

The forecast presented here is for January and the average of the January-February-March period for the United Kingdom as a whole. The forecast for January will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 29 December 2015.

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

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

For January and for January-February-March both above- and below-average precipitation are equally probable.

The probability that UK-average precipitation for January-February-March will fall into the driest of our five categories is around 20% and the probability that it will fall into the wettest of our five categories is also around 20% (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), increase the chance of a positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) in the early part of the outlook period. At this time of year, the positive phase of the NAO is usually associated with above-average precipitation and an increased frequency of Atlantic depressions crossing the UK.

During January, the Met Office seasonal prediction system, and systems from other global forecast centres, suggest an increased likelihood of the positive phase of the NAO continuing. Normally this would suggest above-average rainfall

across the UK. However there is a signal for a northward shift of the associated westerly flow as a more anticyclonic pattern prevails at times across the country. As a result the chances of above- or below-average precipitation are similar, as highlighted by the left-hand graph in figure P2.

For the season as a whole (January-February-March) predictions are uncertain, as this is dependent on the position of the blocked weather patterns which are more likely to develop in February and March. Overall, the probability of above- or below-normal are considered to be equally balanced.

Fig P1

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

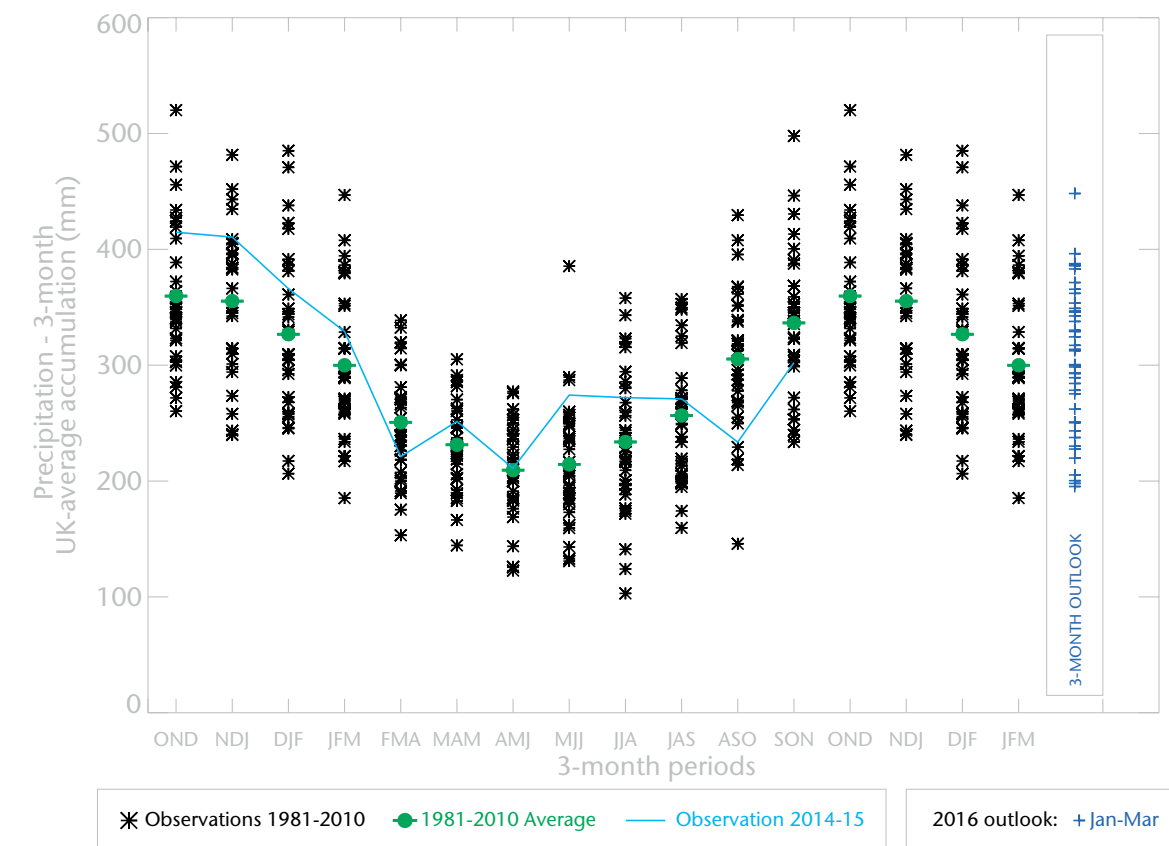


Fig P2

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

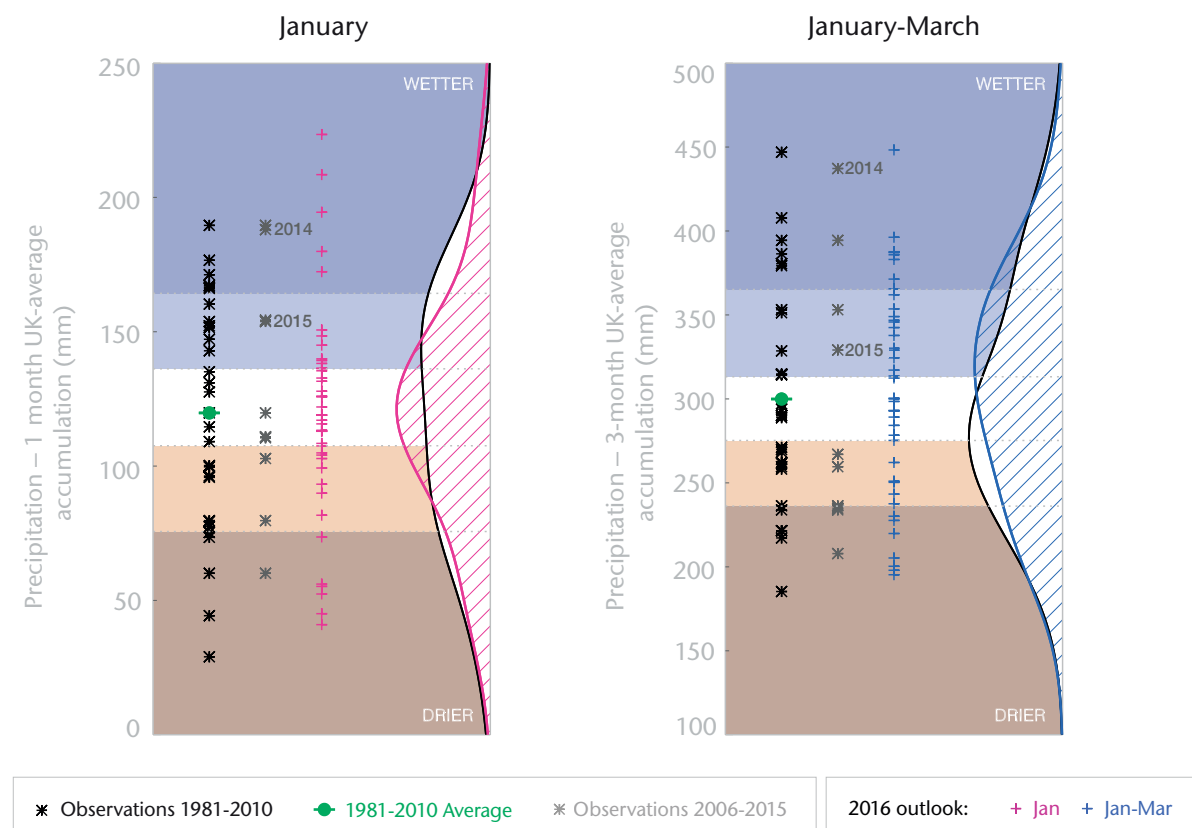


Fig P3

1-month and 3-month UK outlook for precipitation in the context of recent climatology: year-to-year and within-season variability

