Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: January – March 2017 Issue date: 15.12.16

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 The forecast for January will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 2 January 2016.

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

SUMMARY – PRECIPITATION:

During January and for January-February-March as a whole there is only a slight shift from the normal range of expected conditions, with above-average and below-average precipitation considered nearly equally probable.
The probability that UK-average 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 of our five categories is between 15 and 20% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

As discussed in the temperature outlook, factors such as a stronger stratospheric polar vortex and the SST pattern across the Atlantic, along with predictions from the Met Office seasonal prediction system, suggest an increased chance of a positive NAO pattern during January and in January, February and March as a whole. In January, an increased likelihood of mid-Atlantic blocking moderates the tendency for wet conditions resulting from the positive NAO. The left-hand graph in figure P2 highlights this, showing that the chances of above-average and below-average precipitation are similar.

For the season as a whole (January-February-March), the increased likelihood of positive NAO is expected to be accompanied by an increased chance of a high-pressure ridge to the south. This is expected to moderate the tendency for wet conditions, meaning that above-average precipitation is only slightly more likely than below-average precipitation (see the right-hand graph in figure P2). With this weather pattern, the chances of spells of windy weather are slightly higher than normal.

Fig P1

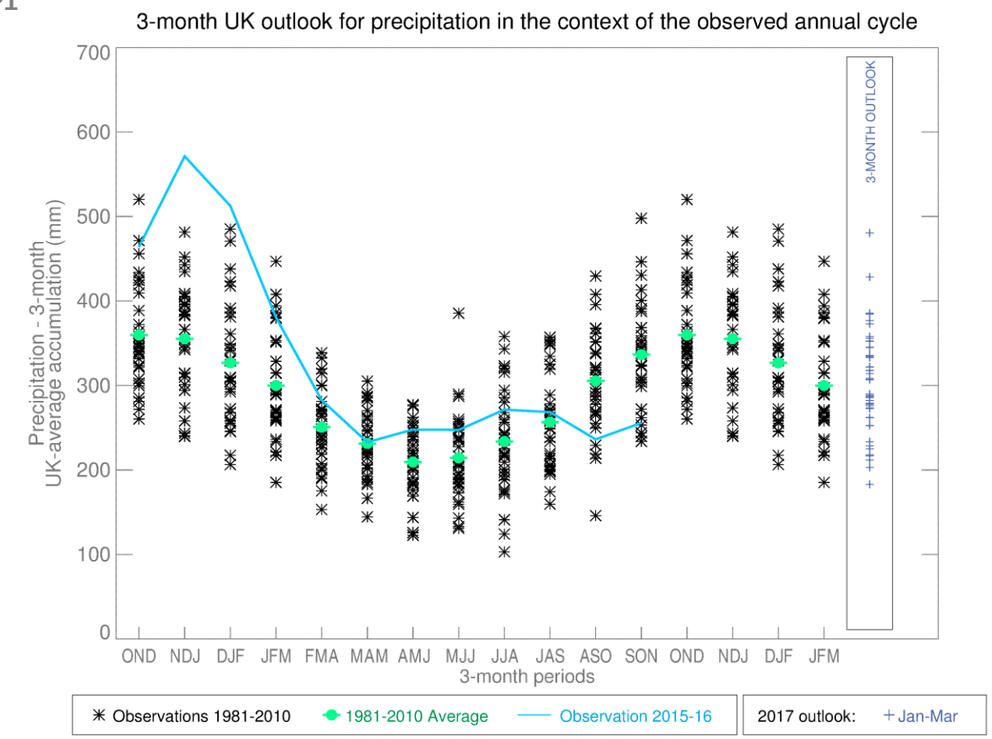


Fig P2

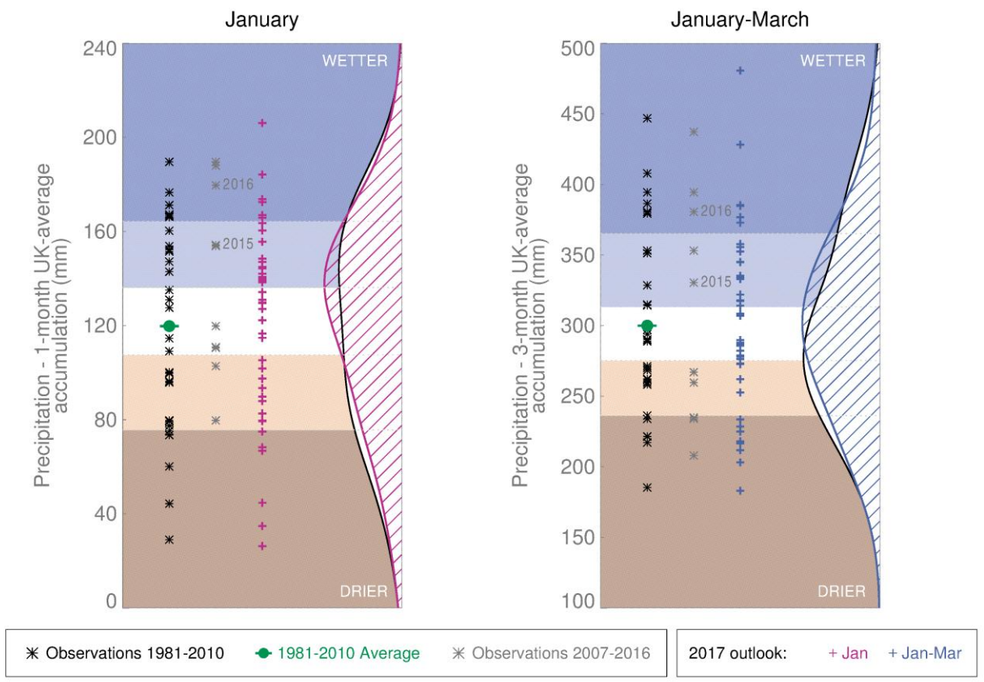
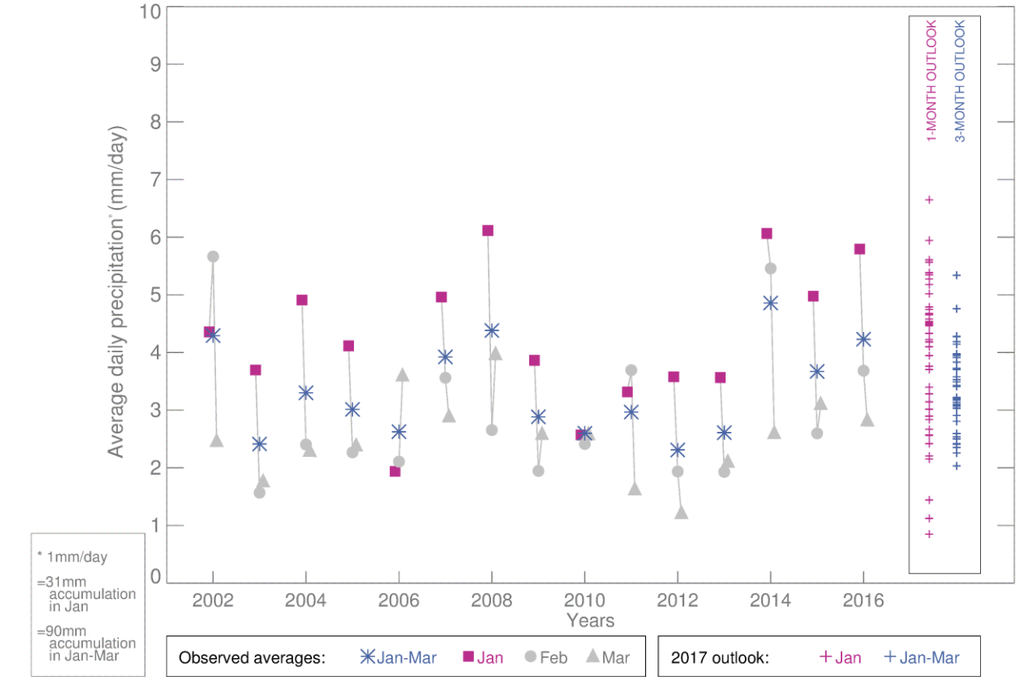


Fig P3



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-5-day) forecasts and warnings available to the contingency planning community from the Met Office.