



Madden-Julian Oscillation: Recent Evolution, Current Status and Predictions

Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
July 11, 2011



Outline

- Overview
- Recent Evolution and Current Conditions
- MJO Index Information
- MJO Index Forecasts
- MJO Composites



Overview

- The MJO remained weak during the past seven days, but the MJO index amplitude has increased in recent days.
- The dynamical model MJO index forecasts indicate an increase in projection with eastward propagation during Week 1. Model forecasts diverge, however, during Week-2 as some models quickly weaken the signal while others continue propagation across the Indian Ocean.
- It is unclear whether this activity will eventually emerge as a long-lived coherent MJO as it is likely related to higher frequency subseasonal variability.
- Nevertheless, the signal is forecast to enhance rainfall across the Western Hemisphere, Africa, and Indian Ocean over the course of the next two weeks. Suppressed rainfall is favored over portions of the western Pacific, southeast of the Philippines.

Additional potential impacts across the global tropics are available at:
<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/index.php>



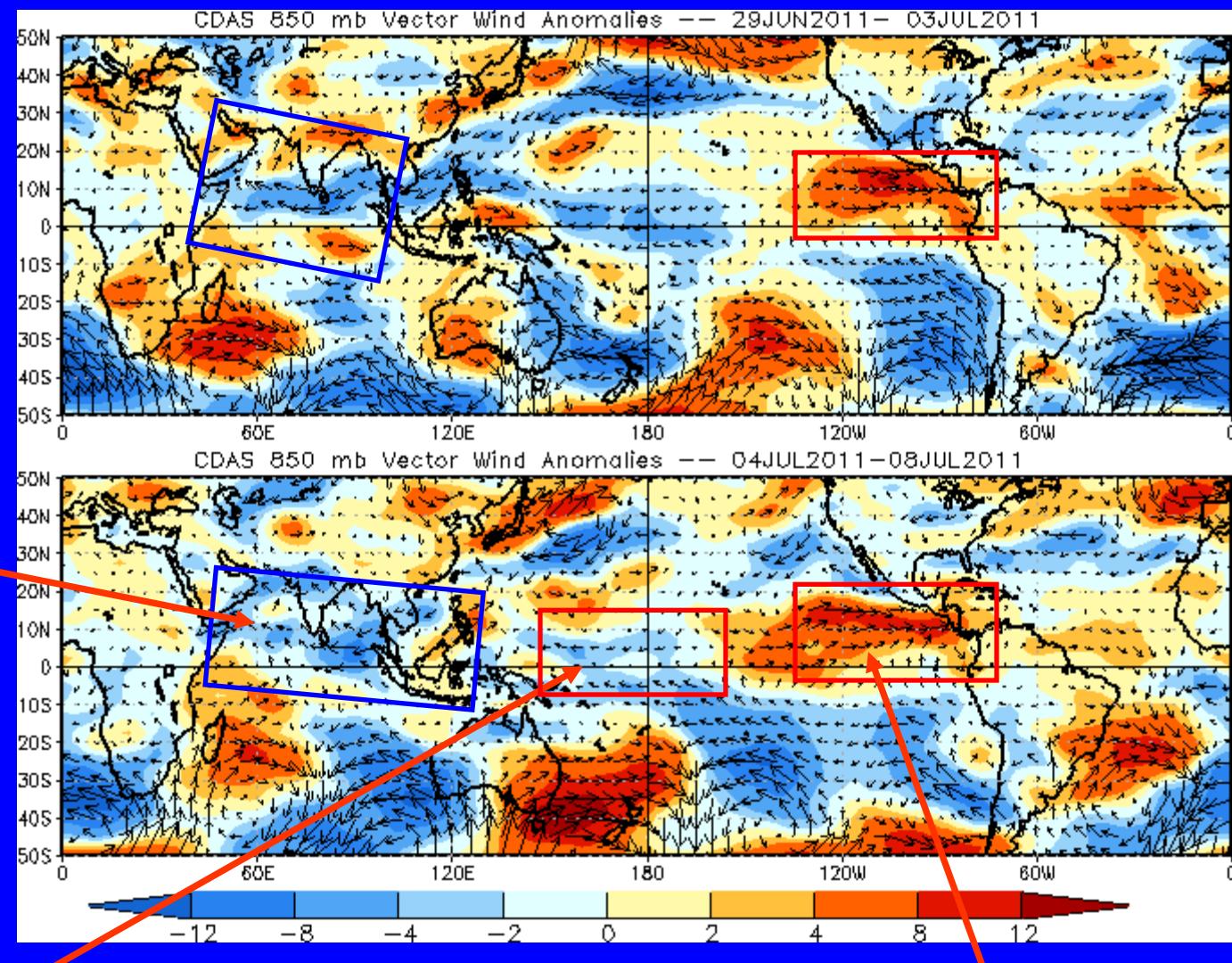
850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies

Suppressed monsoon flow is evident across South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

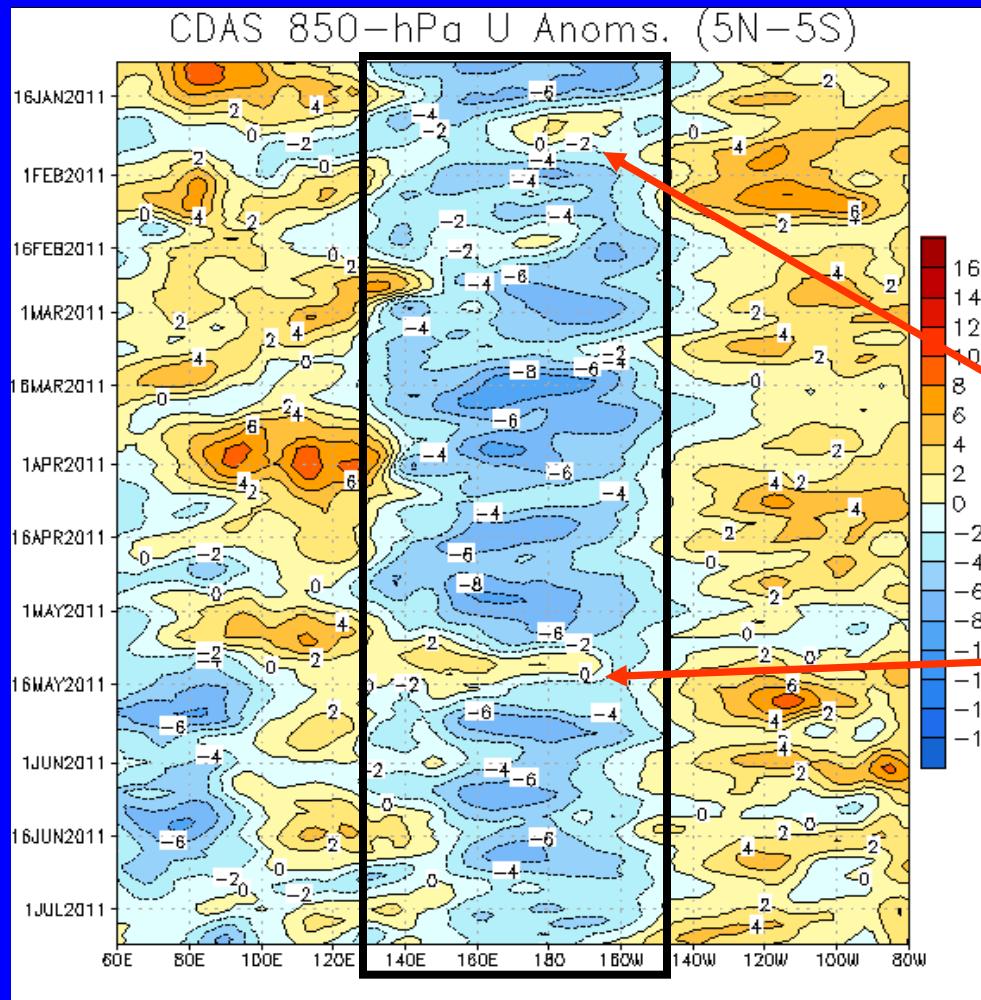


Weak easterly wind anomalies remain evident near the Date Line.

Westerly anomalies persisted across the eastern Pacific Ocean during the last five days.



850-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})



Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading)
represent anomalous west-to-east flow

Easterly anomalies (blue shading)
represent anomalous east-to-west flow

Easterly anomalies have persisted in the west-central Pacific since January (black box) consistent with La Niña conditions. The magnitude of these anomalies, however, has gradually weakened over the period.

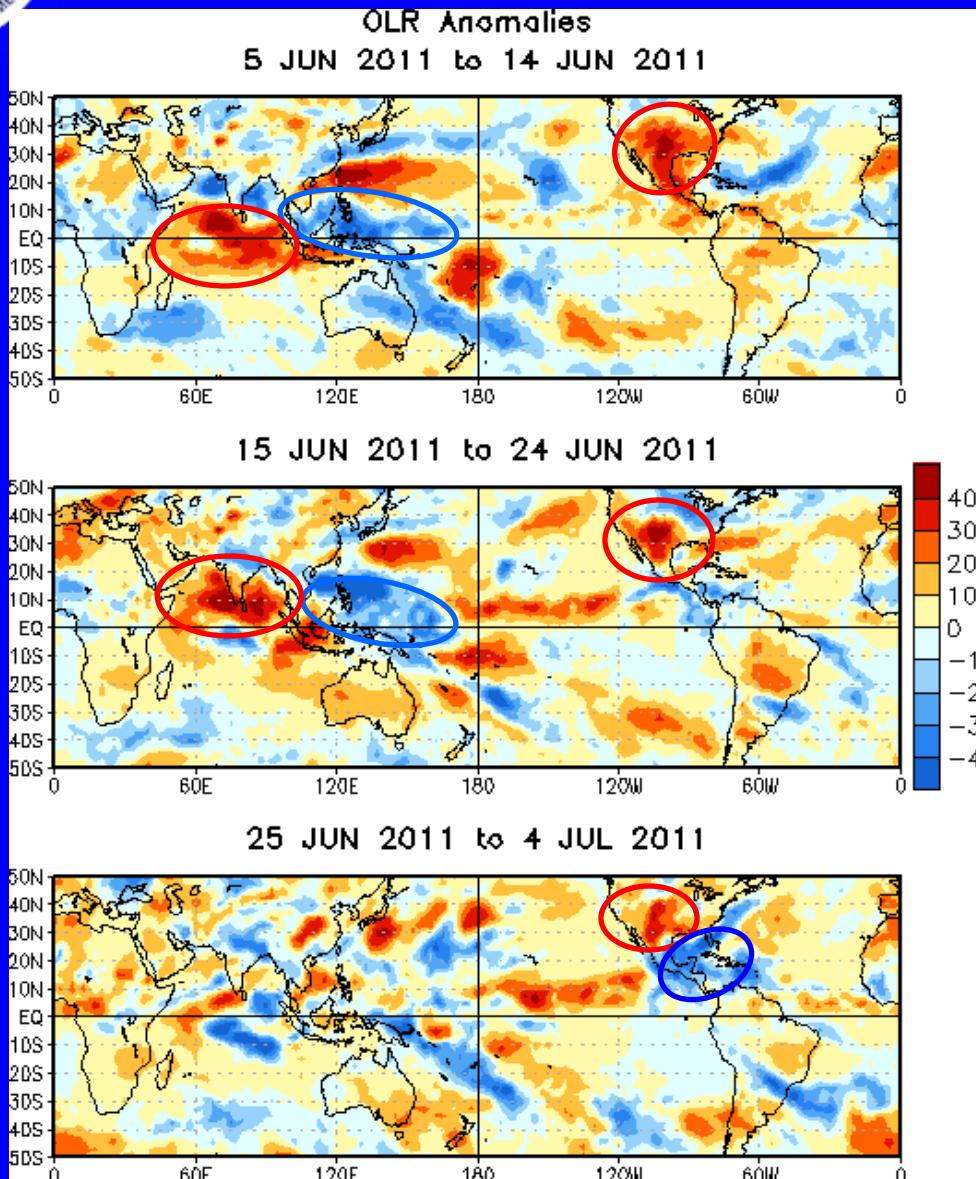
In late January, easterly winds weakened and westerly anomalies developed near the Date Line due to MJO activity.

A burst of westerly wind anomalies associated with the MJO moved across the Pacific in early-to-mid May.

Most recently, closer to normal conditions (on average) have developed across the tropical Indian and Pacific Oceans. Westerly anomalies are evident across the eastern Pacific and Caribbean.



OLR Anomalies – Past 30 days



Drier-than-normal conditions, positive
OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)

Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative
OLR anomalies (blue shading)

During early June, enhanced convection (blue circle) was evident across the far western Pacific, while suppressed convection (red circle) was present across the southern CONUS, Mexico, and the Indian Ocean.

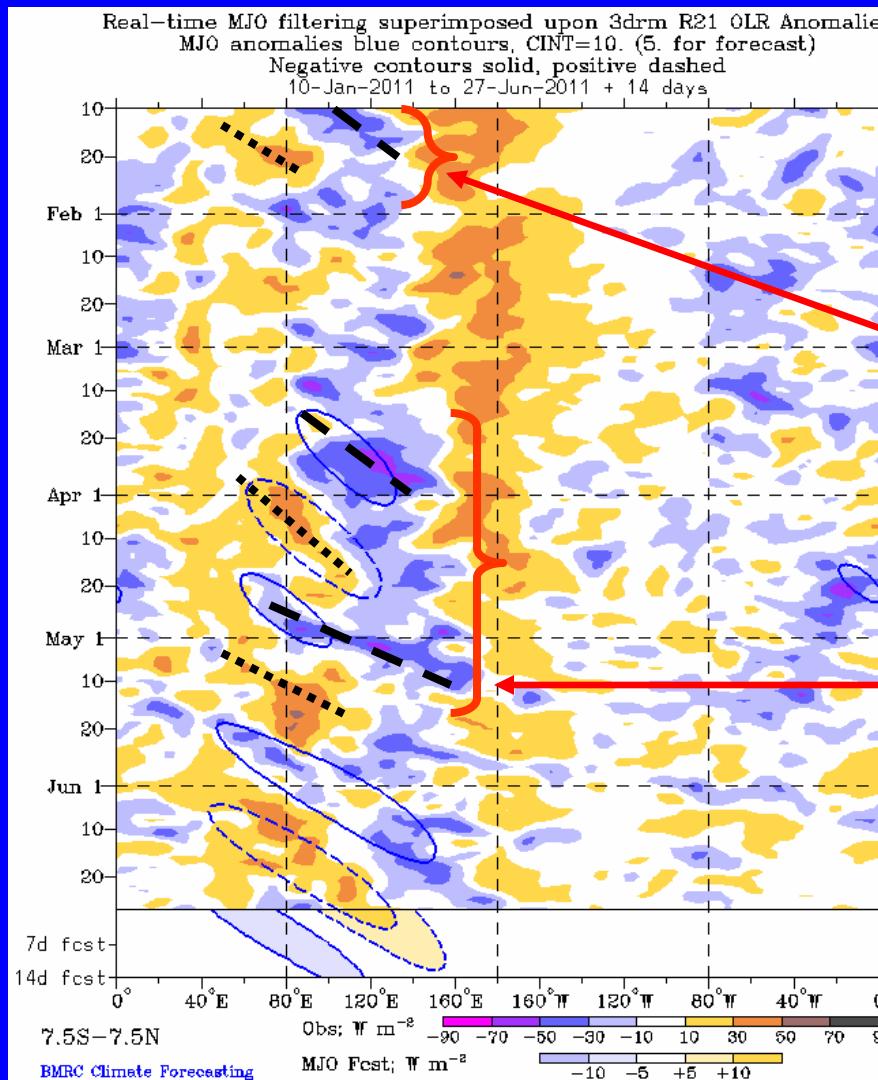
In mid-June, suppressed convection was evident across the northern Indian Ocean and southern CONUS, with enhanced convection continuing across the western Pacific.

Suppressed convection waned across the Indian Ocean during the end of June to early July while widespread enhanced convection is no longer present across the western Pacific. Drier-than-average conditions continued over the southern CONUS while wetter-than-average conditions developed over Mexico, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea.



Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR)

Anomalies (7.5 S-7.5 N)



Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)

Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)

(Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) - Australia)

Weak MJO activity was experienced during January. Enhanced convection developed near 80°E and shifted to the Maritime continent followed by an area of suppressed convection.

During late March and again in late April, two distinct areas of enhanced convection propagated eastward followed by suppressed convection thereafter. This activity was in part associated with MJO activity.

During mid-June, a couplet of suppressed (enhanced) convection is evident and centered near 80°E (140°E).

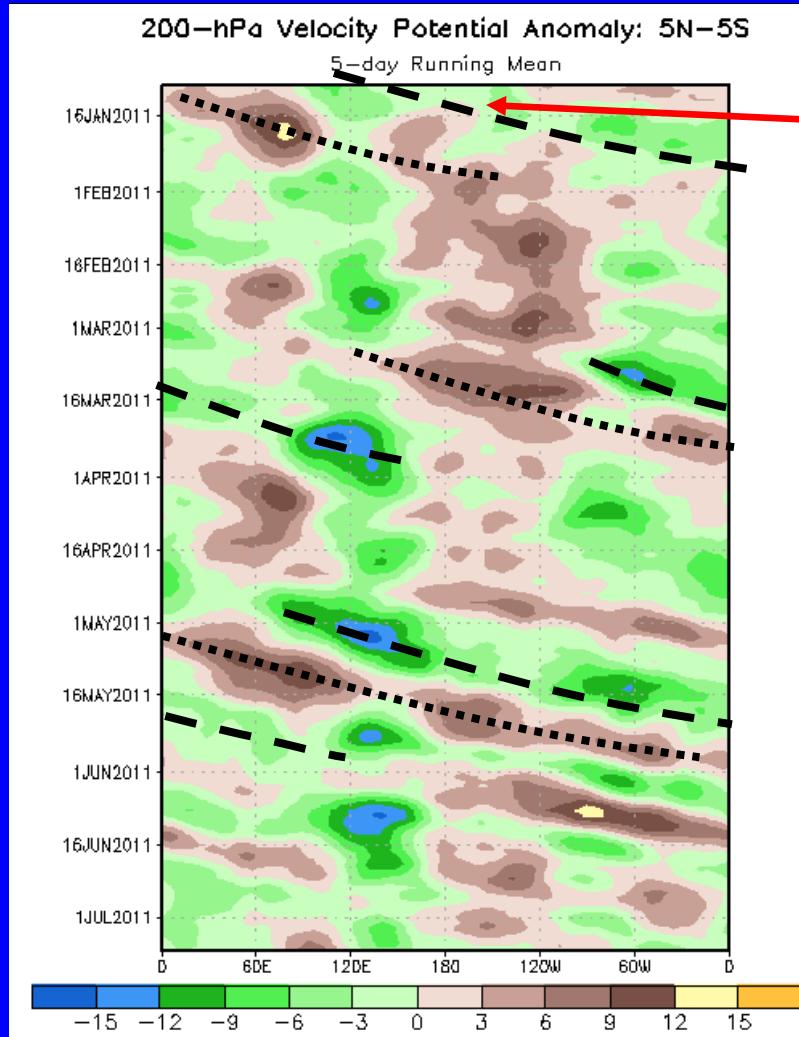
Note this figure has not been updated since June 27.



200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5 S-5 N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation
Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

Time
↓



During mid-to-late January, the MJO strengthened and upper-level divergence shifted eastward from 120E and upper-level convergence shifted from Africa to near the Date Line.

Eastward propagation of anomalies was observed during March associated with weak MJO activity.

Robust MJO activity was observed during late April into May as upper-level divergence (green shades) shifted eastward from the Indian Ocean beginning in early May followed by upper-level divergence (brown shades).

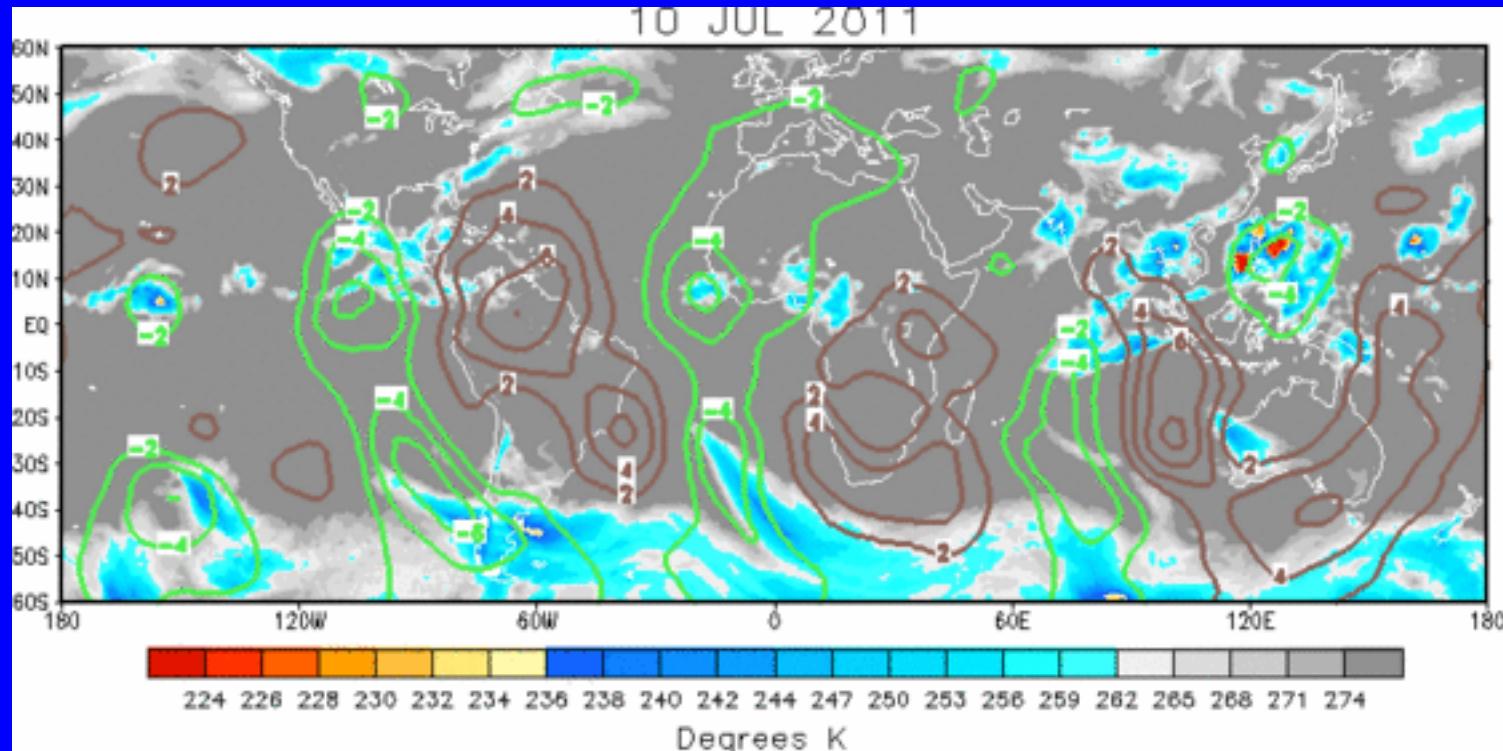
During parts of June, very fast eastward propagation is evident and mainly associated with higher frequency sub-seasonal coherent tropical variability.



IR Temperatures (K) / 200-hPa

Velocity Potential Anomalies

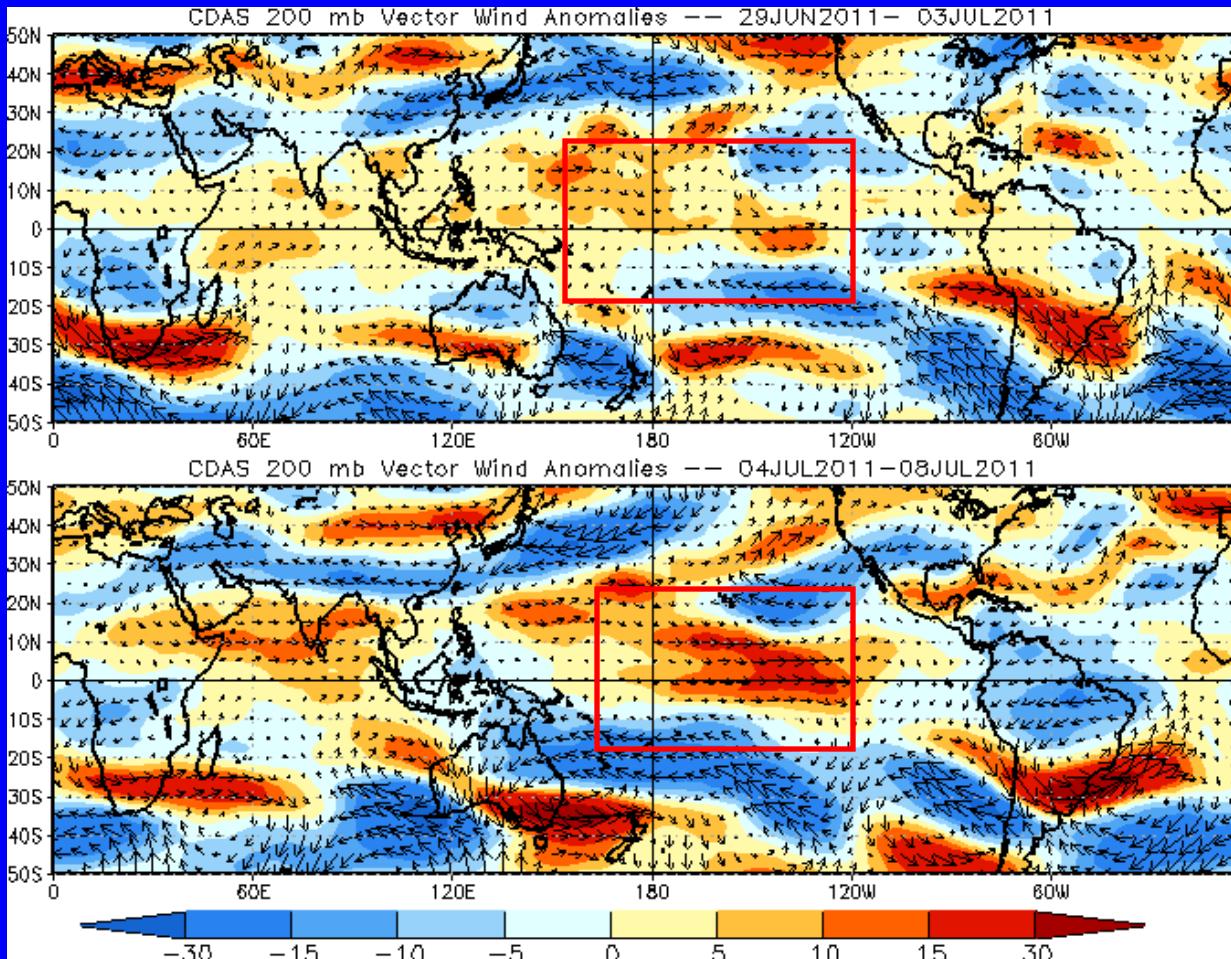
Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation
Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The large scale velocity potential pattern shows weak anomalous upper-level divergence over the Pacific, North America, and the Atlantic Ocean, while anomalous upper-level convergence is observed over the eastern Indian Ocean.



200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})



Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

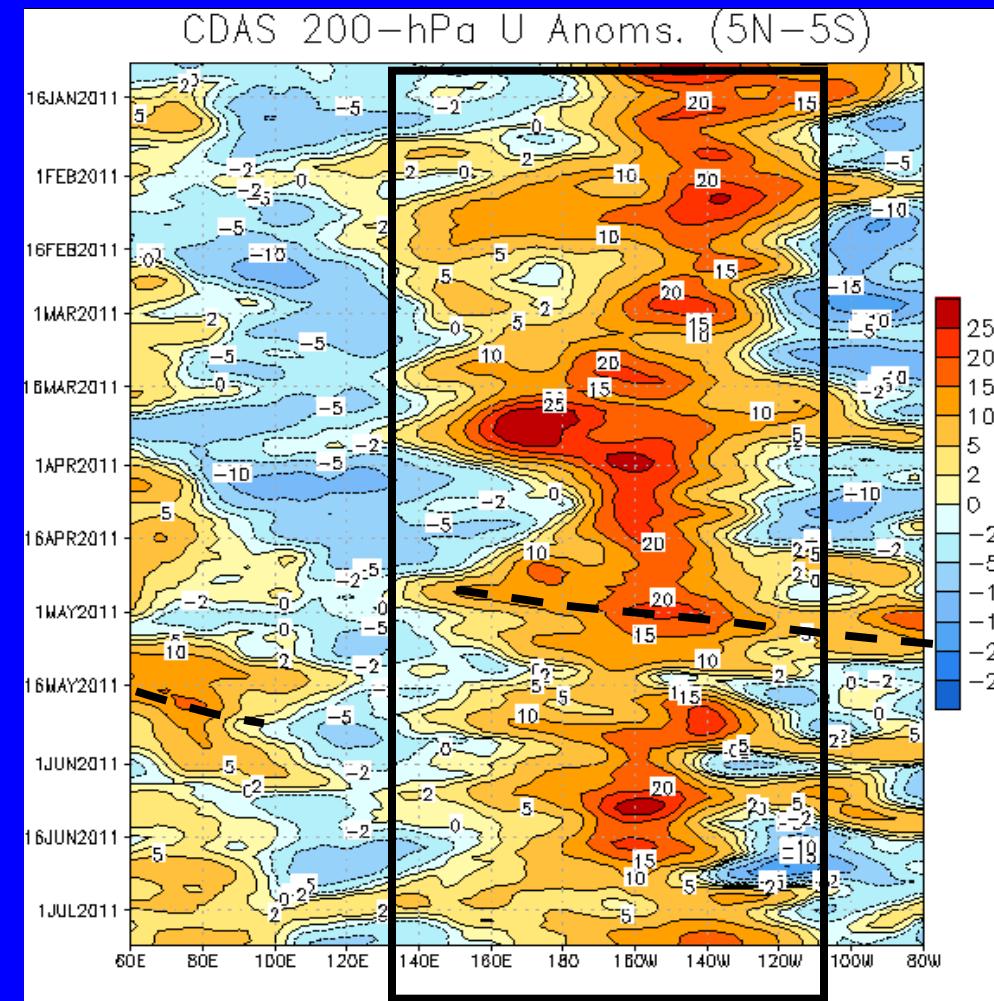
Red shades: Westerly anomalies

Westerly anomalies continue across the central Pacific Ocean (red box), and have strengthened during the last 5 days.

Westerly anomalies are evident across the northern Indian Ocean, indicating a reduced monsoon flow.



200-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})



Westerly anomalies (orange/red shading) represent anomalous west-to-east flow

Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow

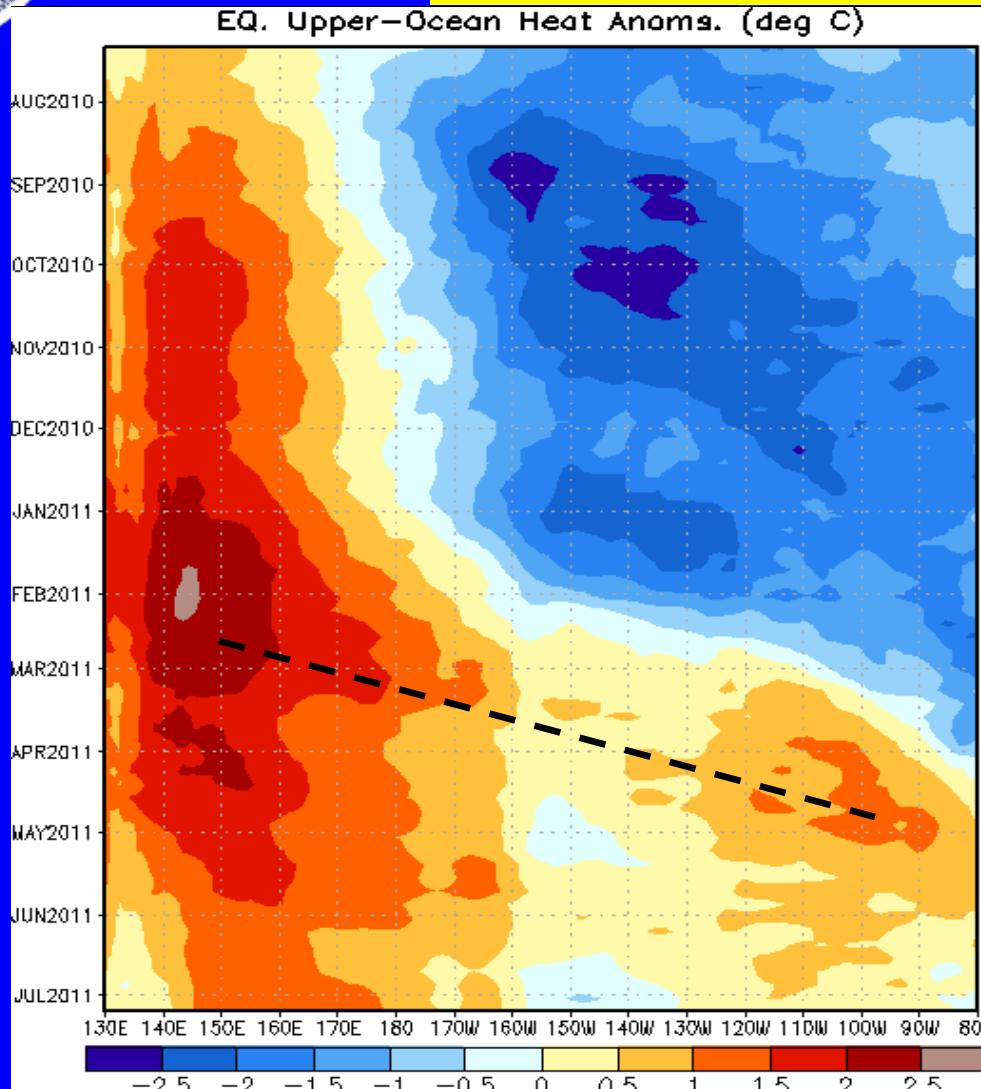
Westerly anomalies persisted across a large area from the Maritime Continent to the central Pacific (black solid box) since November.

Significant eastward propagation of westerly anomalies was evident in late April and May (dashed line) associated with the MJO.

Evidence of faster eastward moving waves is present during June.



Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



Beginning in April 2010 positive heat content anomalies decreased across the Pacific in association with the upwelling phase of a Kelvin wave and later during the early summer due to the development of La Niña.

Since the beginning of January 2011, positive heat content anomalies shifted eastward, while negative heat content anomalies weakened and then became positive across much of the Pacific basin.

An oceanic Kelvin wave (dashed line) shifted eastward during February and March 2011. The entire Pacific basin now indicates above-normal integrated heat content.



MJO Index -- Information

- The MJO index illustrated on the next several slides is the CPC version of the Wheeler and Hendon index (2004, hereafter WH2004).

Wheeler M. and H. Hendon, 2004: An All-Season Real-Time Multivariate MJO Index: Development of an Index for Monitoring and Prediction, *Monthly Weather Review*, 132, 1917-1932.

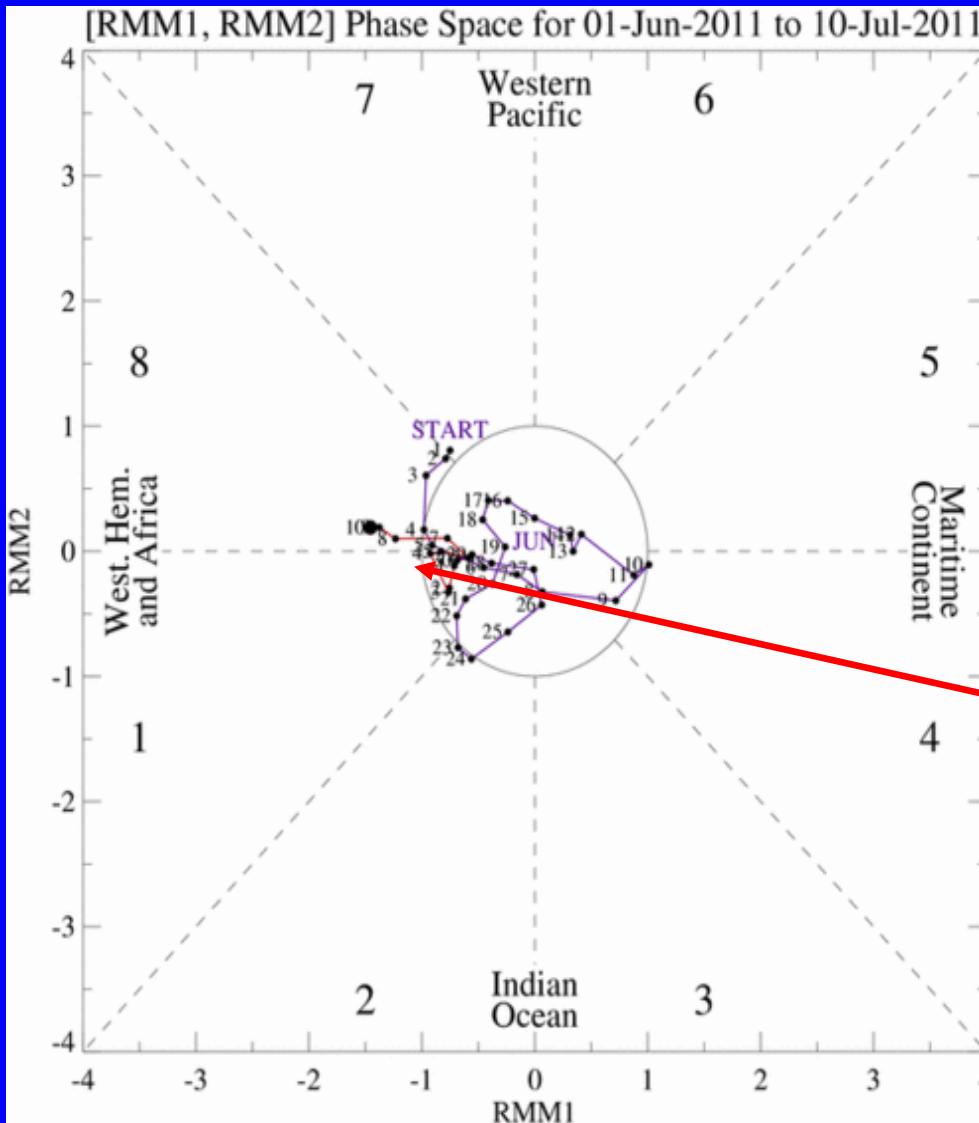
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

Gottschalck et al. 2010: A Framework for Assessing Operational Madden-Julian Oscillation Forecasts: A CLIVAR MJO Working Group Project, *Bull. Amer. Met. Soc.*, 91, 1247-1258.

- The index is based on a combined Empirical Orthogonal Function (EOF) analysis using fields of near-equatorially-averaged 850-hPa and 200-hPa zonal wind and outgoing longwave radiation (OLR).



MJO Index -- Recent Evolution

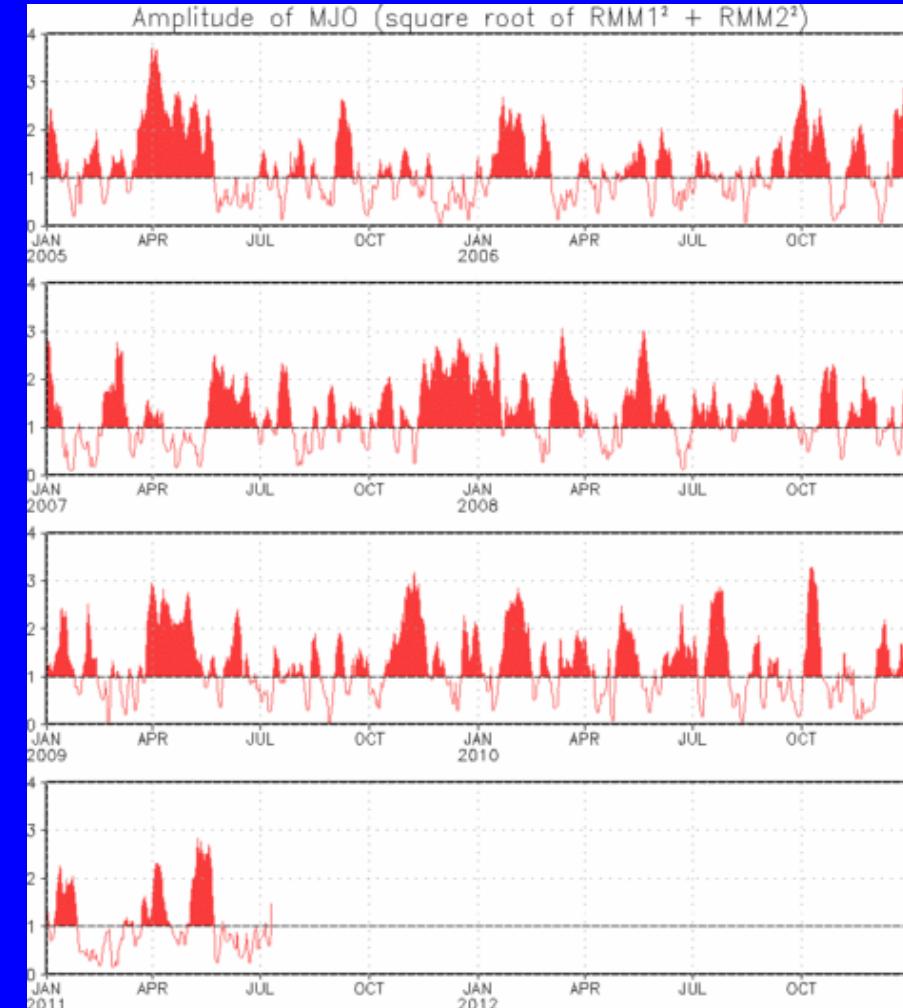
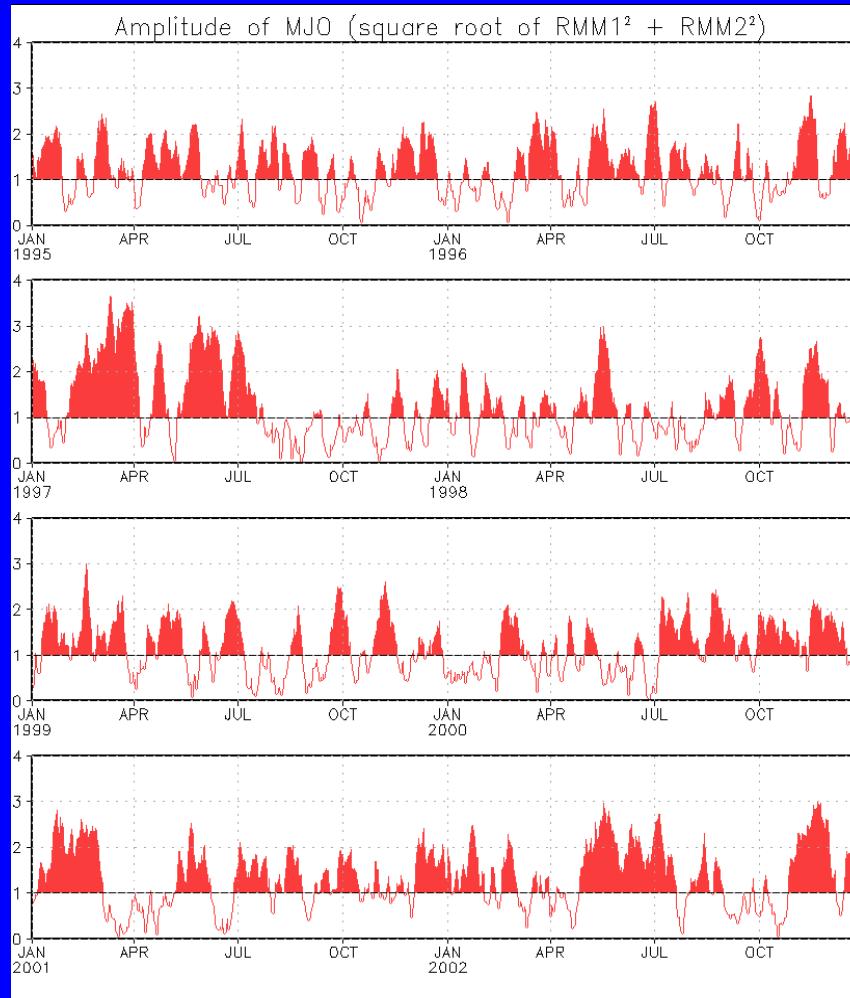


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the origin is proportional to MJO strength
- Line colors distinguish different months

The MJO index indicates continued weak activity during the past week.



MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series



Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 1995 to present.
Plots put current MJO activity in historical context.

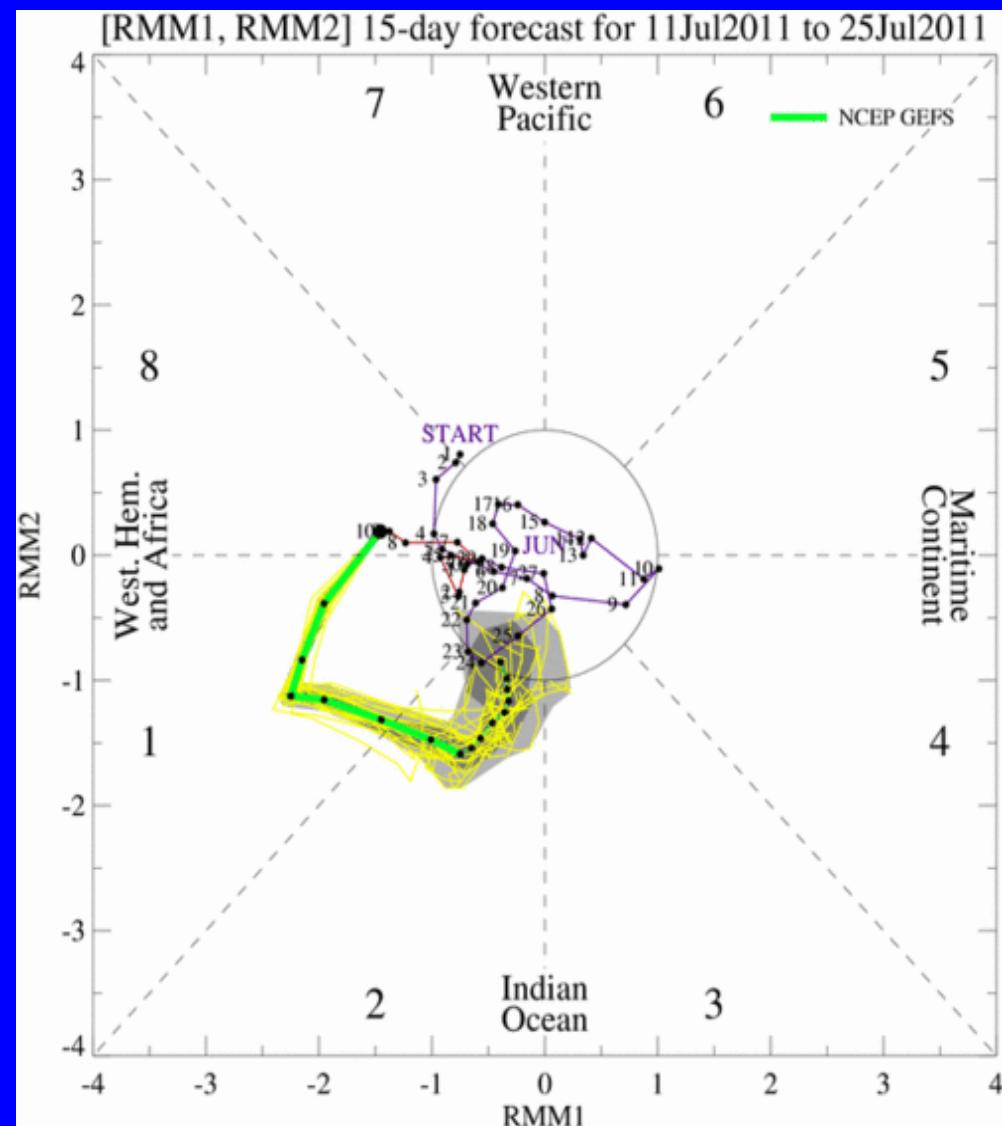


Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

RMM1 and RMM2 values for the most recent 40 days and forecasts from the ensemble Global Forecast System (GEFS) for the next 15 days
light gray shading: 90% of forecasts
dark gray shading: 50% of forecasts

The ensemble GFS forecasts indicate a strengthening signal during most of Week-1 and a weak signal during Week-2. There is very low spread among the ensemble members during Week-1, increasing confidence during that portion of the period.

Yellow Lines – 20 Individual Members
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

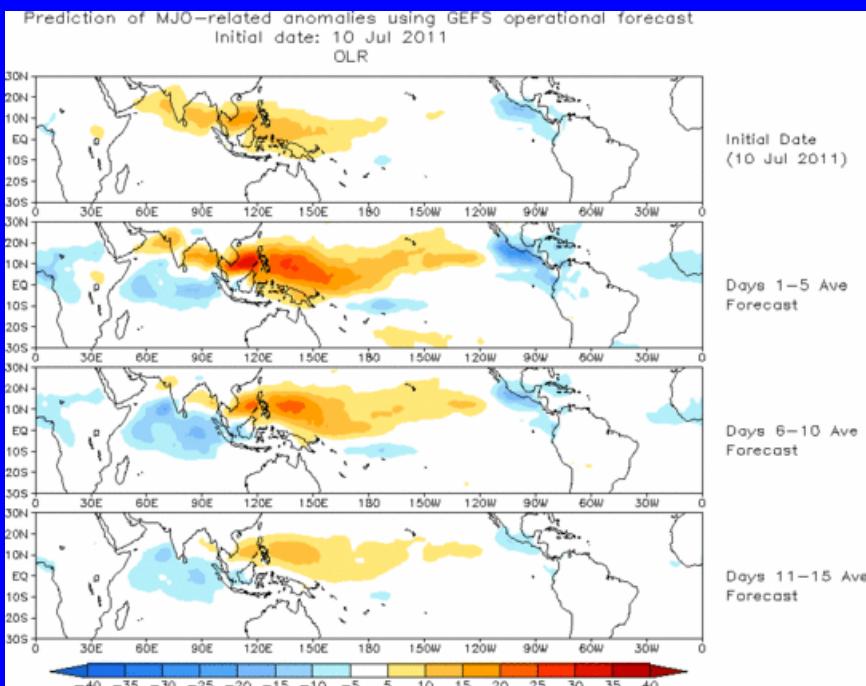




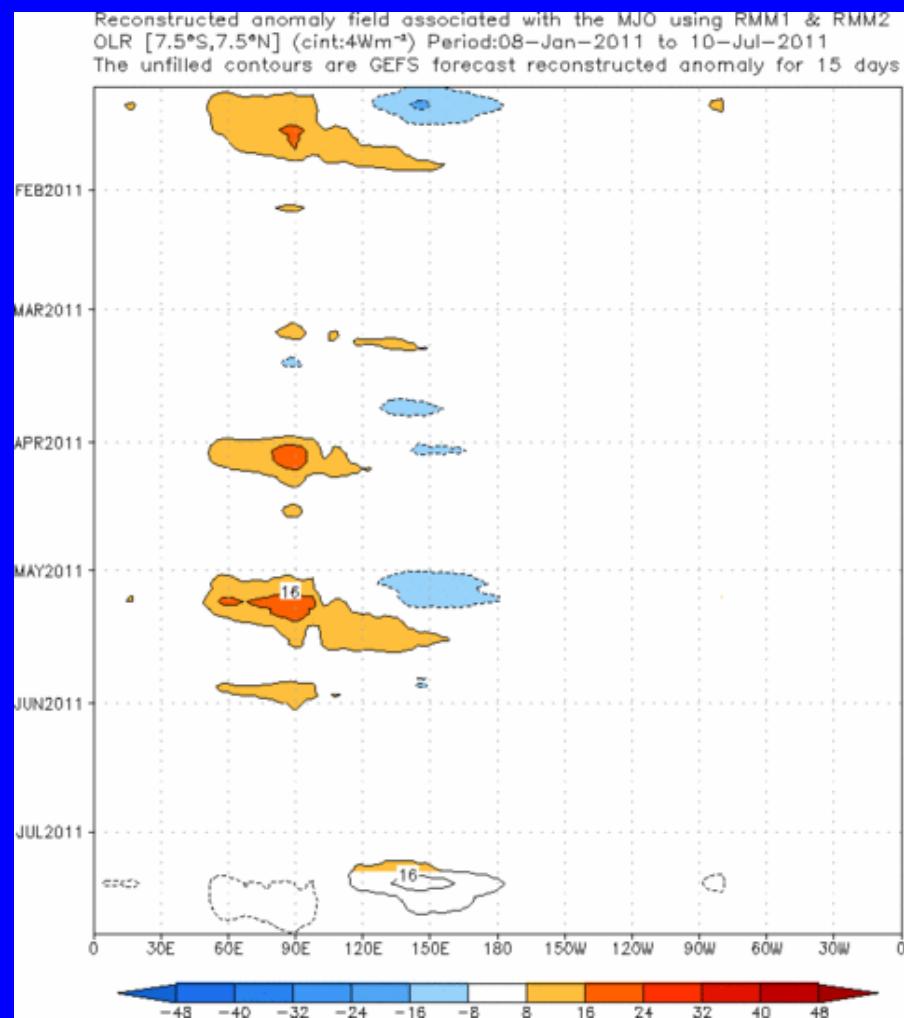
Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

Figures below show MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



Time-longitude section of (7.5°S-7.5°N) OLR anomalies for the last 180 days and for the next 15 days



The GEFS ensemble mean forecast indicates enhanced (suppressed) convection in the western hemisphere, Africa, and the Indian Ocean (South Asia and Western North Pacific).



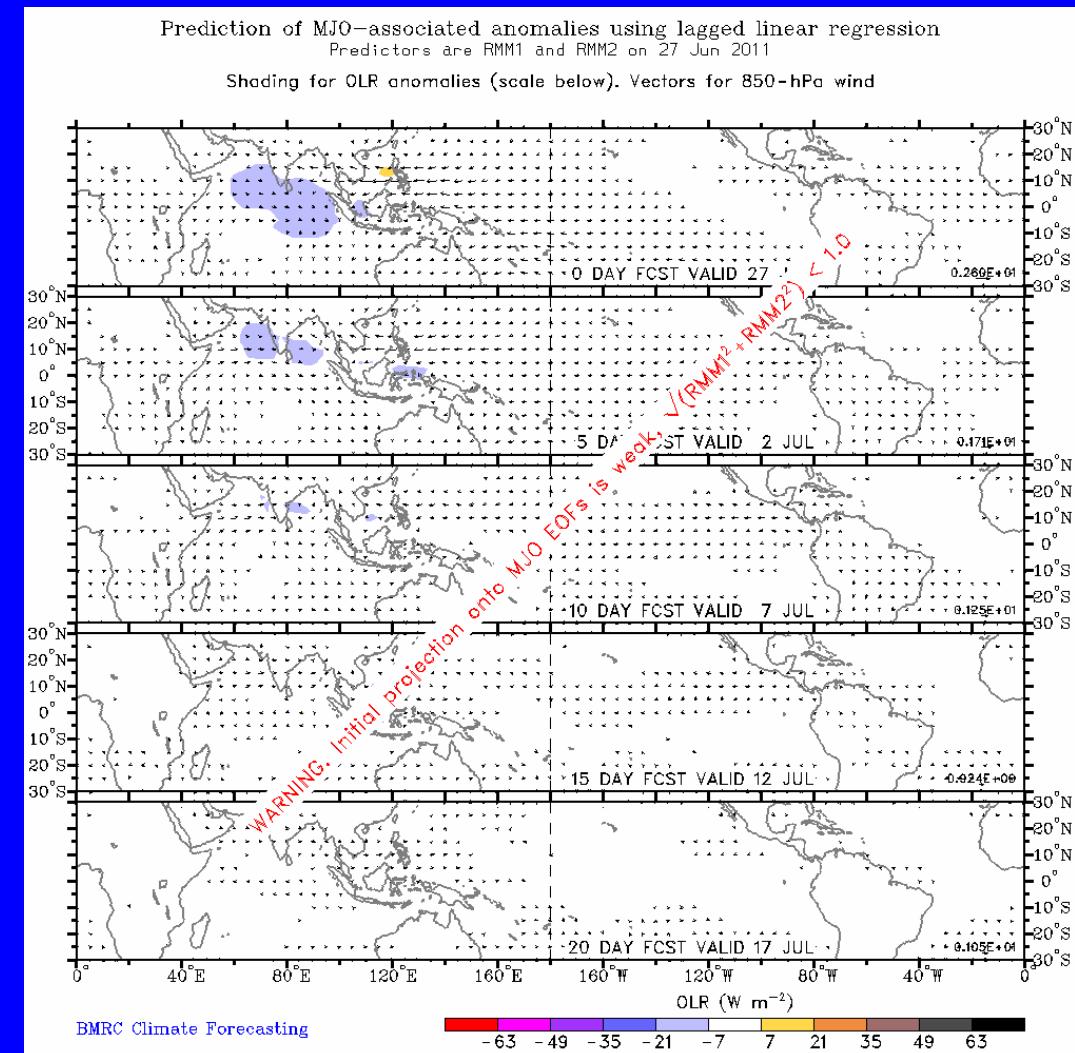
Statistical MJO Forecast

Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies and 850-hPa vectors for the next 20 days

(Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology Research Centre - Australia)

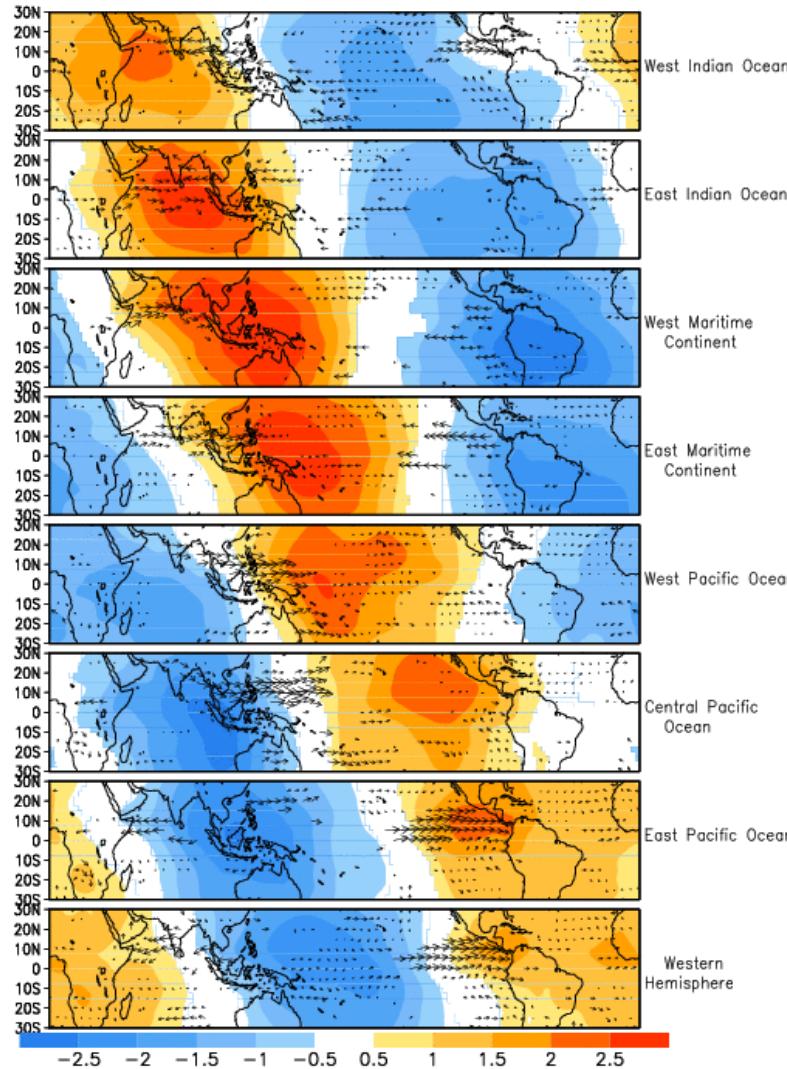
The forecast calls for little MJO activity during the period.



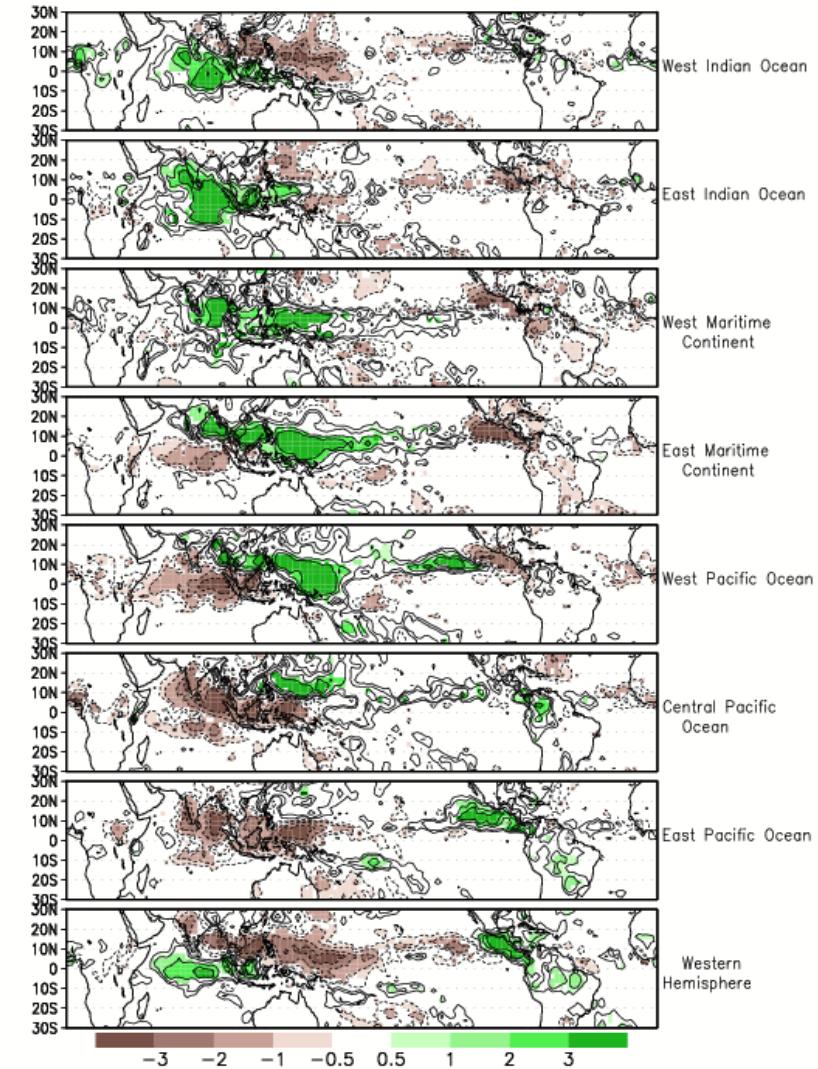


MJO Composites – Global Tropics

850-hPa Wind Anomalies (May-Sep)



Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)

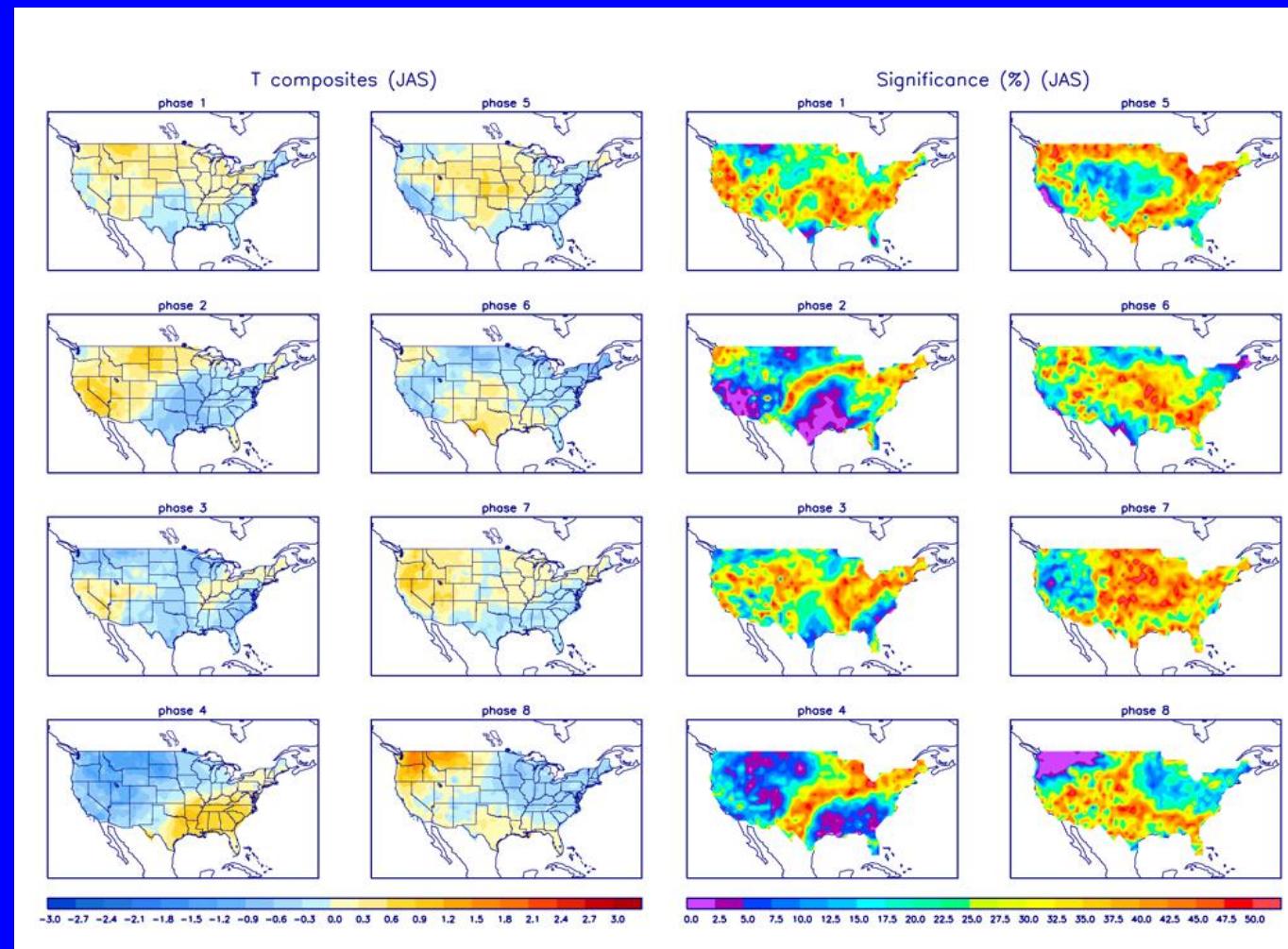




U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

- Left hand side plots show temperature anomalies by MJO phase for MJO events that have occurred over the three month period in the historical record. Blue (orange) shades show negative (positive) anomalies respectively.

- Right hand side plots show a measure of significance for the left hand side anomalies. Dark blue and purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



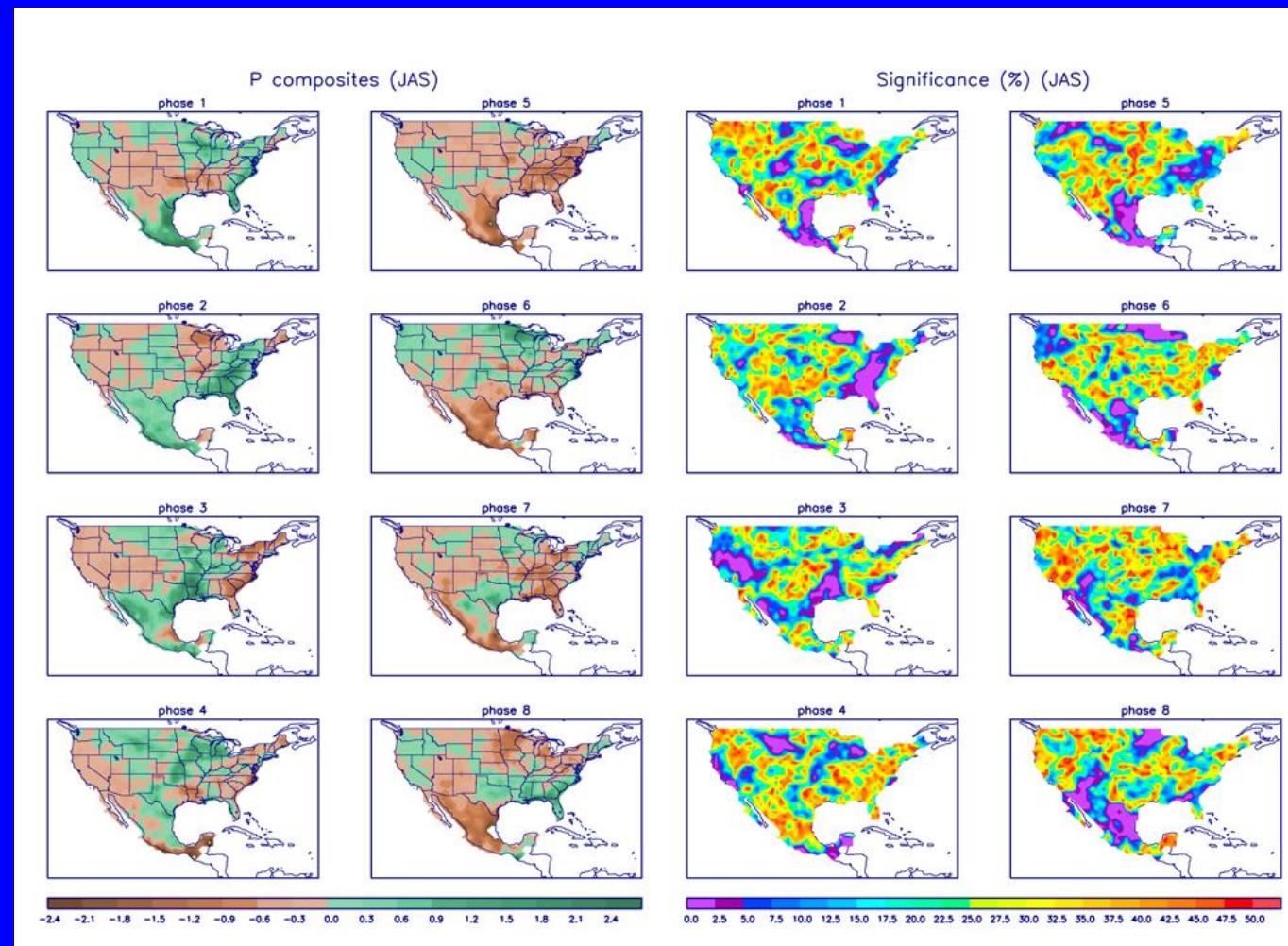
Zhou et al. (2010): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, Submitted.

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>



U.S. MJO Composites – Precipitation

- Left hand side plots show precipitation anomalies by MJO phase for MJO events that have occurred over the three month period in the historical record. Brown (green) shades show negative (positive) anomalies respectively.
- Right hand side plots show a measure of significance for the left hand side anomalies. Dark blue and purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



Zhou et al. (2010): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, Submitted.

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>