionally show a greater-than-usual chance of high pressure impinging on the UK from the south. This moderates the chances of above-average precipitation.
For March, the chances of below-average precipitation are slightly greater than the chances of above-average precipitation. For the March-April-May period overall, above-average precipitation is slightly more likely than below-average precipitation. Nevertheless, the shifts in probability are slight, reflecting uncertainty in the relative influence of the two competing features described above on UK-average precipitation (see graphs of figure P2). Given the increase in the likelihood of these weather patterns, however, the chances of above-average precipitation are higher in the north and northwest of the UK than in the south and southeast. The chances of impacts from high winds are also increased compared to normal, particularly during March.

Fig P1

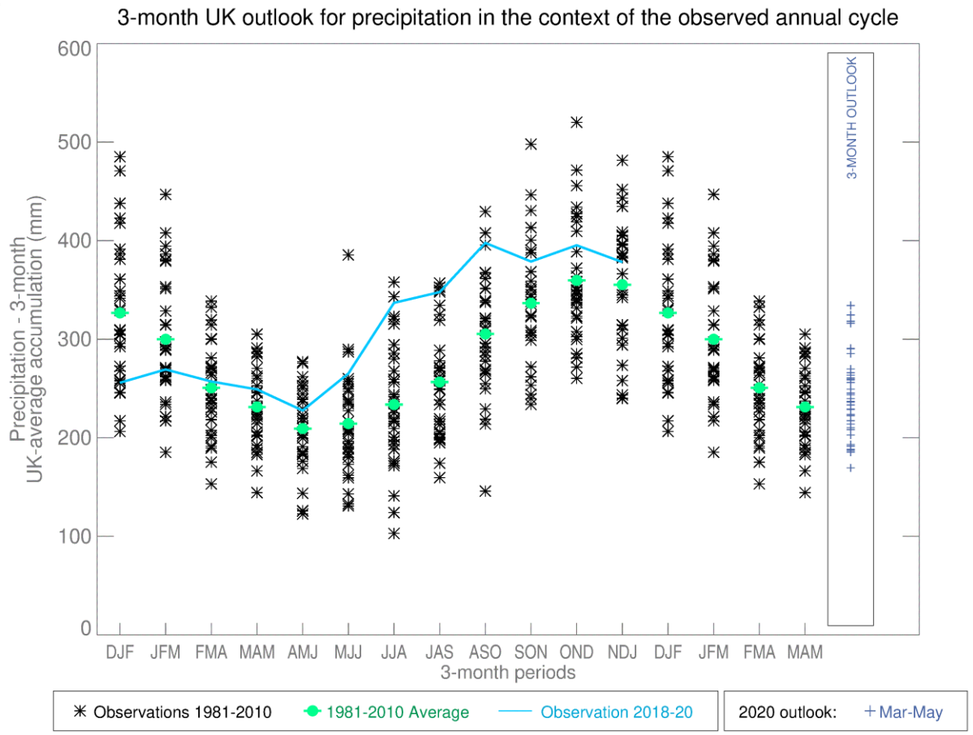


Fig P2

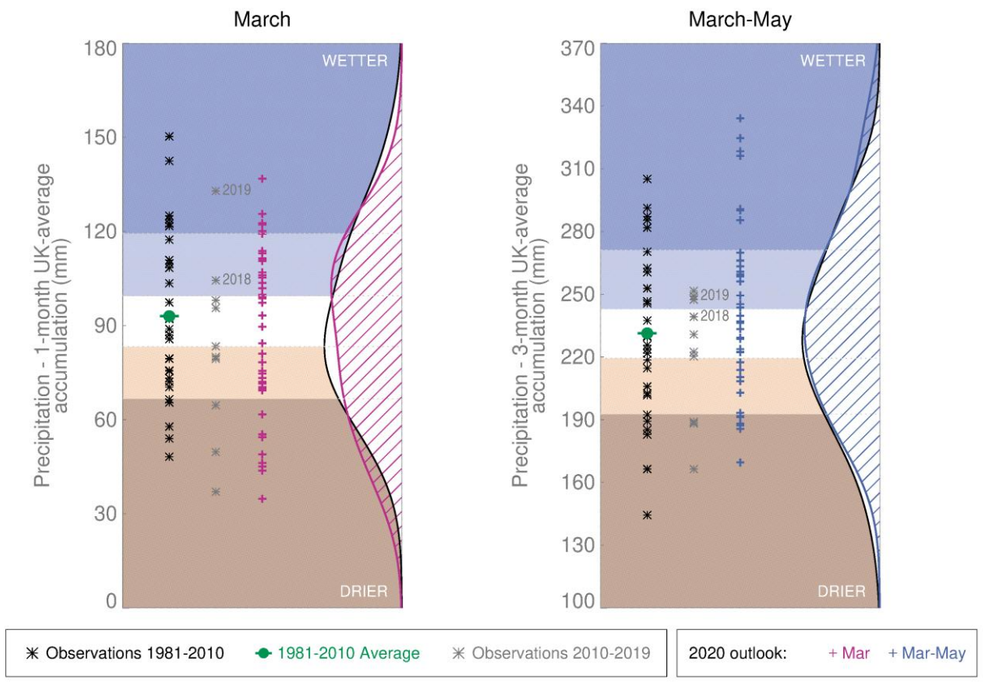
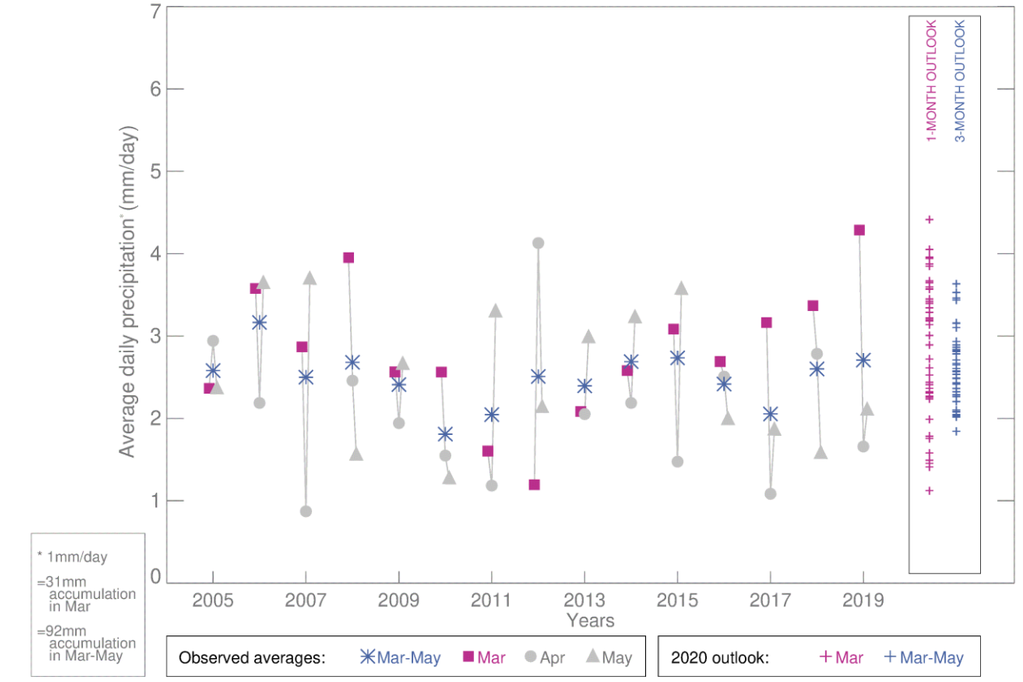


Fig P3



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-7-day) forecasts and warnings available to the contingency planning community from the Met Office.