

Severe Weather Assessment for Tropical Cyclone PAM

Issued on Saturday, 14th March 2015 at 2030 UTC

Summary

Cyclone Pam is now located to the south of Vanuatu and southwest of New Caledonia, still as a Category 5 Cyclone but now with no further significant impacts across the islands. There is good agreement between the Met Office Global Model (GM), EC, GFS and Ensemble output for a continued track southwest-wards through Sunday as it passes just to the northeast of New Zealand, weakening into a Category 1 Cyclone during Sunday.

In its wake the ITCZ precipitation band will bring further heavy showers and thunderstorms to the Vanuatu Islands, with the more northern islands seeing the highest rainfall totals where up to 40mm could accumulate during Sunday in a few places.

However, all models push the ITCZ northwards through Monday, with much of Vanuatu becoming mostly dry by Tuesday. This improved weather situation is expected to continue through the rest of next week across Vanuatu helping the recovery efforts.

There is confidence that Cyclone Pam will track southeast-wards to the northeast of New Zealand through Sunday. However, gusts to 60kt are possible across the North Cape and East Cape, with up to 100mm of rainfall possible in this region in 24 hours. Very large waves are also expected for time around the north of North Island on Sunday and Monday.

These conditions could produce local flood impacts, a risk of power loss and damage to buildings, but Auckland looks likely to escape the worst conditions, with only a low probability of Pam taking a track far enough south to produce high impact conditions in Auckland.

Further west, Cyclone Nathan has been slow moving off the east coast of the Cape York Peninsula. All the model output available suggests Nathan remaining slow moving off the coast, possibly strengthening into a Category 2 Cyclone.

Further south across Queensland the weather is expected to remain settled with good aviation weather across much of the Coral Sea away from Cyclone Nathan.

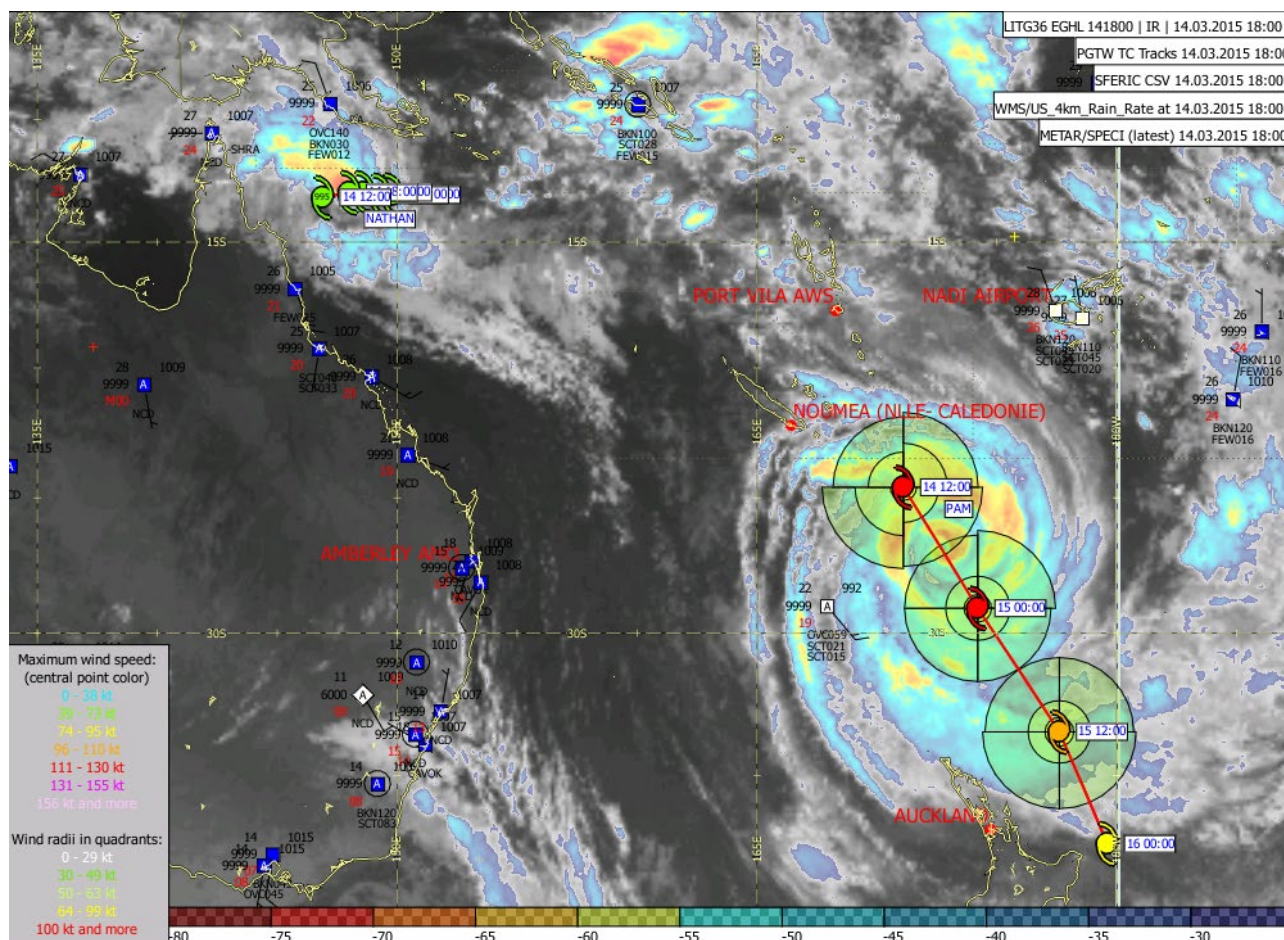
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Fig 1: 14/1800 Z colour enhanced IR imagery to show position of TC Pam. Imagery is colour enhanced to show coldest cloud tops, which can be thought of as a proxy for heaviest rainfall. Forecast tracks are from the Joint Typhoon Warning Centre.



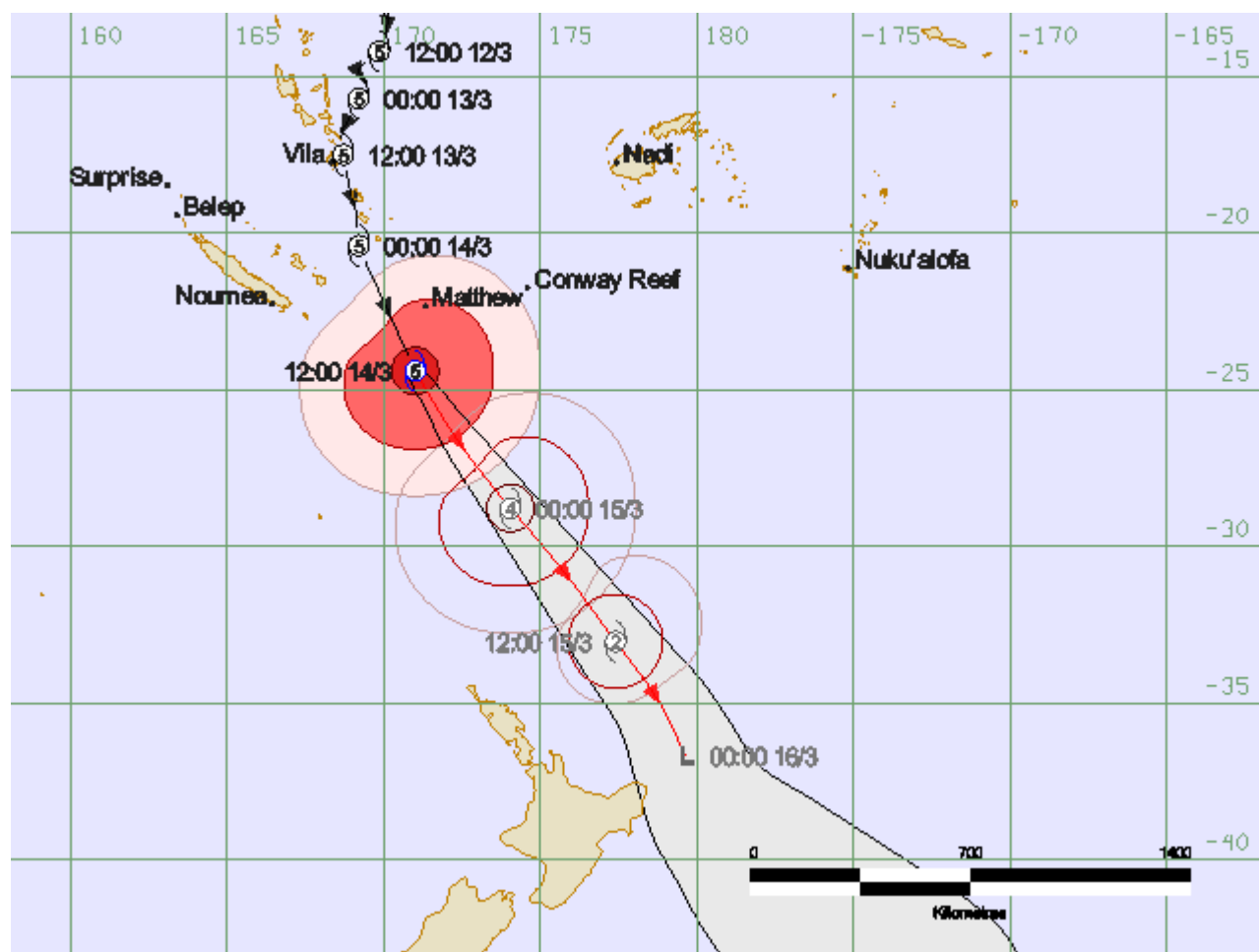
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Fig 2: Official forecast track from Fiji Meteorological Service - <http://www.met.gov.fj/>



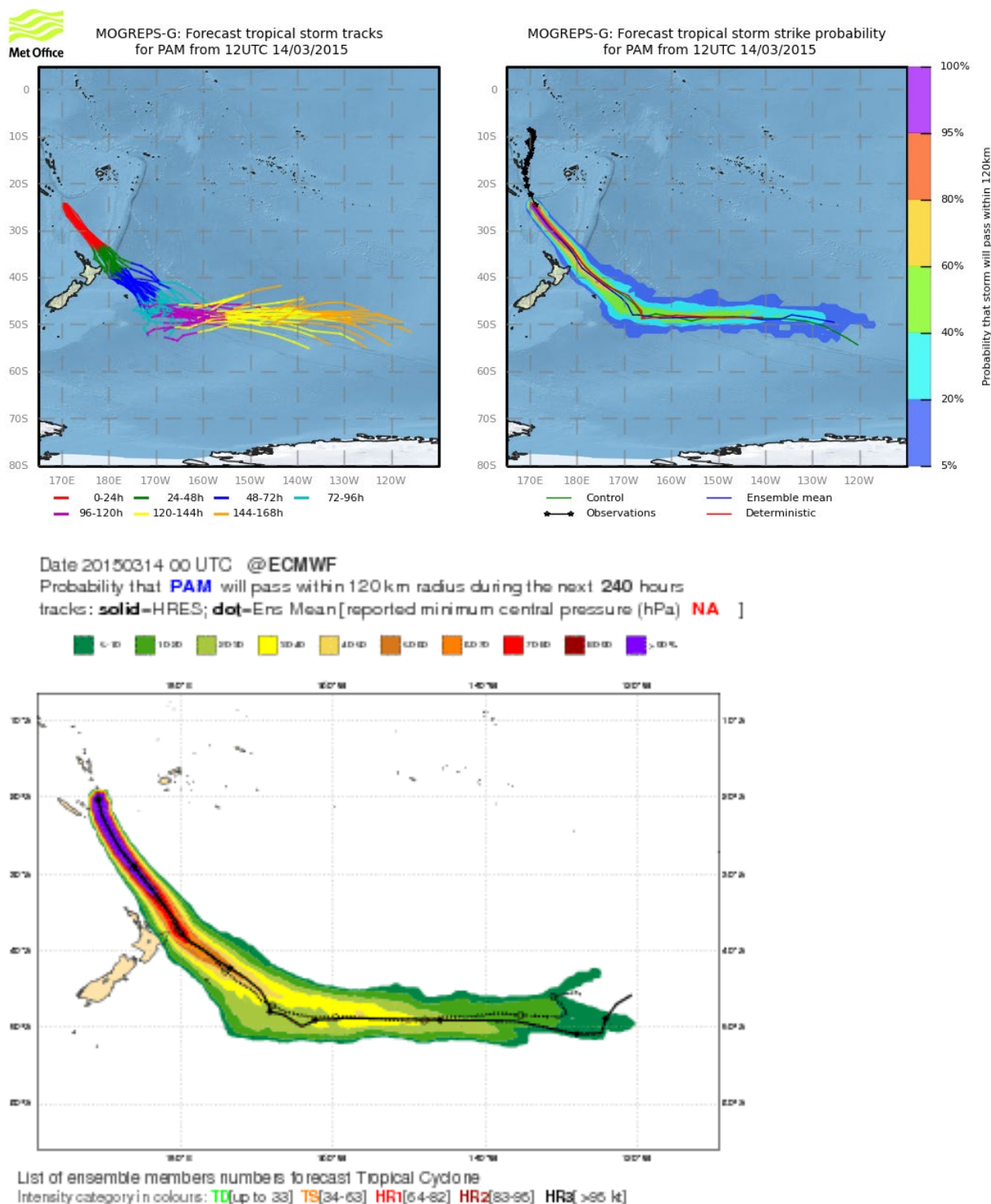
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Fig 3: Latest ensemble output from MOGREPS-G (top) and ECMWF (bottom), both showing high confidence for the track across the SW Pacific away from the areas affect by Pam. However, both models have a minority of ensemble members that clip the East Cape region of the North Island, New Zealand.



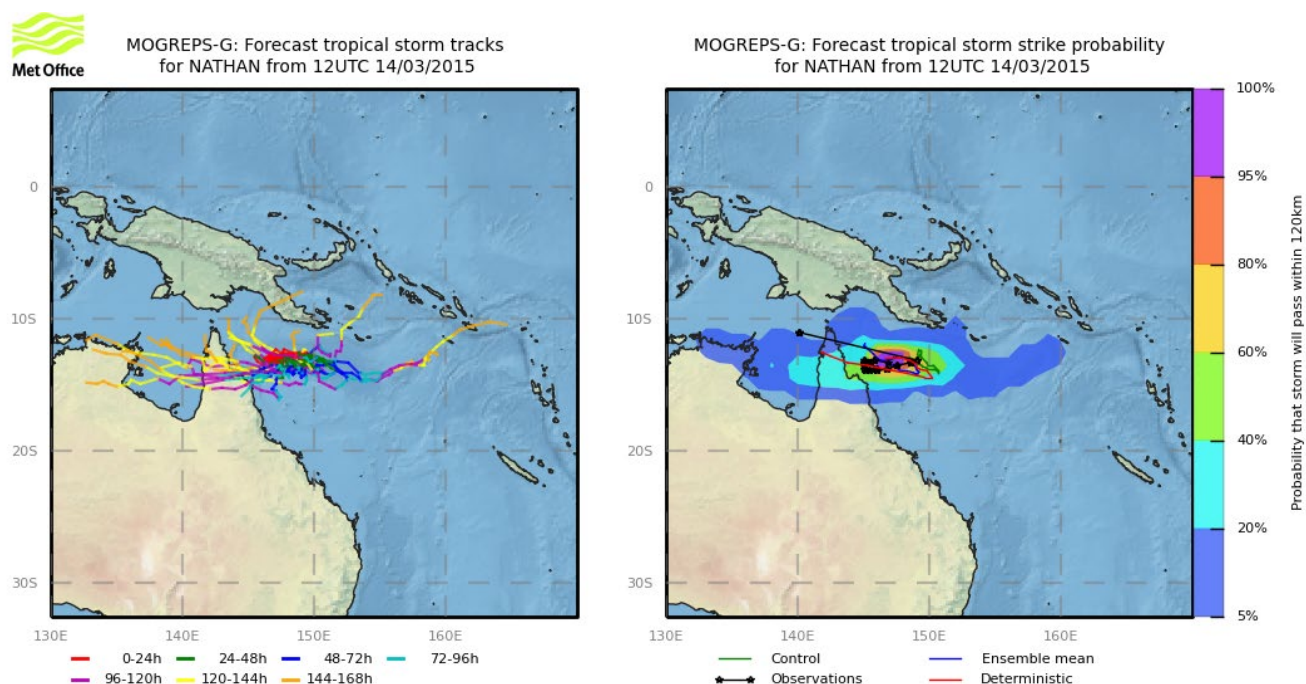
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Fig 4: Latest ensemble output for TC Nathan from MOGREPS-G.



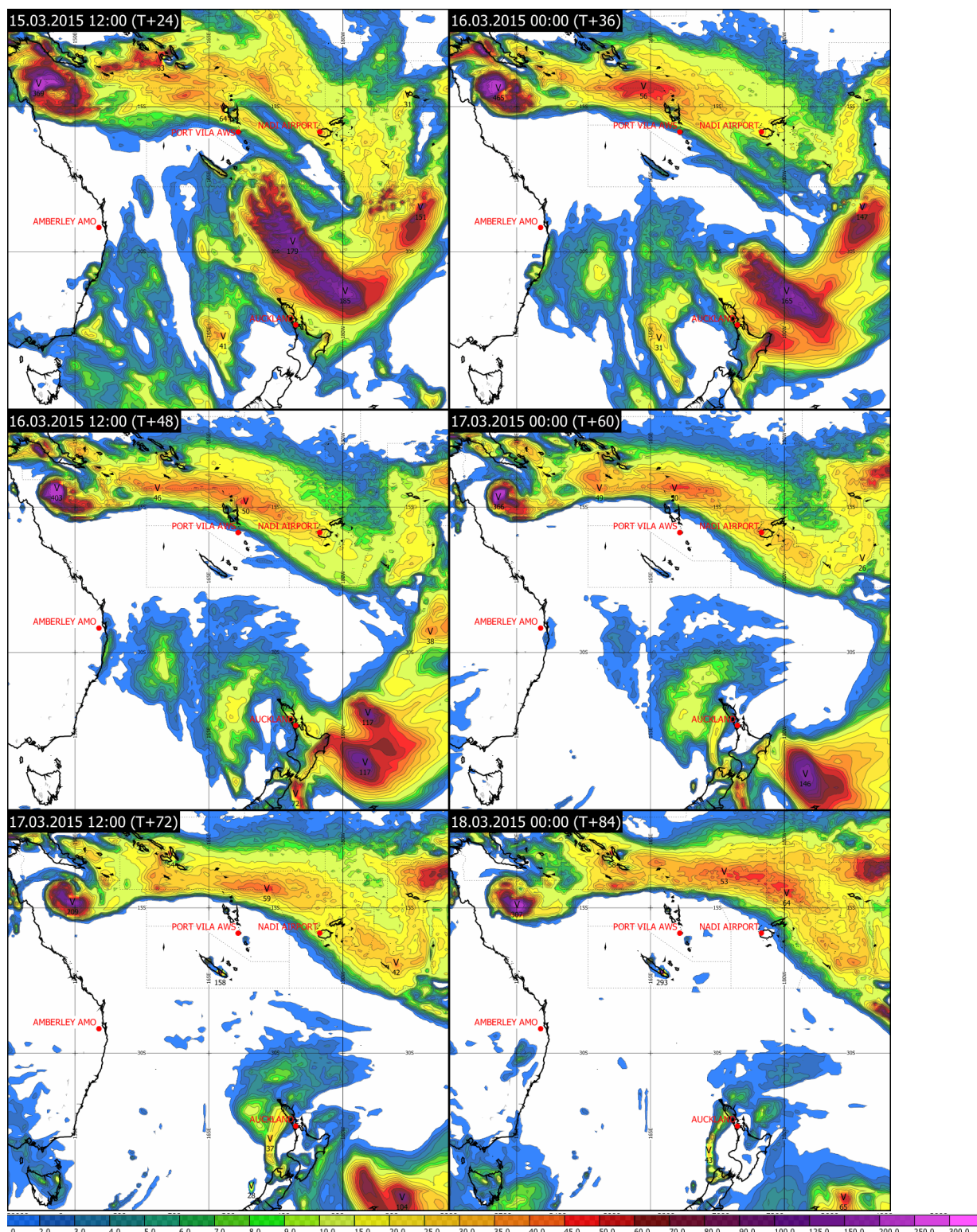
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Fig 5: 14/12Z 12-hr rainfall accumulations from the GM.



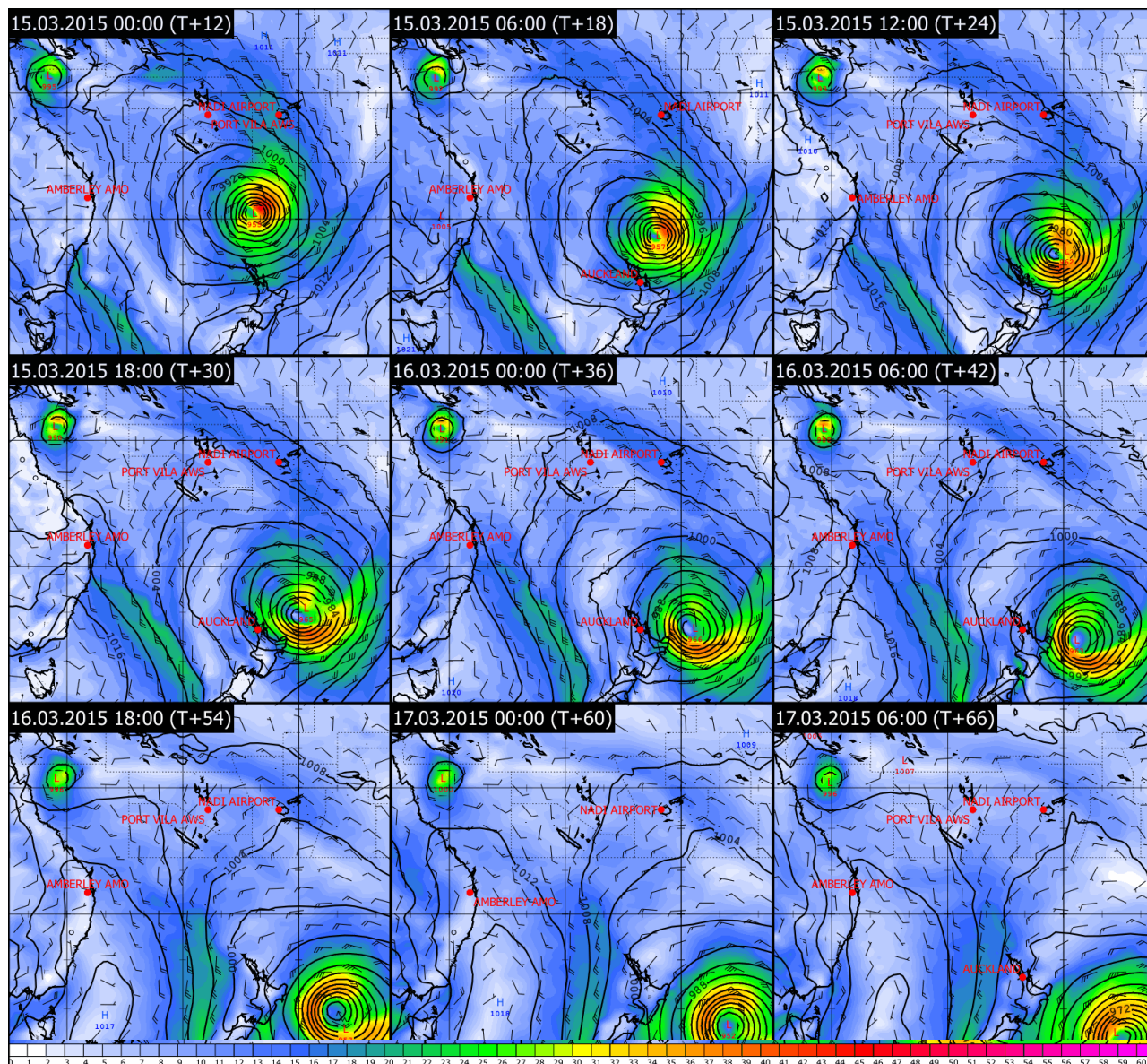
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Fig 6: 14/12Z 12-hr 10m wind barbs and gust speeds (m/s) from the GM.



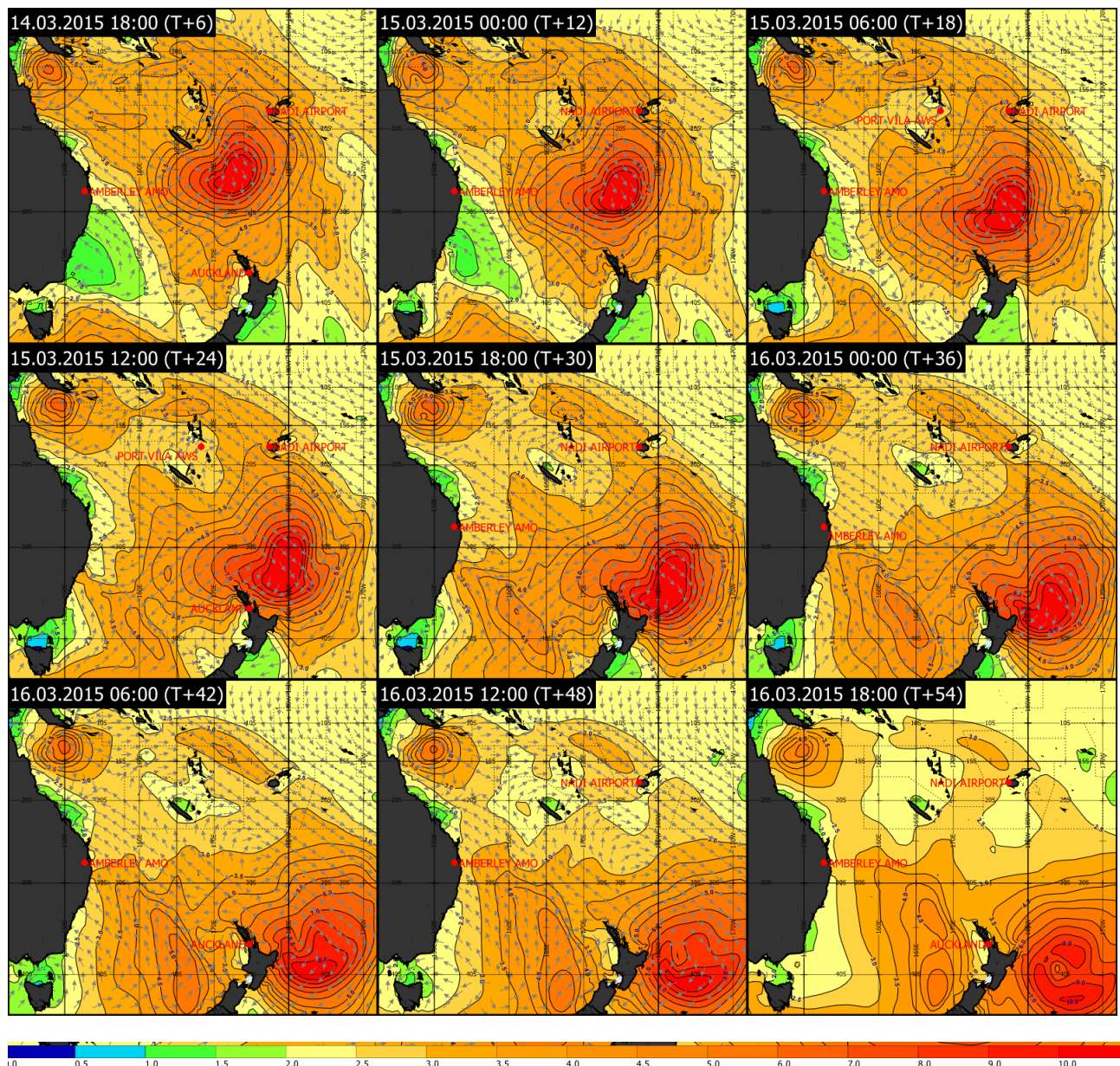
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Fig 7: 14/12Z GM significant wave heights.



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