

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 The forecast for March will be superseded by the long-range information on the public weather forecast web page (www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/forecast/#?tab=regionalForecast), starting from 27 February 2015.

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

SUMMARY - PRECIPITATION:

The latest predictions for UK-mean precipitation favour below-average rainfall over above-average in March. For March-April-May, predictability is low and the forecast is largely indistinguishable from climatology, although with a slight preference for near- to below-average precipitation.

The probability that UK precipitation for March-April-May 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 between 15% and 20% (the 1981-2010 probability for each of these categories is 20%).

CONTEXT:

As already mentioned in the temperature section, predictability in spring is lower than in the winter, with large-scale global drivers not known to have a significant influence on weather patterns across northern Europe.

During March there is a fairly consistent signal from computer models for the positive phase of the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO), which prevailed through the winter, to continue. Also evident is a preference for pressure to be higher than average, particularly in the south, with low pressure systems tending to track between Scotland and Iceland, rather than across the UK; this type of pattern is often associated with below-average UK rainfall. However, a slight shift in the track of these systems

could bring higher rainfall and this is reflected in the left-hand graph of figure P2 which shows a shift towards drier-than-average conditions, but also still a large range of outcomes.

For March-April-May as a whole, although near- to below-average precipitation is slightly favoured, uncertainty is large; this is highlighted in figure P2, where the range of outcomes is broad. There is disagreement between models over which atmospheric pattern will dominate, although there is a slight preference in some models for above-average pressure near and to the south of the UK; this is generally associated with drier-than-average conditions.

Fig P1

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

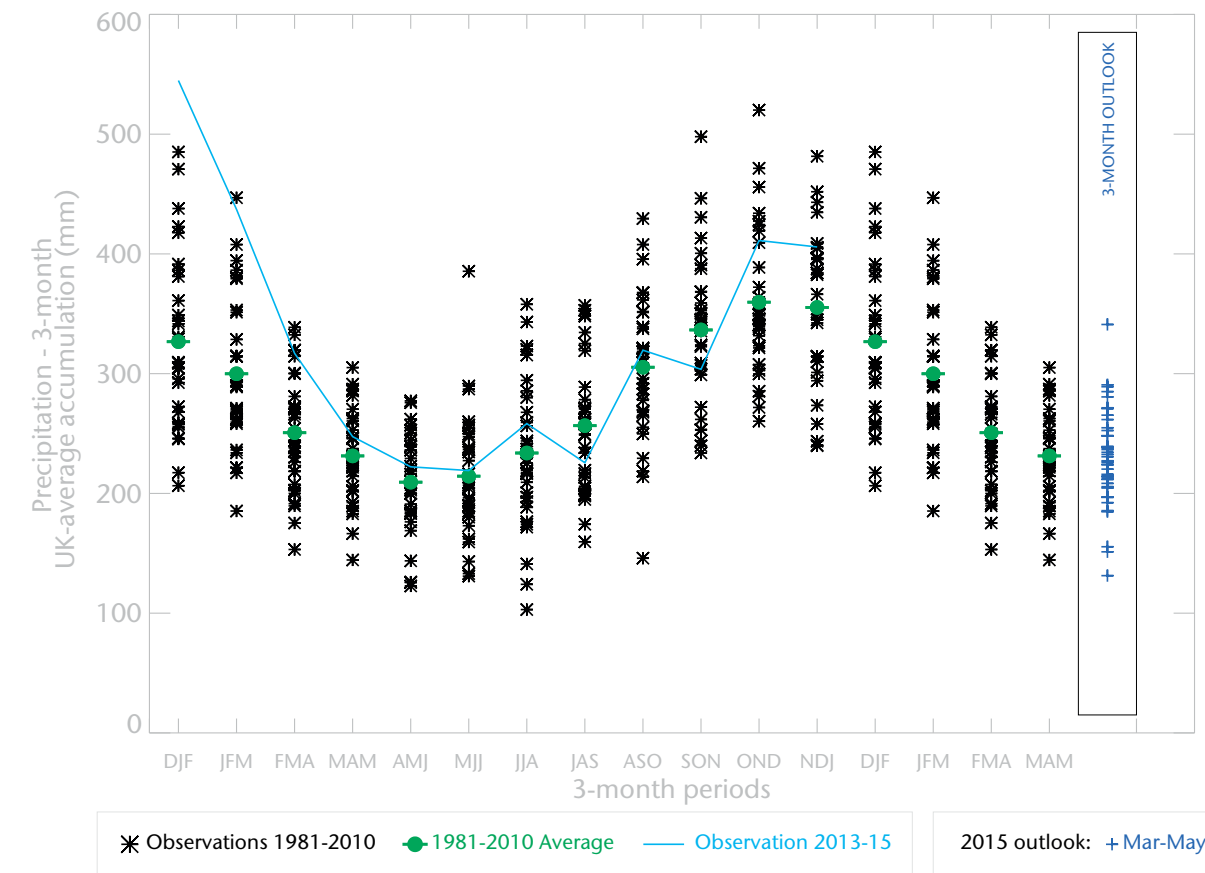


Fig P2

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

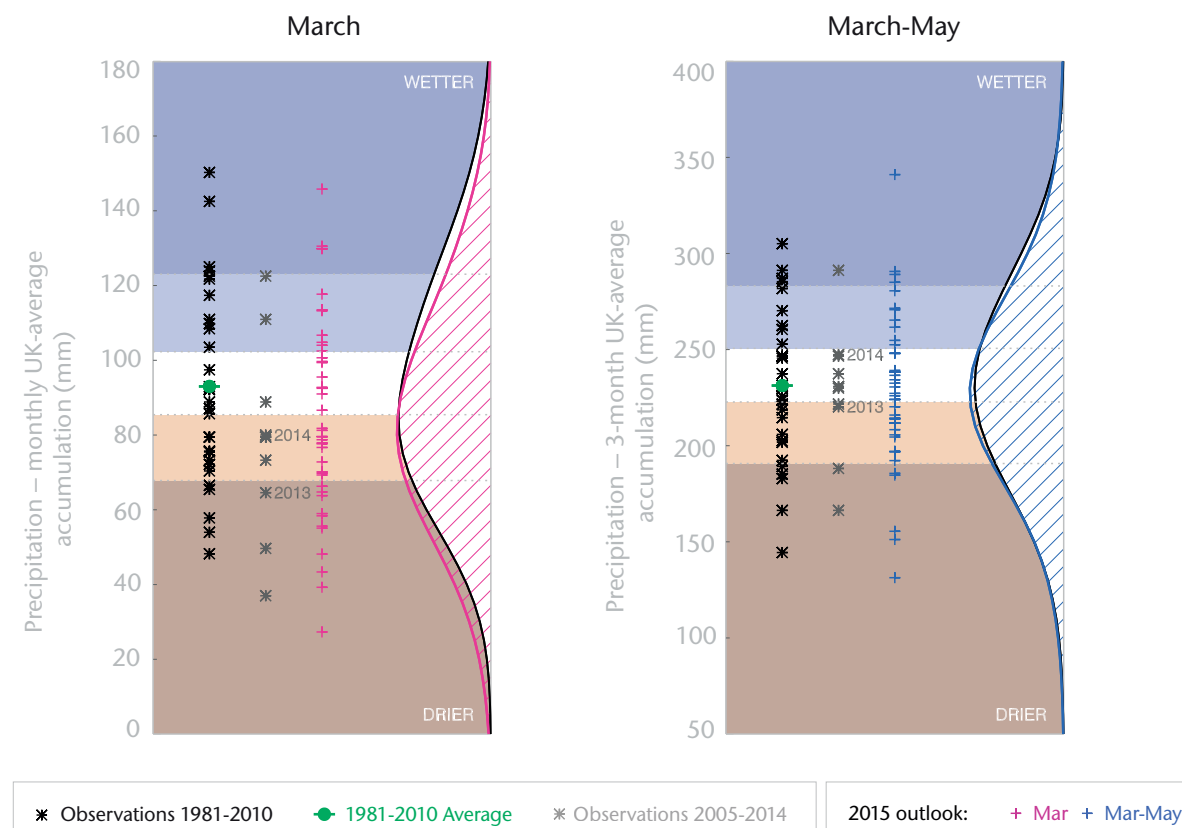
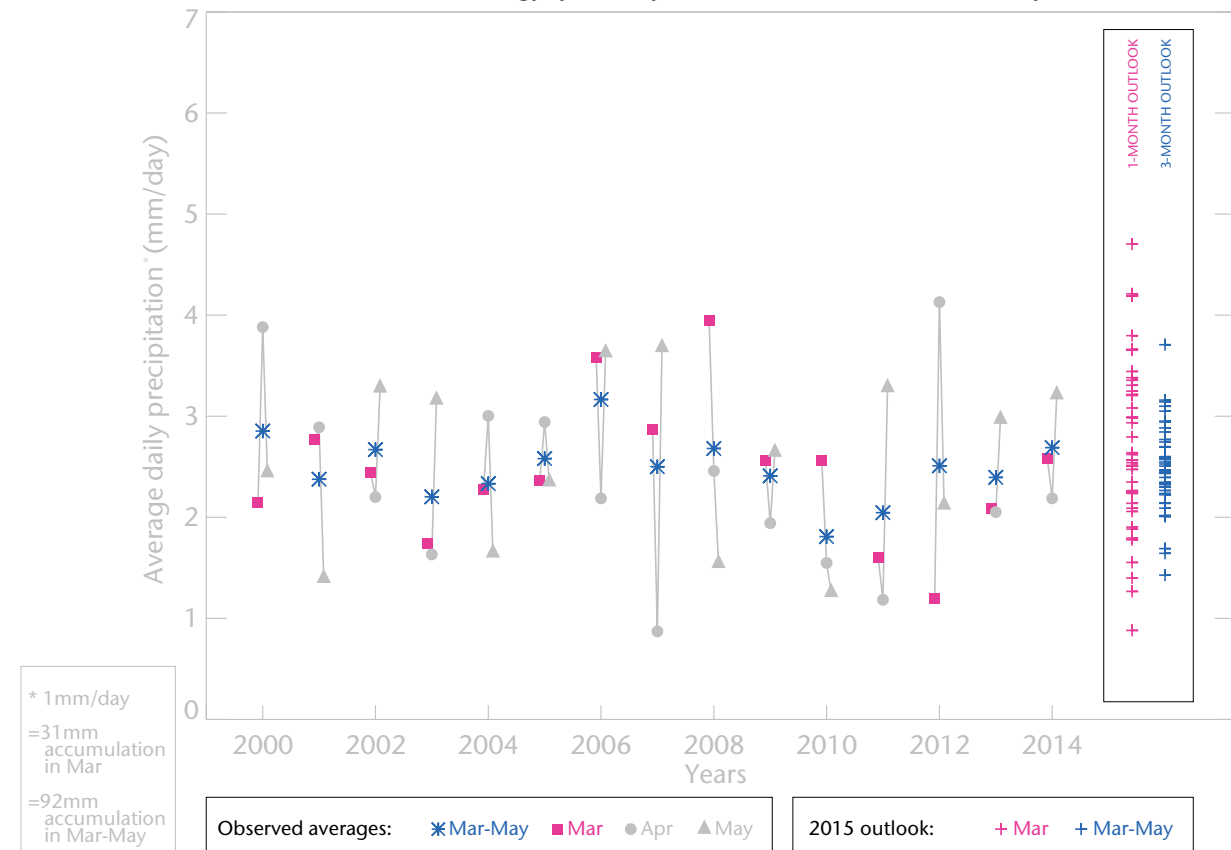


Fig P3

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.