



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

**Update prepared by
Climate Prediction Center / NCEP
August 11, 2014**



Outline

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



Overview

- The MJO remains generally weak as indicated by various MJO indices, although there is some evidence of an intraseasonal signal, primarily noted as an envelope of suppressed convection that has shifted eastward to the western Pacific from the Indian Ocean.
- Other types of subseasonal variability, namely westward moving features, are playing large roles in the pattern of anomalous tropical convection.
- The fact remains that robust, canonical and longer-lived MJO activity has been difficult to initiate and maintain in recent months and this is likely to continue. Both statistical and dynamical model forecast tools indicate little prospects for more strong MJO activity to emerge in the coming few weeks.
- Based on recent observations and both statistical and dynamical model guidance, the MJO is forecast to remain weak, but may contribute to enhanced (suppressed) convection across the Indian Ocean (west-central Pacific) over the coming two week outlook period.

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

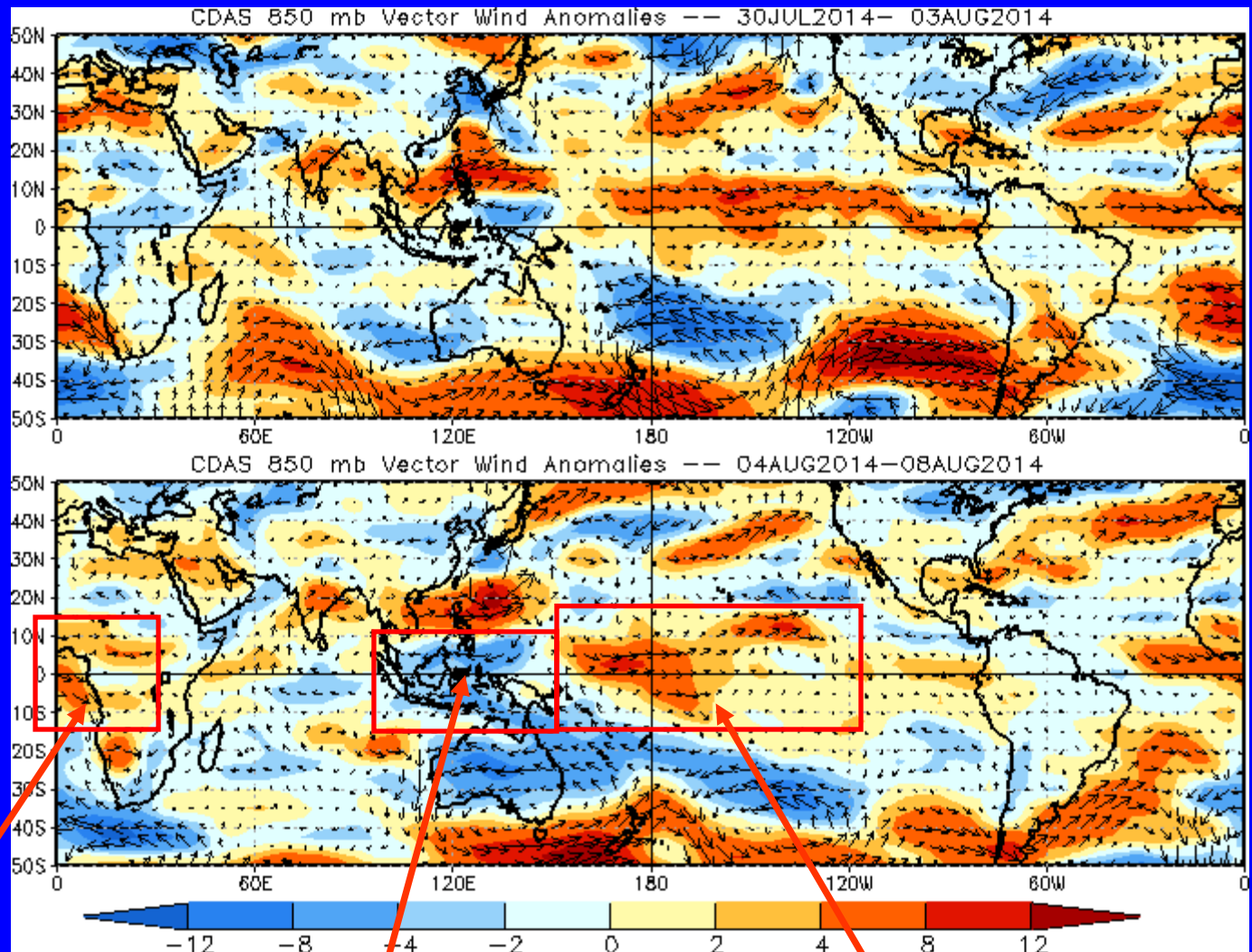


850-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



Westerly anomalies increased over the eastern Atlantic and western Africa during the last five days.

Easterly anomalies increased in coverage over the Maritime Continent during the most recent five days.

Westerly anomalies continued near the Date Line and across the Central Pacific.

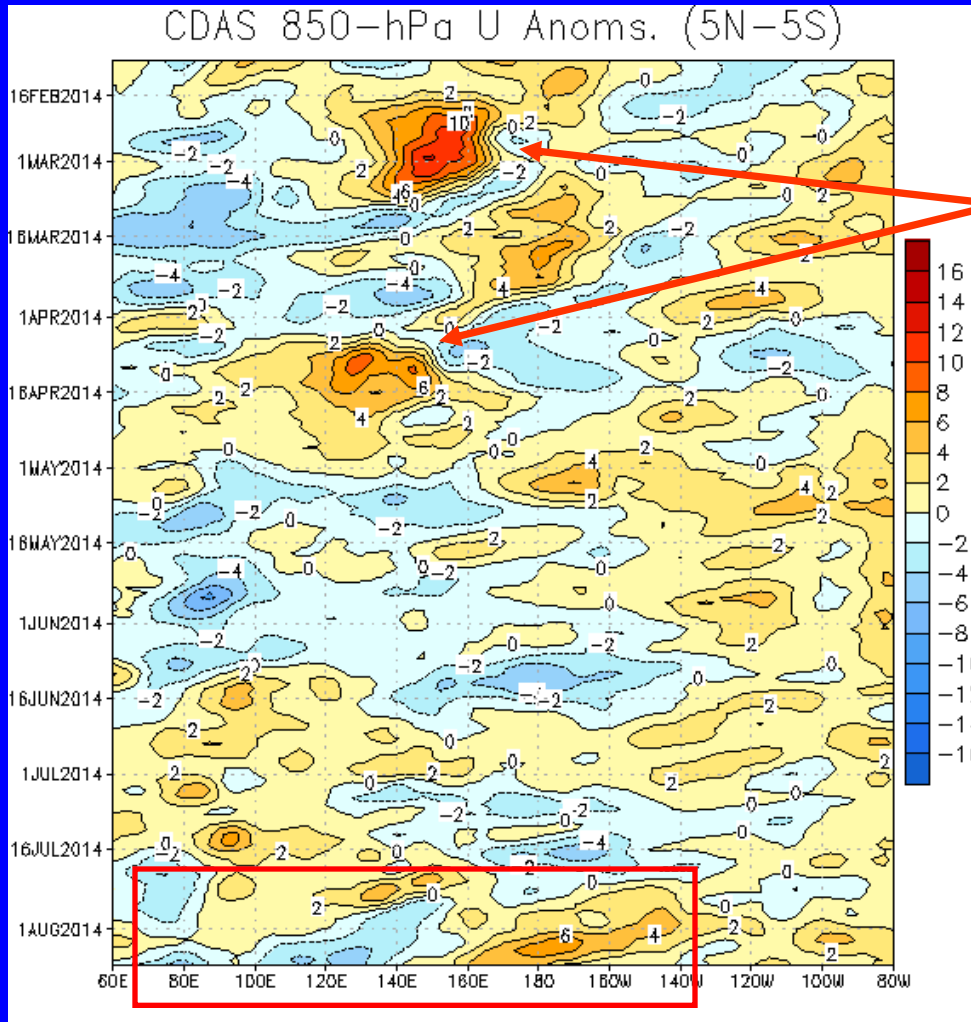


850-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

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

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

Time



Longitude

Multiple westerly wind bursts were observed across the western Pacific between February and mid-April.

During April, westerly anomalies were generally persistent across the Maritime continent and far western Pacific.

During much of May and June, westerly anomalies were observed over the eastern Pacific.

Westerly anomalies associated with an enhanced Southeast Asian monsoon circulation are evident from 80E to 120E during much of June and July.

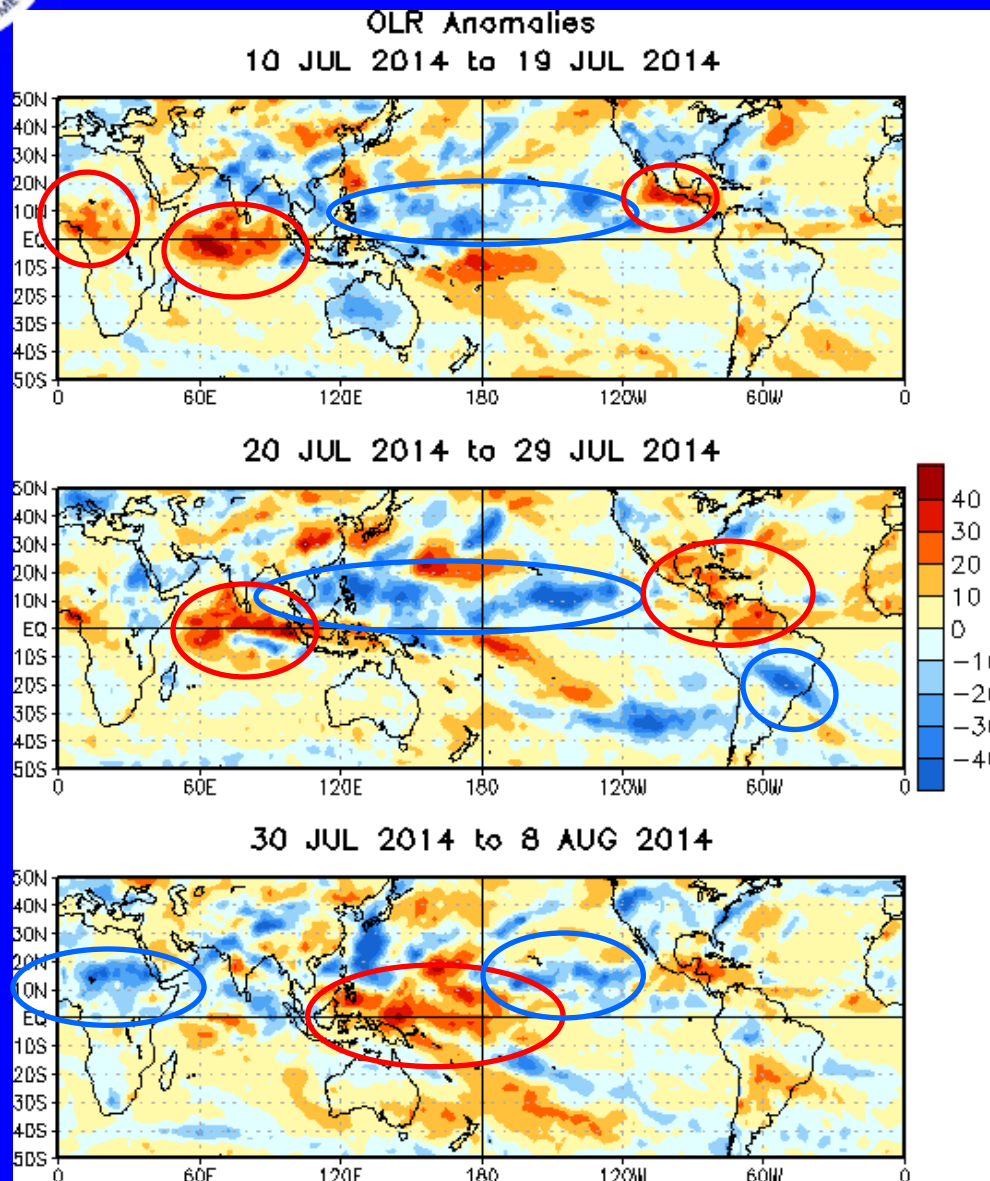
Beginning in late July into August, westerly anomalies increased in coverage and magnitude over the central and eastern Pacific while at the same time easterly anomalies developed from 80E to 140E (red box). Both areas appear to be shifting westward with time.



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 mid-July, enhanced convection (blue ovals) was evident over much of the Pacific basin, while suppressed convection (red ovals) was evident across the equatorial Indian Ocean, central America and west Africa.

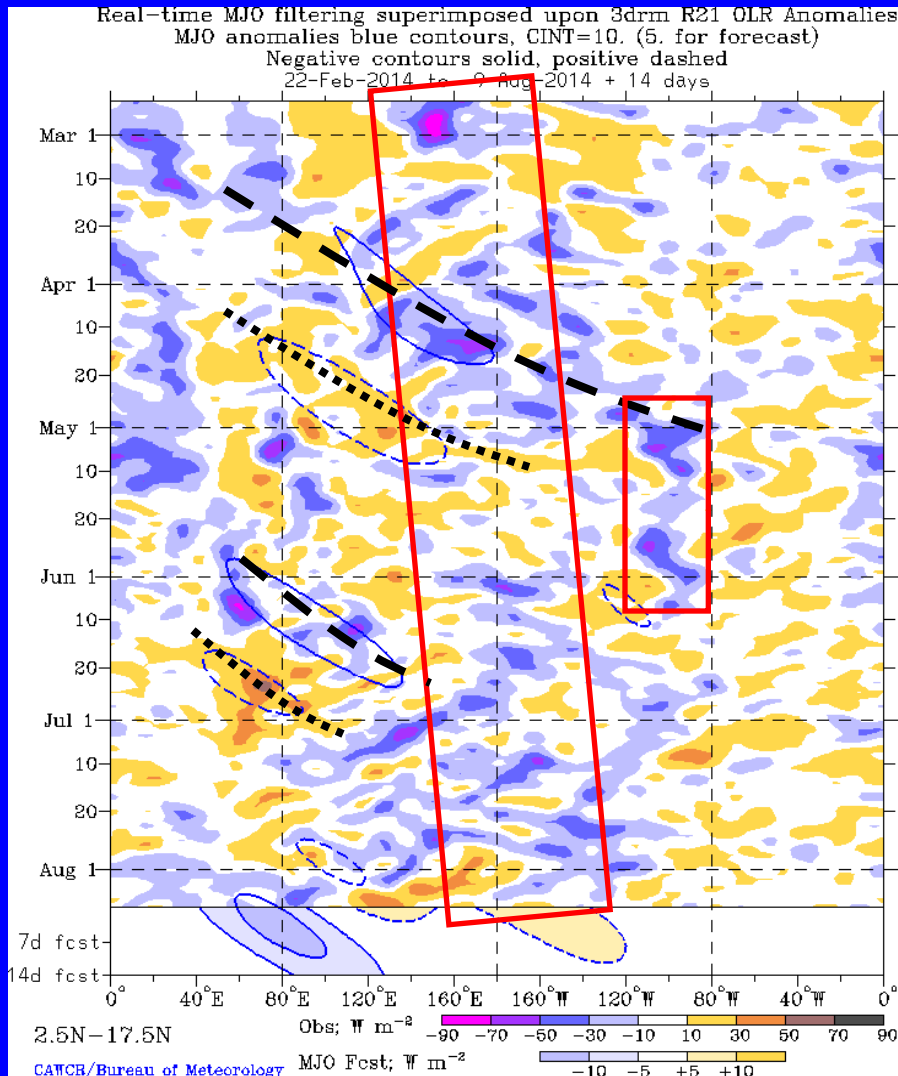
An active Pacific basin continued during late July along with enhanced frontal activity near southern Brazil. Suppressed convection continued over the equatorial Indian ocean and the Americas.

Entering early August, enhanced convection developed over much of central Africa and continued in the east-central Pacific, the latter primarily related to ongoing tropical cyclone activity. Suppressed convection spread across the eastern Maritime continent and western Pacific to near the Date Line.



Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR)

Anomalies (2.5°N-17.5°N)



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)

Since January, enhanced convection has propagated slowly eastward from the Maritime Continent to the central Pacific (red box), interrupted periodically by subseasonal variability.

The MJO became more coherent during April, with the subseasonal envelopes of enhanced and suppressed convection modulating the strength of the low frequency signal. The anomalous tropical convection pattern became largely incoherent during mid-May, with enhanced convection more clear over the eastern Pacific (red box).

During June, the MJO became more organized, primarily over the Indian Ocean, but during July and into early August the pattern became less coherent with respect to canonical MJO activity.

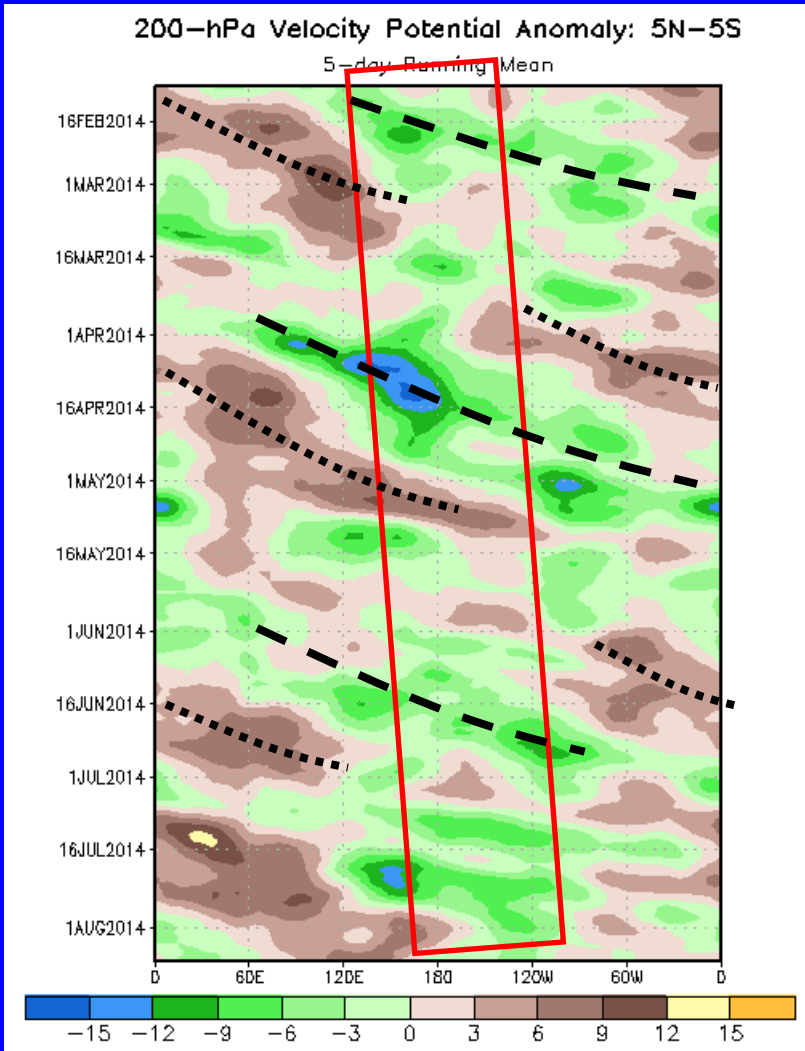


200-hPa Velocity Potential Anomalies (5°S-5°N)

Positive anomalies (brown shading) indicate unfavorable conditions for precipitation

Negative anomalies (green shading) indicate favorable conditions for precipitation

Time



A slow eastward progression of negative anomalies was observed from January to present across the Indo-Pacific warm pool and central Pacific (red box).

During February through April, anomalies propagated eastward with time associated with the MJO before weakening for much of May.

The pattern became more organized during June with a more coherent wave-1 MJO like structure with eastward propagation.

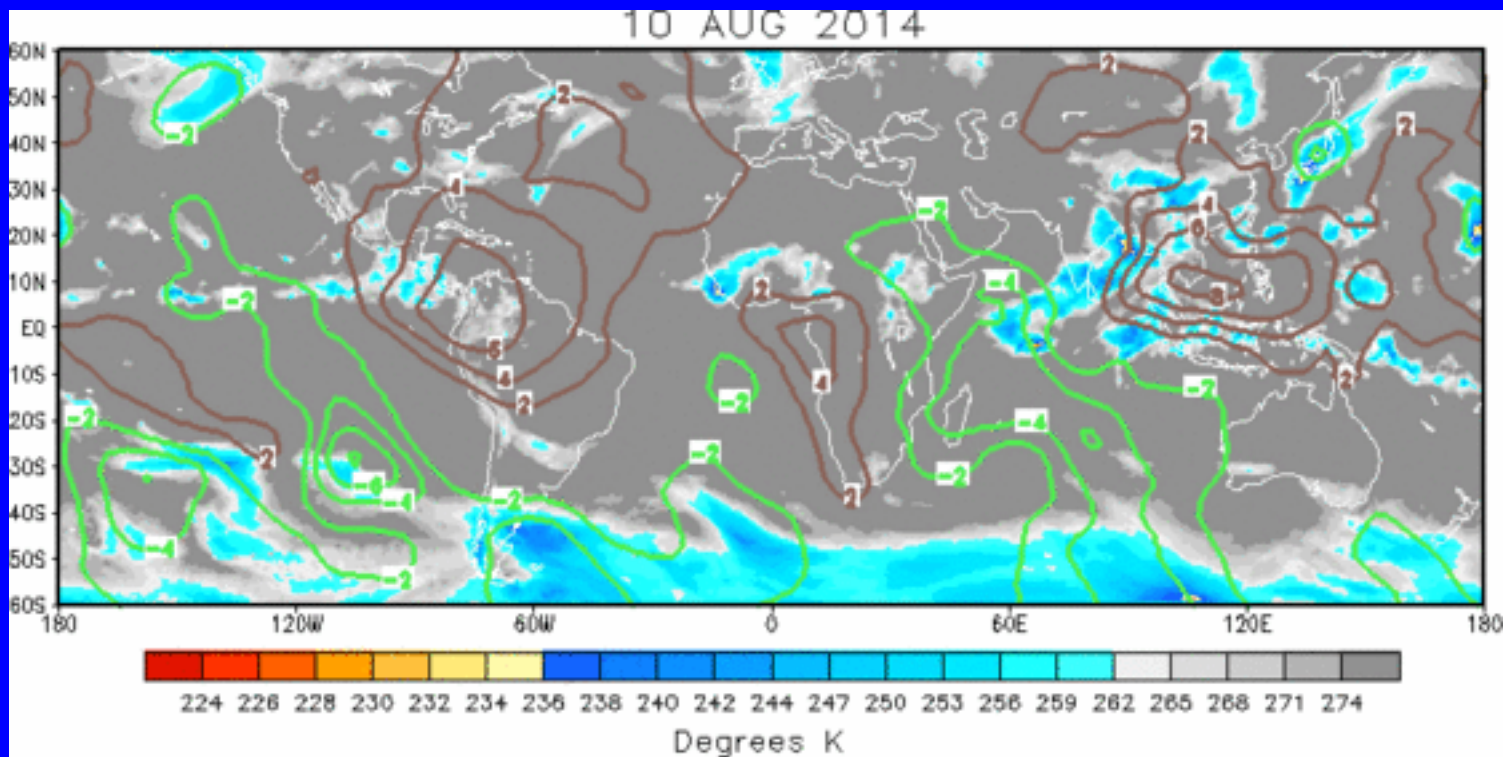
More recently, the pattern became less coherent as other modes of subseasonal tropical variability (e.g., equatorial Rossby and Kelvin wave activity) appear to have become the more dominant signals.



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 upper-level anomalous velocity potential spatial pattern indicates generally weak anomalies across much of the global Tropics. Regional anomalous descent is shown in proximity to the Maritime continent.

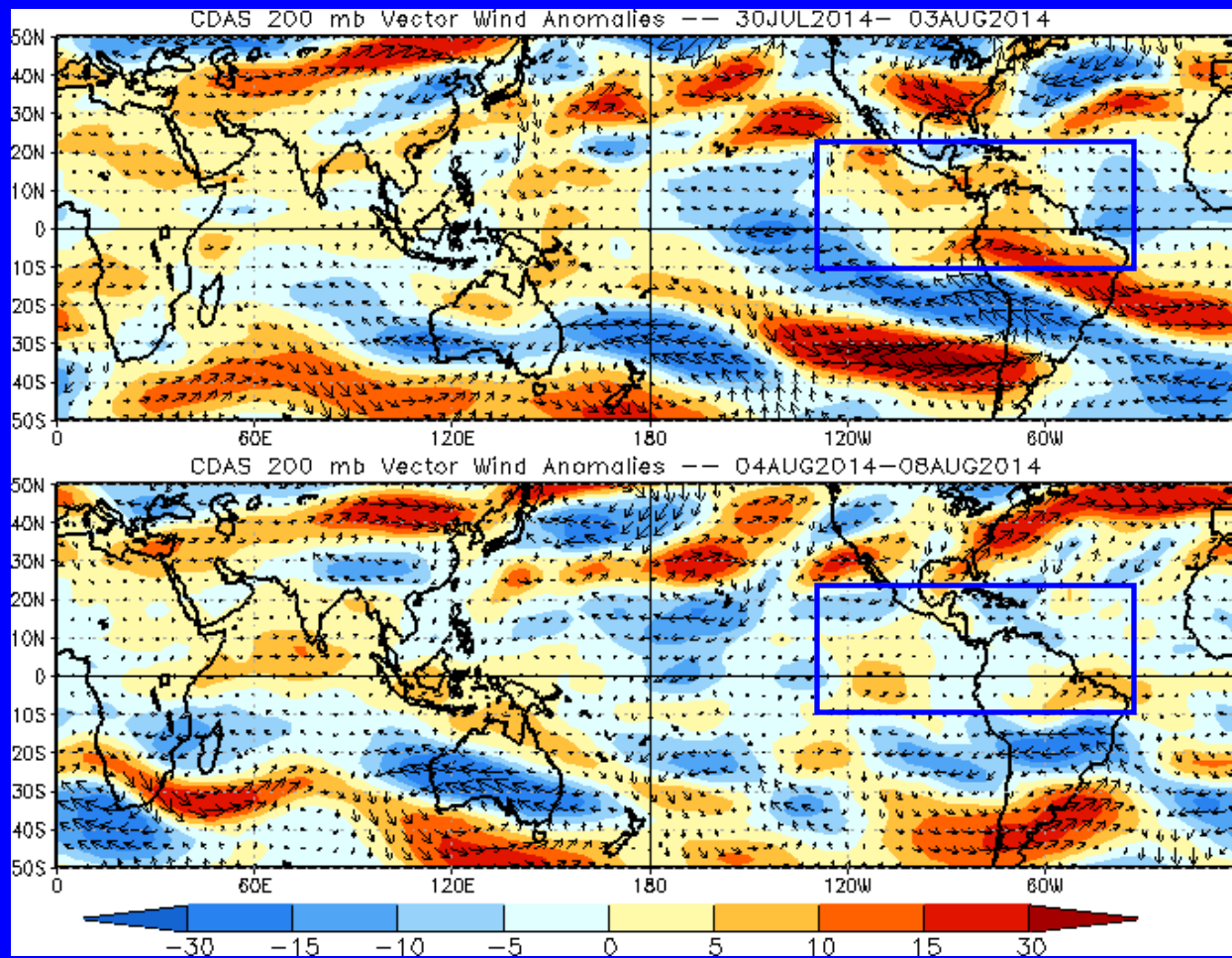


200-hPa Vector Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

Note that shading denotes the zonal wind anomaly

Blue shades: Easterly anomalies

Red shades: Westerly anomalies



Upper-level westerly wind anomalies (blue box) decreased over the eastern Pacific and Americas during the most recent five days.

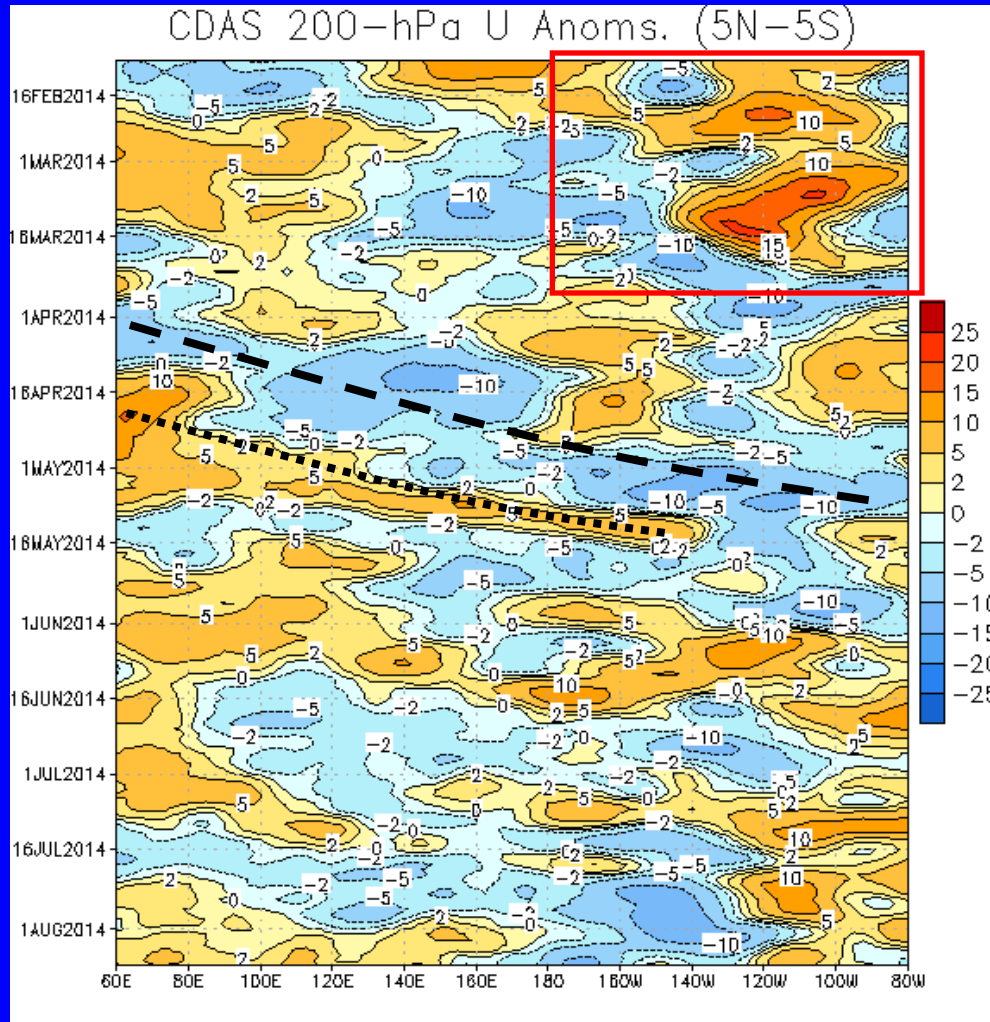


200-hPa Zonal Wind Anomalies (m s^{-1})

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

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

Time
↓



Longitude

From January into March, westerly anomalies were most prevalent across the western Hemisphere (red box).

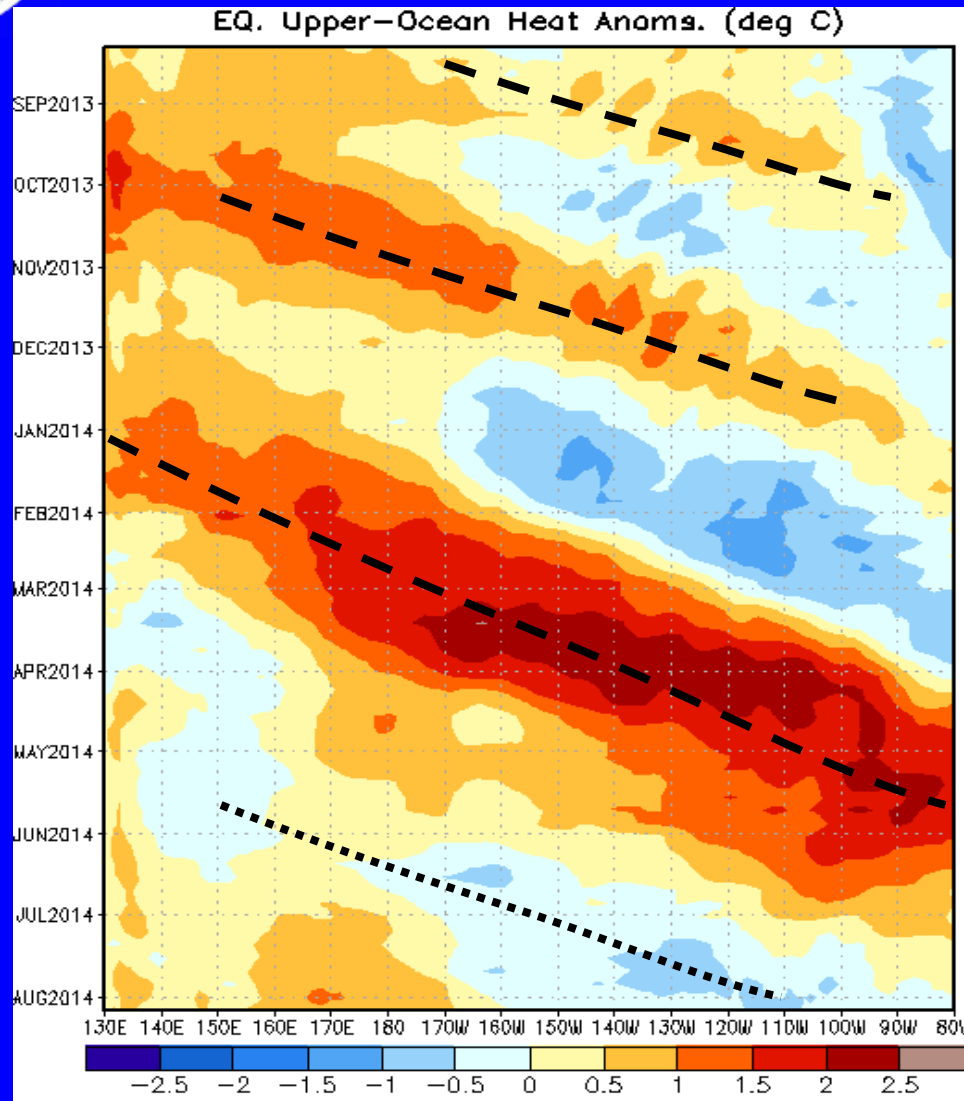
During mid-April, the slowly evolving background state contributed to easterly anomalies expanding to the Date Line.

MJO activity is evident in the eastward propagation of both easterly and westerly anomalies during April and early May. This signal weakened during late May.

Westward propagation of westerly anomalies is evident over the east central Pacific during June. In July, easterly anomalies intensified over the central and eastern Pacific.



Weekly Heat Content Evolution in the Equatorial Pacific



Oceanic downwelling Kelvin wave activity is evident in late August 2013 and once again during October through early December 2013.

A considerably stronger downwelling event began in January 2014 and propagated across the Pacific.

Warm anomalies persisted over much of the Pacific during April and May, though basin-averaged anomalies decreased during June associated with upwelling Kelvin wave activity (dotted line).



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.

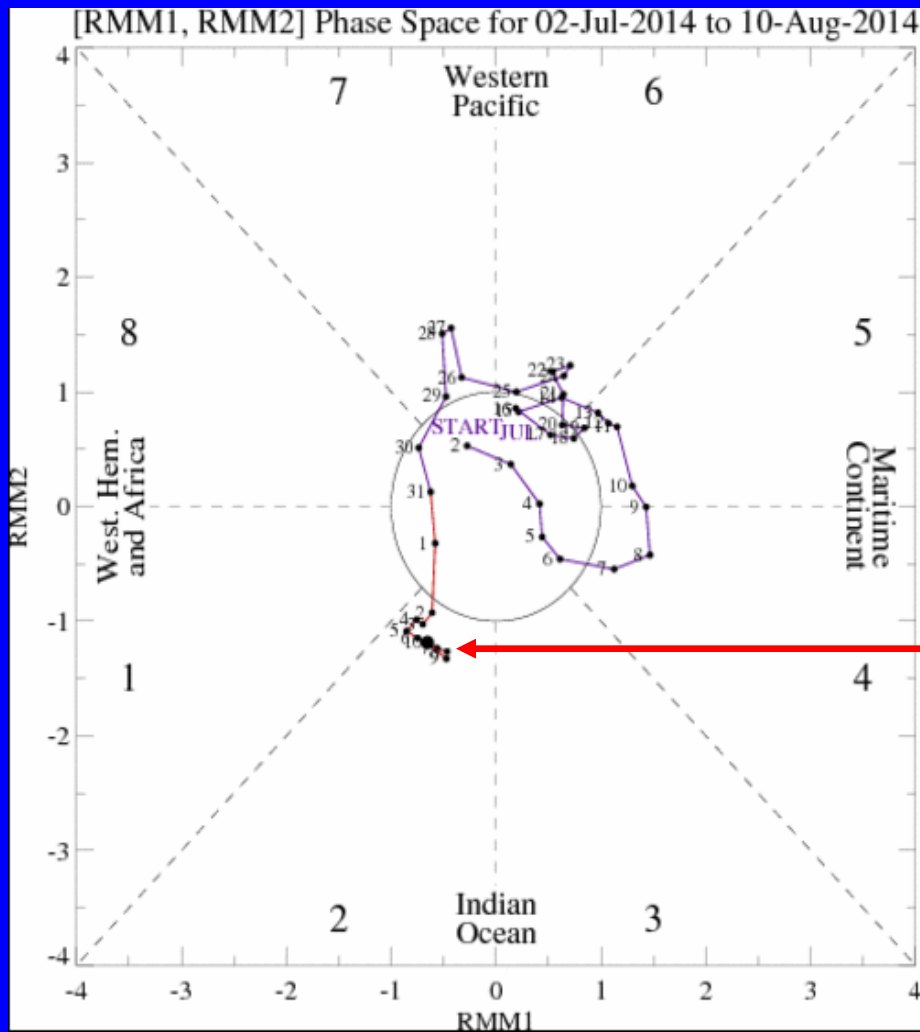
- The methodology is very similar to that described in WH2004 but does not include the linear removal of ENSO variability associated with a sea surface temperature index. The methodology is consistent with that outlined by the U.S. CLIVAR MJO Working Group.

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

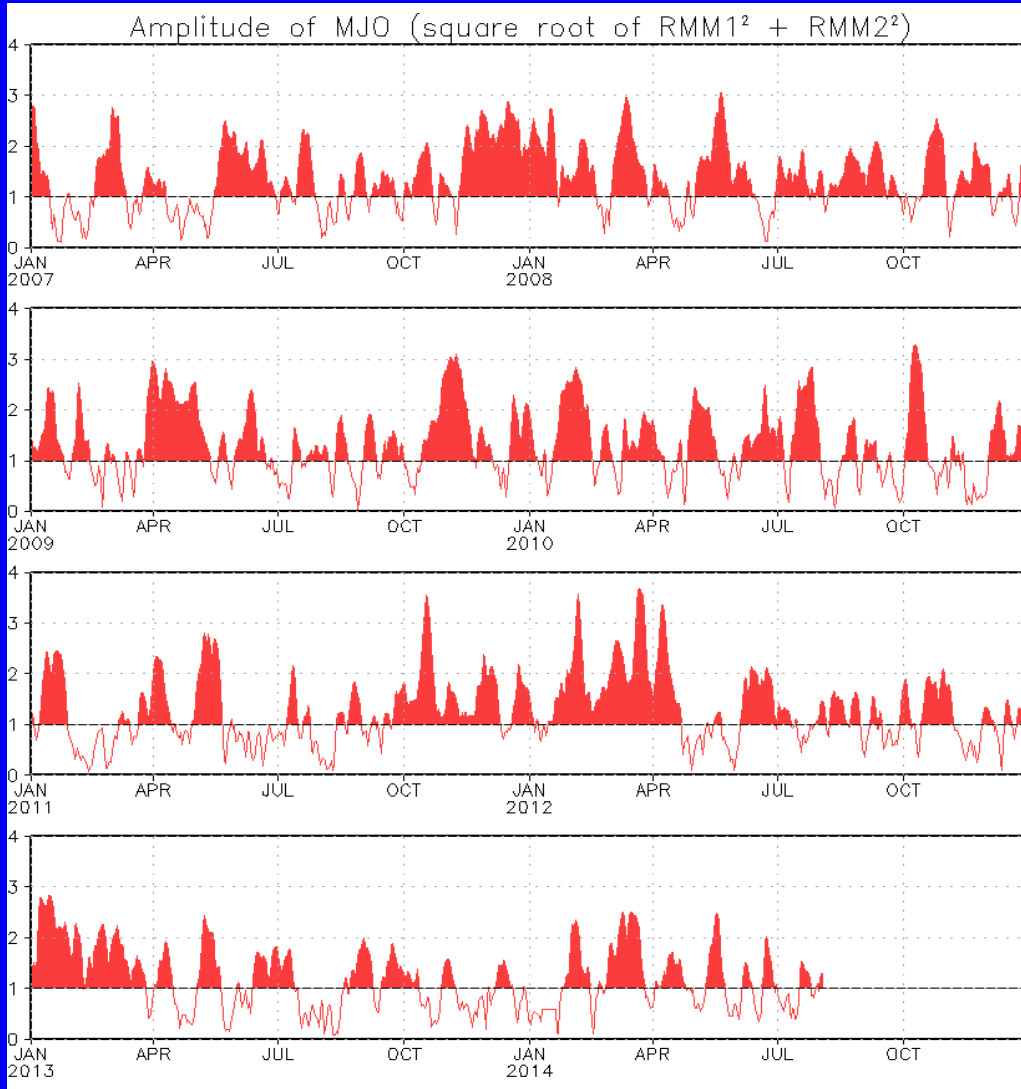


- The axes (RMM1 and RMM2) represent daily values of the principal components from the two leading modes
- The triangular areas indicate the location of the enhanced phase of the MJO
- Counter-clockwise motion is indicative of eastward propagation. Large dot most recent observation.
- Distance from the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

The MJO index indicates little coherent MJO activity during the past week. Although values have some amplitude, there is no clear eastward propagation over the past ten days.



MJO Index – Historical Daily Time Series



Time series of daily MJO index amplitude from 2007 to present.

Plot puts current MJO activity in recent historical context.



Ensemble GFS (GEFS) MJO Forecast

Yellow Lines – 20 Individual Members

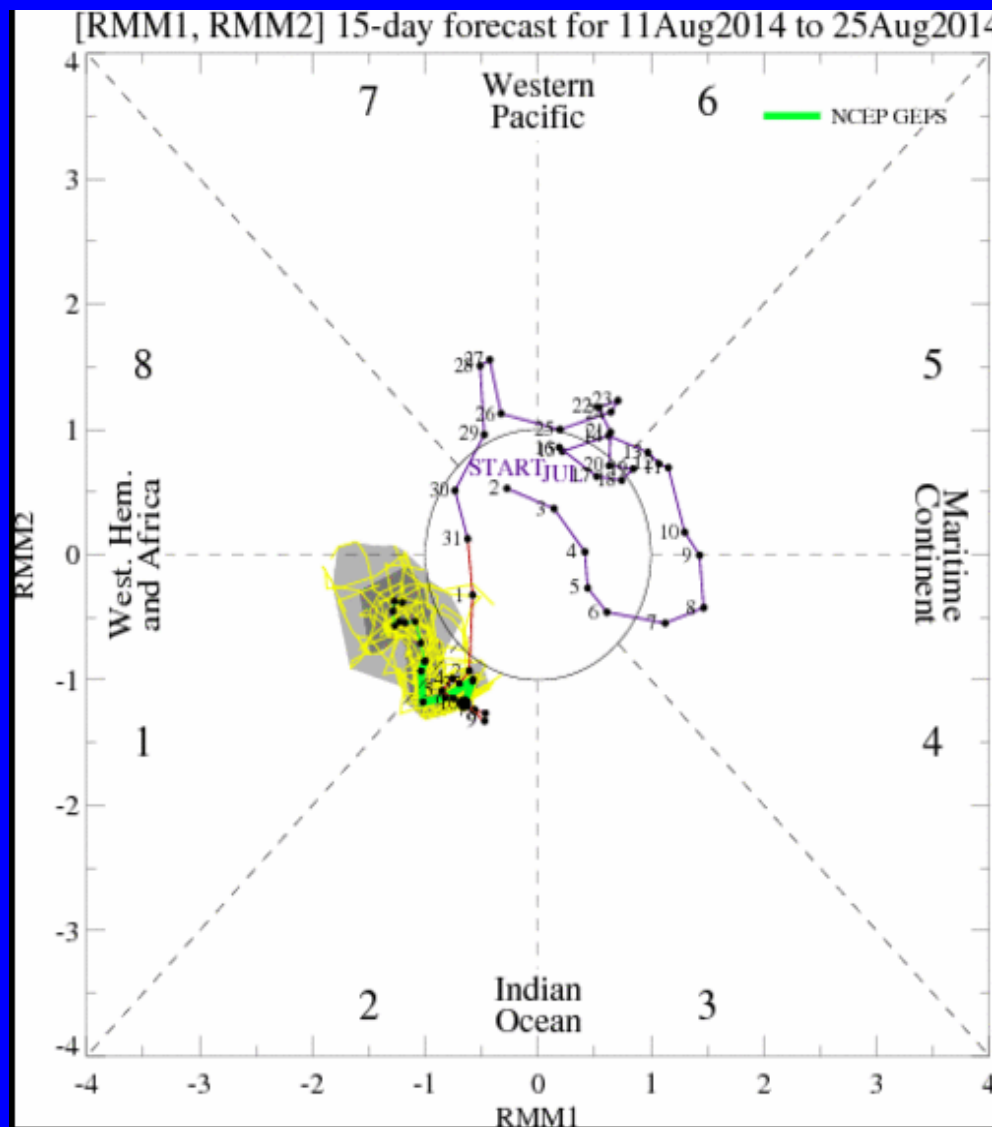
Green Line – Ensemble Mean

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 forecast indicates an incoherent MJO signal over the next two weeks. The GEFS is forecasting persistent convection over the western Indian Ocean.

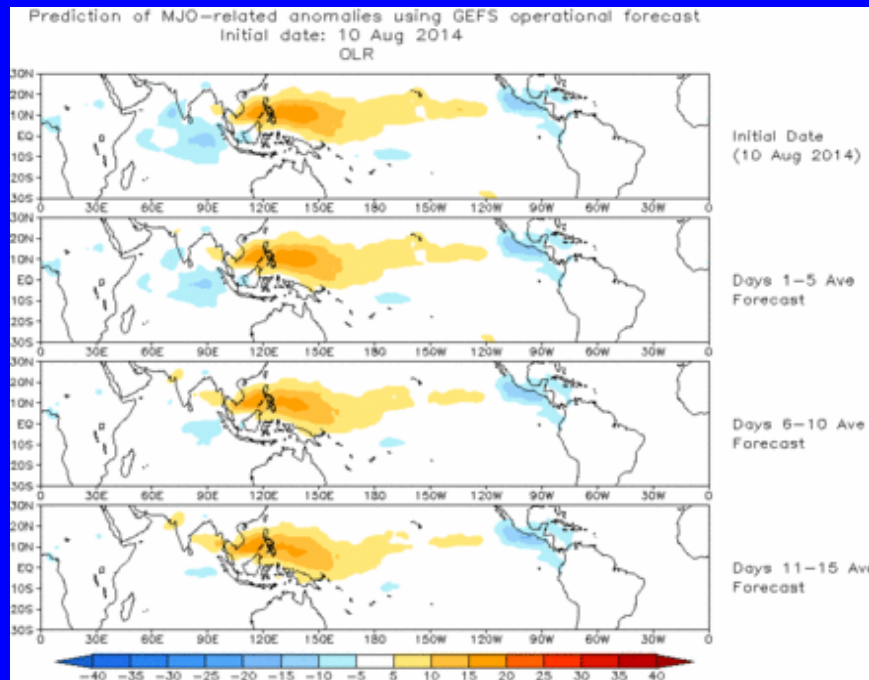




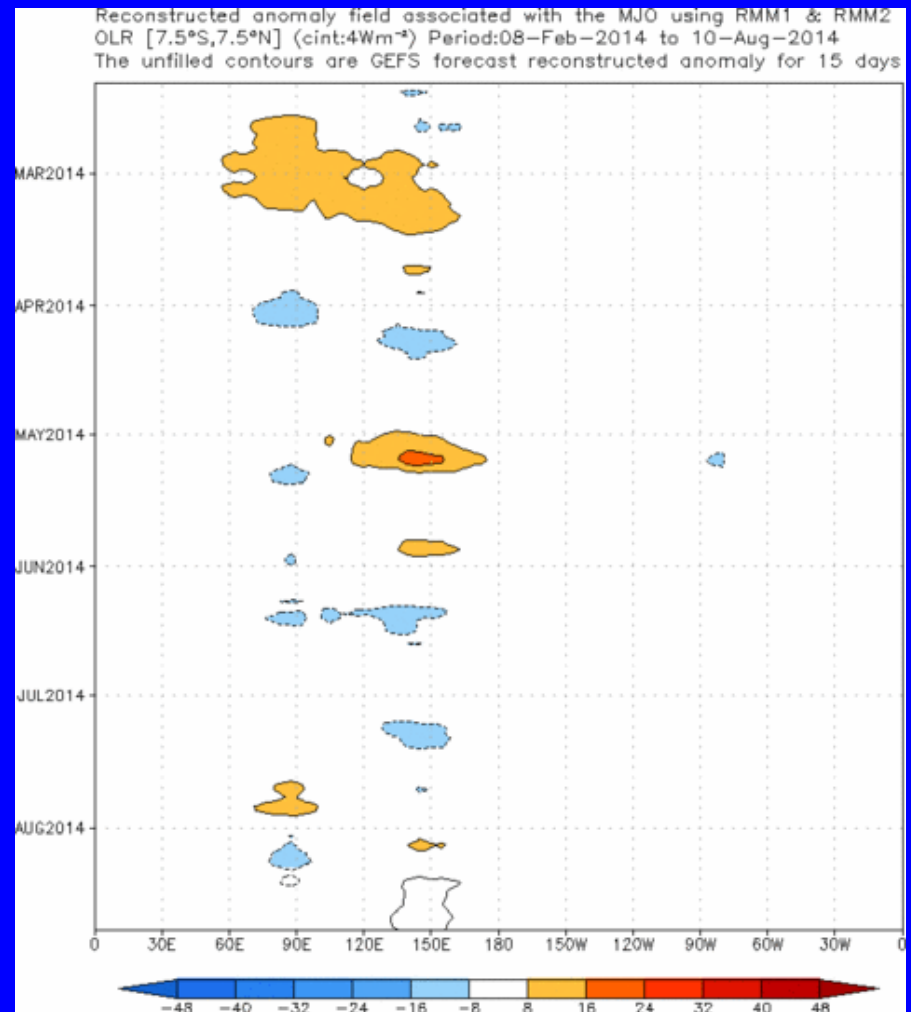
Ensemble Mean GFS MJO Forecast

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



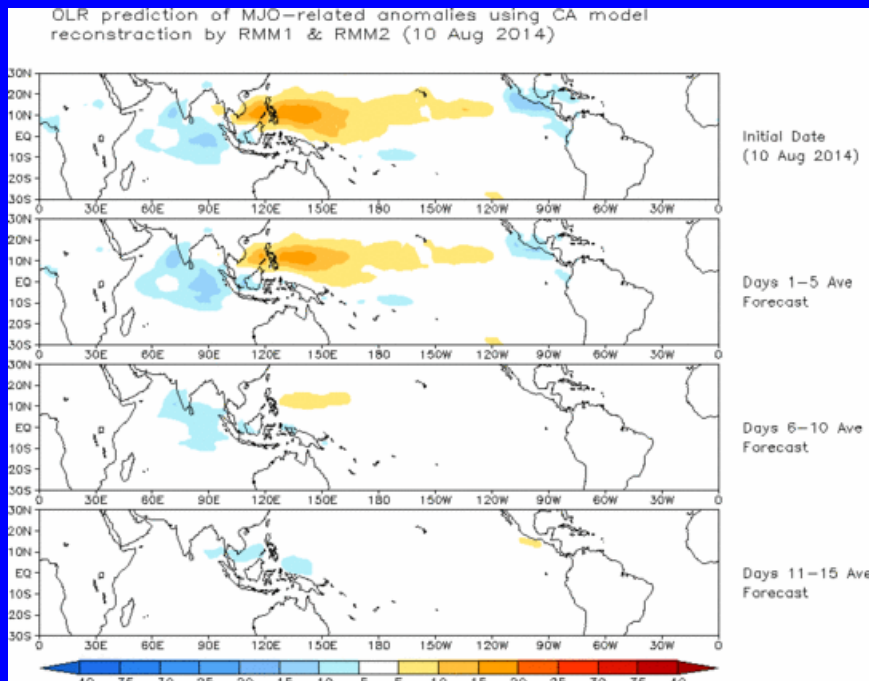
The ensemble mean GFS forecasts persistently enhanced (suppressed) convection over the Indian Ocean and Central America (western Pacific).



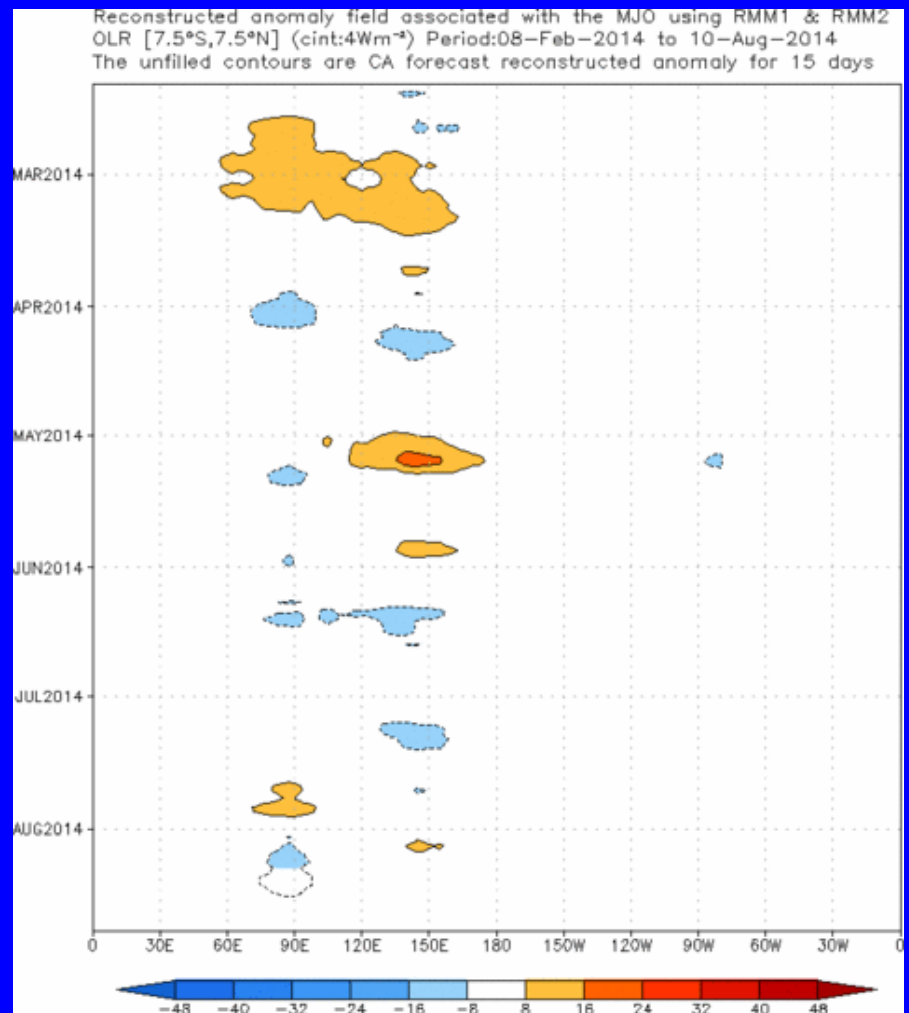
Constructed Analog (CA) MJO Forecast

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

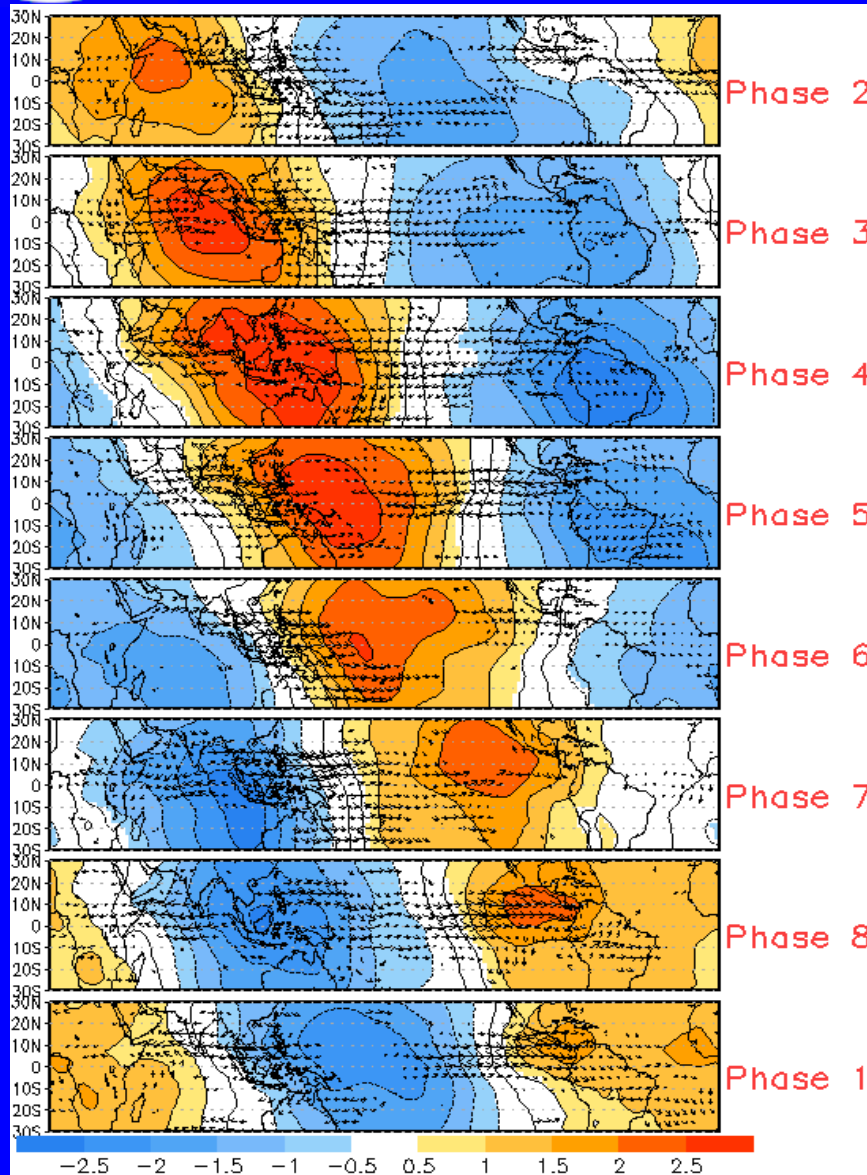


The constructed analog forecast depicts anomalous convection over the Indian Ocean and Americas and suppressed convection over the western Pacific, with a quickly decaying signal in all areas.

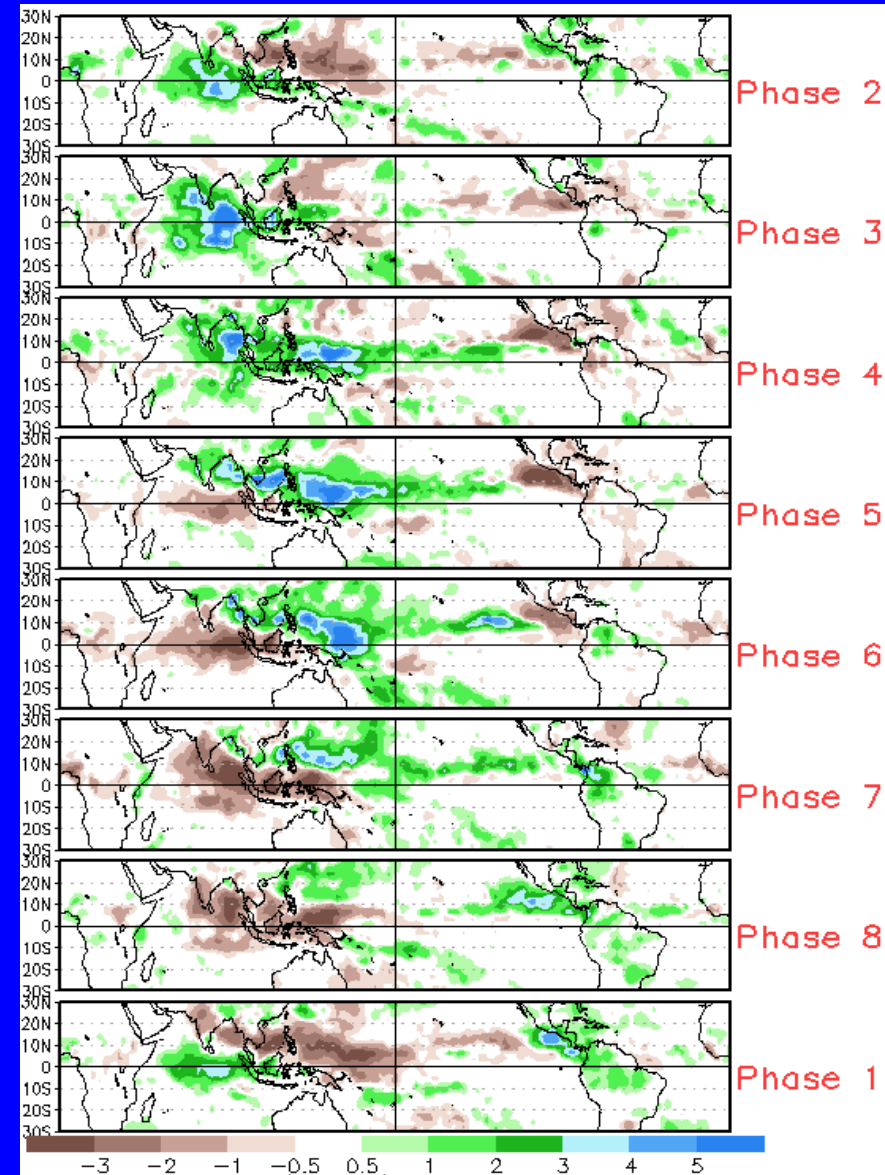


MJO Composites – Global Tropics

850-hPa Velocity Potential and
Wind Anomalies (May-Sep)



Precipitation Anomalies (May-Sep)

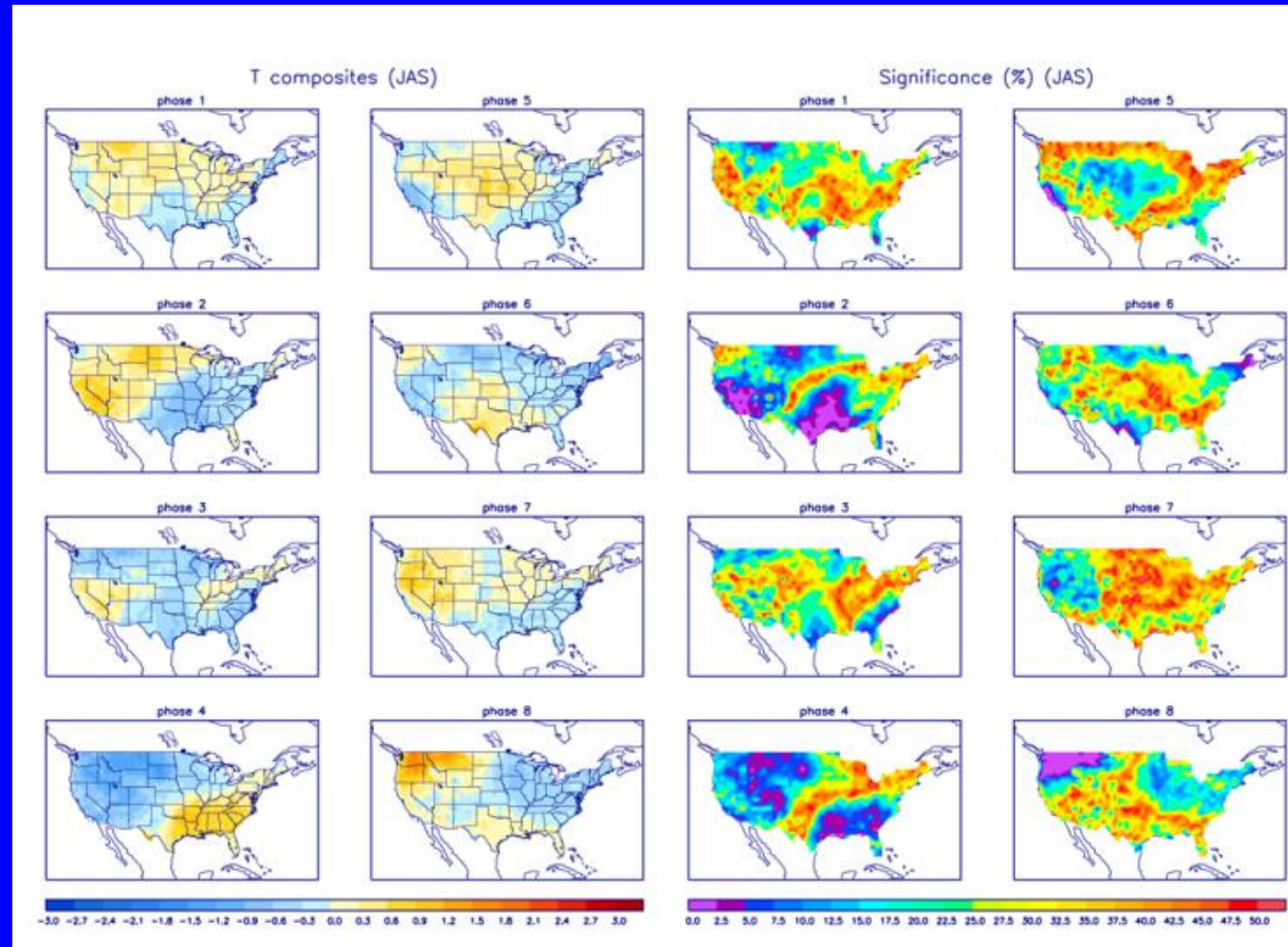




U.S. MJO Composites – Temperature

- 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. Purple shades indicate areas in which the anomalies are significant at the 95% or better confidence level.



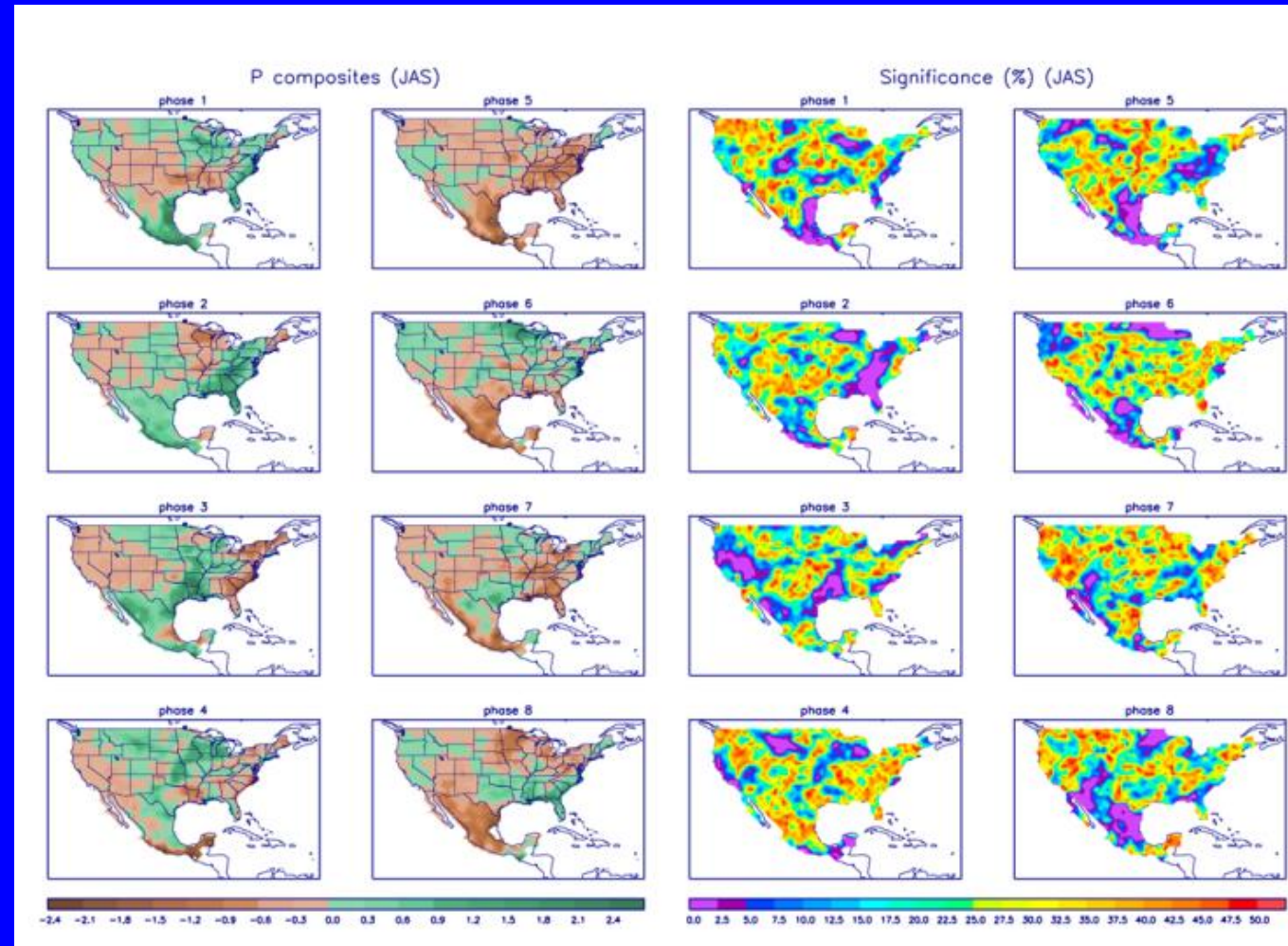
Zhou et al. (2011): A composite study of the MJO influence on the surface air temperature and precipitation over the Continental United States, *Climate Dynamics*, 1-13, doi: 10.1007/s00382-011-1001-9

<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. 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>