

The MJO has remained fairly weak over the past several days, despite impressive convective anomalies over parts of the Maritime Continent and West Pacific. The RMM index has emerged in Phase 6 and is expected to approach two standard deviations in magnitude. However, little eastward propagation is expected, as only the JMA model and some statistical tools indicate any long-lived eastward propagation. Additionally, the RMM is slightly out of phase with the CPC velocity potential index, that latter of which places the enhanced phase of the MJO farther west than the RMM.

The enhanced convection, therefore, is best attributed to the slowly-evolving low-frequency state, which has been shifting east since early December, combined with equatorial Rossby waves. The former is expected to continue to favor enhanced convection across parts of the West Pacific and Maritime Continent, mainly south of the equator, for the next two weeks. Low-frequency signals also favor below-normal rainfall near the Date Line for the next two weeks, although there is some indication that this signal may be weakening slowly thereafter.

With the convectively active region shifting slowly eastward, parts of the Australian and South Pacific tropical cyclone basins are forecast to be active during the next two weeks. The zonal wind anomalies at upper- and lower-levels support enhanced activity in these regions.

Persistent convection near the eastern Maritime Continent and parts of the West Pacific could have important impacts on the extratropics from the North Pacific downstream into North America. In recent observations, an extension of the East Asian jet stream has been observed, consistent with convective forcing from the West Pacific over the past week to ten days. Therefore, the forecast pattern of tropical convection favors continued ridging in the Northeast Pacific over the next few weeks.