Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: June – August 2012 Issue date: 23.05.12

The forecast presented here is for June and the average of the June-July-August period for the United Kingdom as a whole.
This forecast is based on information from observations, several numerical models and expert judgement.

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

For UK-average rainfall, the forecast for this summer is very uncertain, due to a lack of any strong driving factors. Although there is a somewhat elevated chance, relative to climatology, of the summer being wet, it looks unlikely that there will be very wet conditions. However, the probability of very dry conditions remains close to climatology.

The probability that UK-average rainfall for June-July-August will fall into the driest of our five categories is around 20%, whilst the probability that it will fall into the wettest of our five categories is 25-30% (the 1971-2000 climatological probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

For June the position of the forecast curve in Figure P2 (left panel, pink) relative to the climatology curve (black) indicates a slightly elevated risk of wetter than average conditions, although the chances of an exceptionally wet month, such as occurred in 2007 (topmost grey star), when flooding was widespread in northeastern England, appears to be very low. Computer forecasts currently suggest there may be a trend towards somewhat wetter conditions as June progresses.

For the summer as a whole (June-July-August), the forecasts indicate a wide range of possible outcomes for UK-average rainfall, with chances of both very wet and very dry conditions near or above climatological levels. Summer rainfall is often showery in nature, and so significant regional variations are possible.

Although some parts of England are no longer in drought, due to the wettest April on record (UK-average data), groundwater resources in some parts of southern, eastern and central England remain at very low levels. While the forecast does suggest a slightly enhanced probability of well-above-normal rainfall during summer, the probability of extreme amounts (similar to 2007 – the wettest year plotted on Figure P2), is still low.

Despite the lack of a strong signal for particular atmospheric circulation types, as noted in the temperature section, there is a possibility that the jet stream over the North Atlantic may end up a little further south than its climatological position. In that situation, rainfall levels may end up higher than average in the south of the UK.

Fig P1

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

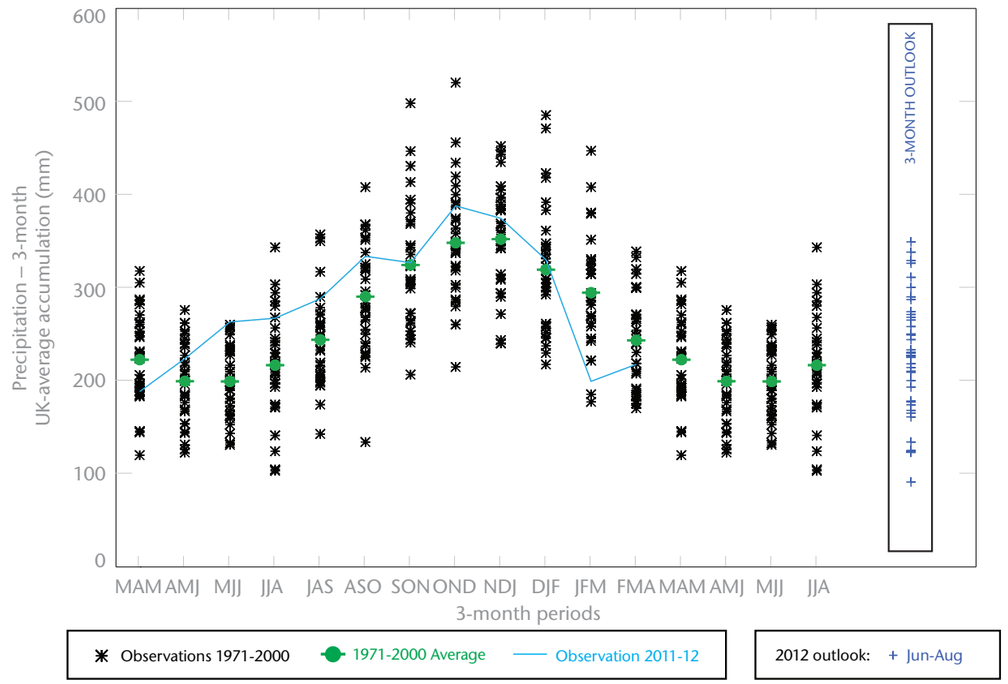


Fig P2

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

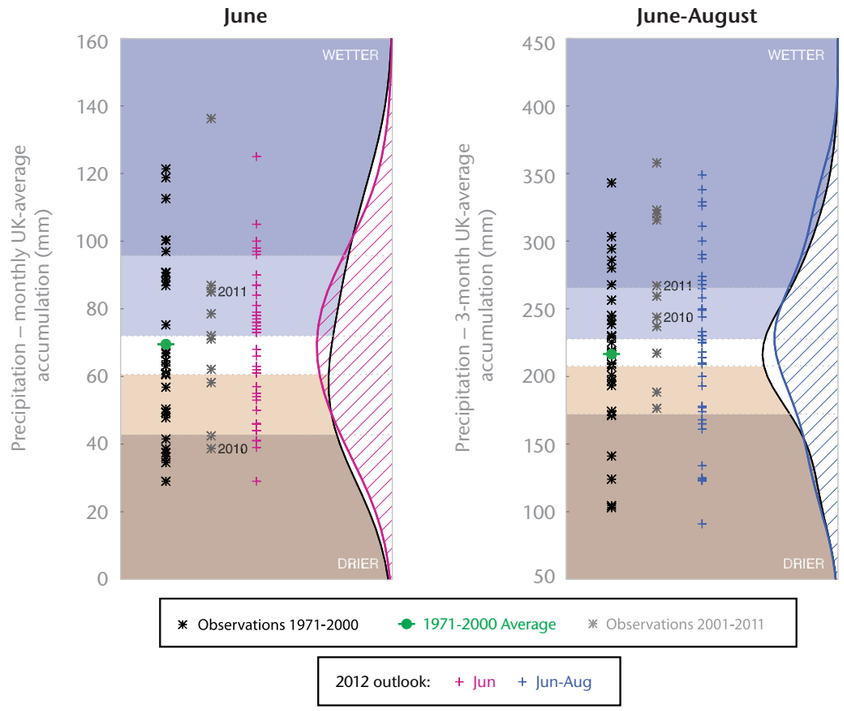
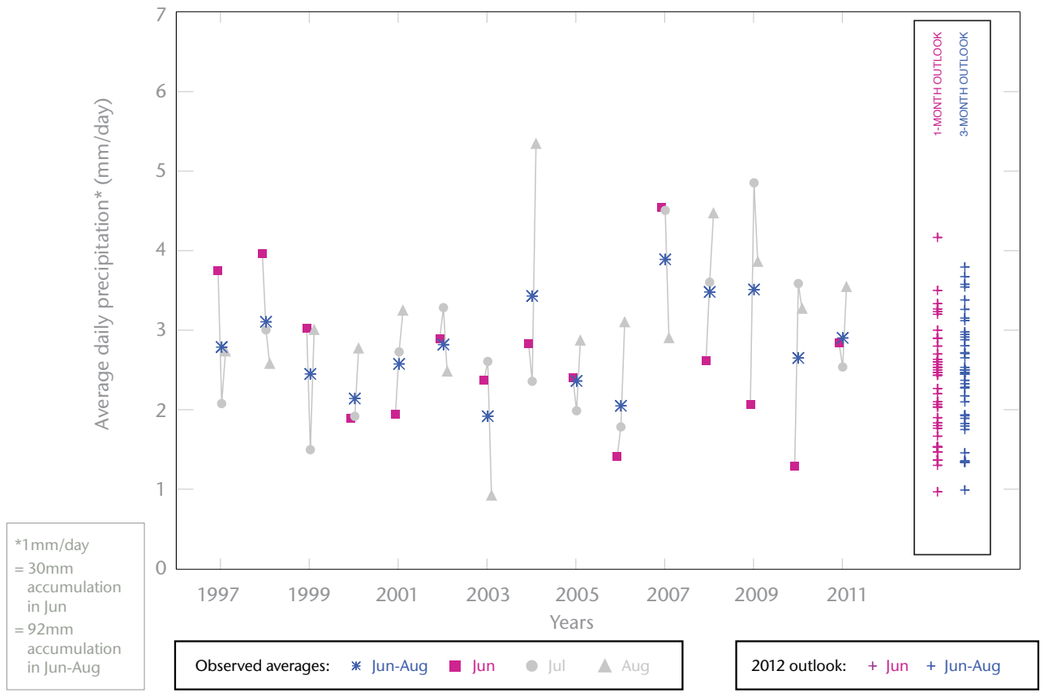


Fig P3

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.