

The forecast presented here is for March and the average of the March-April-May period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for March will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page ([www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast)), starting from 27 February 2015.

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

## SUMMARY - TEMPERATURE:

For March near- to above-average temperatures are more probable than below-average. For March-April-May although above-average temperatures are more probable than below-average, predictability is low.

Overall, the probability that the UK-mean temperature for March-April-May will fall into the coldest of our five categories is around 15% and the probability that it will fall into the warmest category is around 25% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

## CONTEXT:

Much of the tropical Pacific Ocean remains warmer than average, but just below El Niño thresholds. Climate models suggest little change in the coming months, with near-neutral conditions the most probable outcome; this will offer little predictive value for conditions across Europe during the period of this forecast.

Spring is a transitional time of year, with large-scale global drivers becoming less influential and predictability declining. Early in the season, the Quasi-Biennial Oscillation (QBO), an oscillation of the equatorial wind in the stratosphere, can still be a useful source of predictability. Currently, the QBO is in an easterly phase which increases the probability of disruptions to the polar vortex. A weaker polar vortex can lead to a greater incidence of blocking patterns over the northern hemisphere in early spring, which would increase the probability of cold weather across northern Europe. However, models show no indication of the polar vortex being disrupted in the coming weeks, with the circulation pattern over northern Europe and the North

Atlantic most likely to be similar to that seen so far this year, that is predominately westerly or northwesterly.

For March, there is a reasonably strong signal, from several models, for a continuation of a positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation, with winds blowing frequently from the west. Overall this pattern typically brings near- to above-average temperatures but, as seen in the winter, this does not preclude occasional spells of colder weather. The left-hand graph in figure T2 shows a shift towards milder conditions and the chance of a prolonged, severe spell of cold weather, such as in 2013, is reduced compared to climatology.

As already noted above, predictability in spring is lower than in the winter, with large scale global drivers less influential. For March-April-May as a whole no strong signals emerge from models for temperature; this is reflected in the right-hand graph of figure T2, with the forecast curve only slightly shifted towards above-average temperatures.

Fig T1

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

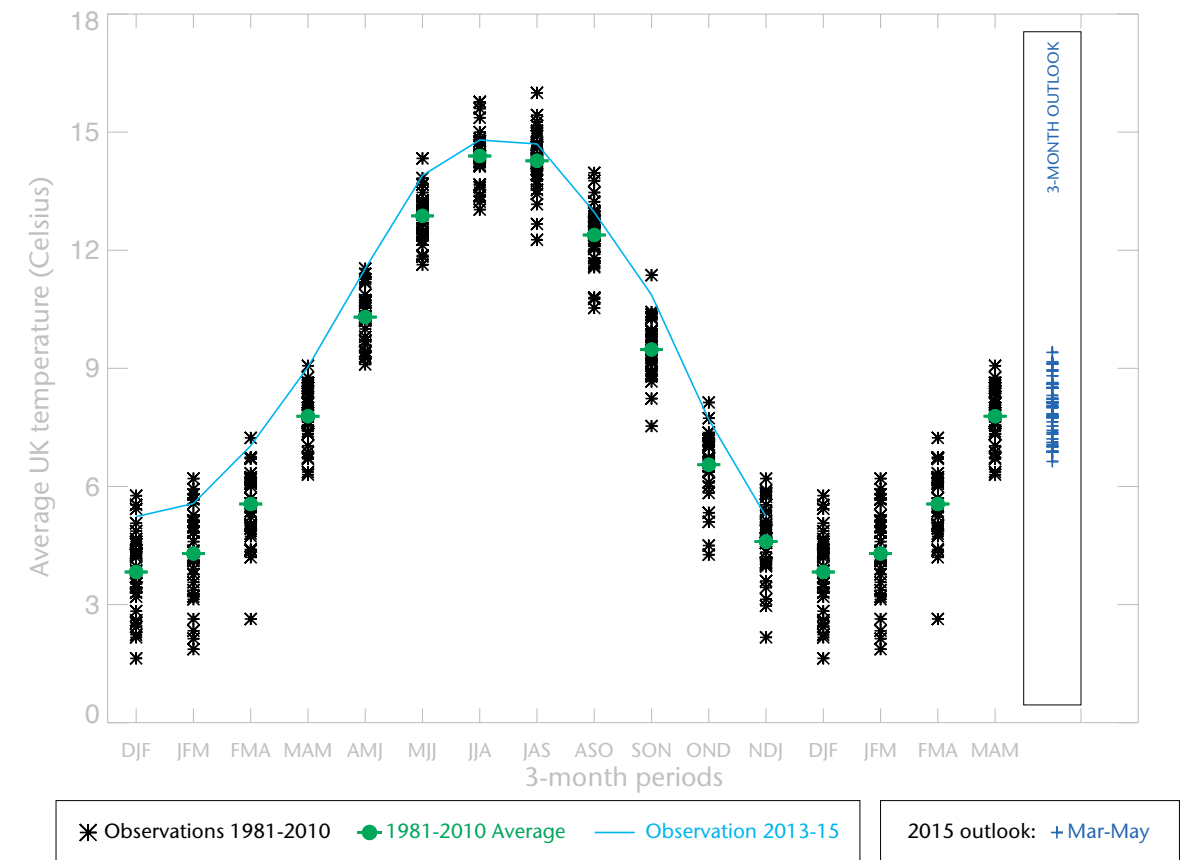


Fig T2

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

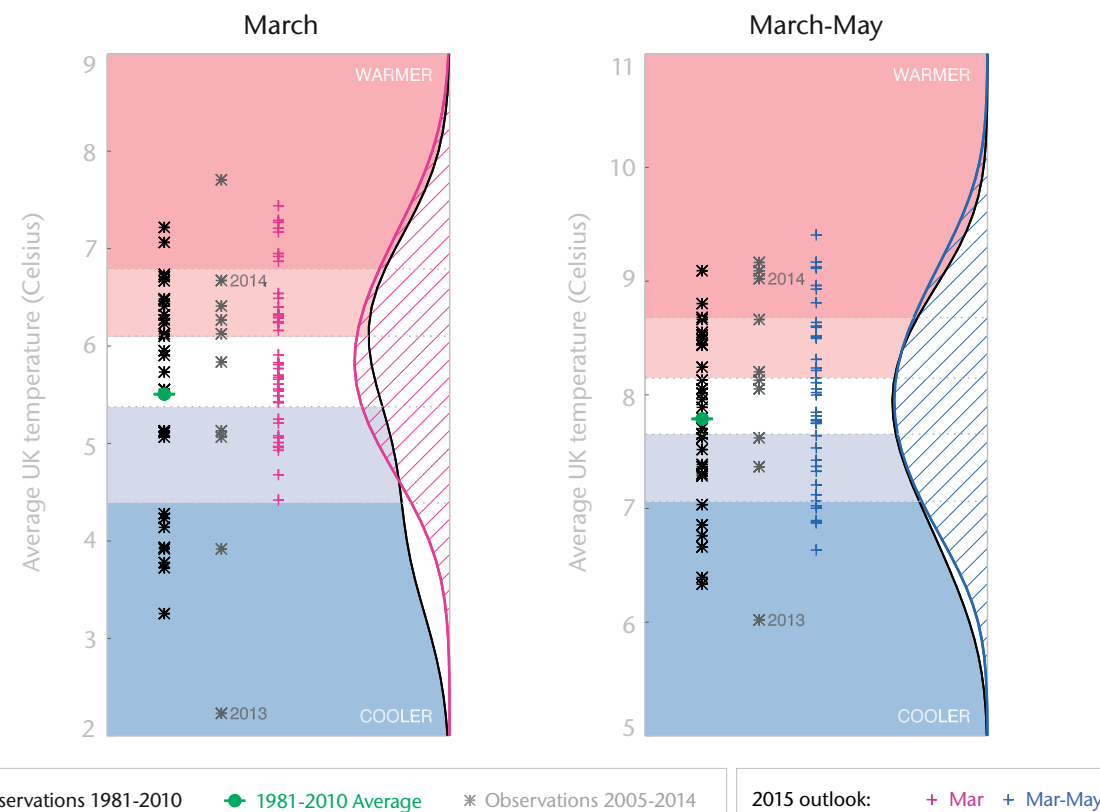
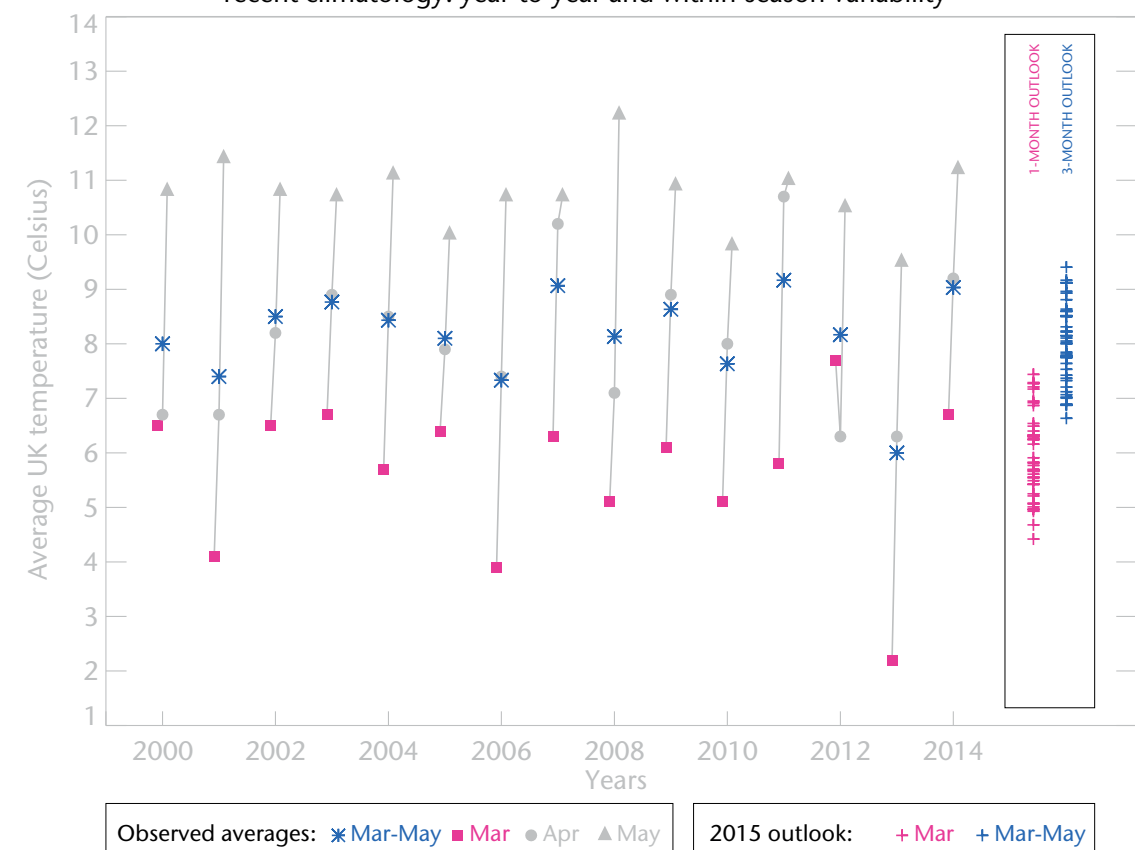


Fig T3

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