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

Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
May 26, 2008

Outline

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

Overview

- Moderate MJO activity continues with the enhanced phase located in the western hemisphere.

- The MJO is expected to continue at moderate strength for the next 1-2 weeks, although some model forecasts indicate a weakening of the MJO signal.

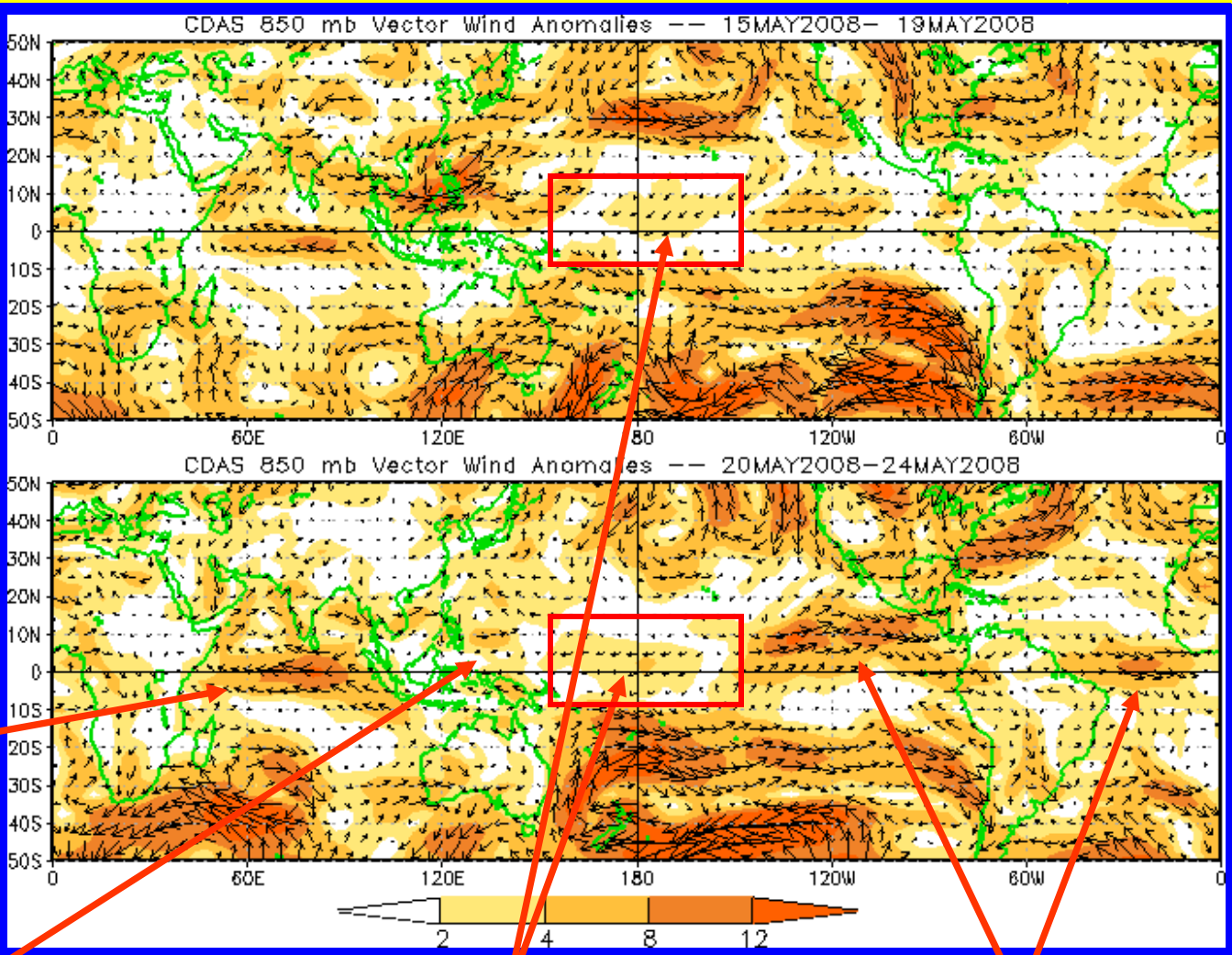
- US interests should closely monitor potential tropical development – linked to the current MJO activity – across the western Caribbean during the upcoming period.

- During week 1, the MJO will contribute to dry conditions across sections of Indonesia and wet conditions across parts of the eastern Pacific, the Caribbean, and equatorial Africa and the Indian Ocean. Wet conditions are expected across the Indian Ocean during week 2.

Additional potential impacts across the global tropics are available at:
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/ghaz.shtml

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

Note that shading denotes the magnitude of anomalous wind vectors



Easterly anomalies continue in the Indian Ocean.

Westerly anomalies have decreased in the western Pacific Ocean during the last five days.

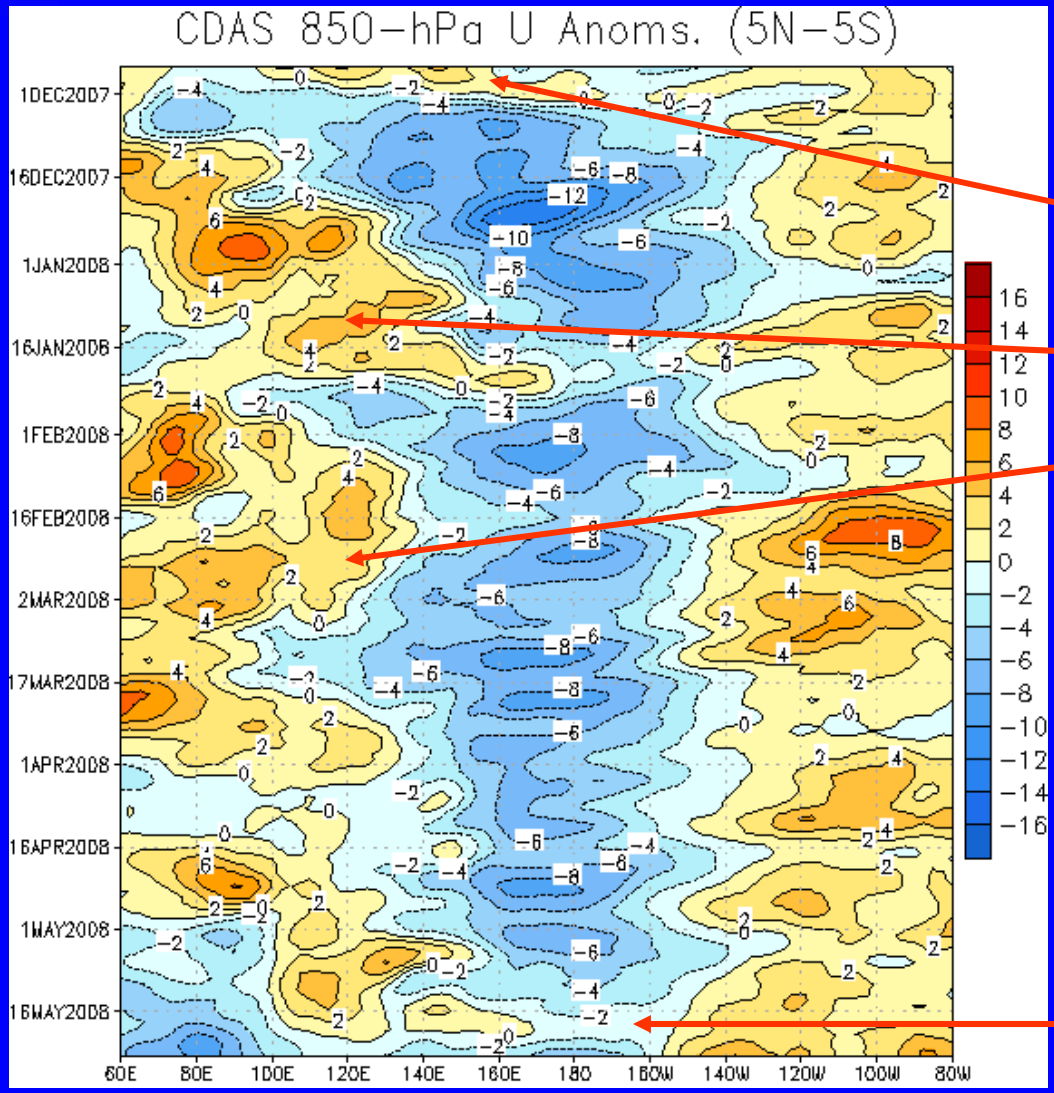
Easterly anomalies in the western Pacific have decreased markedly during the past ten days.

Westerly anomalies have increased across the eastern Pacific and Atlantic 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



Time

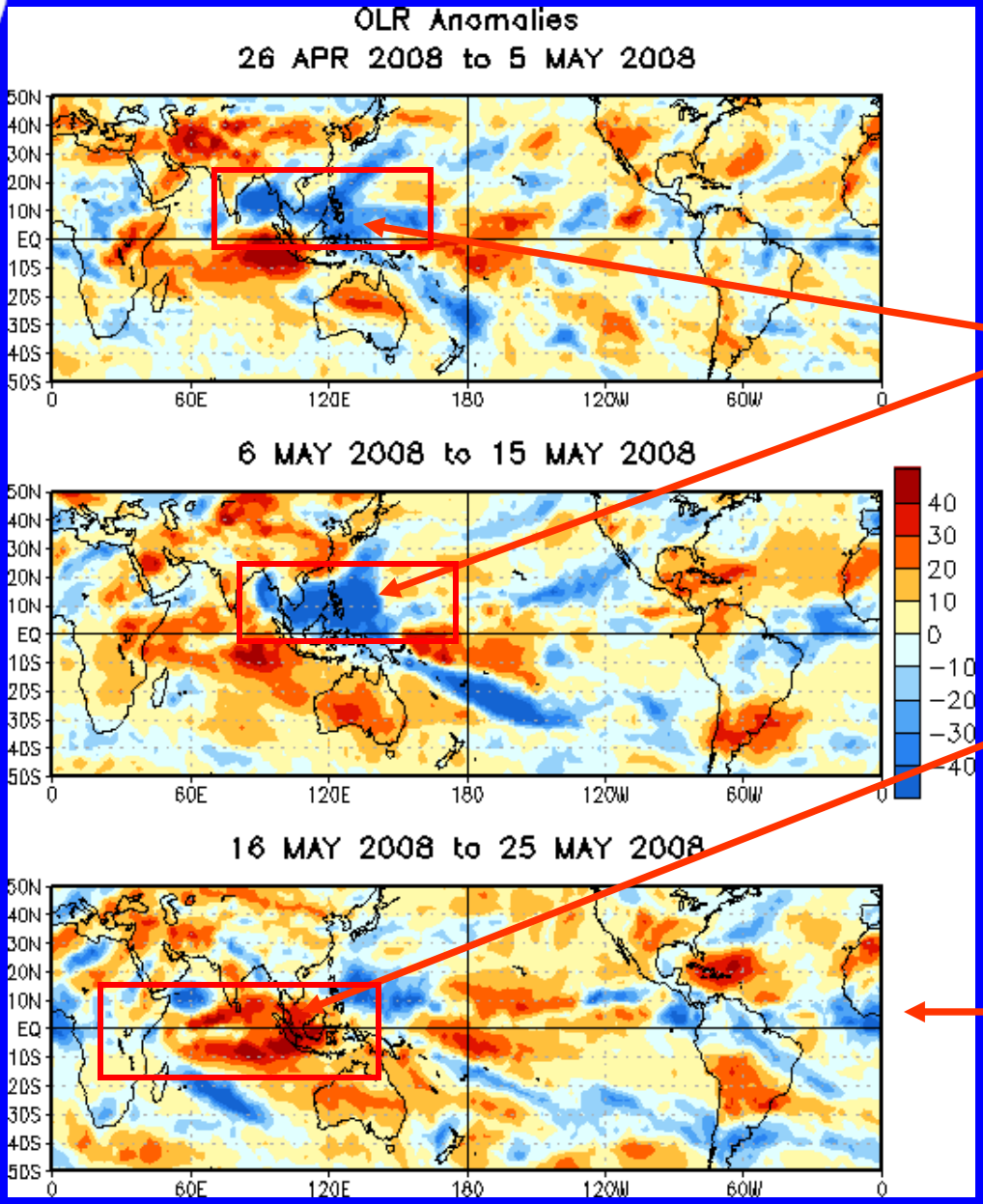
Longitude

Moderate-to-strong MJO activity was evident from late October to mid-late February as shown by westerly anomalies shifting eastward from the Indian Ocean across Indonesia and a weakening of the easterlies at the Date Line during early December, mid-January and mid-February.

MJO activity was weaker during much of March and April.

During mid-May, easterlies weakened near the Date Line associated with the latest MJO activity. Also, large easterly anomalies have returned to the Indian Ocean.

OLR Anomalies: Last 30 days



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

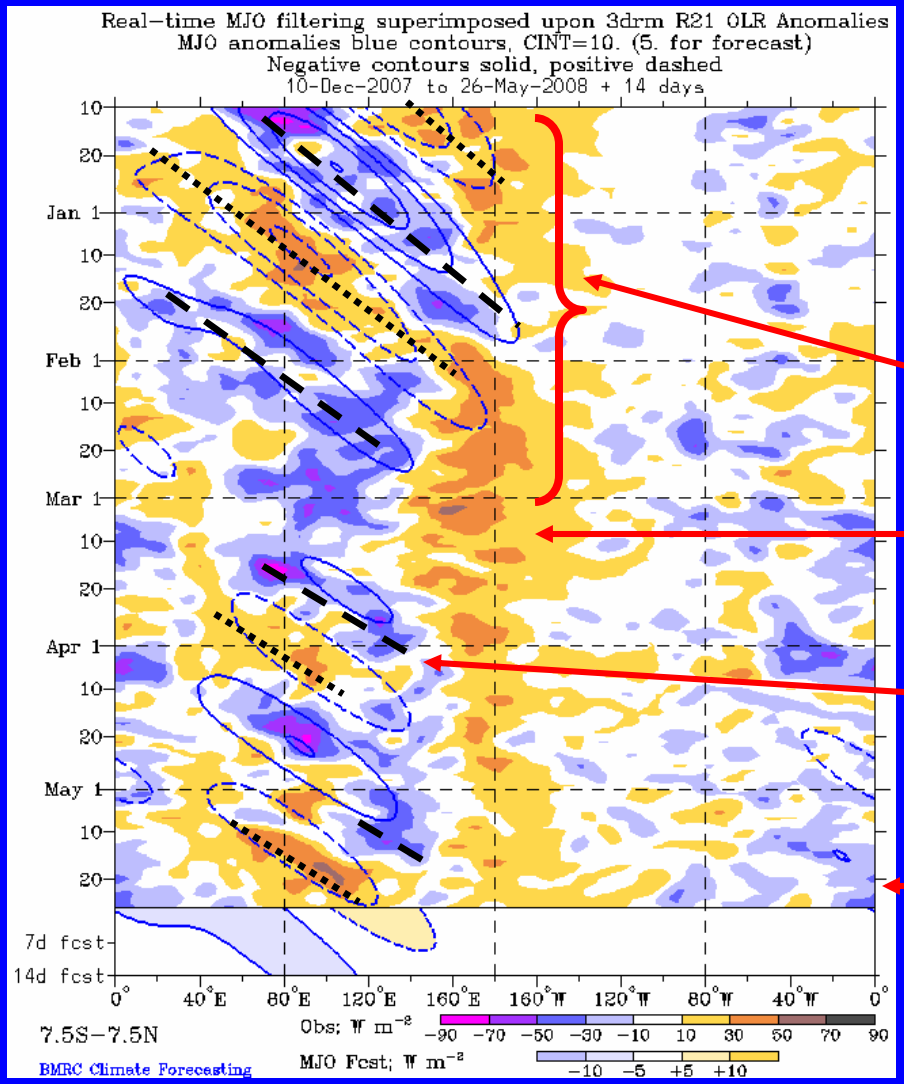
Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)

Enhanced convection shifted northeastward to include more of the western Pacific and Bay of Bengal during late April and early May.

Suppressed convection developed across the equatorial Indian Ocean and has shifted to Indonesia during mid-late May.

Wet conditions intensified across the Atlantic Ocean and Africa during mid-late May.

Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies (7.5°S-7.5°N)



Time

Longitude

Drier-than-normal conditions, positive OLR anomalies (blue shading)

Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (yellow/red shading)

(Courtesy of the Bureau of Meteorology - Australia)

Moderate-to-strong MJO activity was evident from mid-November to mid-February with coherent eastward propagation of enhanced (suppressed) convection indicated by the dashed (dotted) lines.

From mid-February to early-mid March, a more stationary pattern of anomalous convection was evident.

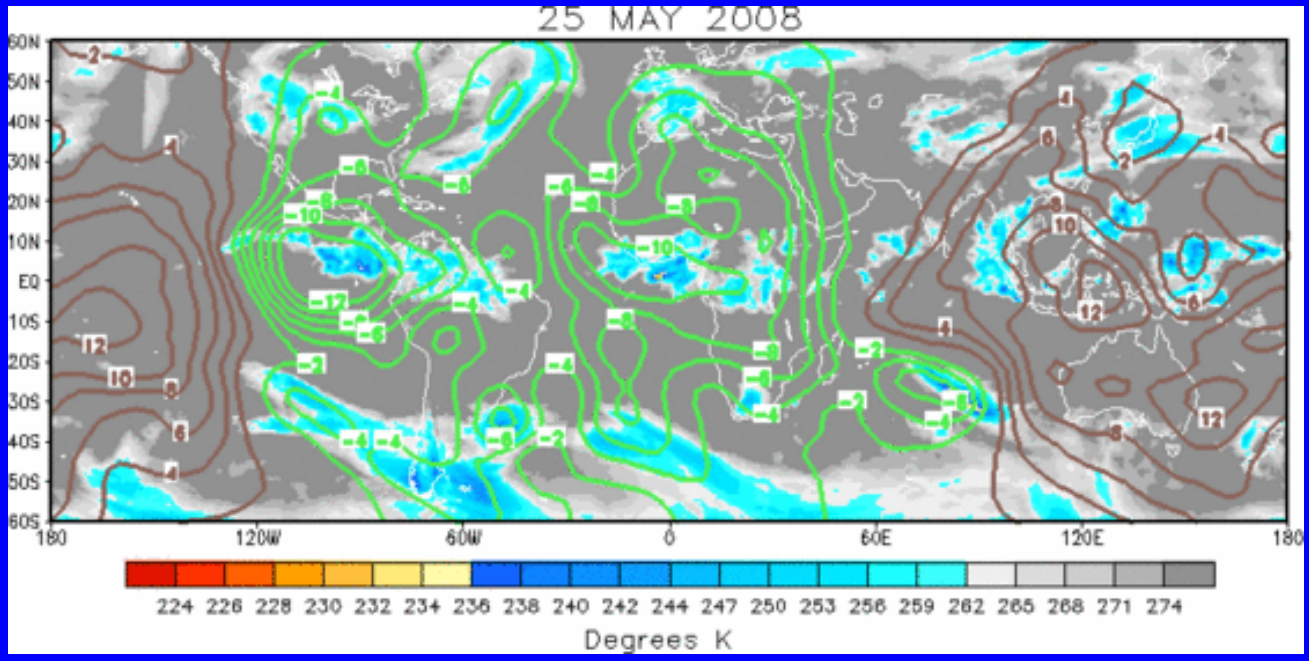
Weak MJO activity was evident during mid-late March.

Strong suppressed convection organized across the Indian Ocean and has shifted eastward during mid-May. Enhanced convection is evident across much of the western hemisphere.

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

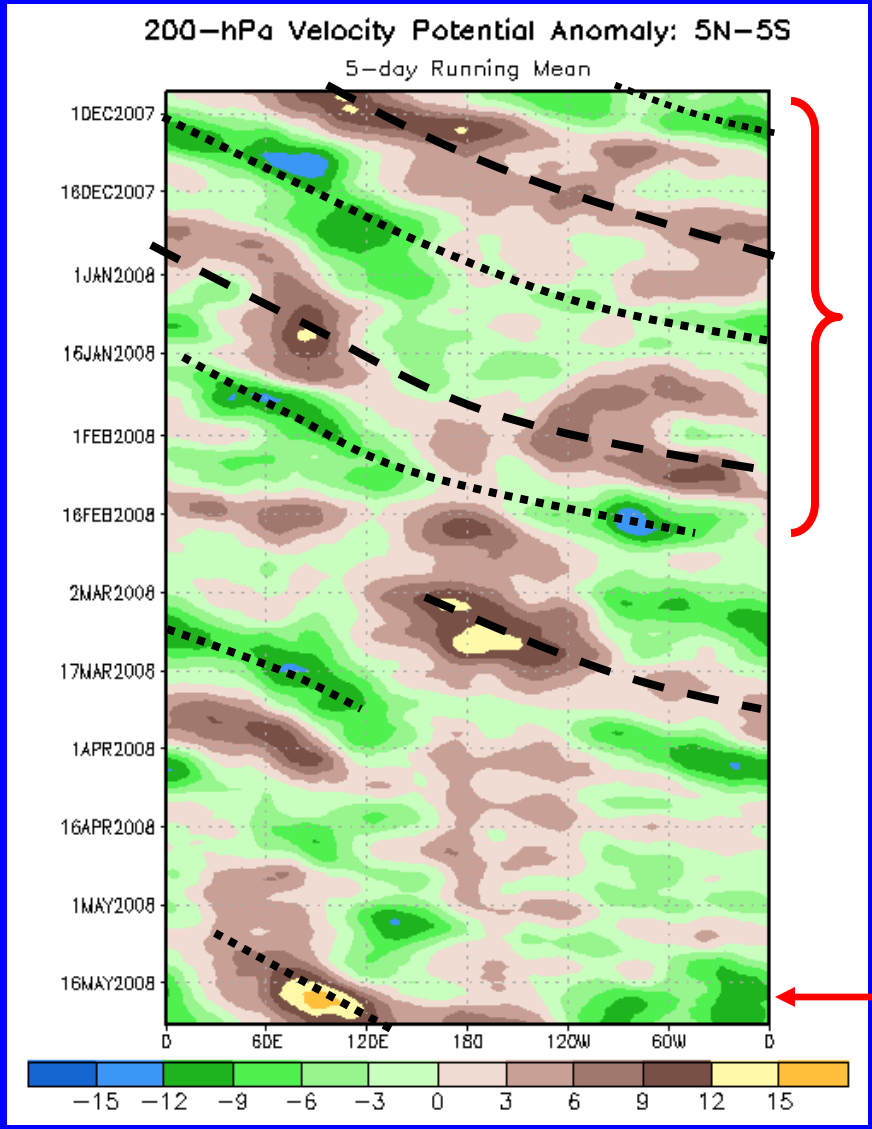


The current velocity potential anomalies indicate a large-scale wave structure of upper-level divergence stretching from the eastern Pacific to Africa and upper-level convergence from the Indian Ocean into the Pacific.

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

Longitude

Moderate-to-strong MJO activity developed in mid-November and continued into mid-February.

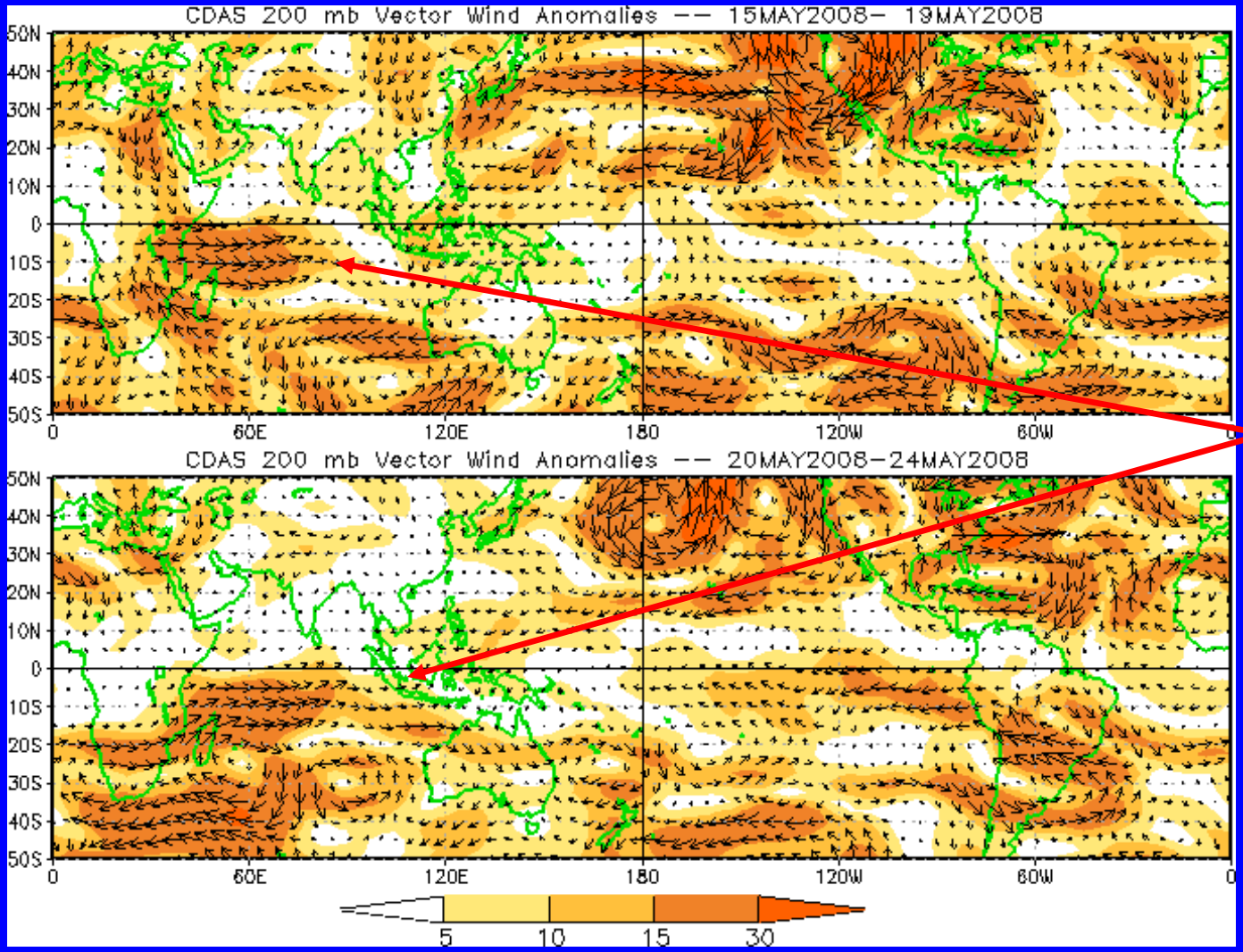
Weak MJO activity was evident during parts of March.

The MJO was largely incoherent during the month of April.

The MJO strengthened during May as velocity potential anomalies have increased with some eastward propagation evident.

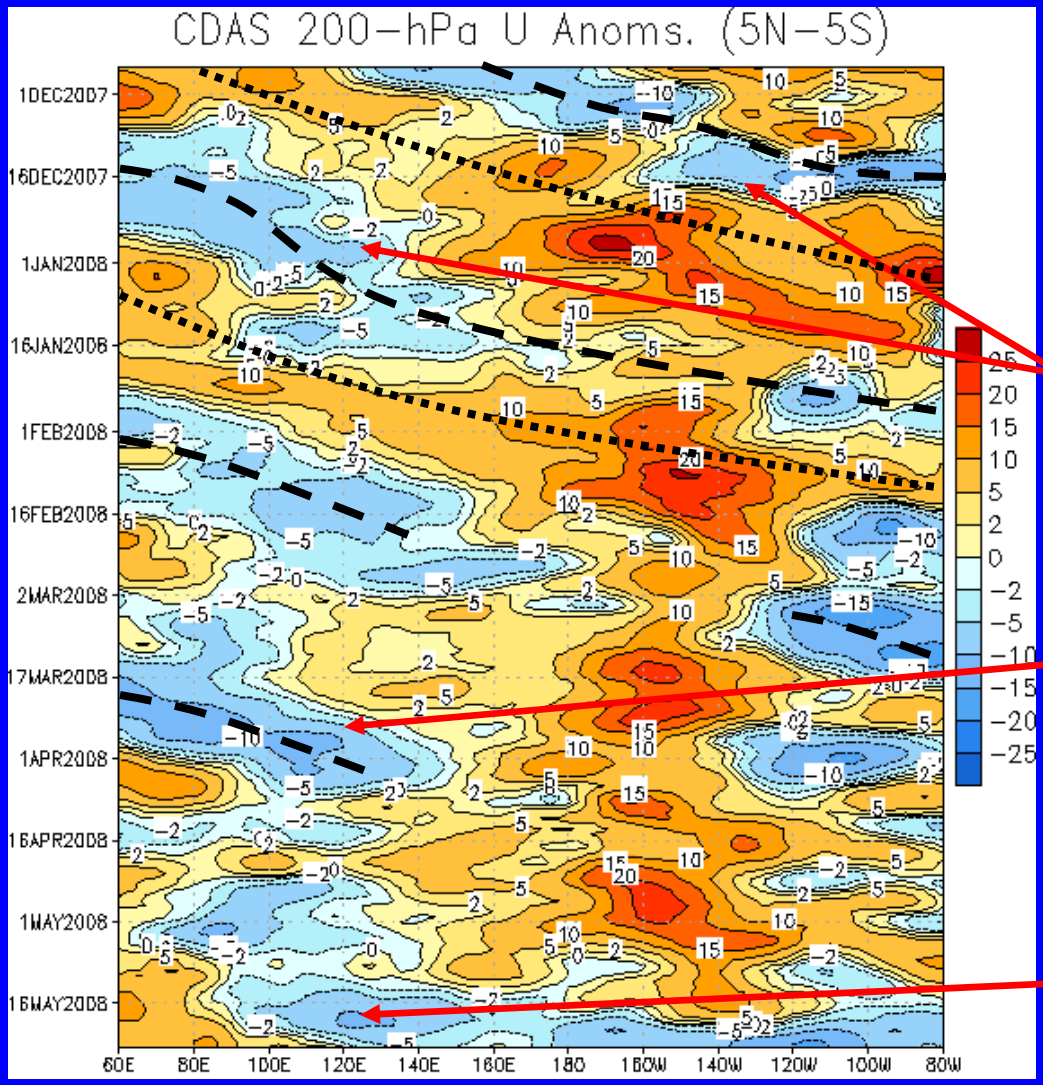
200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the magnitude of anomalous wind vectors



Westerly anomalies continue over the Indian Ocean with a small eastward shift during the last five days.

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



Time

Longitude

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

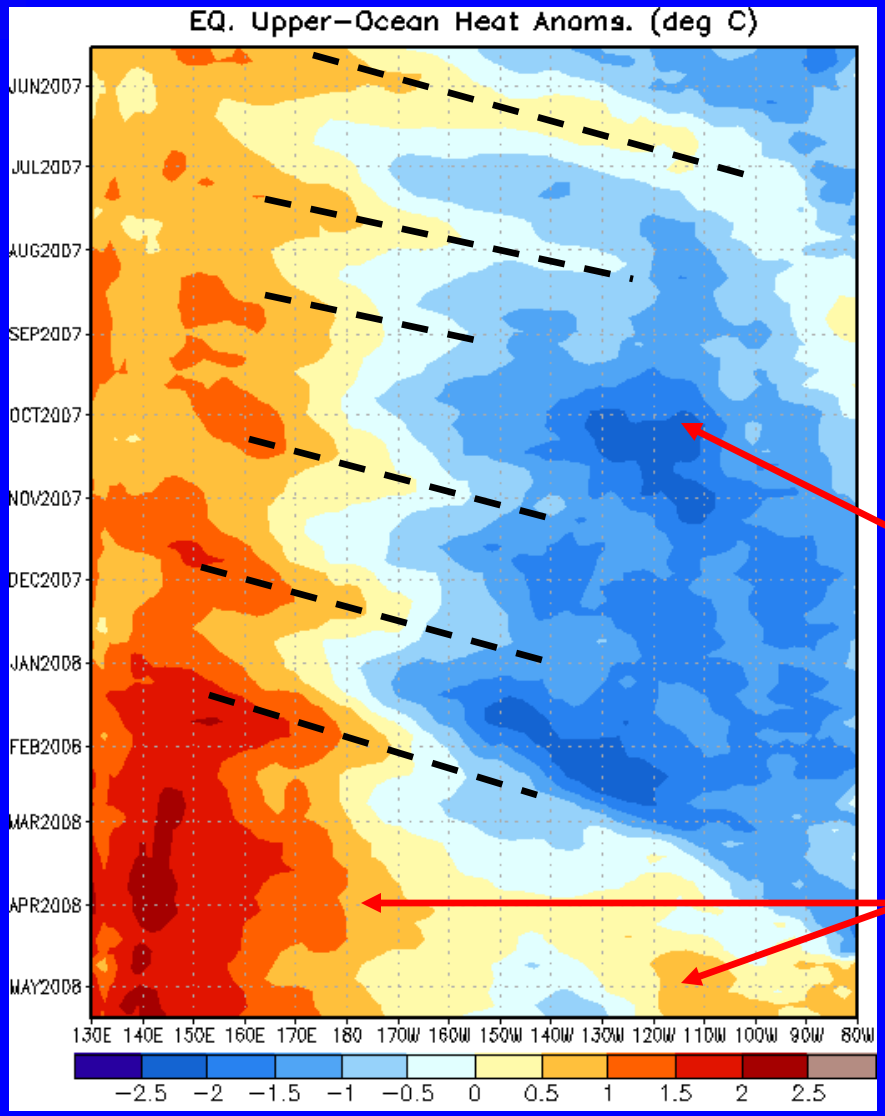
Easterly anomalies (blue shading) represent anomalous east-to-west flow

MJO activity is evident in the upper-levels by eastward propagation of easterly (westerly) anomalies by dashed (dotted) lines globally from November to mid-February.

During March, easterly anomalies propagated quickly eastward from the western hemisphere to the Maritime continent region in part associated with weak MJO activity.

Easterly anomalies increased during May over Indonesia and have shifted eastward while westerly anomalies have developed over the Indian Ocean.

Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



Time

Longitude

Kelvin wave activity (downwelling phases indicated by dashed lines) was observed from May 2007 to February 2008 and affected sub-surface temperature departures at varying degrees across the Pacific Ocean. The strongest wave occurred during May and June 2007.

During September and October, negative heat content anomalies increased markedly across the eastern Pacific Ocean and continued until February 2008.

Beginning in March, increasingly positive anomalies have developed across parts of the western and central Pacific and have extended eastward into parts of the eastern Pacific during April and May.

MJO Index -- Information

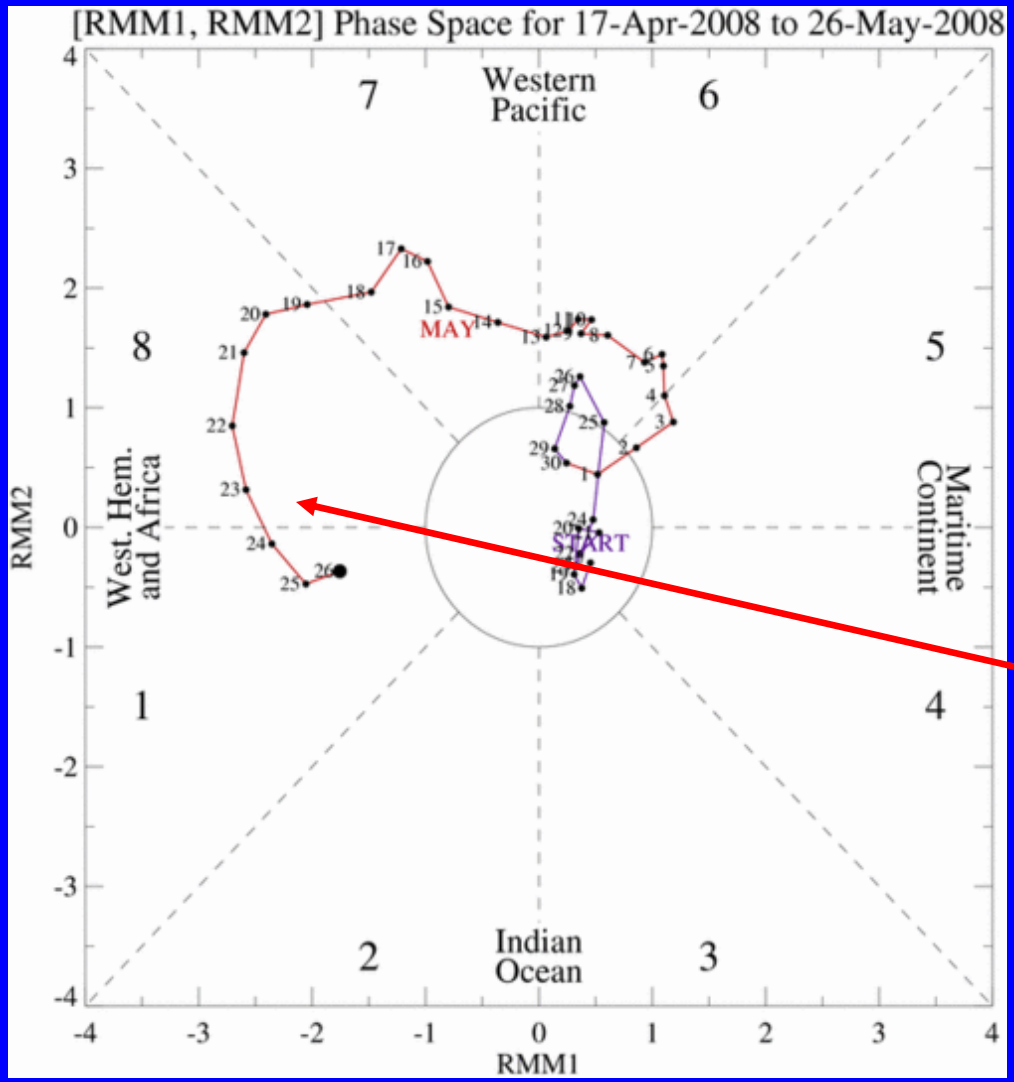
- **The MJO index illustrated on the next several slides is the CPC version of the Wheeler and Hendon index (2004, hereafter WH2004).**

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 nearly identical to that described in WH2004 but small deviations from the BMRC figure are possible at times due to differences in input data and methodology. These typically occur during weak MJO periods.**

- **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).**

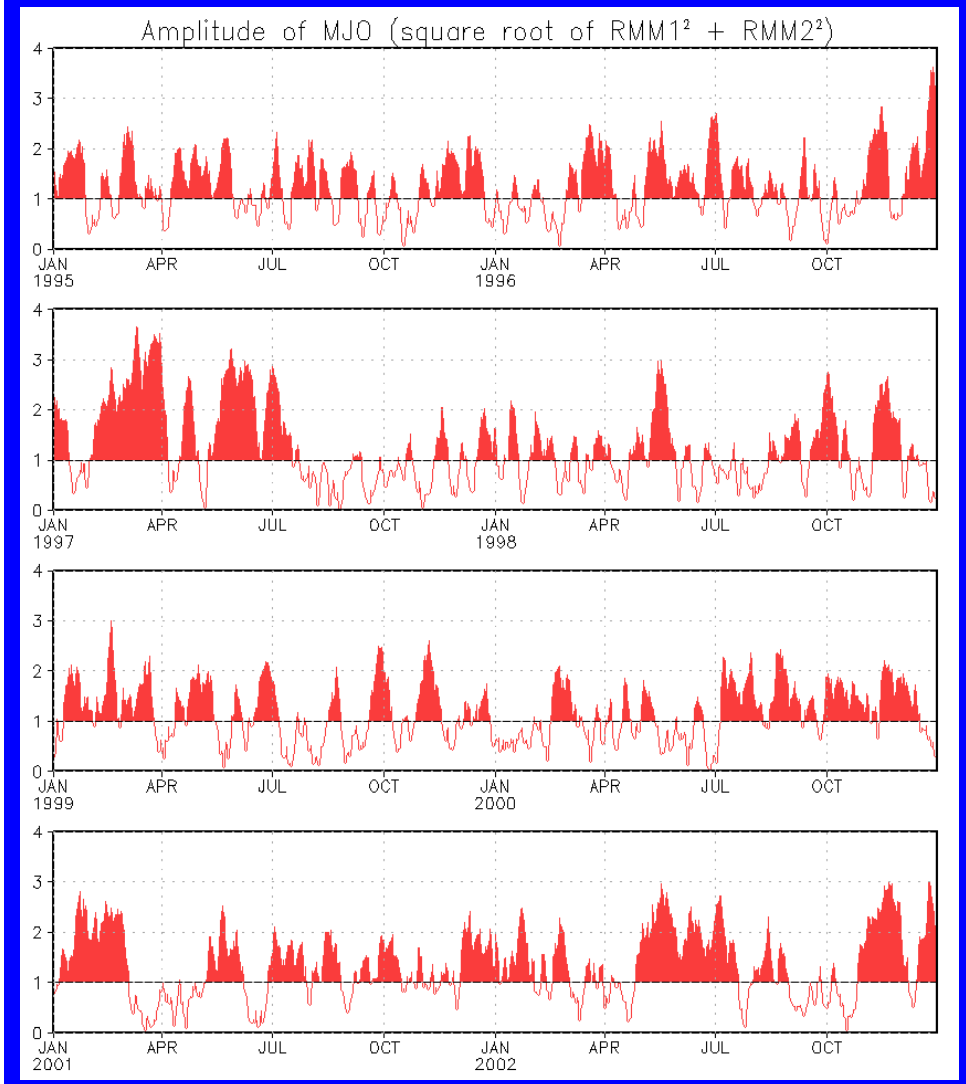
MJO Index -- Recent Evolution

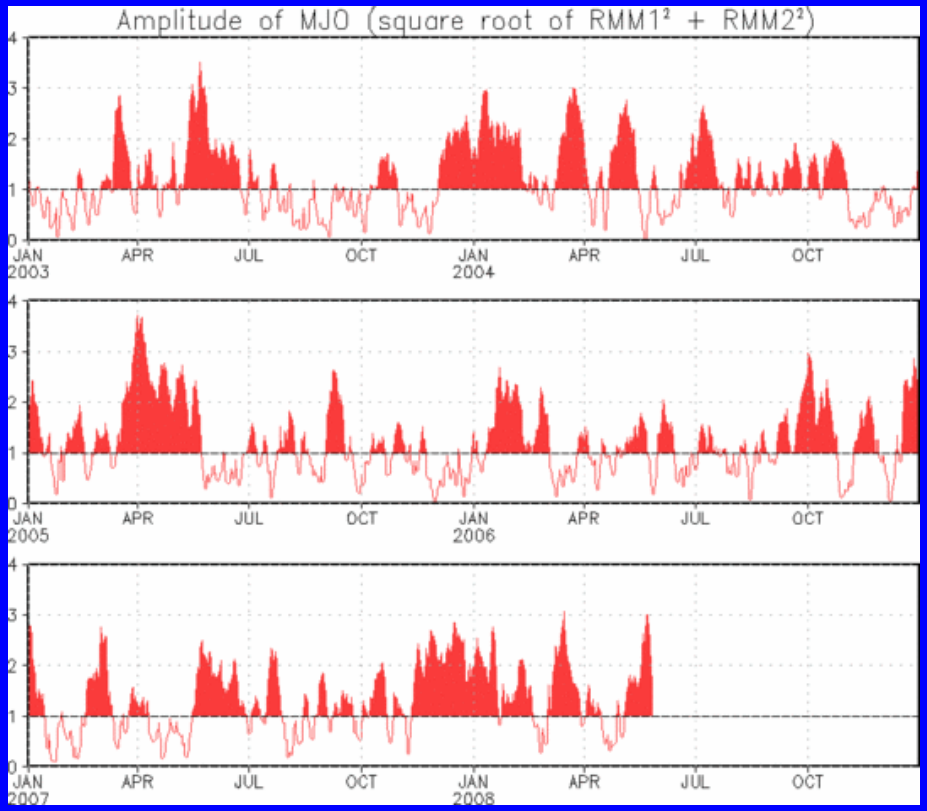


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation
- Distance from the origin is proportional to MJO strength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

The MJO index has decreased in amplitude during the past week but has propagated eastward.

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

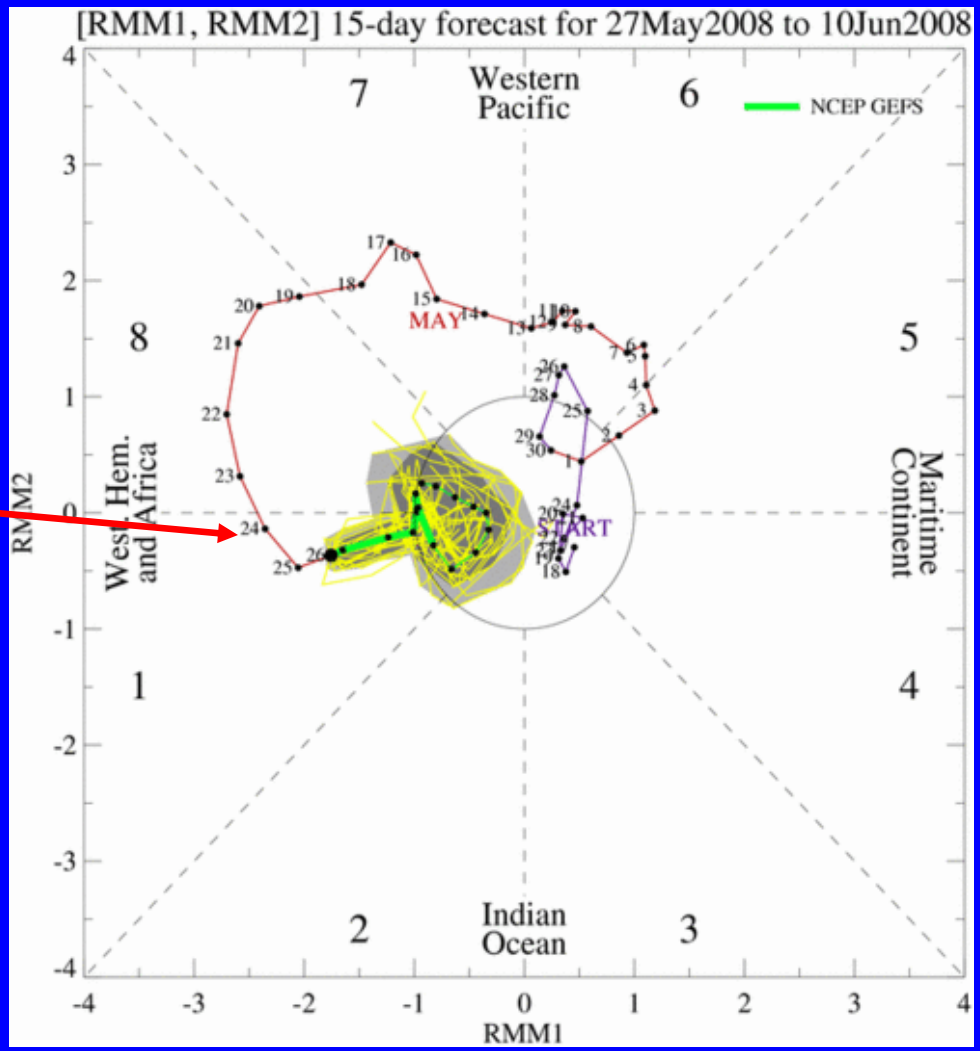
Ensemble GFS MJO Forecasts

Yellow Lines – 20 Individual Members
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

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

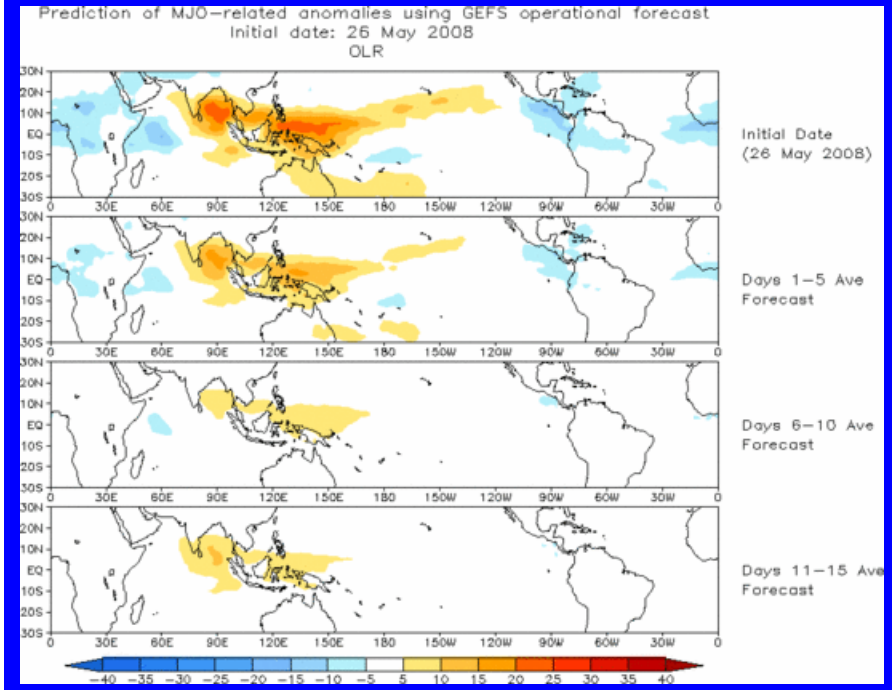
The GEFS predicts the MJO signal to cease its eastward propagation and decrease in amplitude during next week.



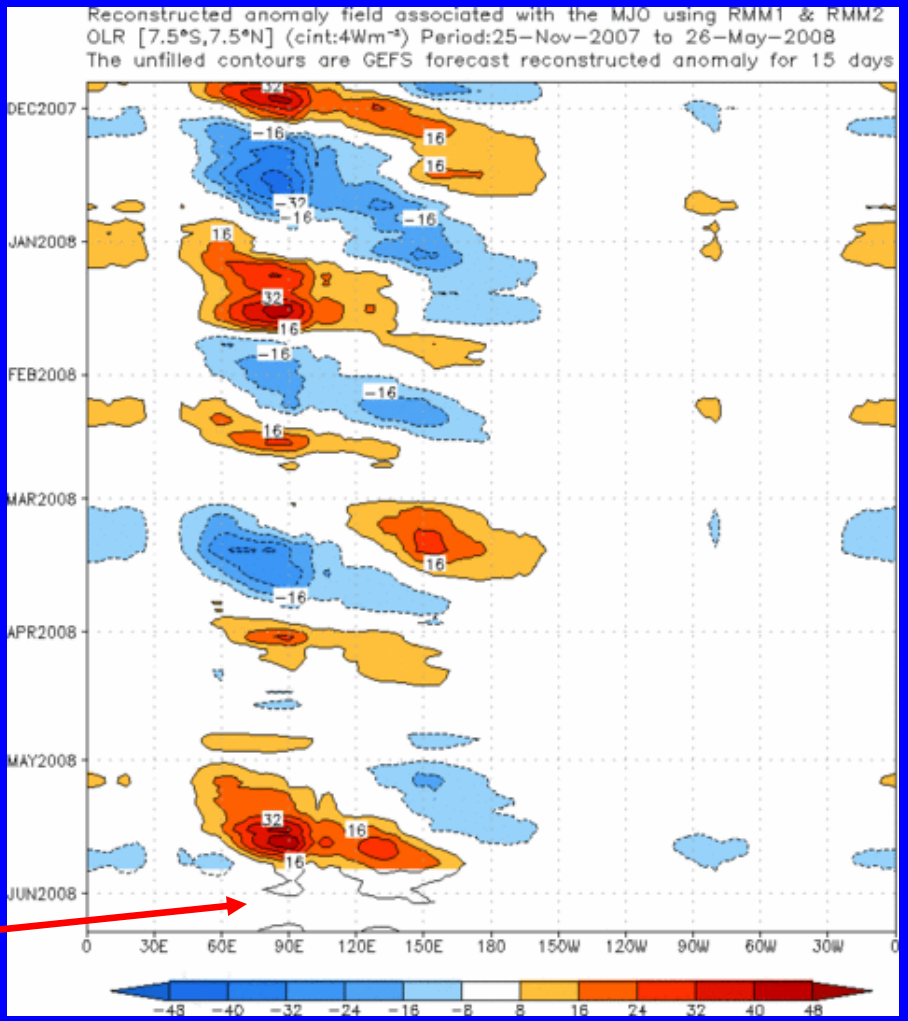
Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

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 forecast from the GEFS for MJO-associated convection indicates weak suppressed convection across parts of Indonesia and the western Pacific. Wet conditions are forecast for Central America early during the period.

Little eastward propagation is forecast.

Statistical MJO Forecast

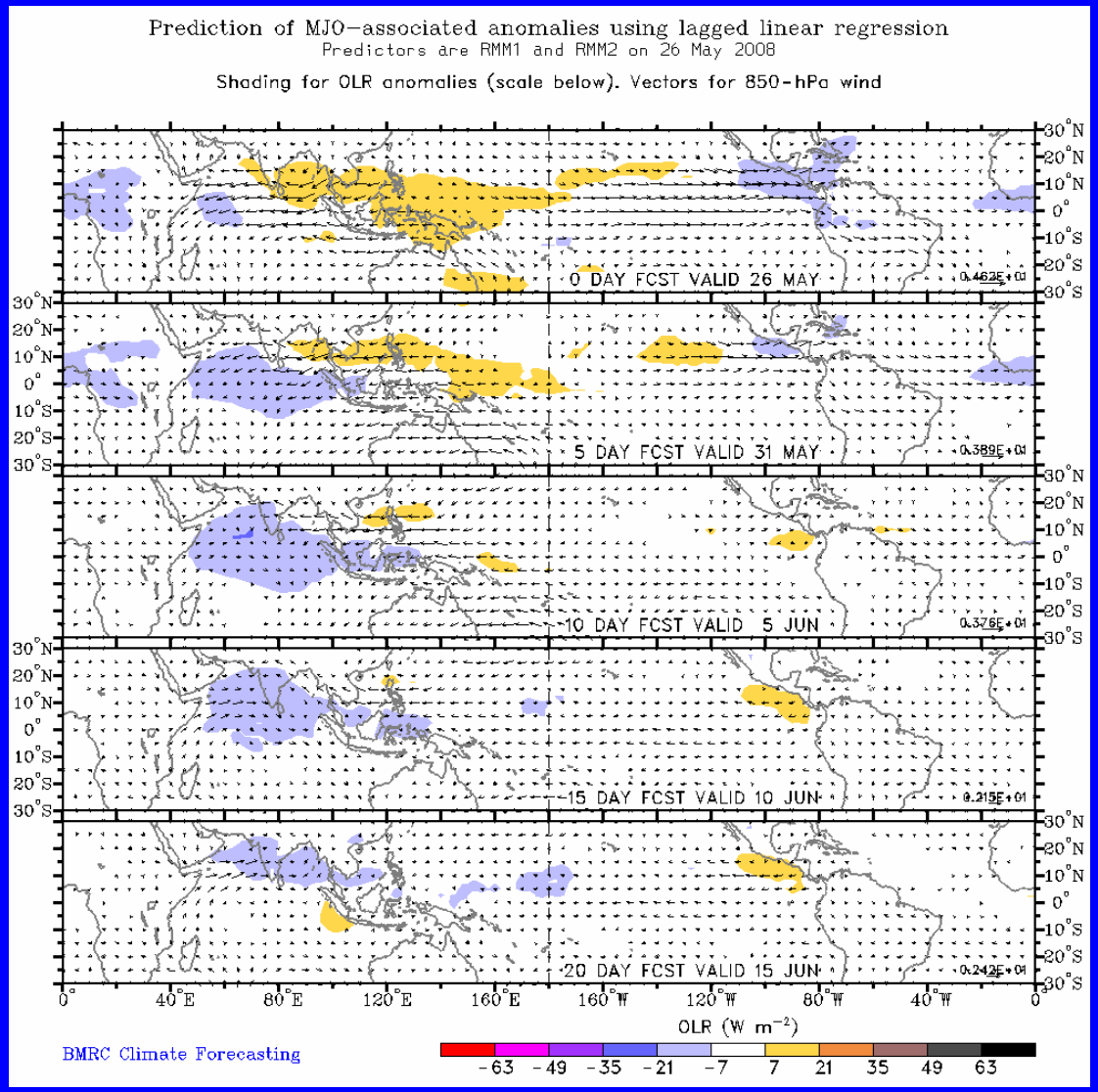
Figure below shows MJO associated OLR anomalies only (reconstructed from RMM1 and RMM2) and do not include contributions from other modes (*i.e.*, ENSO, monsoons)

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

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

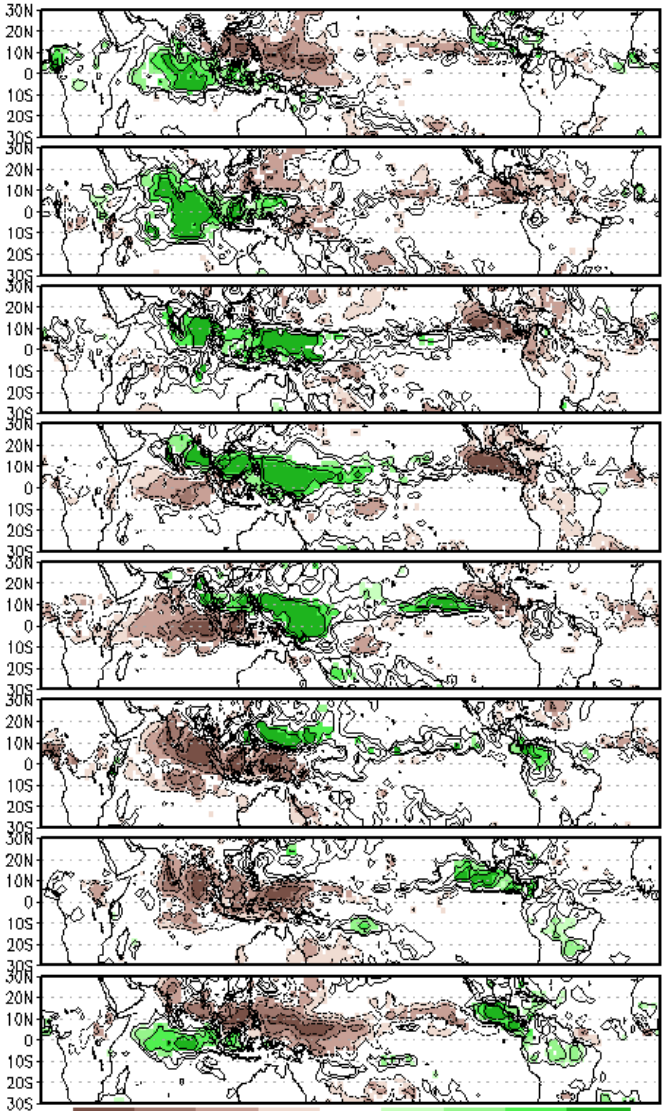
Moderate MJO activity is forecast with suppressed convection shifting northeastward across Indonesia to the western Pacific during the period.

Wet conditions are forecast to enter the Indian Ocean during week 1.



MJO Composites – Global Tropics

Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)



850-hPa Wind Anomalies (May-Sep)