



February Forecast Update for Atlantic Hurricane Activity in 2002

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

Forecast Summary

TSR raises its earlier forecasts slightly predicting the 2002 Atlantic hurricane season will be active with basin storm numbers and strikes on the USA and Caribbean Lesser Antilles 15% above the 10 year average and 40-50% above the 30 year average.

The TSR (Tropical Storm Risk) early February forecast update for Atlantic hurricane activity in 2002 continues to anticipate another active hurricane season. The forecast relates to the Atlantic season from 1st June 2002 to 30th November 2002 and is based on data available through the end of January 2002. The reason for predicting above average activity in 2002 is our continued expectation for neutral ENSO conditions combined with warm tropical Atlantic sea surface temperatures and weaker than normal trade winds over the Caribbean Sea and tropical north Atlantic during July-September 2002. Our projections have risen slightly from last month due to small shifts in each predictor favouring increased hurricane activity.

Atlantic Total Numbers in 2002

		Intense Hurricanes	Hurricanes	Tropical Storms
TSR Forecast (\pm FE)	2002	3.2(\pm 1.8)	8.0 (\pm 2.5)	13.6 (\pm 3.5)
10yr Climate Norm (\pm SD)	1992-2001	2.9(\pm 2.0)	6.9 (\pm 2.9)	11.5 (\pm 4.1)
30yr Climate Norm (\pm SD)	1972-2001	2.1(\pm 1.5)	5.7 (\pm 2.4)	9.5 (\pm 3.6)
Forecast Skill at this Lead	1987-2001	17%	12%	15%

Key: Intense Hurricane = 1 Minute Sustained Wind > 95Kts = Hurricane Category 3 to 5
 Hurricane = 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

Total Numbers Forming in the MDR, Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico in 2002

		Intense Hurricanes	Hurricanes	Tropical Storms
TSR Forecast (\pm FE)	2002	3.2(\pm 1.7)	6.2 (\pm 2.4)	10.4 (\pm 3.6)
10yr Climate Norm (\pm SD)	1992-2001	2.9(\pm 2.0)	5.1 (\pm 3.0)	8.3 (\pm 4.3)
30yr Climate Norm (\pm SD)	1972-2001	1.8(\pm 1.6)	3.8 (\pm 2.5)	6.4 (\pm 3.7)
Forecast Skill at this Lead	1987-2001	18%	17%	15%

The Atlantic hurricane Main Development Region (MDR) is the region 10°N - 20°N, 20°W - 60°W between the Cape Verde Islands and the Caribbean. A storm is defined as having formed within this region if it reached at least tropical depression status while in the area.

USA Landfalling Numbers in 2002

		Hurricanes	Tropical Storms
TSR Forecast (\pm FE)	2002	1.9 (\pm 1.1)	3.8 (\pm 1.7)
Average (\pm SD)	1992-2001	1.2 (\pm 1.2)	3.3 (\pm 1.8)
Average (\pm SD)	1972-2001	1.2 (\pm 1.3)	2.6 (\pm 1.8)
Forecast Skill at this Lead	1987-2001	5%	12%

Key: Landfall Strike Category = Maximum 1 Minute Sustained Wind of Storm Coming Within 30km of Land
 USA Mainland = Brownsville (Texas) to Maine

USA landfalling intense hurricanes are not forecast since we have no skill at any lead.

Caribbean Lesser Antilles Landfalling Numbers in 2002

		Intense Hurricanes	Hurricanes	Tropical Storms
TSR Forecast (\pm FE)	2002	0.4 (\pm 0.4)	0.8 (\pm 0.7)	2.0 (\pm 0.9)
10yr Climate Norm (\pm SD)	1992-2001	0.3 (\pm 0.5)	0.7 (\pm 0.8)	1.5 (\pm 0.9)
30yr Climate Norm (\pm SD)	1972-2001	0.2 (\pm 0.4)	0.4 (\pm 0.6)	1.1 (\pm 1.0)
Forecast Skill at this Lead	1987-2001	3%	9%	6%

Key: Landfall Strike Category = Maximum 1 Minute Sustained Wind of Storm Coming Within 30km of Land
 Lesser Antilles = Island Arc from Anguilla to Trinidad Inclusive

Key Predictors for 2002

The key factors behind our forecast for an active hurricane season in 2002 are the anticipated enhancing effects of July-September forecast 925mb U(east/west)-winds over the Caribbean Sea and tropical north Atlantic region (7.5°N - 17.5°N, 30°W - 100°W), and of August-September forecast SST for the Atlantic MDR. The current forecast anomalies (1971-2000 climatology) for these predictors are $0.76 \pm 0.75 \text{ ms}^{-1}$ and $0.31 \pm 0.26 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ respectively. The corresponding forecast skills at this lead are 22% and 17%.

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 Atlantic Hurricane Activity in 2002' document issued on the 3rd December 2001. Our next monthly forecast update for the 2002 Atlantic hurricane season will be issued on the 6th March 2002. Further regular monthly updates will follow through to early August 2002.

