



Met Office

Met Office 3-month Outlook

Period: December 2016 – February 2017 Issue date: 24.11.16

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 The forecast for December will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 2 December 2016.

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

SUMMARY – PRECIPITATION:

During December below-average precipitation is more likely than above-average. For December-January-February as a whole there is only a slight shift from the normal range of expected conditions, with below-average precipitation slightly more probable than above-average. The probability that UK-average precipitation for December-January-February will fall into the driest of our five categories is between 20% and 25% and the probability that it will fall into the wettest of our five categories is around 15% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

As discussed in the temperature outlook, factors such as a weak stratospheric polar vortex and tropical Pacific conditions, suggest an increased chance of blocked weather patterns during December. In addition, the Met Office seasonal prediction system and systems from other global forecast centres consistently show an increased chance of the UK experiencing these types of weather patterns. At this time of year, blocking is associated with a decreased frequency of Atlantic depressions crossing the UK and as a result below-average precipitation. Spells of very wet or stormy weather are still possible, but are likely to be less frequent than usual for the time of year. The left-hand graph in figure P2 highlights a clear shift

towards below-average precipitation during December with a reduced probability of above-average precipitation and an increased probability of below-average precipitation compared to normal. For the season as a whole (December-January-February), there is a slightly higher chance of below-average precipitation than of above-average precipitation. Through the early part of the period, drier-than-average conditions are more likely than wetter-than-average, given the increased likelihood of blocking. Thereafter, an increasing probability of more westerly types of weather results in more balanced probabilities for the season as a whole.

Fig P1

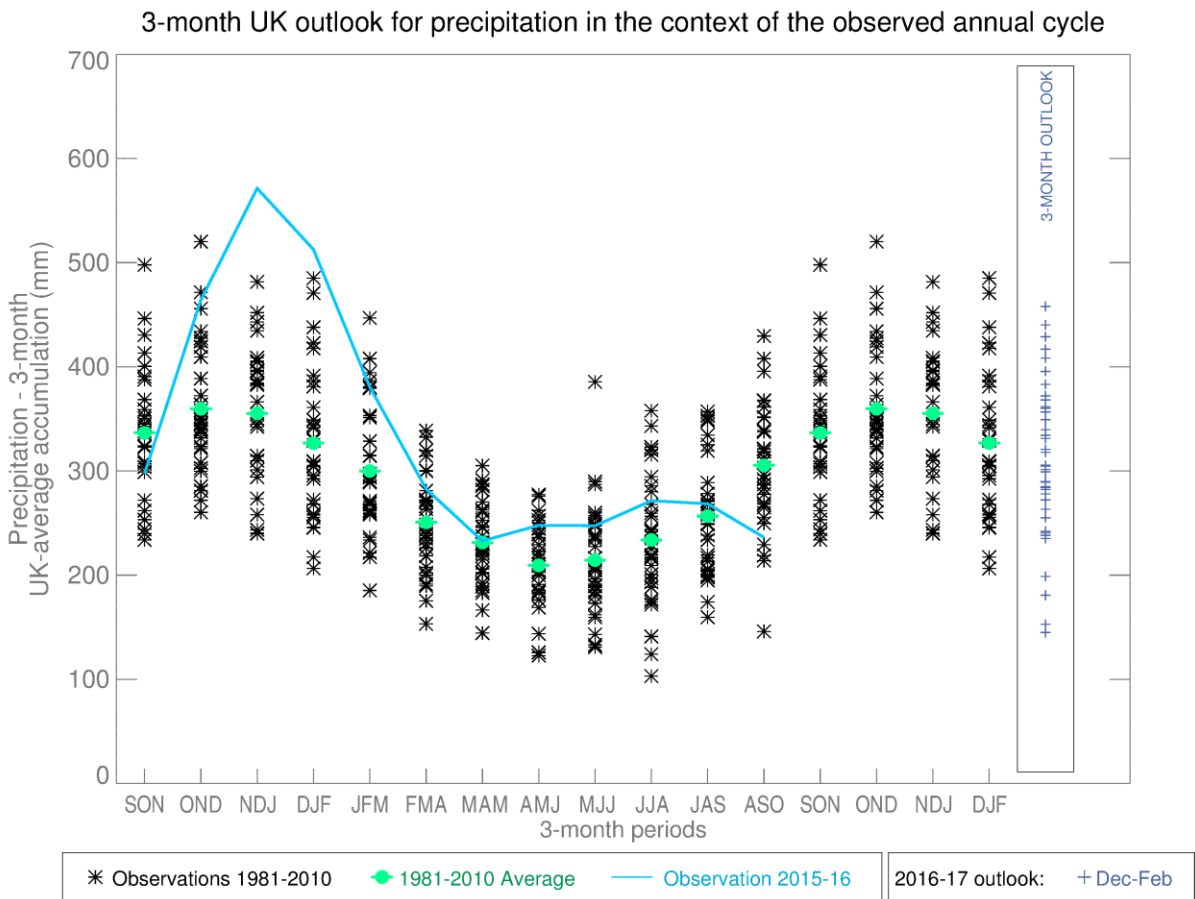


Fig P2

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

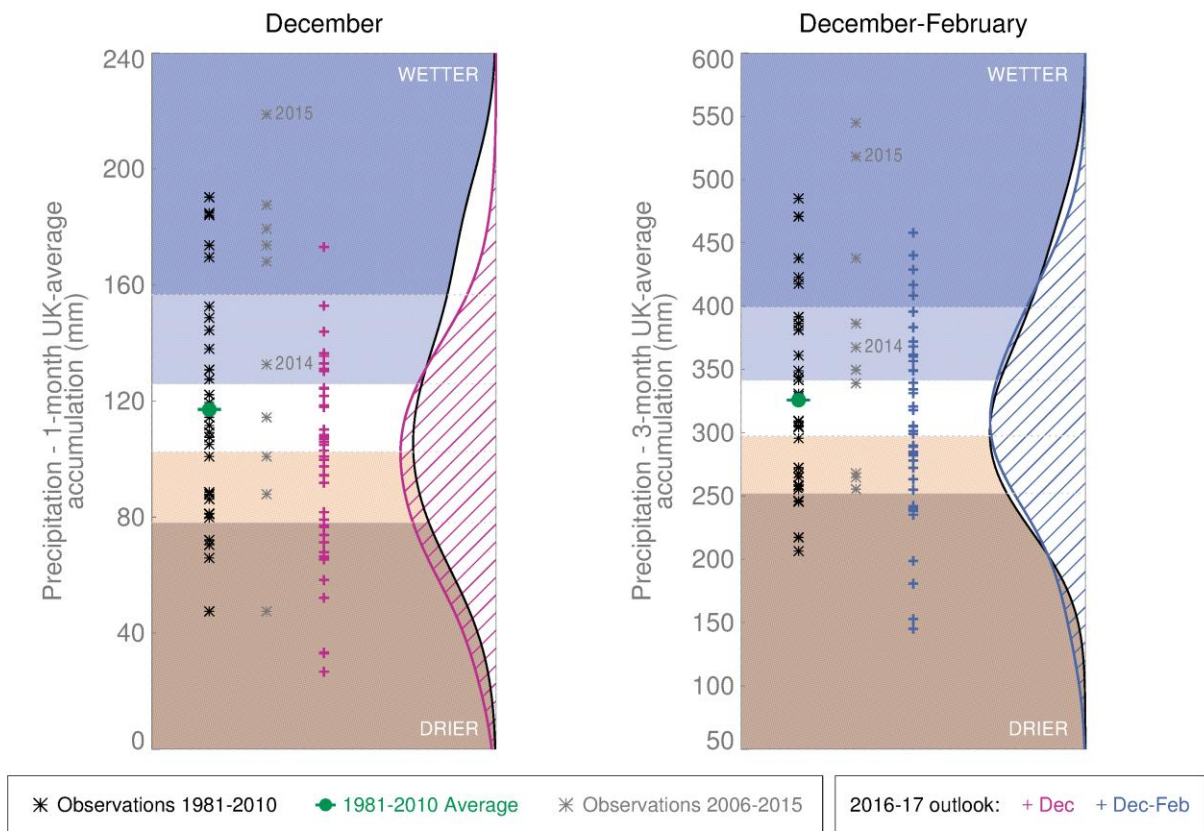
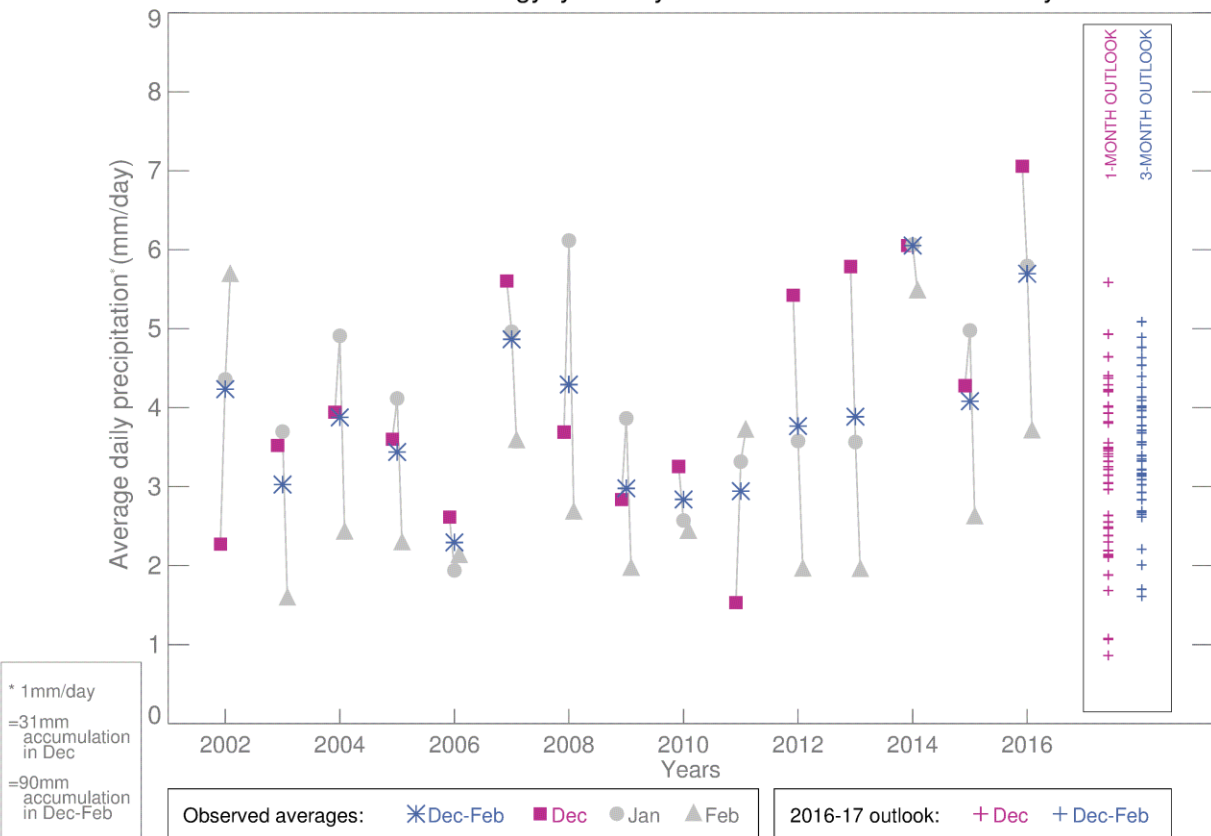


Fig P3

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.