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

Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
October 17, 2011

Outline

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

Overview

- The MJO remained active during the past week with the enhanced convective phase centered over Africa.
- Dynamical model MJO index forecasts continue to indicate an eastward propagating MJO signal during the period with the enhanced convective phase shifting across the Indian Ocean during the period.
- Based on the latest observations and model MJO forecasts, the MJO is forecast to remain active during the next two weeks.
- The MJO is expected to contribute to enhanced rainfall across the Americas and central Africa (Week-1) and the Indian Ocean (Weeks 1 and 2) during the period. The MJO would tend to suppress rainfall for some areas across the western and central Pacific.
- The forecast MJO phase enhances the threat for tropical cyclogenesis for areas of western Atlantic basin mainly during Week-1.

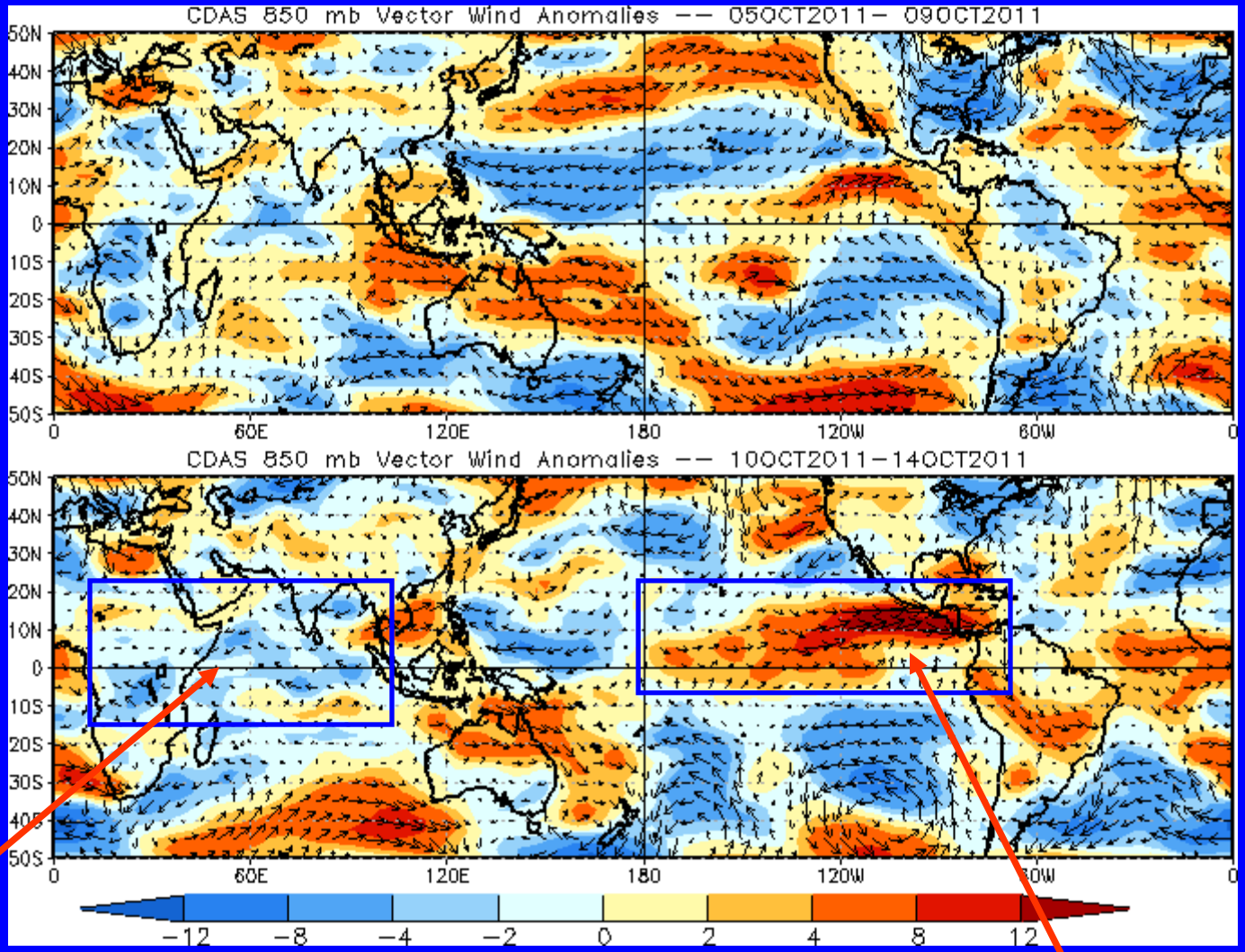
Additional potential impacts across the global tropics are available at:
http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/ghazards/index.php

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

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



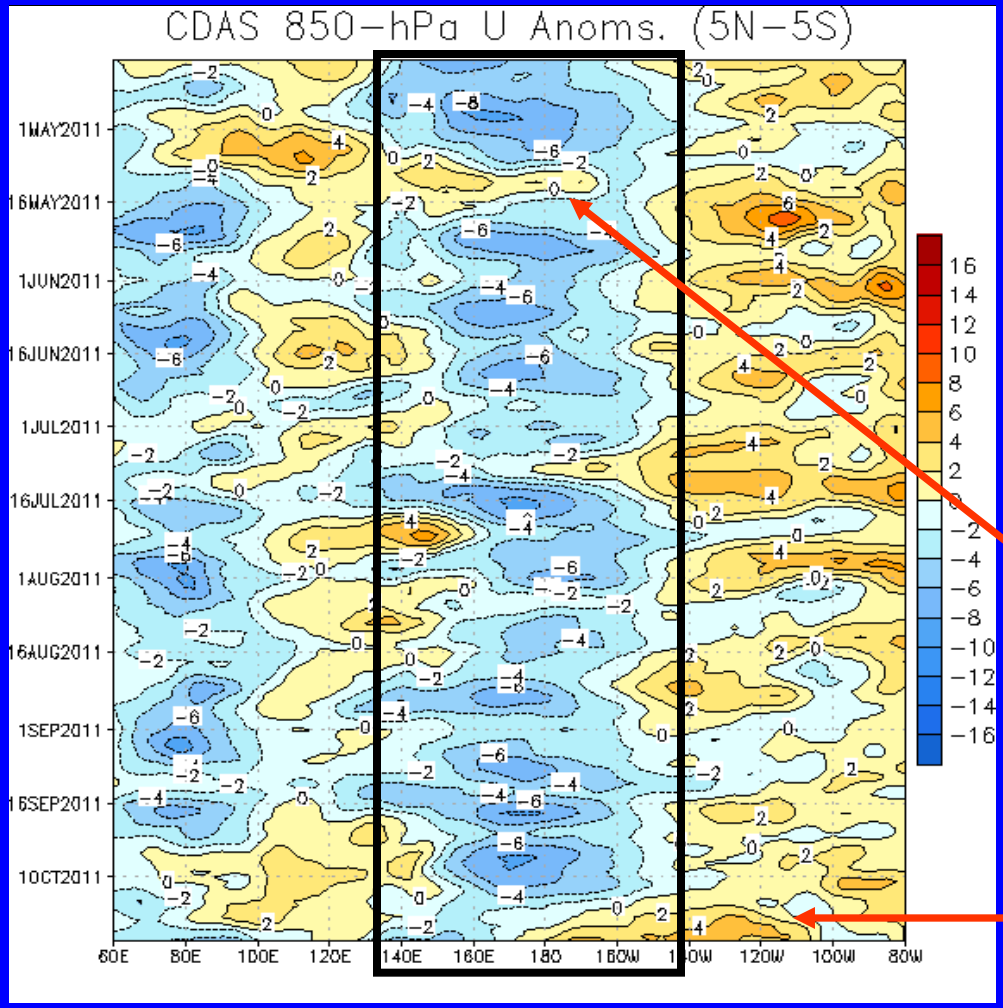
Easterly wind anomalies have developed across central Africa and the Indian Ocean during the last five days.

Strong westerly anomalies have developed across the eastern Pacific and Central America 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

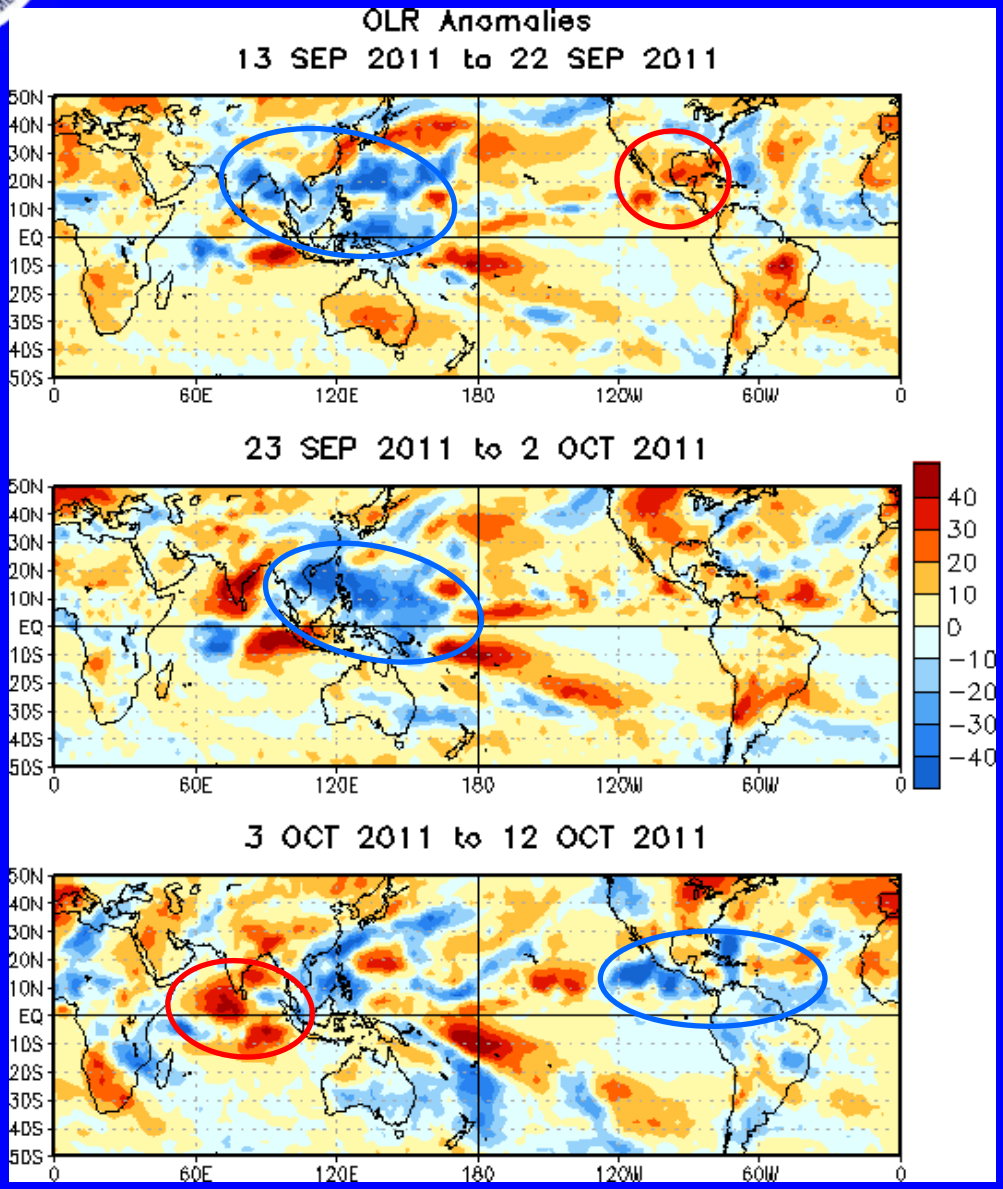
Longitude

Easterly anomalies have persisted in the west-central Pacific since late March (black box) consistent with La Nina conditions during much of the period. The magnitude of these anomalies, however, weakened somewhat from the early portion of the period.

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

In early October, easterly anomalies decreased across the central Pacific and westerly anomalies increased from the Date Line to 100W due to MJO activity.

OLR Anomalies – Past 30 days



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

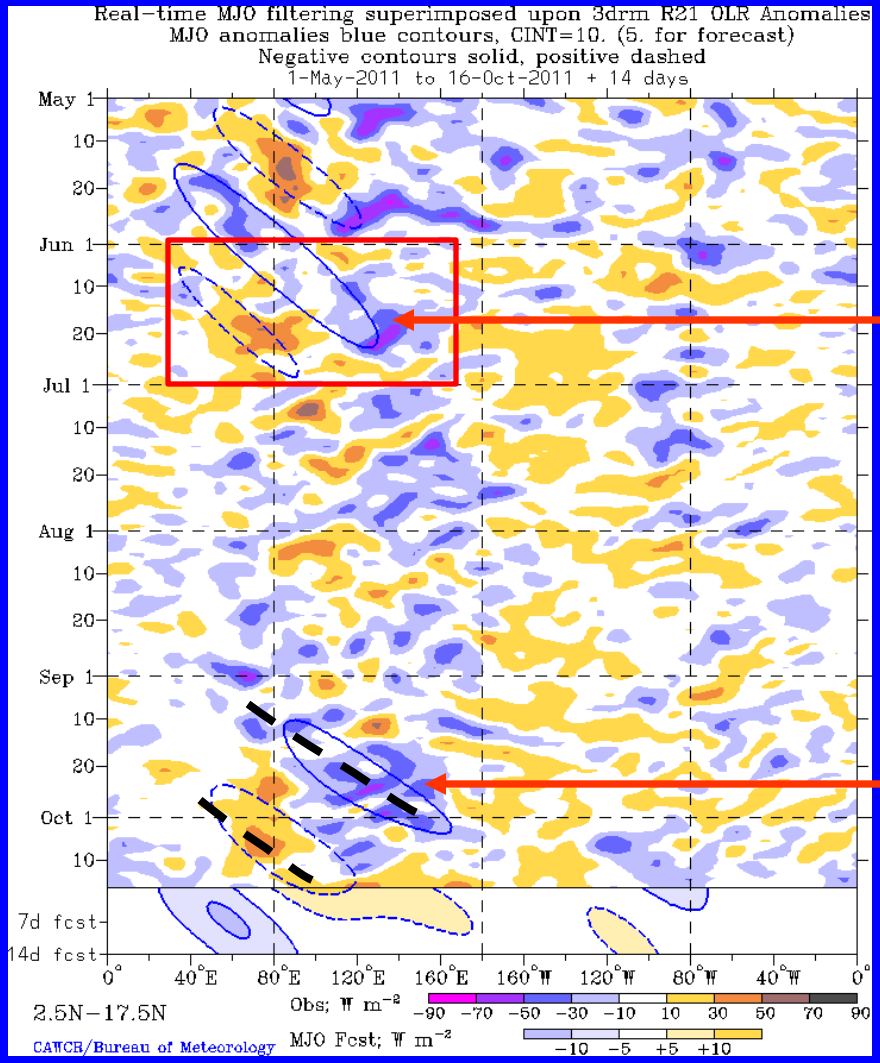
Wetter-than-normal conditions, negative OLR anomalies (blue shading)

In mid-September, suppressed convection (red circle) was observed across the Mexico and the Caribbean while enhanced convection shifted eastward and covered the areas from southern Asia into the western Pacific.

Enhanced convection from Southeast Asia across much of the western Pacific continued during late September into early October. Drier-than-average conditions developed over India and parts of the eastern Indian Ocean and western Maritime continent an continued over much of the western Hemisphere.

During early October, enhanced convection persisted near the Philippines and developed over the eastern Pacific and parts of South America. Suppressed convection continued in the Indian Ocean.

Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR) Anomalies (2.5°S-17.5°N)



Time

Longitude

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

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

(Courtesy of CAWCR Australia Bureau of Meteorology)

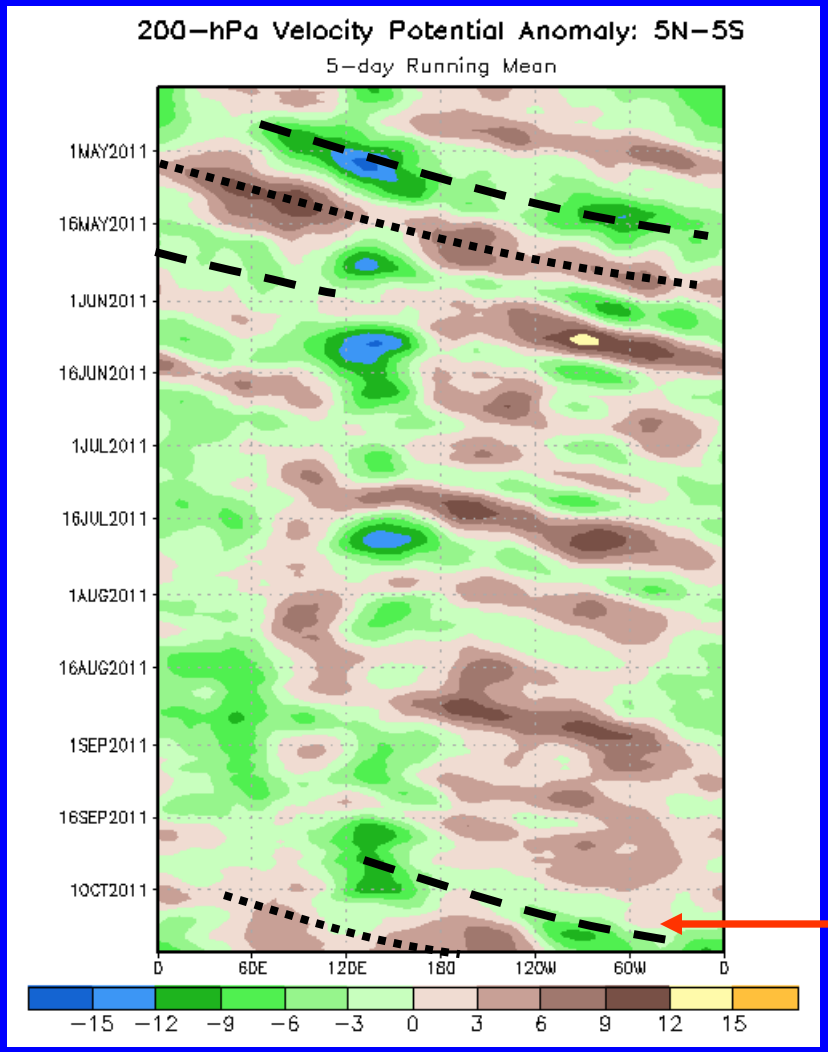
During mid-June, a couplet of suppressed (enhanced) convection was evident and centered near 80E (140E).

Beginning in mid-September, enhanced convection shifted from southern Asia to the western Pacific while suppressed convection developed during late September across India and also shifted eastward. This activity is associated with the MJO.

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

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).

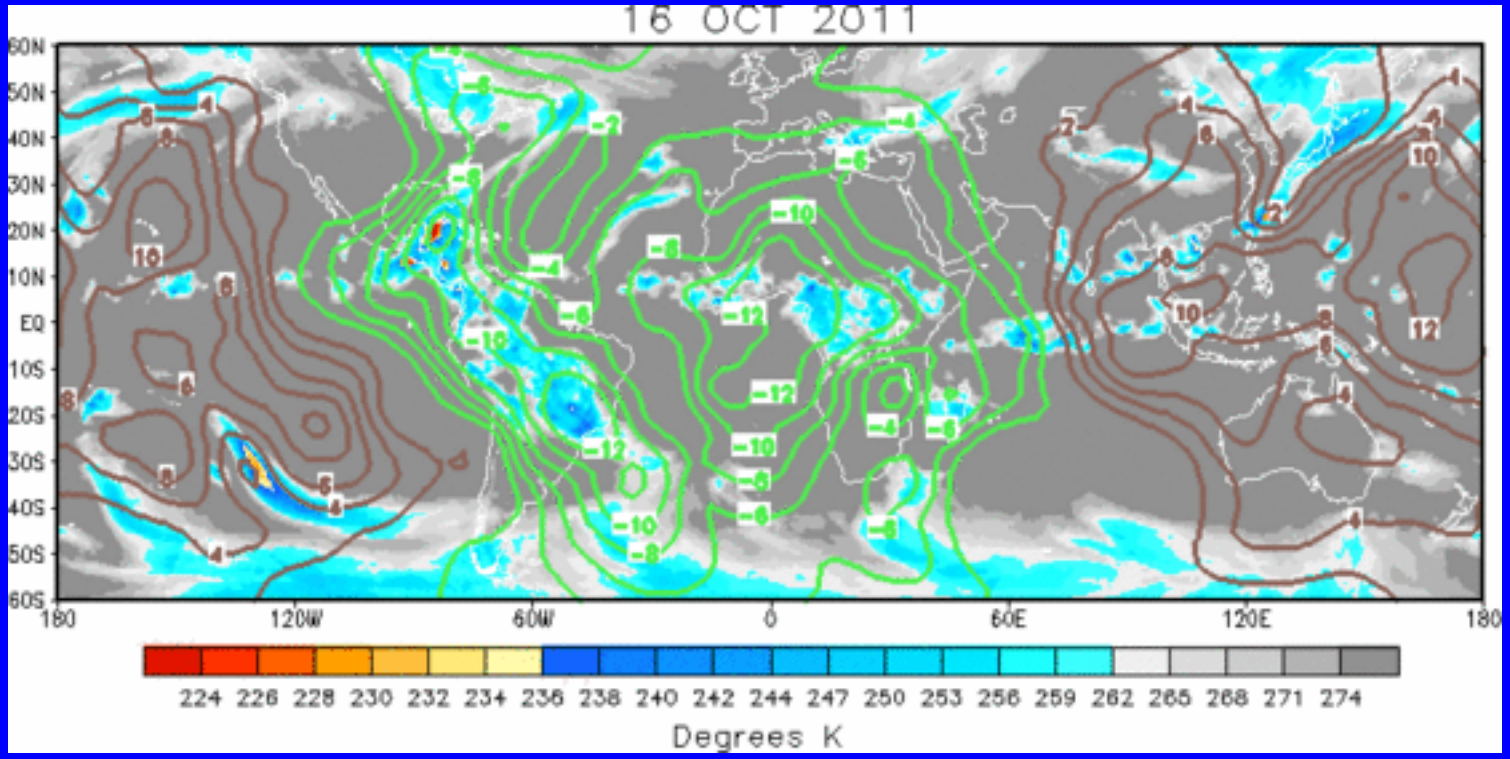
During parts of June, July and August very fast eastward propagation was evident at times and mainly associated with higher frequency sub-seasonal coherent tropical variability and not MJO activity.

During the second half of September, negative anomalies developed across the western Pacific and have propagated eastward followed by positive anomalies.

IR Temperatures (K) / 200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies

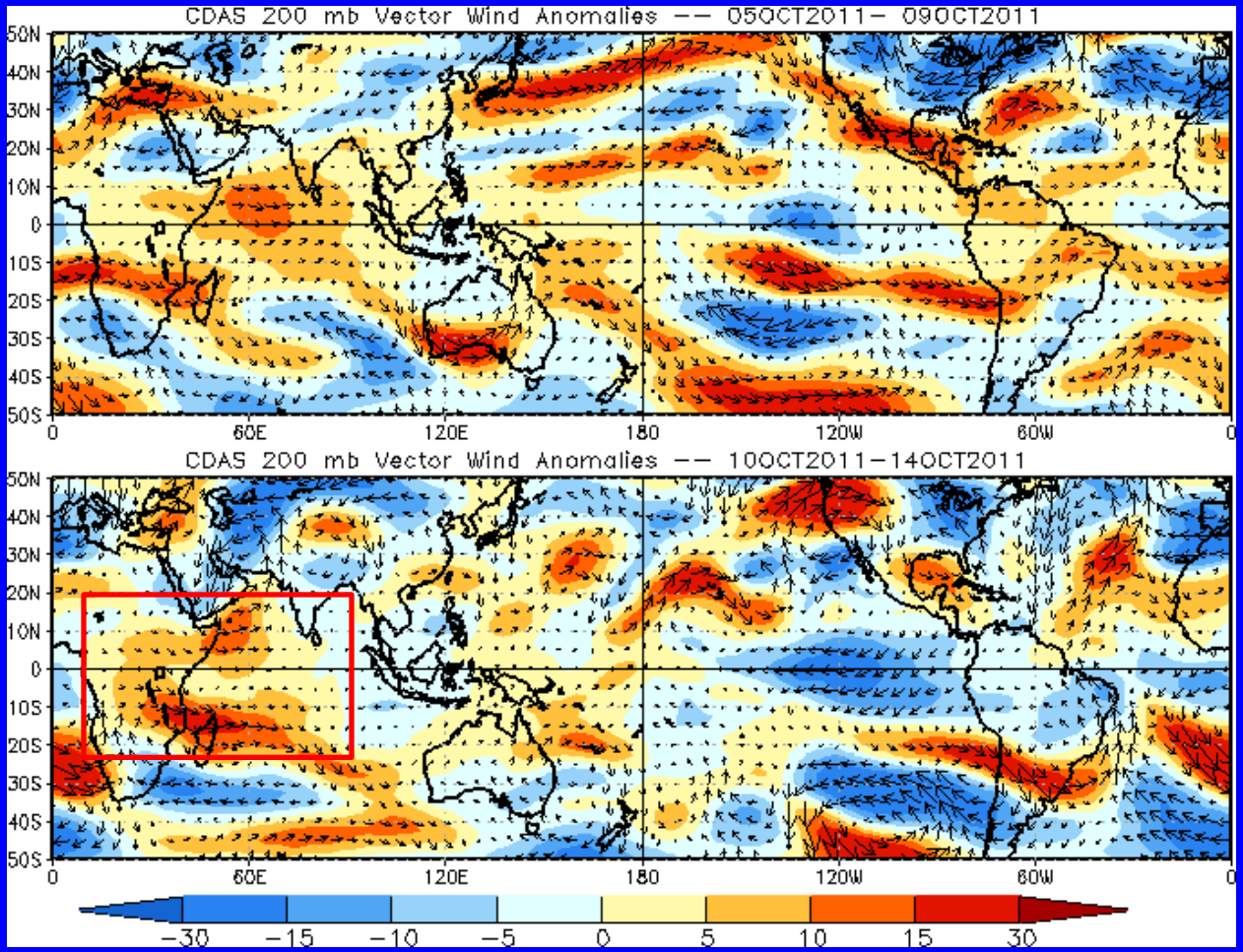
Positive anomalies (brown contours) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green contours) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation



The large scale velocity potential pattern indicates a coherent wave 1 structure with anomalous upper-level divergence stretching from the western Hemisphere across Africa with anomalous upper-level convergence observed from the Indian Ocean to the central Pacific.

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



Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

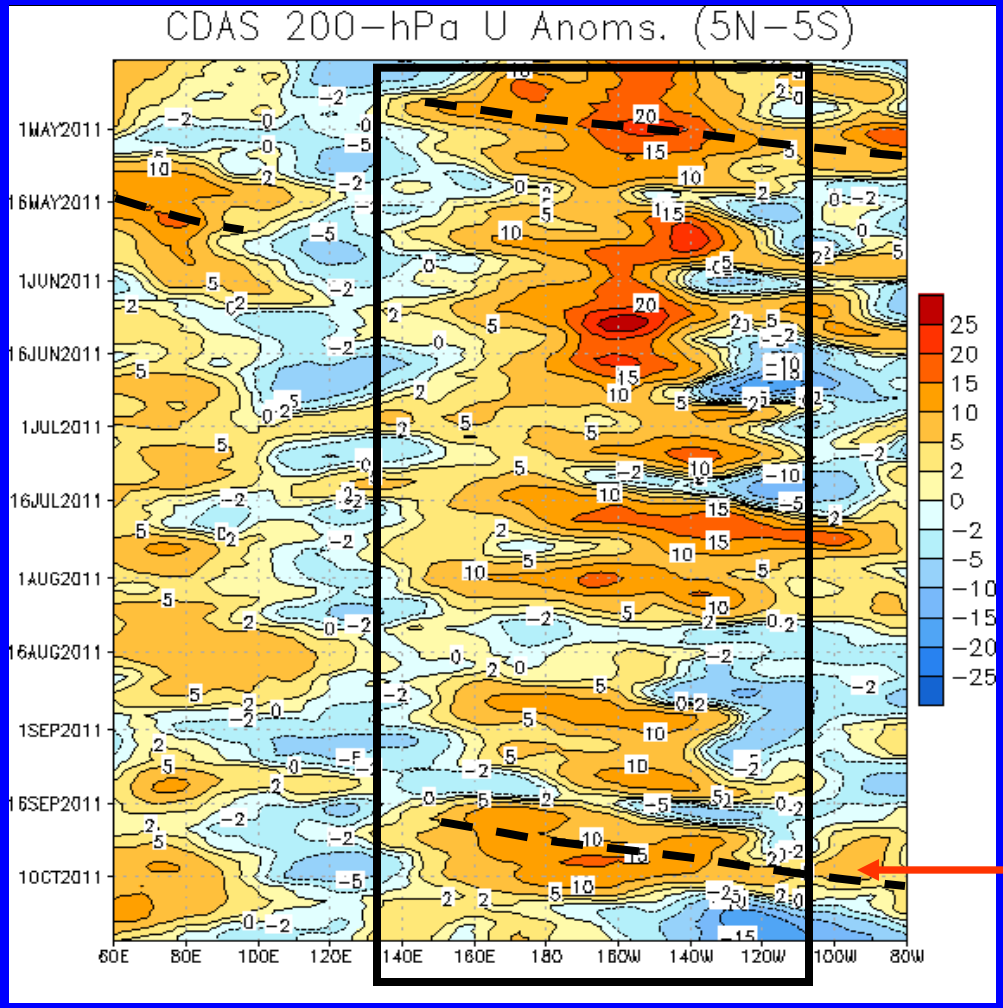
Red shades: Westerly anomalies

Upper-level westerly wind anomalies continued over east Africa and the Indian Ocean during the last five days (red box).

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



Time

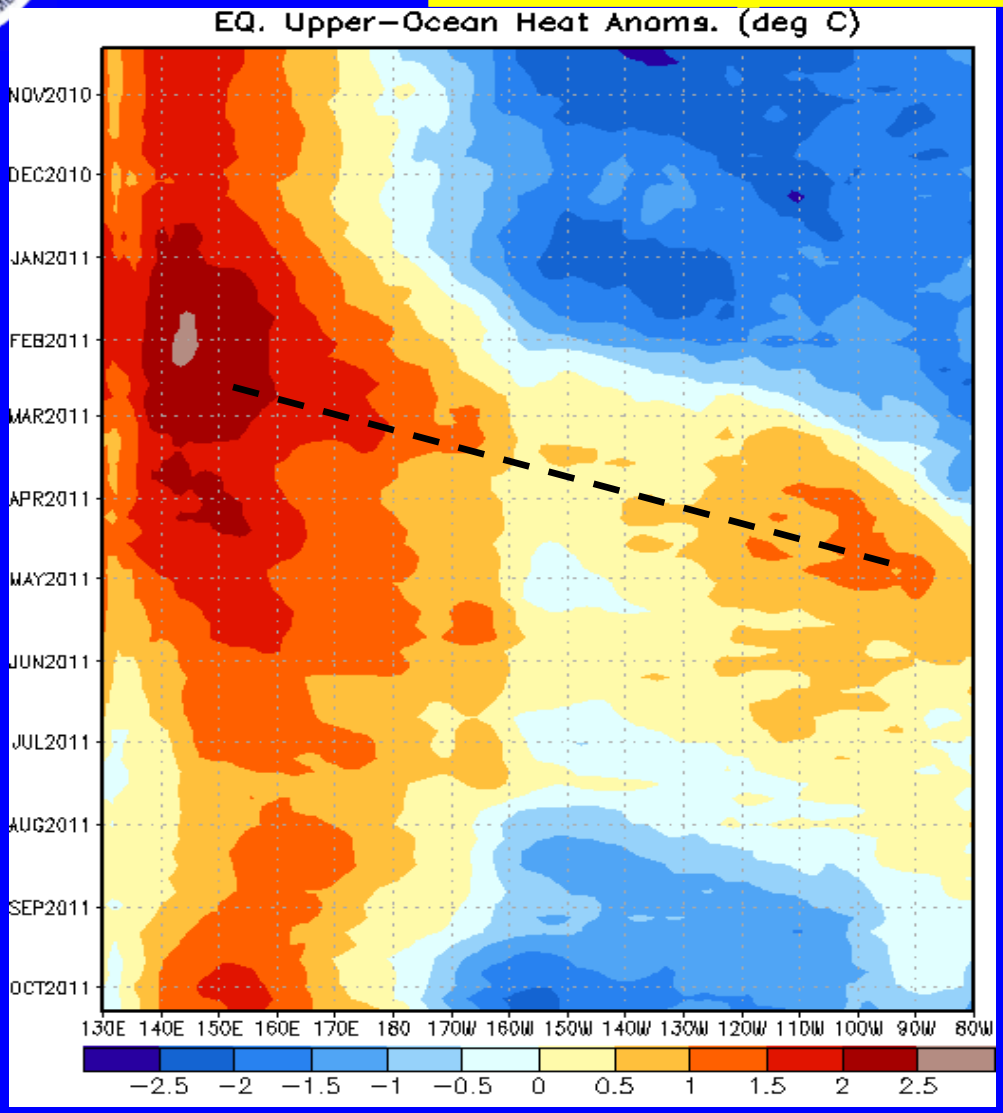
Longitude

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

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

Westerly anomalies over the Pacific strengthened during late September and have shifted eastward associated with the MJO.

Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



Time

Longitude

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. Much of the Pacific basin now indicates above- or near-normal integrated heat content.

Since the beginning of August, negative heat content anomalies increased across the equatorial central Pacific.

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).

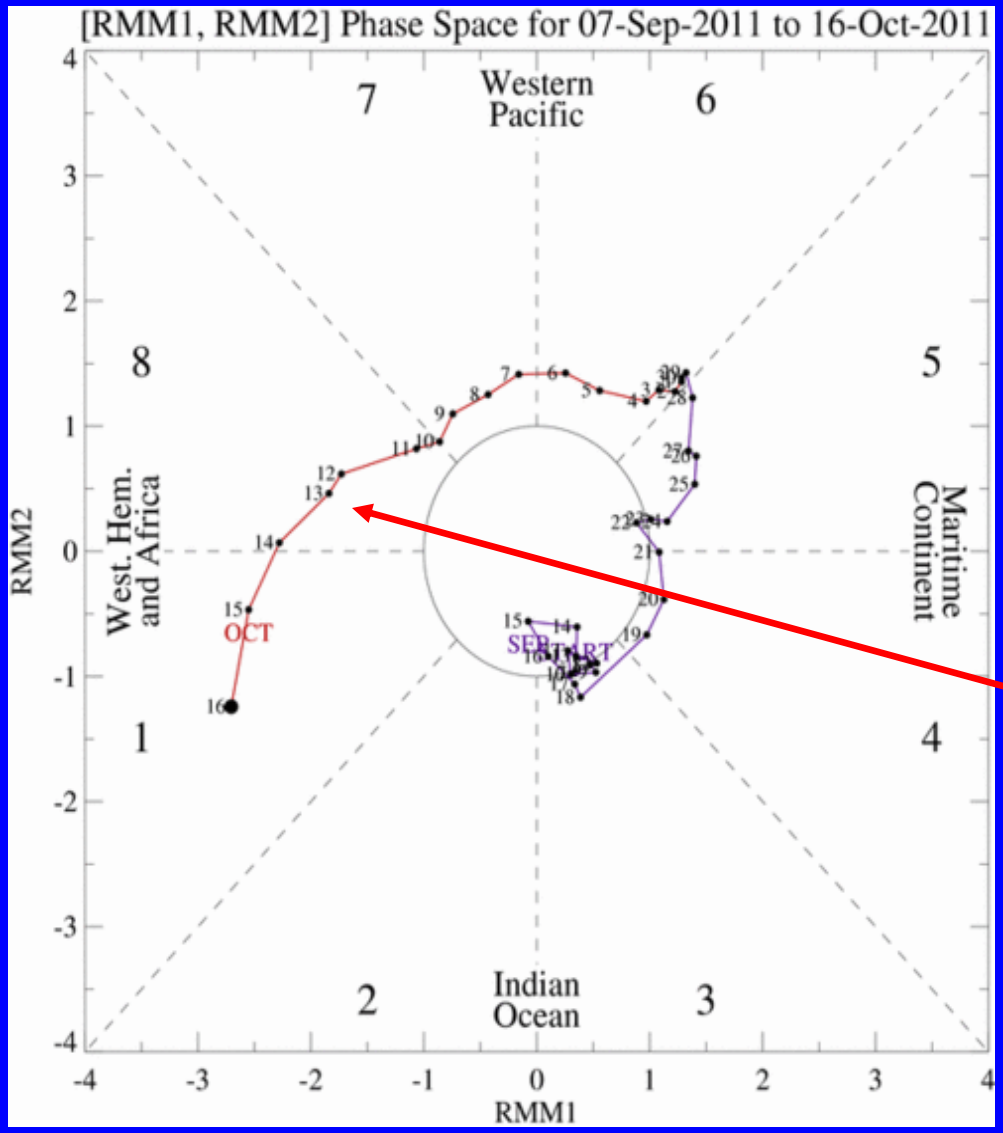
Wheeler M. and H. Hendon, 2004: An All-Season Real-Time Multivariate MJO Index: Development of an Index for Monitoring and Prediction, *Monthly Weather Review,* 132, 1917-1932.

- 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).

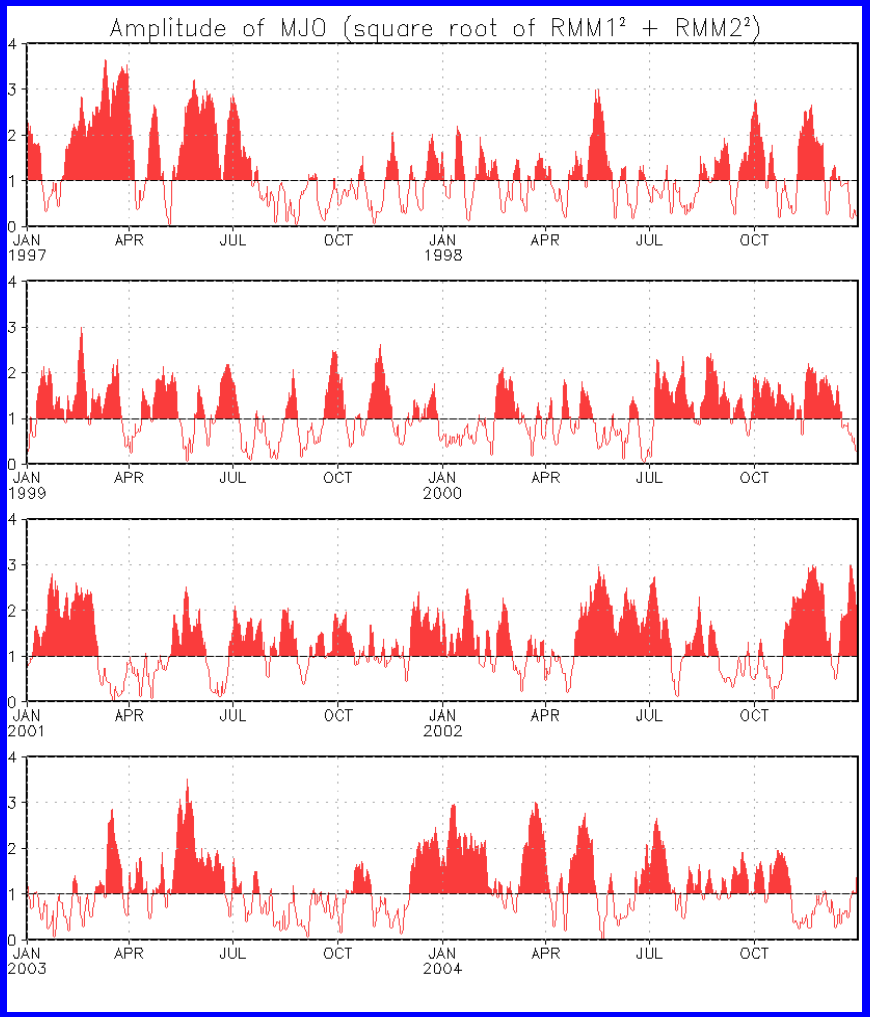
MJO Index -- Recent Evolution

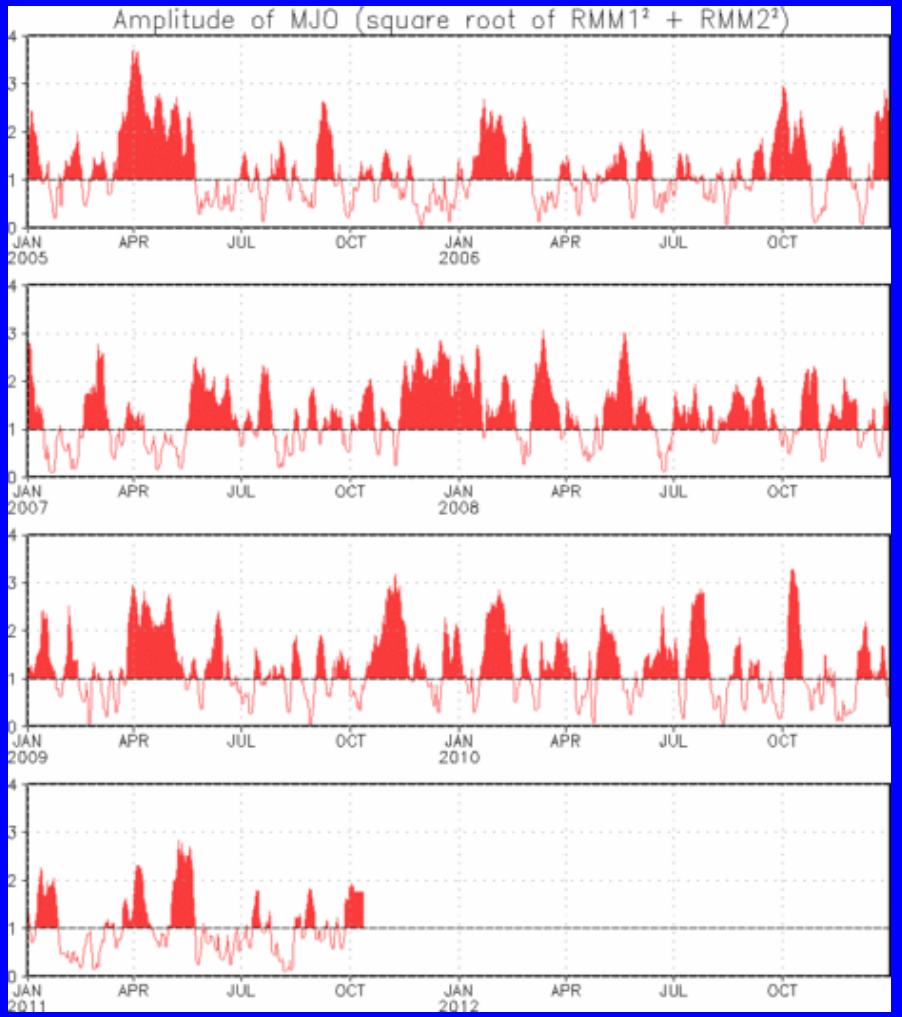


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the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

The MJO index indicates an increase in strength with continued eastward propagation during the past week.

MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series





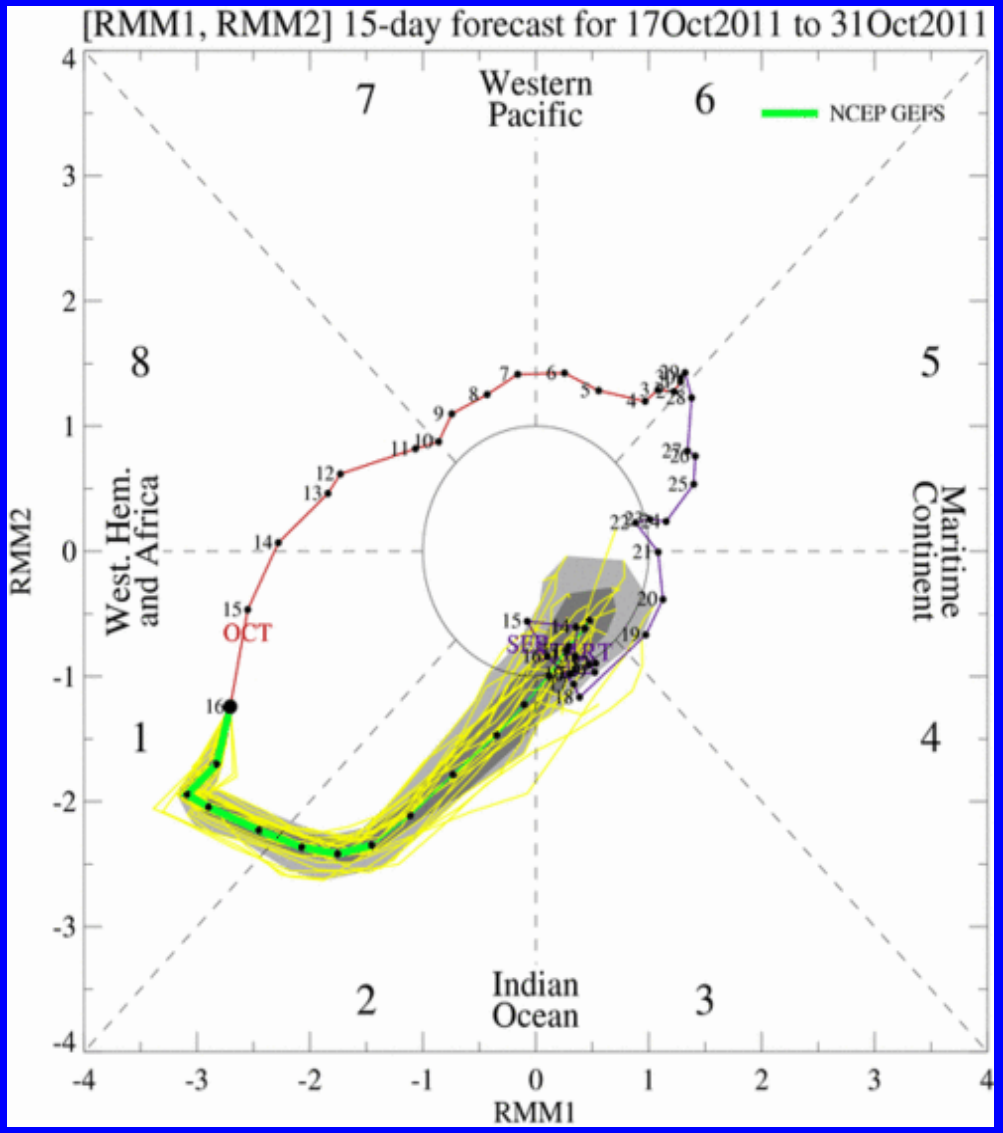
Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 1997 to present.
Plots put current MJO activity in historical context.

Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

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

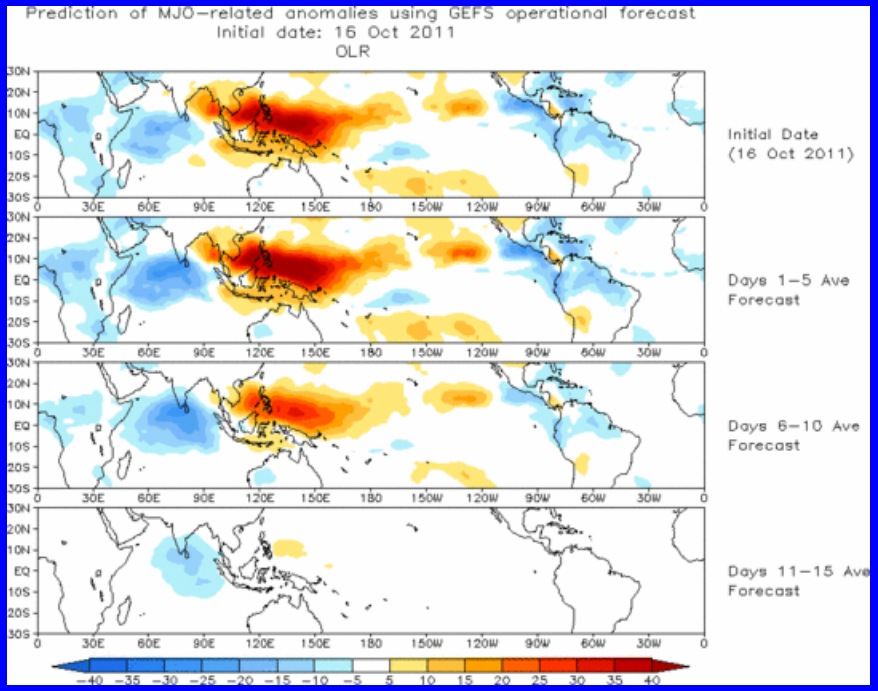


The ensemble GFS forecasts indicate a MJO signal continuing during the period with the enhanced convective phase shifting into the Indian Ocean over the period although the amplitude is forecast to decrease. There is very low spread amongst the forecast members even in Week-2.

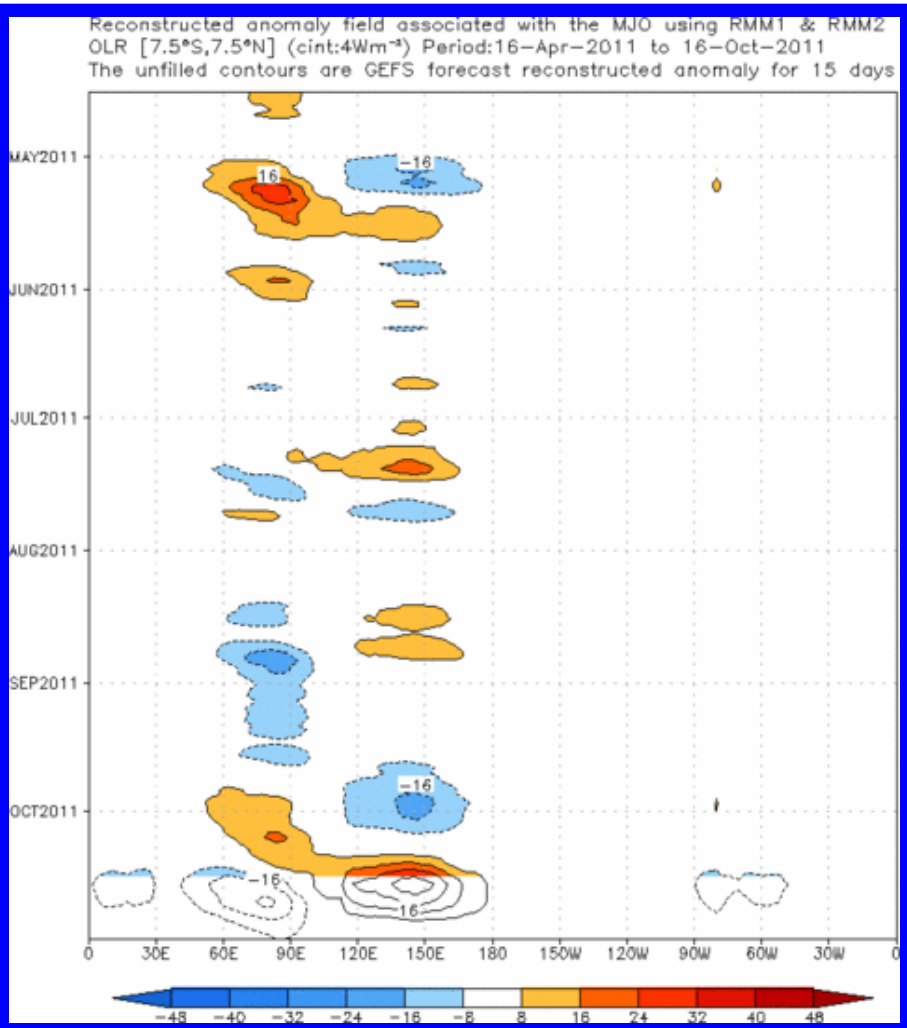
Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

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, etc.)

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

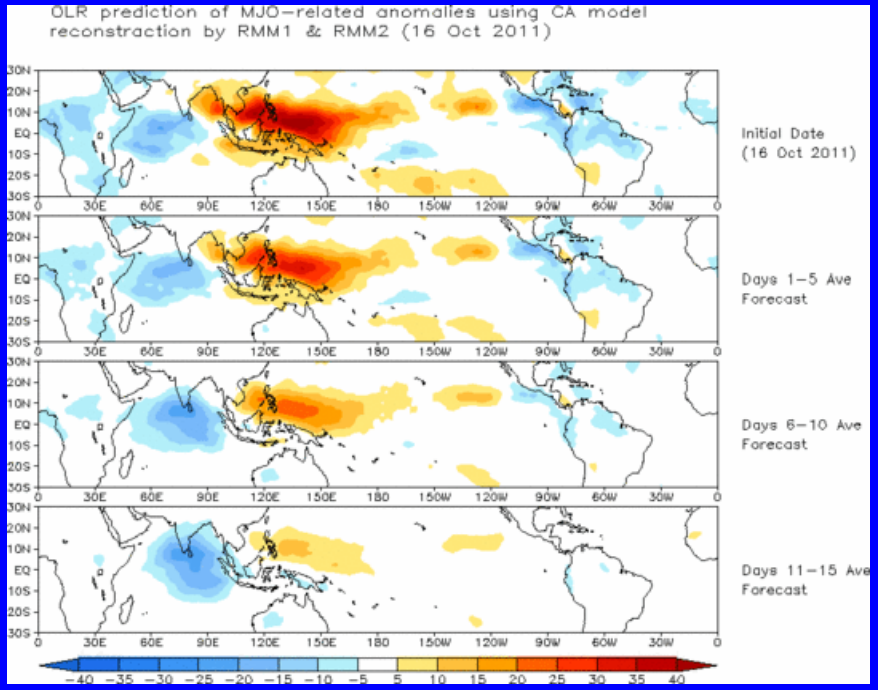


The ensemble mean GFS forecast indicates enhanced convection for the Americas, Africa and the Indian Ocean during Week-1 and the Indian Ocean during Week-2. Suppressed convection is forecast across the Maritime continent and western Pacific mainly during Week-1.

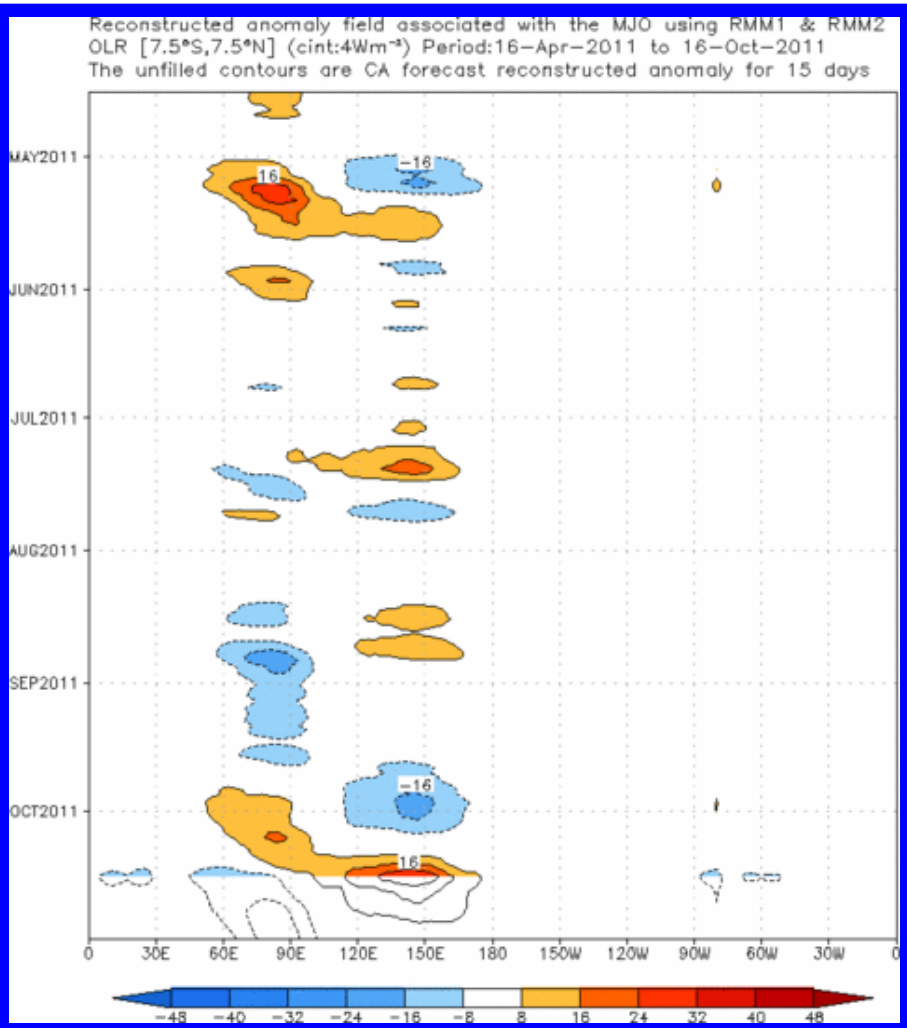
Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

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, etc.)

Spatial map of OLR anomalies for the next 15 days



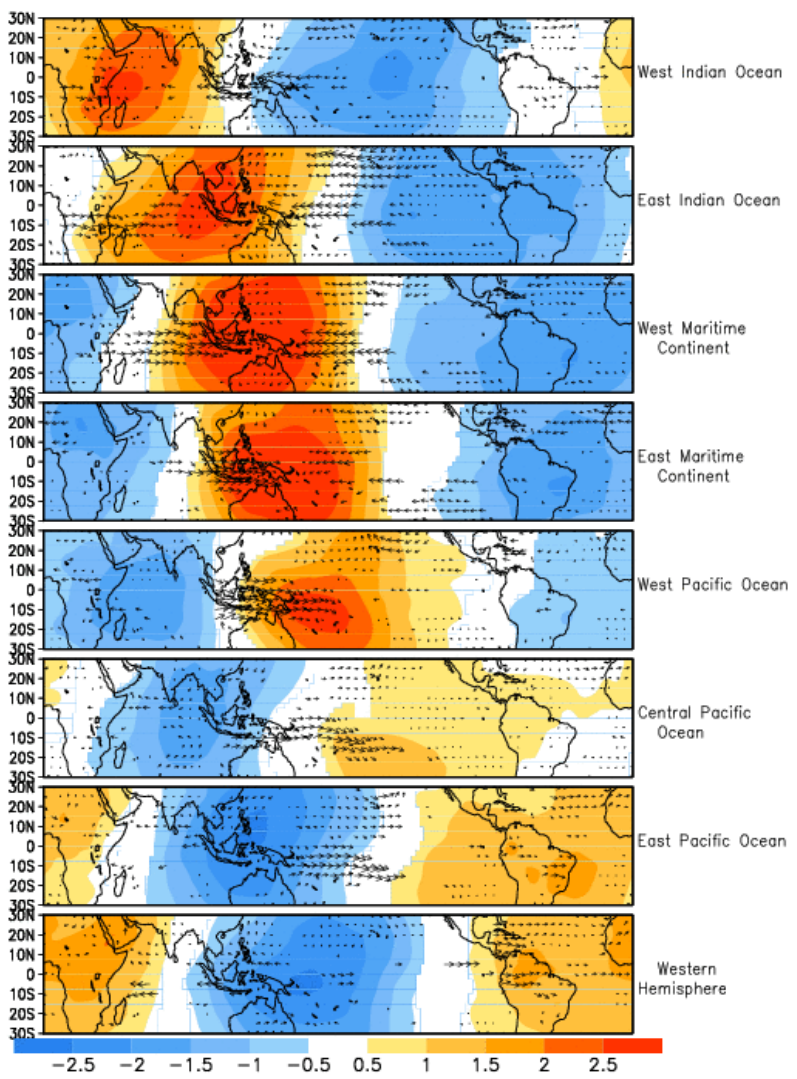
Time-longitude section of (7.5°S-7.5°N) OLR anomalies for the last 180 days and for the next 15 days



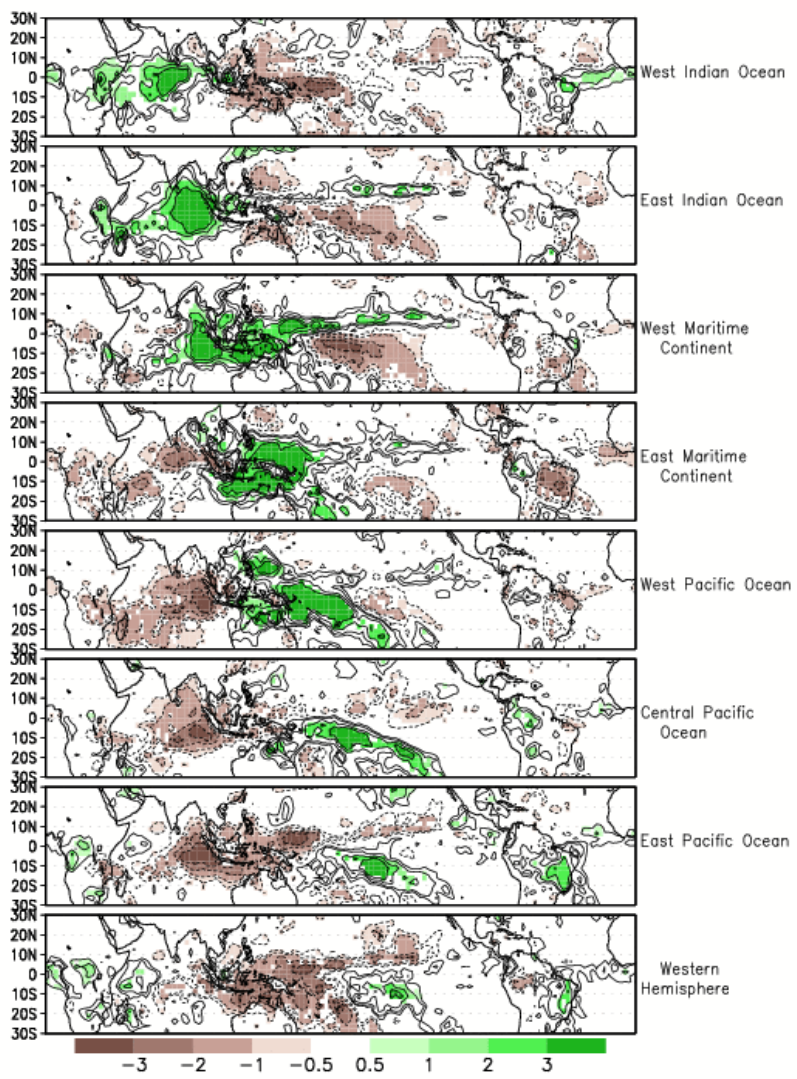
The CA forecast indicates enhanced convection for the Americas, Africa and the Indian Ocean during Week-1 and the Indian Ocean during Week-2. Suppressed convection is forecast across the Maritime continent and western Pacific during much of the period.

MJO Composites – Global Tropics

850-hPa Wind Anomalies (Nov-Mar)

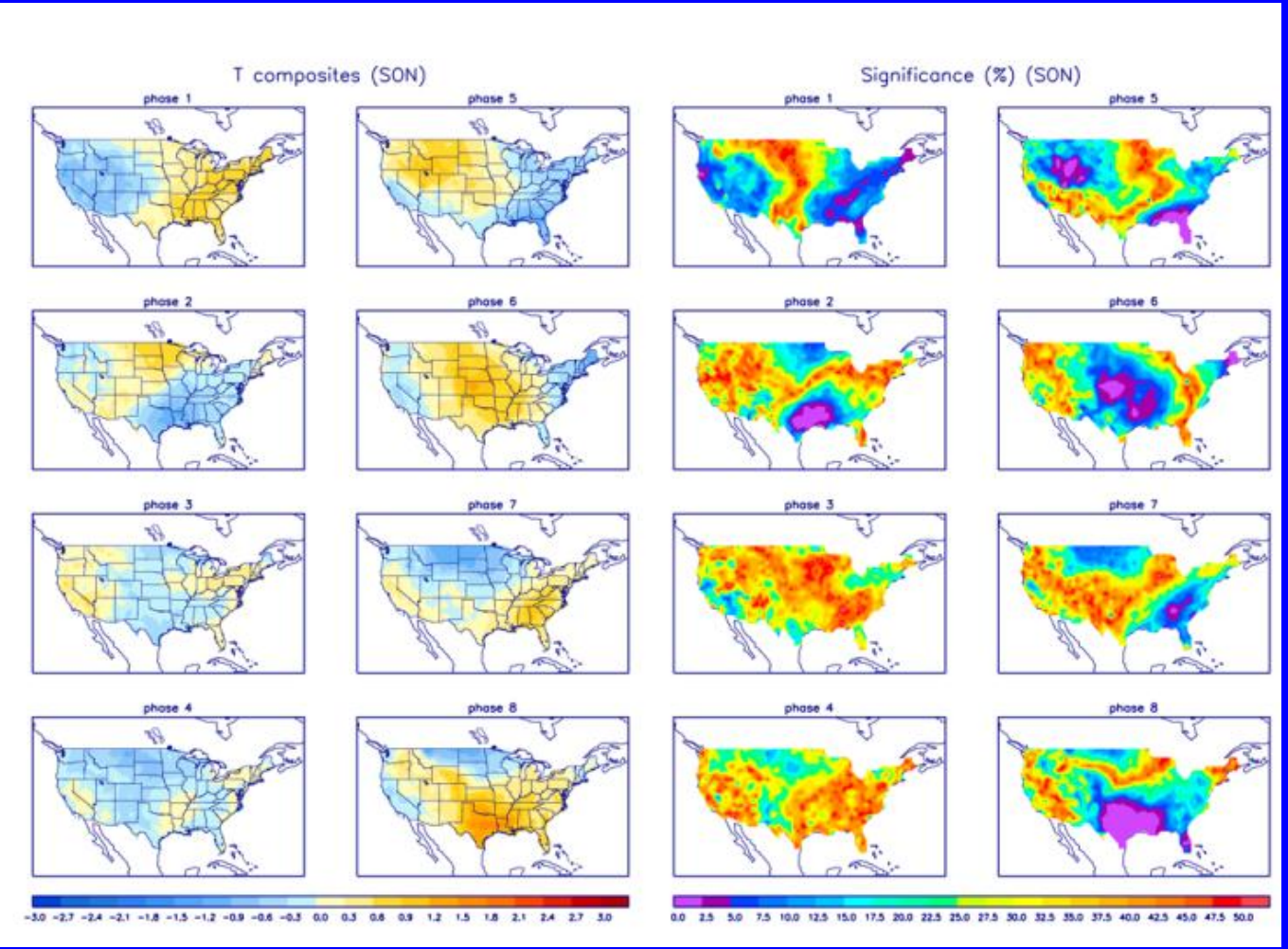


Precipitation Anomalies (Nov-Mar)



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.**

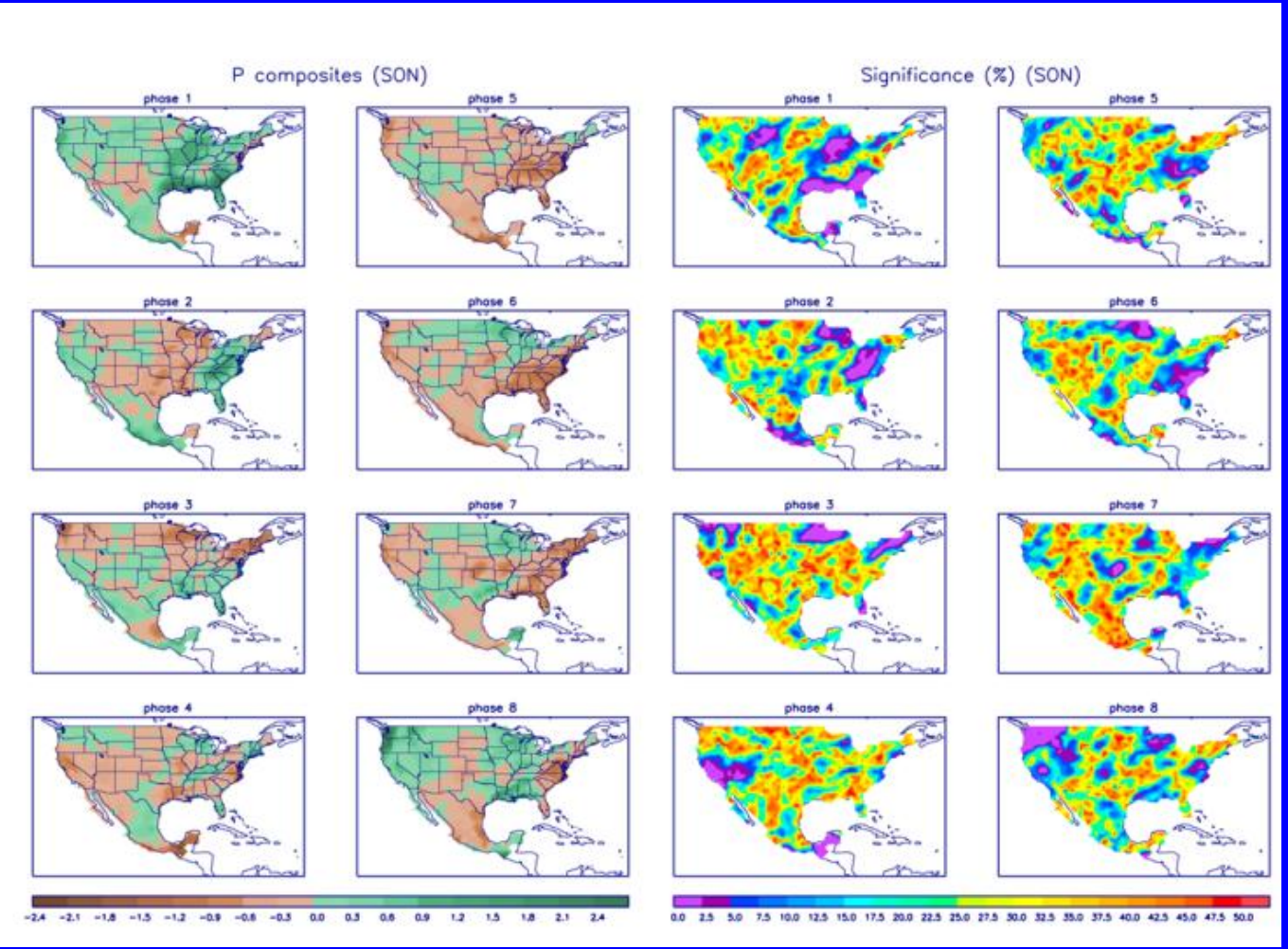


Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

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.**



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