Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: October - December 2014 Issue date: 24.09.14

The forecast presented here is for October and the average of the October-November-December period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for October will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 3 October 2014.

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

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

The latest predictions for UK precipitation favour near- or above-average rainfall during October and above-average rainfall for October-November-December as a whole.

The probability that UK precipitation for October-November-December will fall into the driest of our five categories is around 15% and the probability that it will fall into the wettest category is between 25 and 30% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

Autumn marks a shift in character of the precipitation across the UK. In summer it is often convective in nature which can lead to quite large localised variations in accumulations across any given region. In autumn it becomes increasingly dominated by larger scale weather systems driven by Atlantic depressions bringing more periods of widespread rain. At this time of year these depressions can be intense and carry large amounts of moisture making the latter part of autumn and early winter often the stormiest and wettest part of the year. This is all reflected in figure P1 which shows the October-November-December period being, climatologically, the wettest period of the year.

As discussed in the temperature section, there is remarkable consistency in computer models' hemisphere-wide projections for a large part of October, November and December, including an increased frequency of cyclonic weather types affecting the UK. This, in turn, brings an increased risk of episodes of heavy rainfall relative to what is usual for the time of year, and clearly a marked change from the recent period of settled weather. As such wetter-than-average conditions are favoured over drier-than-average (Figure P2).

Fig P1

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

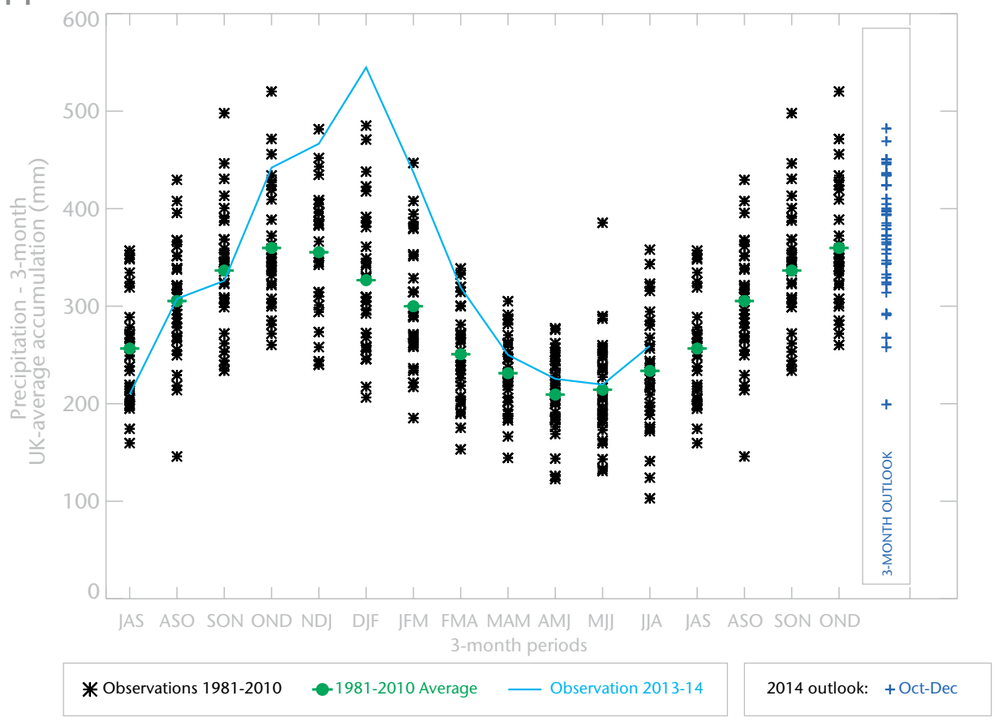


Fig P2

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

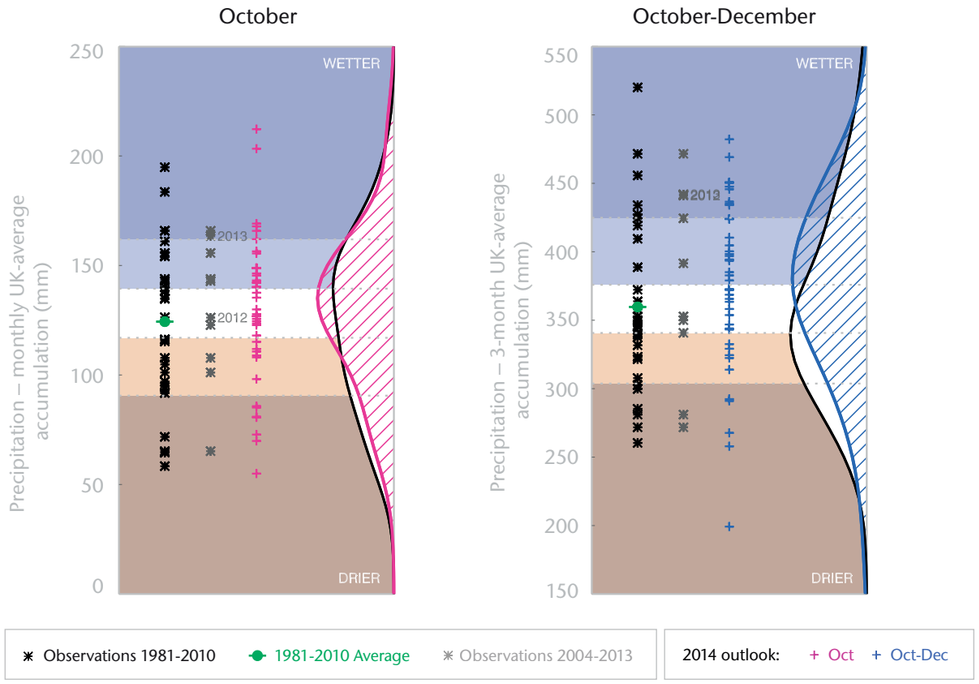
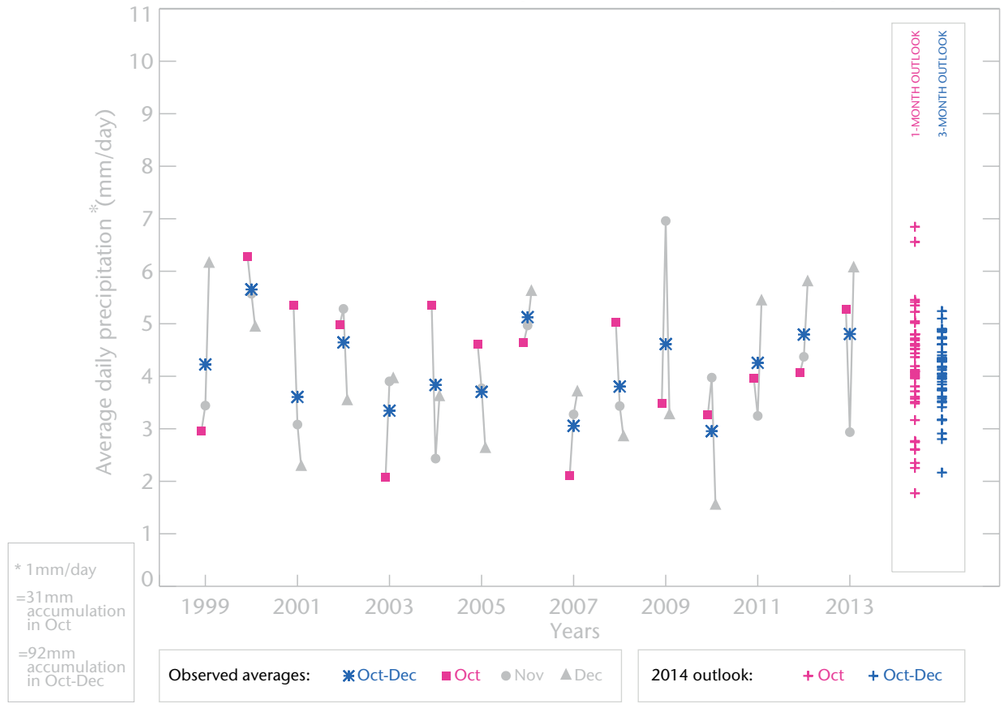


Fig P3

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.