

The forecast presented here is for February and the average of the February-March-April period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for February will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 7th February 2014.

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

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

During February, the balance of probabilities suggests a continuation of the very unsettled weather experienced so far this winter, with above-average rainfall most probable. For February-March-April, predictions for rainfall are very uncertain and largely indistinguishable from climatology.

The probability that UK precipitation for February-March-April will fall into the wettest of our five categories is between 20 and 25% and the probability of falling into the driest of our five categories is between 15 and 20% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

The winter season so far has been characterised by a series of Atlantic storms crossing the UK, bringing frequent spells of wet and windy weather. The frequency of heavy rainfall and strong wind events has been higher than in a typical winter. This increased storminess is consistent with the predominately positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO).

As discussed in the temperature section, there is a preference in computer models for the positive phase of the NAO to continue in February and therefore conditions to be similar to those experienced so far this winter. The left-hand graph in figure P2 highlights a shift towards above-average rainfall. During February, the pattern of

atmospheric circulation which favours above-average precipitation also tends to increase the frequency of Atlantic storms crossing the UK and spells of windy weather may be more frequent than is typical.

For February-March-April as a whole, confidence in rainfall predictions is relatively low. At this time of year, large scale global forcing factors become weaker and therefore predictability is lower than in the winter months. The right-hand side graph of figure P2 reflects this, being largely indistinguishable from climatology.

Fig P1

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

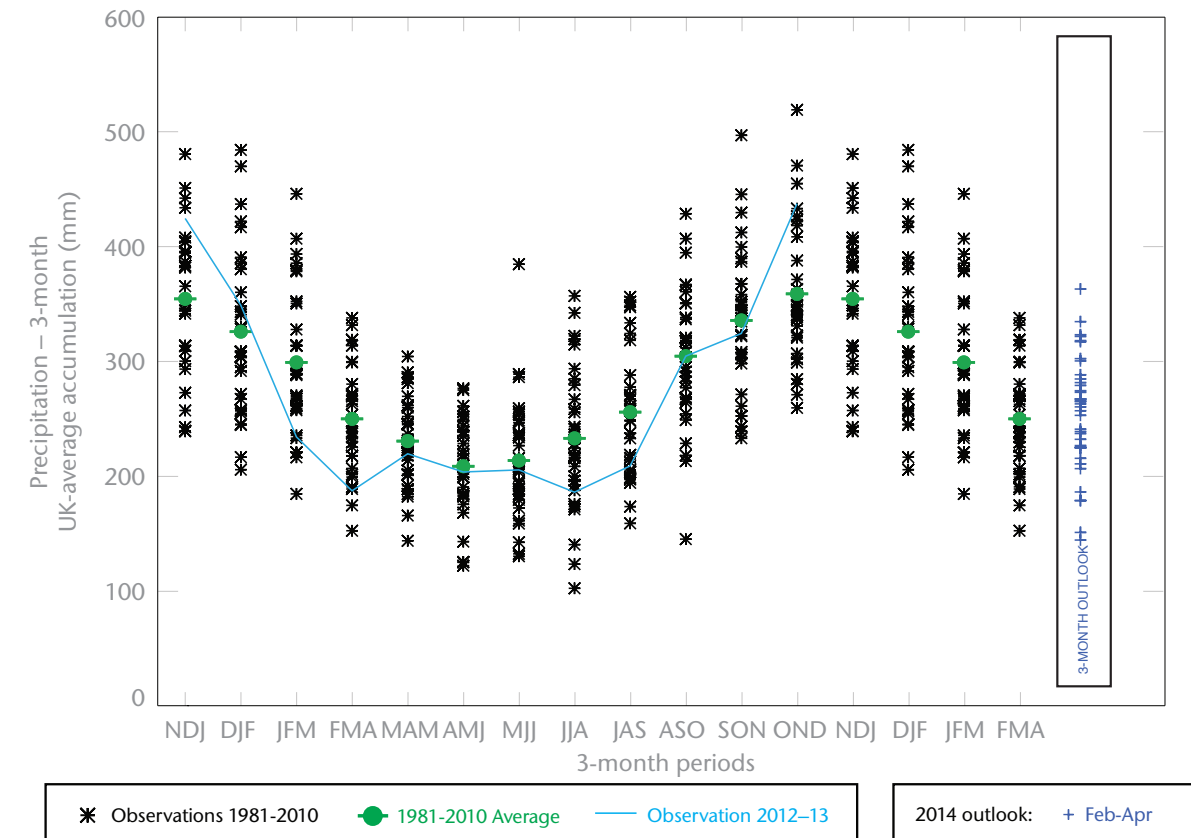


Fig P2 1-month and 3-month UK outlook for precipitation in the context of observed climatology

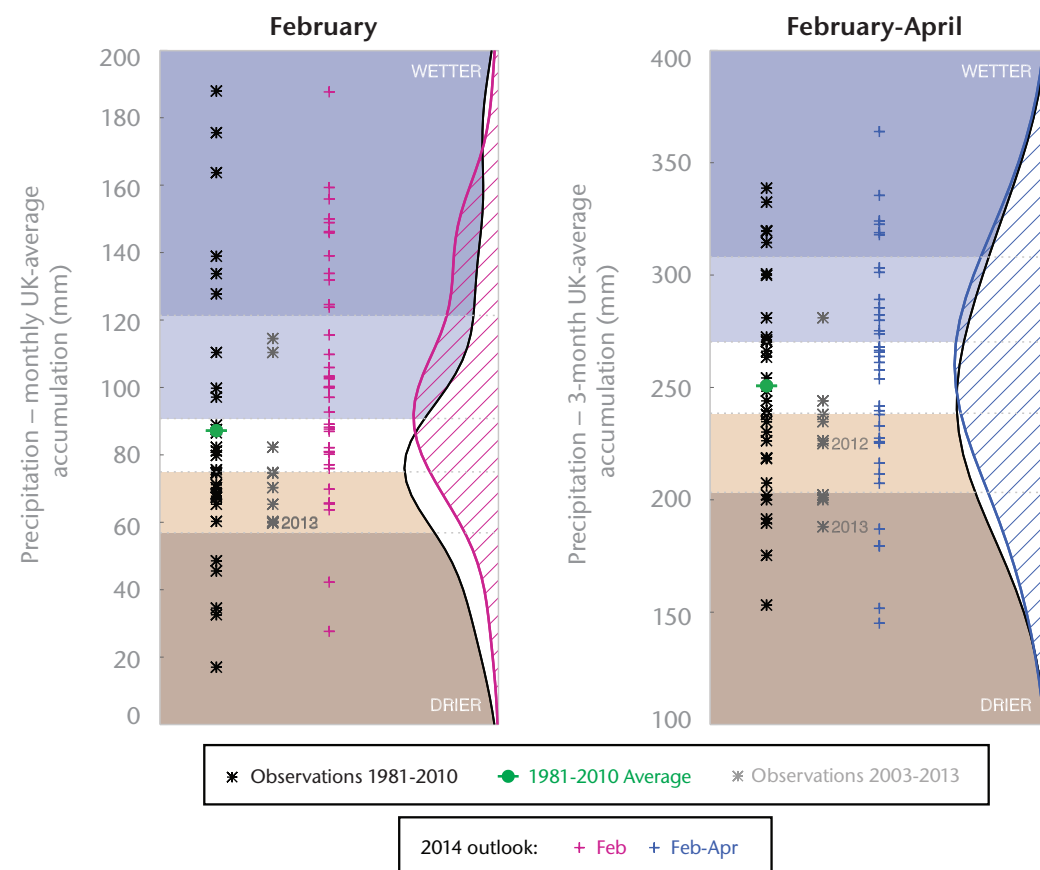
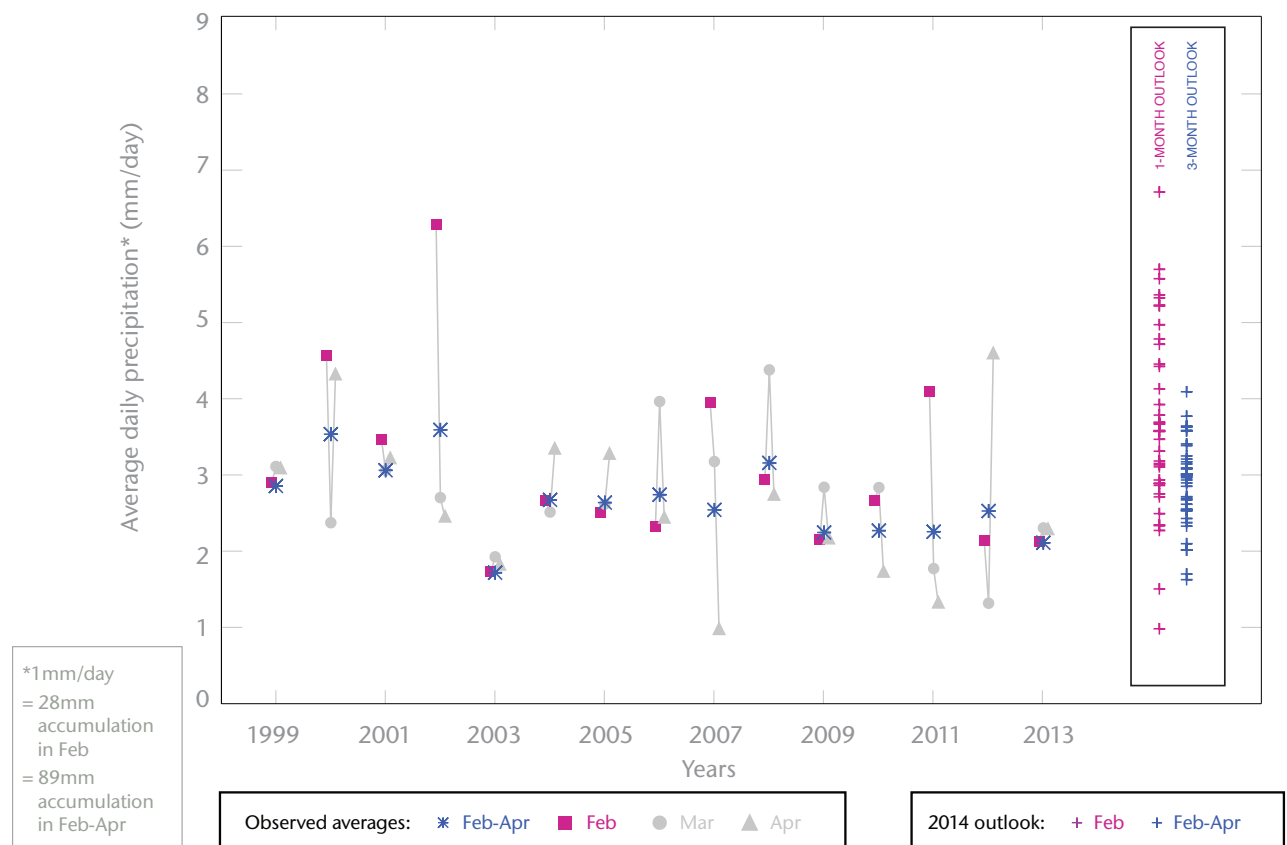


Fig P3

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.