



Met Office

Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: February – April 2020 Issue date: 24.01.20

The forecast presented here is for February and the average of the February-March-April period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for February will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 31st January 2020.

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

SUMMARY – TEMPERATURE:

For February and February-March-April as a whole, above-average temperatures are more likely than below-average temperatures. Impacts from cold weather remain possible, but they are less likely than normal.

Overall, the probability that the UK-average temperature for February-March-April will fall into the coldest of our five categories is around 5% and the probability that it will fall into the warmest of our five categories is 50% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

The El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is currently in a neutral phase, with little likelihood of a significant El Niño or La Niña event developing during the Outlook period. Similarly, the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) has returned to a neutral state following a strong positive event in the second half of last year. Neither are expected to influence UK weather patterns in the next 3 months.

The Stratospheric Polar Vortex (SPV) – the circulation of winds in the stratosphere above the Arctic – is currently stronger than average and there is an increased likelihood it will remain stronger than average over most of the Outlook period. A strong SPV favours a positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) and milder-than-normal conditions.

Patterns of predicted rainfall in the Tropics suggest an increased likelihood of higher-than-normal pressure over continental Europe. This increases the chances of mild westerly or southwesterly winds over the UK.

For February and February-March-April as a whole, the Met Office long-range prediction system and systems from other centres around the world agree on an increased chance of a positive phase of the NAO and higher-than-normal pressure centred to the south or southeast of the UK. Along with the warming of climate, this contributes to an increase in the probability of above-average temperatures (see graphs of figure T2). Note that below-average temperatures remain possible, although less likely.

Fig T1

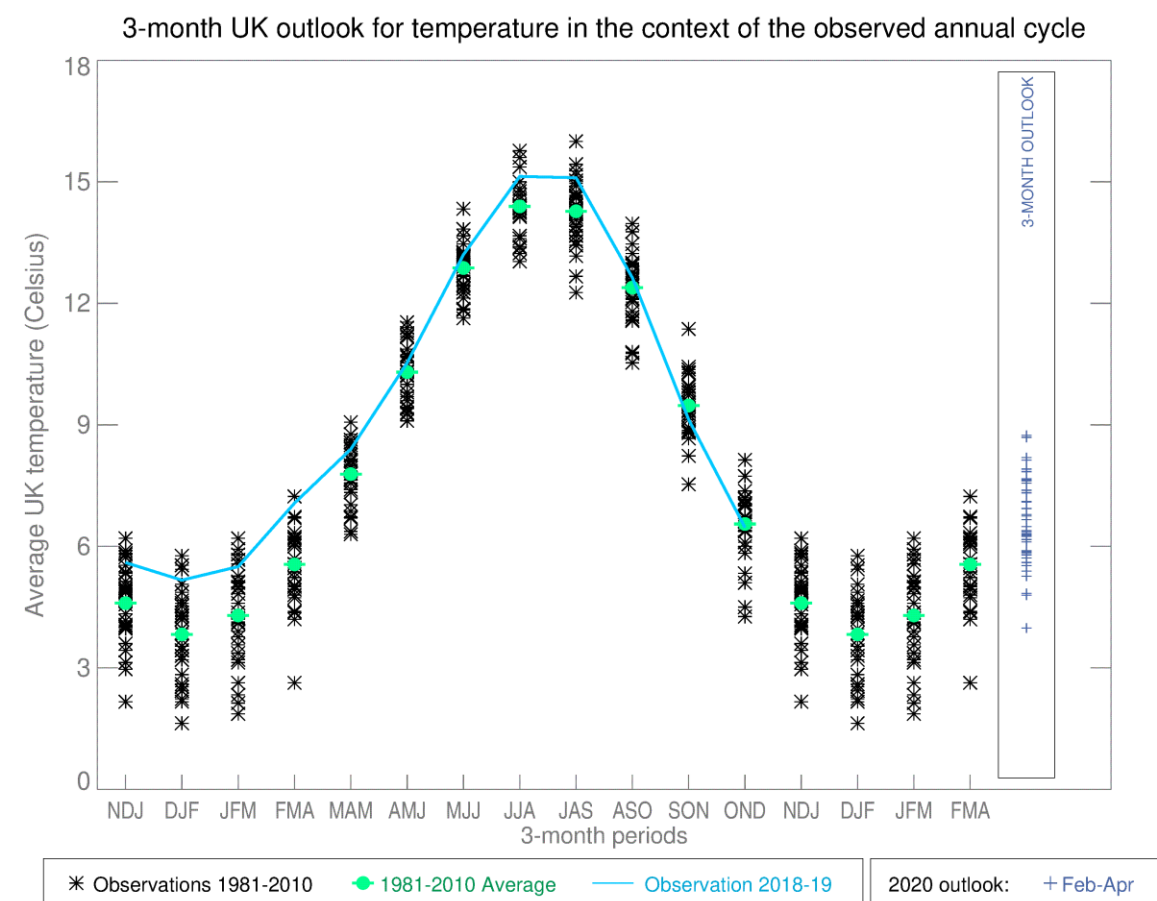


Fig T2

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

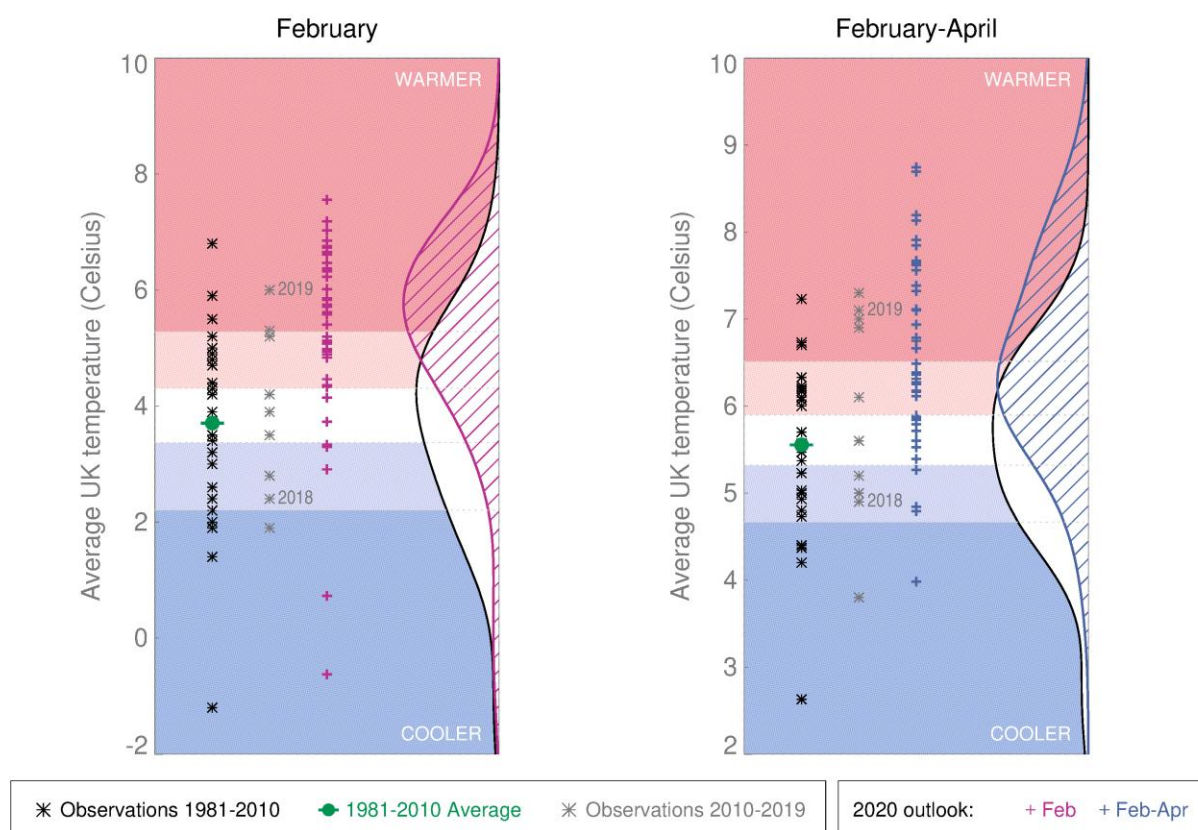
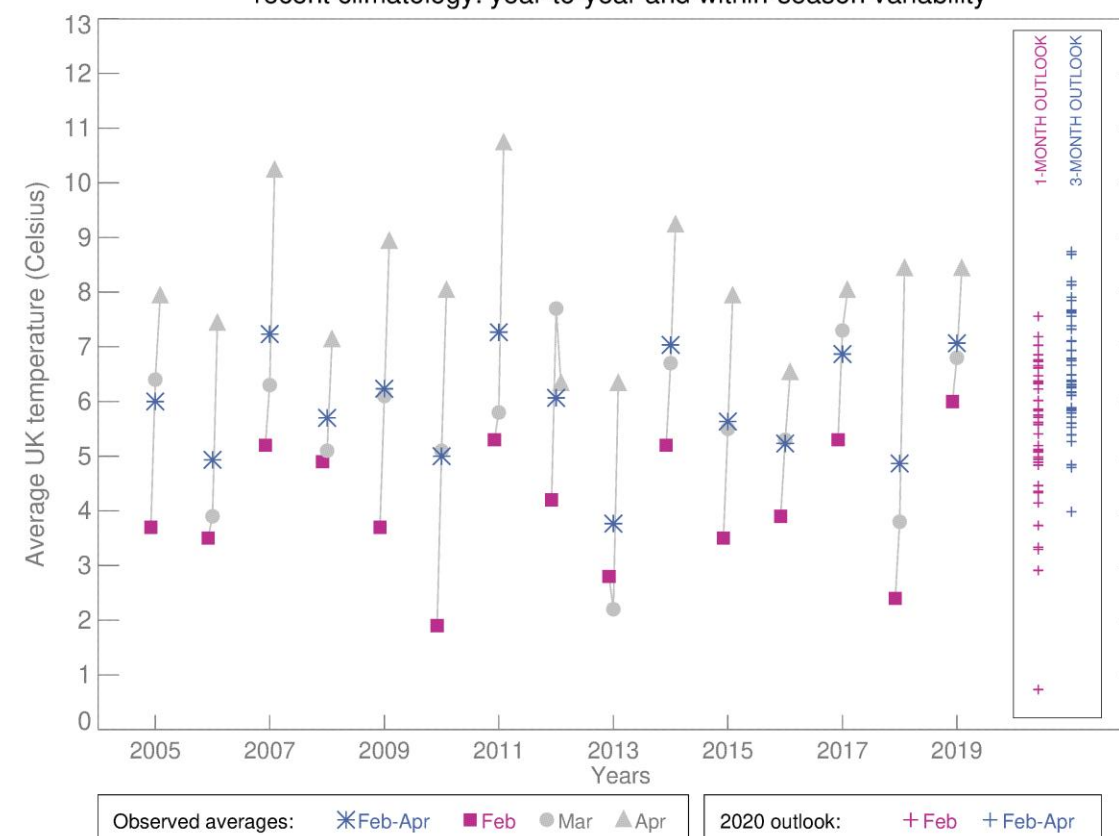


Fig T3

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