

The forecast presented here is for December and the average of the December-January-February period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for December will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 4 December 2015.

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

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

For December and December-January-February as a whole above-average precipitation is more probable than below-average.

The probability that UK-average precipitation for December-January-February will fall into the driest of our five categories is between 10% and 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:

As discussed in the temperature section, the ongoing El Niño event, together with the westerly phase of the Quasi-Biennial Oscillation (QBO), increases the chance of a positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) in early winter.

At this time of year, the positive phase of the NAO is associated with above-average precipitation and an increased frequency of Atlantic depressions crossing the UK.

During December, the Met Office seasonal prediction system, along with systems from other global forecast centres, supports an increased risk of above-average rainfall. The left-hand graph in figure P2 highlights a clear shift towards

above-average precipitation with a reduced probability of below-average precipitation and an increased probability of above-average precipitation compared to normal. Furthermore, the risk of spells of windy or even stormy weather is expected to be greater than usual for the time of year.

For the season as a whole (December-January-February) predictions are more uncertain. Through the first half of the period, wetter-than-average conditions are more likely than drier-than-average, given that the positive NAO phase is likely to prevail. Thereafter the uncertainty in precipitation increases, as this is dependent on the position of the blocked weather patterns which are more likely to develop later in the winter.

Fig P1

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

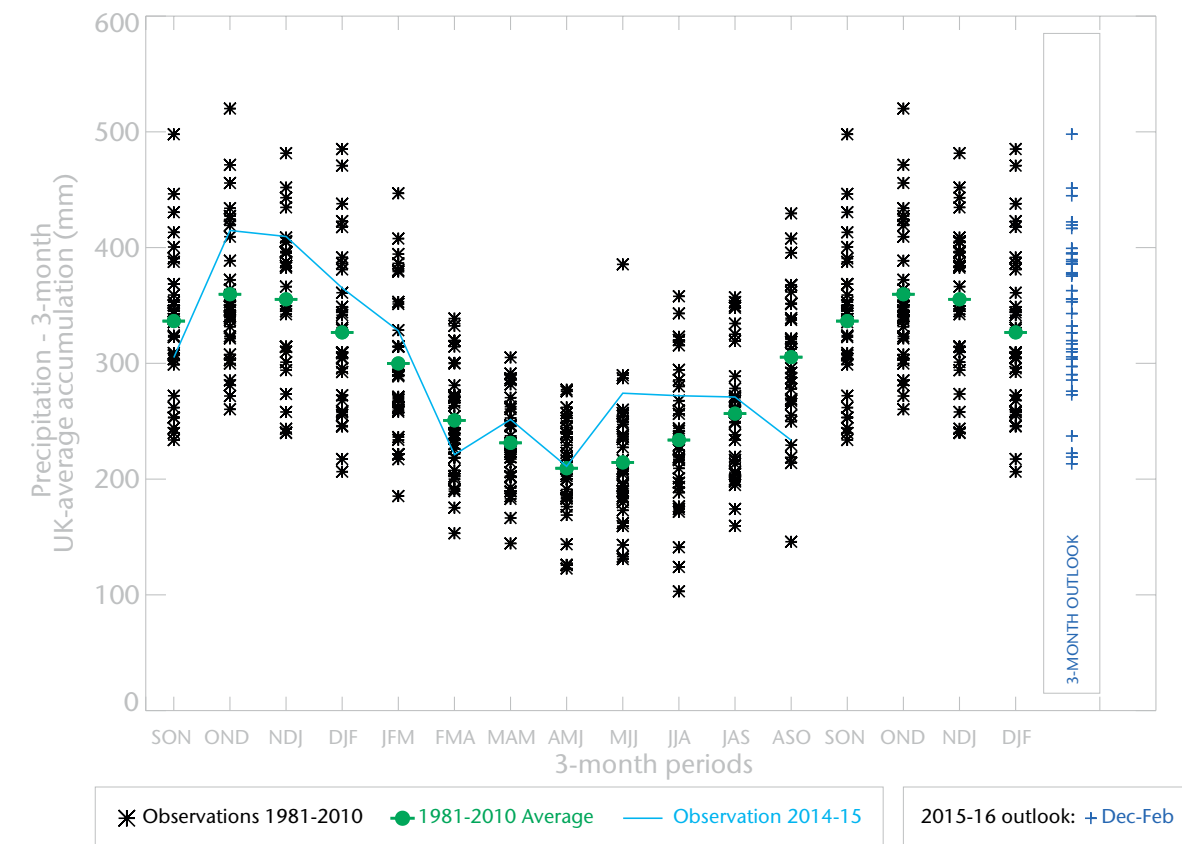


Fig P2

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

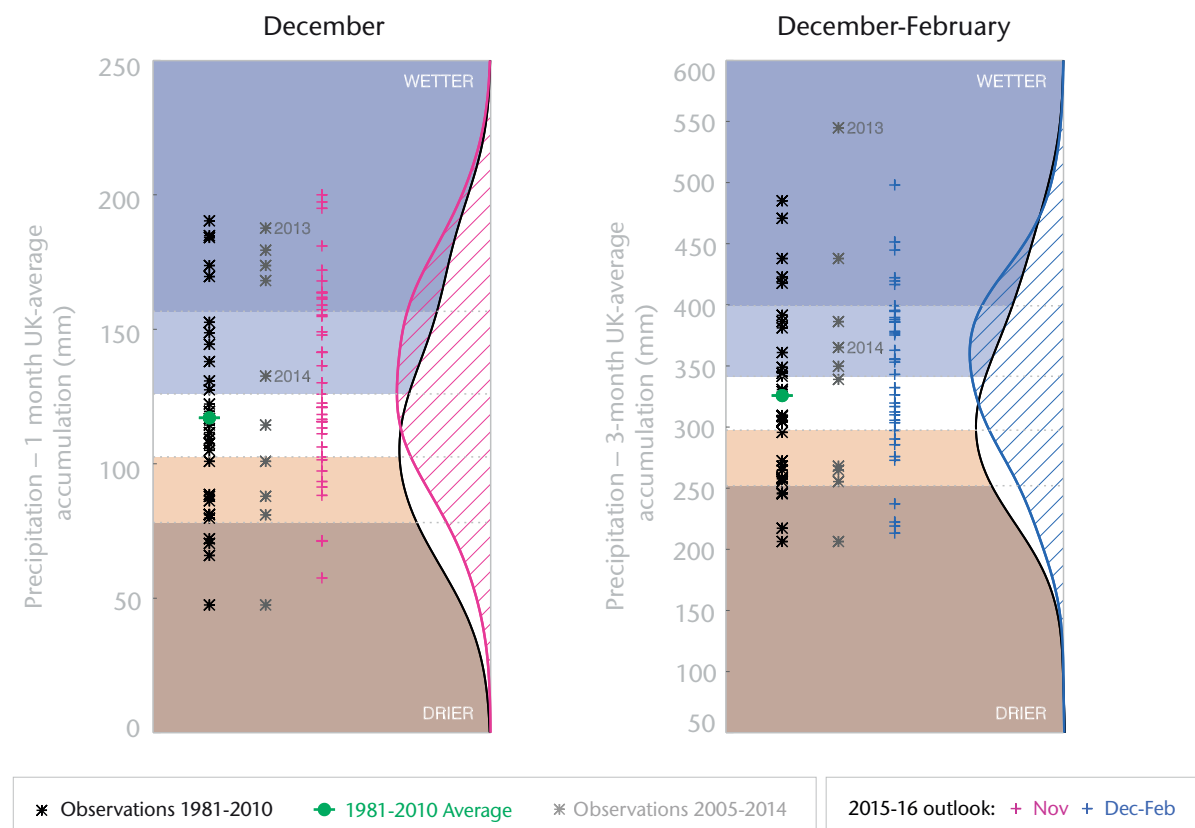
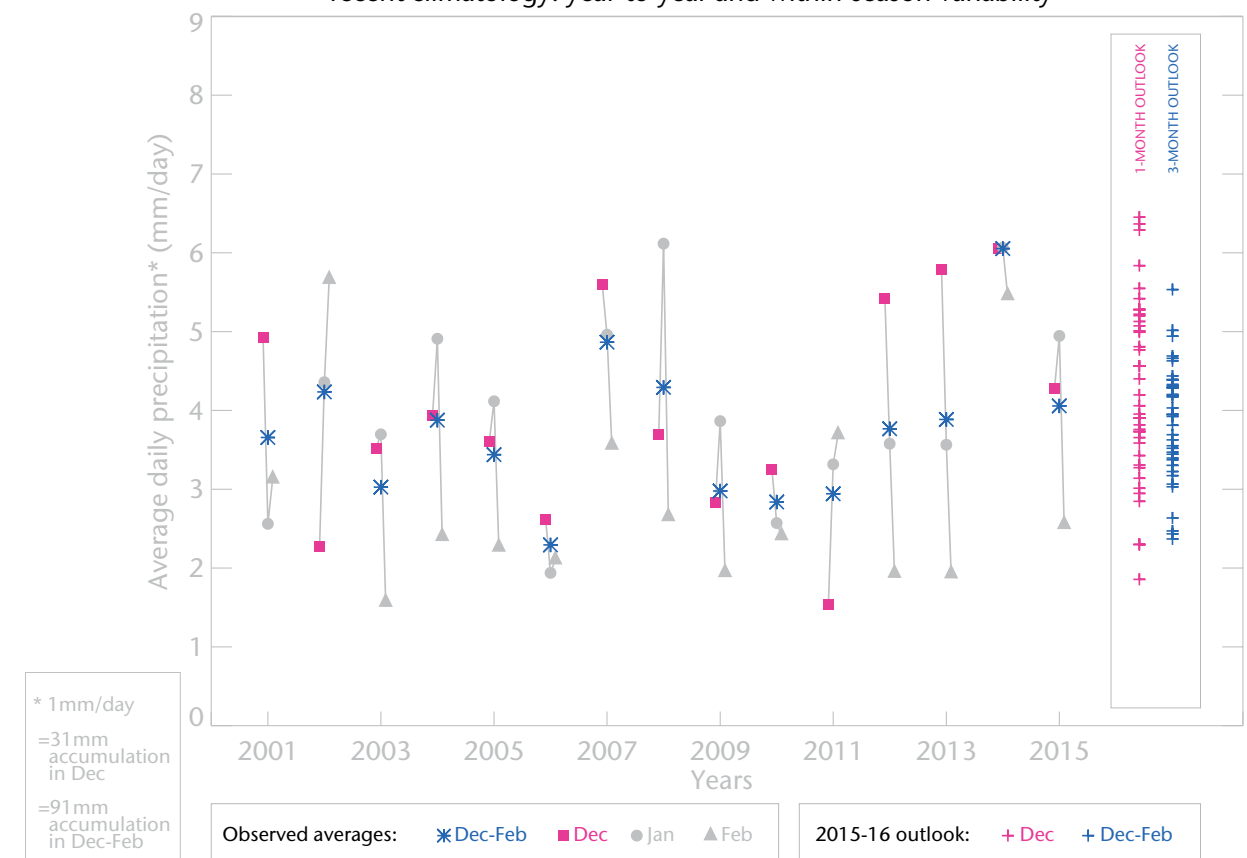


Fig P3

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.