



May Forecast Update for Northwest Pacific Typhoon Activity in 2002

Issued: 7th May 2002

by Drs Paul Rockett and Mark Saunders
Benfield Greig Hazard Research Centre, UCL (University College London), UK

Forecast Summary

TSR again raises its previous forecast and anticipates Northwest Pacific typhoon and intense typhoon activity being 20% above the 10-year climate norm in 2002.

The TSR (Tropical Storm Risk) consortium early May forecast update for northwest Pacific typhoon activity in 2002 reinforces expectations for above average tropical storm, typhoon and intense typhoon activity in 2002. The forecast spans the full northwest Pacific season from 1st January to 31st December 2002 and is based on data available through the end of April 2002. Our main predictor is the forecast anomaly in August-September Niño 4 sea surface temperature (SST). We expect above average activity in 2002 because we anticipate Niño 4 being 0.49°C warmer than normal this summer. Our projections have risen slightly from last month due to a slight rise in our predicted summer Niño 4 SST value. Further monthly forecast updates will be issued through to early August 2002.

NW Pacific Total Numbers in 2002

		Intense Typhoons	Typhoons	Tropical Storms
TSR Forecast (±FE)	2002	10.3(±2.2)	20.8 (±3.4)	30.5 (±4.6)
10yr Climate Norm (±SD)	1992-2001	8.4(±2.7)	16.9 (±4.3)	27.4 (±4.6)
30yr Climate Norm (±SD)	1972-2001	7.9(±3.0)	16.4 (±3.6)	26.3 (±4.0)
Forecast Skill at this Lead	1987-2001	28%	20%	2%

Key: Intense Typhoon	=	1 Minute Sustained Wind > 95Kts	=	Hurricane Category 3 to 5
Typhoon	=	1 Minute Sustained Wind > 63Kts	=	Hurricane Category 1 to 5
Tropical Storm	=	1 Minute Sustained Wind > 33Kts		
SD	=	Standard Deviation		
FE (Forecast Error)	=	Standard Deviation of Errors in Simulated Real Time Forecasts 1992-2001		
Forecast Skill	=	Percentage Improvement over Running 10-year Prior Climate Norm from Simulated Real Time Forecasts 1987-2001		
Northwest Pacific	=	Northern Hemisphere Region West of 180°W Including the South China Sea. Any Tropical Cyclone (Irrespective of Where it Forms) Which Reaches Tropical Storm Strength Within this Region Counts as an Event.		

Key Predictor for 2002

The key factor behind our forecast for an active Northwest Pacific typhoon season in 2002 is the anticipated enhancing effect of warmer than average Niño 4 (150°W-160°E, 5°S-5°N) SST. Our forecast anomaly (1972-2001 climatology) for August-September 2002 Niño 4 SST is 0.49±0.30°C (up from 0.35±0.41 °C last month). The 'Skill Score_{Clim} (%)' for this predictor at this lead is 47% (assessed using simulated real-time forecasts over the last 15 years).

Further Information

Further information on the TSR forecast methodology, the TSR simulated real-time forecast skill 1987-2001 as a function of lead time, and on TSR in general, may be obtained from the 'Extended Range Forecast for Northwest Pacific Typhoon Activity in 2002' document issued on the 6th March 2002. Our next monthly forecast update for the 2002 Northwest Pacific Typhoon season will be issued on the 7th June 2002. Further monthly updates will follow in early July and early August 2002.

Appendix - Predictions from Previous Months

NW Pacific Total Numbers 2002				
		Tropical Storms	Typhoons	Intense Typhoons
Average Number (\pm SD) (1992-2001)		27.4 (\pm 4.6)	16.9 (\pm 4.3)	8.4 (\pm 2.7)
Average Number (\pm SD) (1972-2001)		26.3 (\pm 4.0)	16.4 (\pm 3.6)	7.9 (\pm 3.0)
TSR Forecast (\pm FE)	7 May 2002	30.5 (\pm 4.6)	20.9 (\pm 3.4)	10.3 (\pm 2.2)
	5 Apr 2002	29.6 (\pm 5.0)	19.8 (\pm 4.1)	9.8 (\pm 2.6)
	6 Mar 2002	28.6 (\pm 4.8)	18.7 (\pm 4.0)	9.3 (\pm 2.5)

