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A new approach to forecasting mountain wave induced Clear Air Turbulence

Andrew D. Elvidge, Helen Wells, Simon B. Vosper, Jacob C. H. Cheung, Steve Derbyshire, Debi Turp

Presented by Andrew C. Bushell

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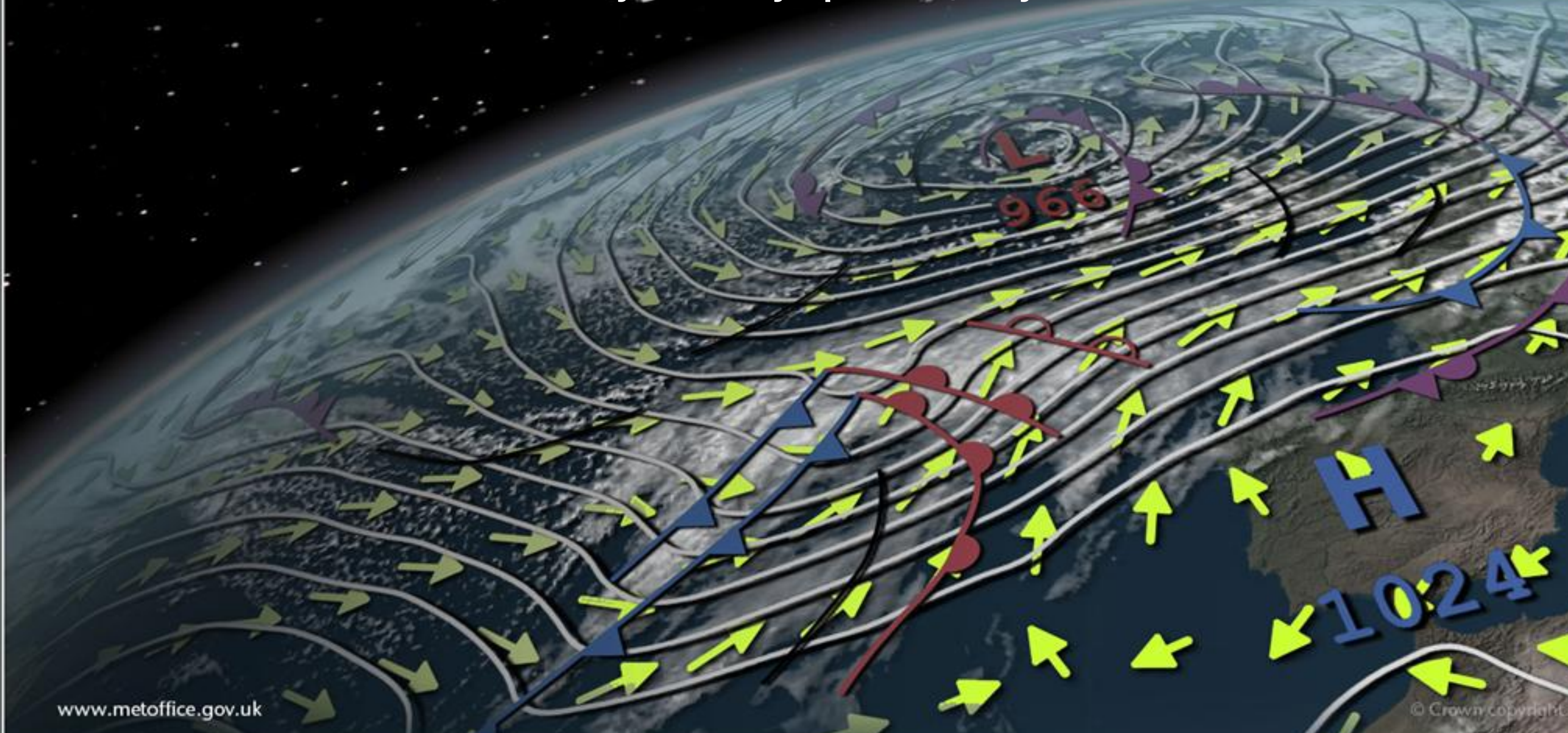

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Overview

Background: Forecasting mountain wave induced turbulence for aviation

A new diagnostic for predicting Mountain CAT

Verifying the new Mountain CAT predictor

Conclusions

Forecasting mountain wave turbulence for aviation

- **Atmospheric turbulence encountered in commercial aviation** – cause of most weather-related aircraft incidents
- **Mountain wave breaking** in the lower stratosphere is **one of the major causes** of it
- For **clear air turbulence** (CAT), there are **no visual clues** – pilots reliant on
    - **operational forecasts**
    - reports from other aircraft.
- Mountain waves typically sub-grid-scale in global forecast models
- Due to recent developments some NWP models (e.g. UK Met Office Unified Model; MetUM) **now able to resolve mountain wave activity explicitly**
    - **allows forecasts of mountain wave induced turbulence with greater accuracy** and confidence than possible before.

Mountain CAT predictors in the MetUM: **Parameterized to resolved**

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Previously: "WAFC CAT predictor" – diagnose **mountain wave turbulence** from **subgrid GW stress** diagnosed from **orographic drag parameterization scheme**. Not ideally fit for purpose as:

- Stress realism limited by simplifications used in drag scheme
- Stress divergence, rather than stress, is associated with wave dissipation and turbulence

Proposed new method:

- latest version of MetUM dynamical core (ENDGame) **and** increased operational global model resolution (N768 ~17km at mid-latitudes)
- allows significantly improved representation of gravity waves
- Consequent possibility now of turbulence prediction based on model-resolved fields.

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Mountain CAT predictors in the MetUM: **A new diagnostic**

- Propose a **modified TKE diagnostic** using **model-resolved** fields
- Despite the improvements, the characteristically **fine-scale** phenomenon of mountain wave **breaking** is still unlikely to be resolved by global models
- Grey zone? – likely to resolve waves but under-predict dissipation
- To account for this, the modified TKE diagnostic
  - uses a long tail stability function
  - gives greater mixing (κ_m) at higher stabilities than unmodified.

Mountain CAT predictors in the MetUM: **A new diagnostic**

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Diagnostic derived via bulk formula based on **eddy diffusivity for momentum**, κ_m, as:

$$TKE = \left(\frac{\kappa_m}{lC}\right)^2 ,$$

where C is a tuneable constant (set to 0.5) and $\boldsymbol{l}$ is **mixing length**.
Modified TKE uses a diagnosed eddy diffusivity which assumes a **long tail stability function**:

$$f(Ri) = \frac{1}{1+10Ri} ,$$

where Ri is gradient Richardson number. κ_m is then defined as

$$\kappa_m = l^2 S f(Ri) ,$$

where S is **modulus of vertical wind shear**.

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Methodology for verifying new diagnostic

Use automated commercial aircraft turbulence reports as observations (**Global Atmospheric DataSet – GADS**)

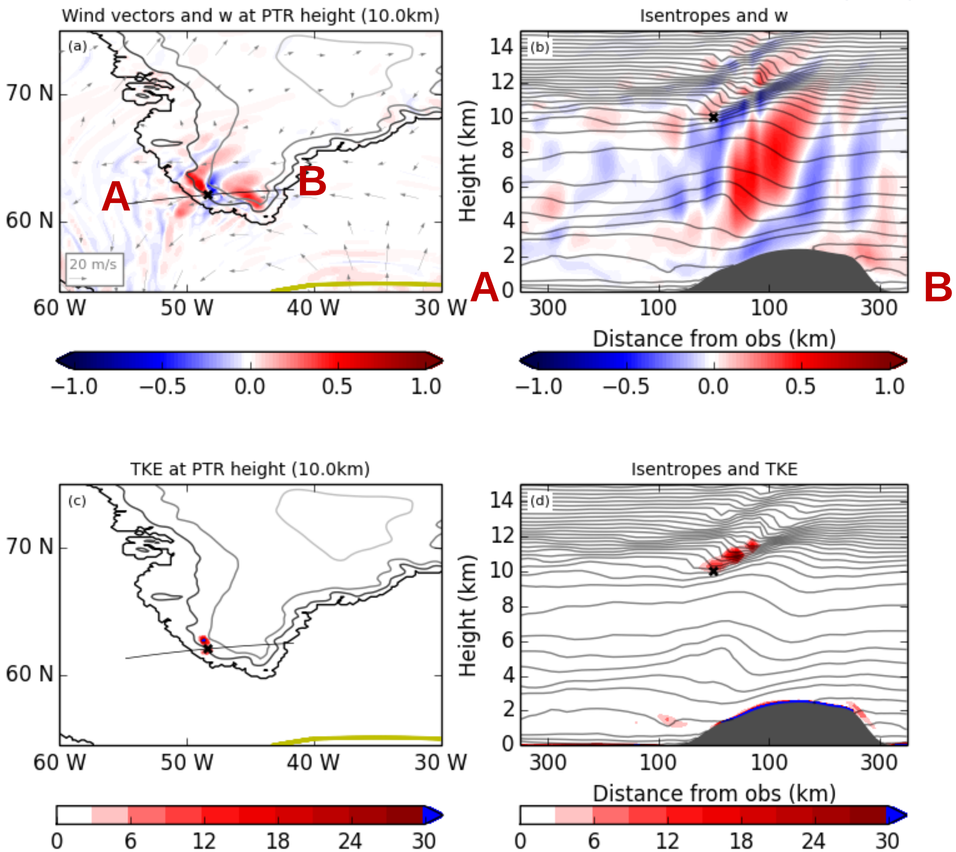
- over Greenland (mountain wave induced turbulence an identified hazard in this region)
- Derived Equivalent Vertical Gust (DEVG) metric
- Light / Moderate / Severe turbulence categories

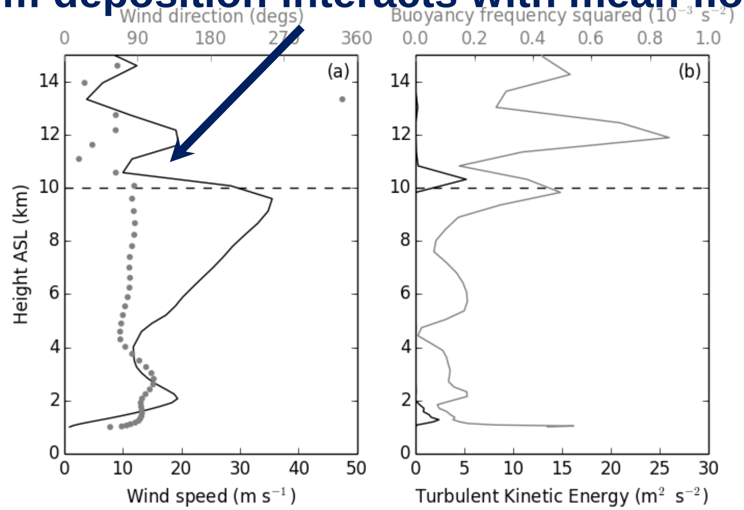
Two approaches:

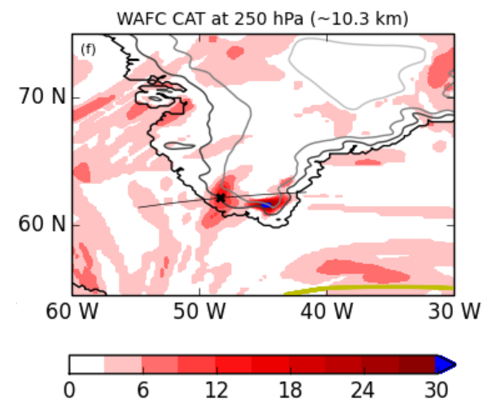
- **Case studies**
  - May 2010 Severe (Sharman et al. 2012)
  - GADS Moderate, widespread
  - GADS Severe, strong shear
- **Long-term verification** (17-month)

Severe Localised Turbulence Case study

Wave-induced critical level breaking -- momentum deposition interacts with mean flow



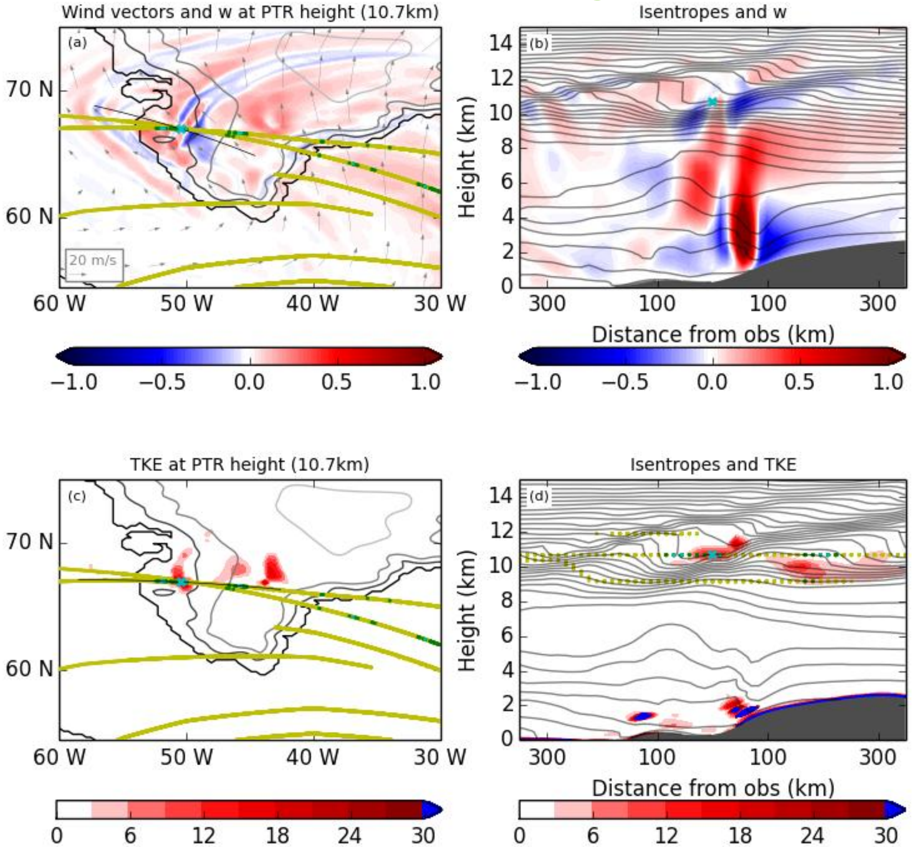


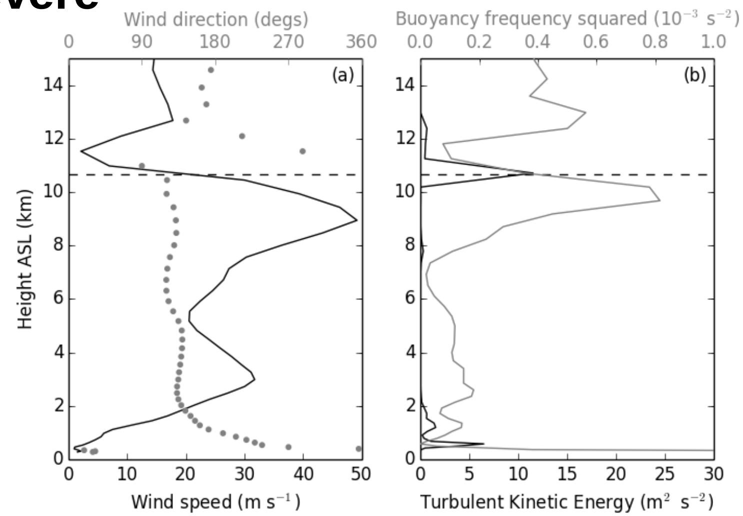


Case details see Sharman et al. 2012

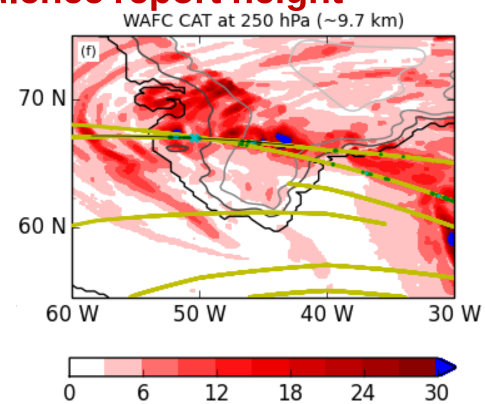
GADS Moderate Case

Tracks: No turbulence, Light, Moderate, Severe





Peak turbulence report height



GADS Severe Case

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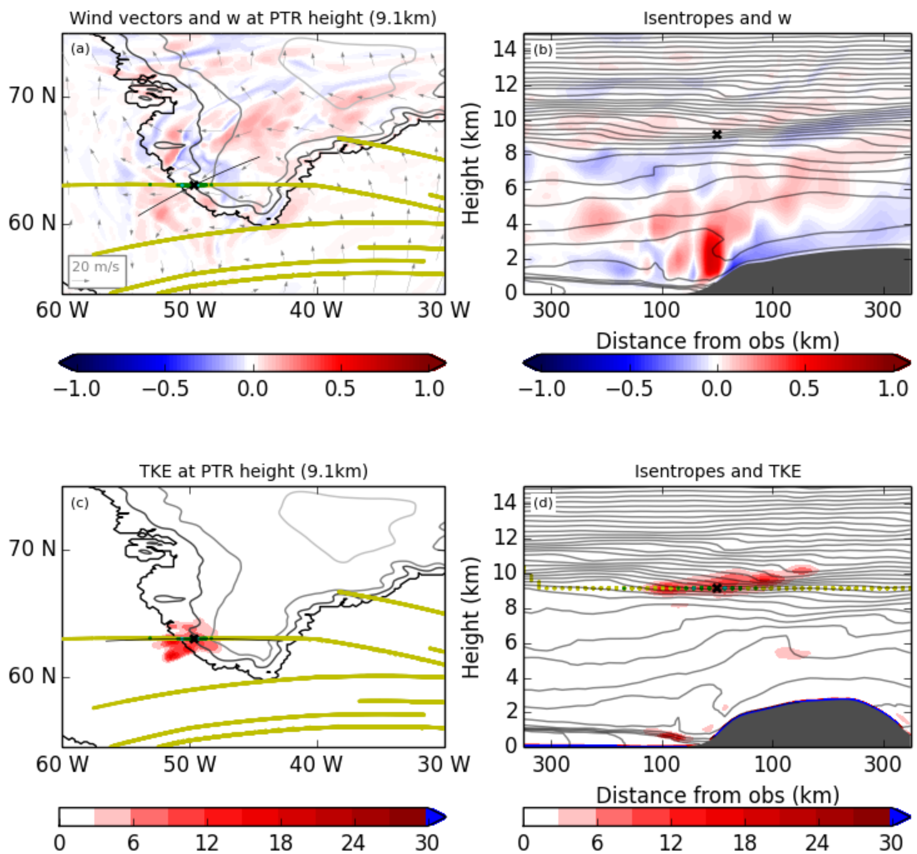
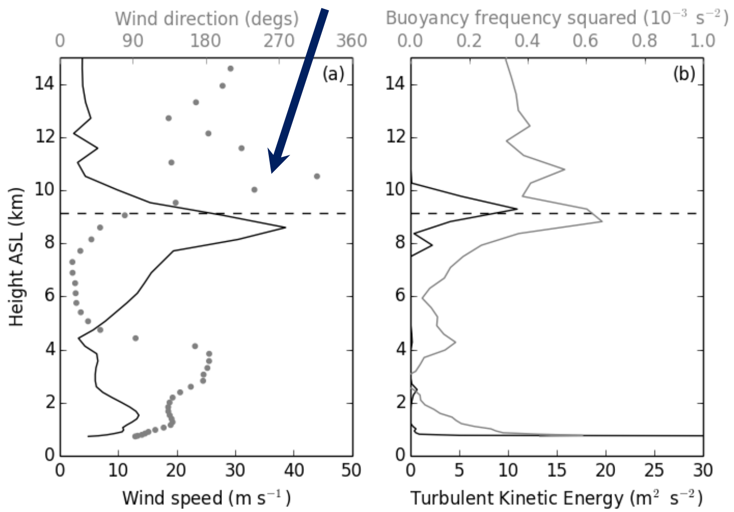
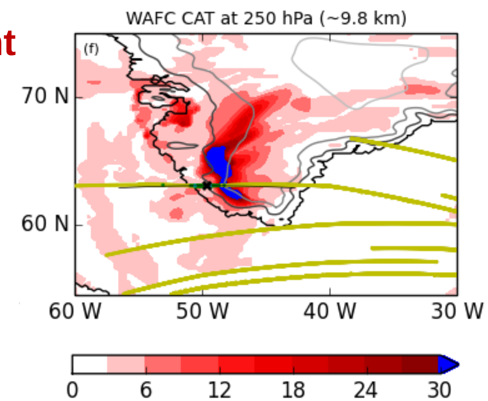
Shear-induced critical level breaking -- flow direction northerly to southerly



PTR height





Long-term verification: **method**

GADS reports

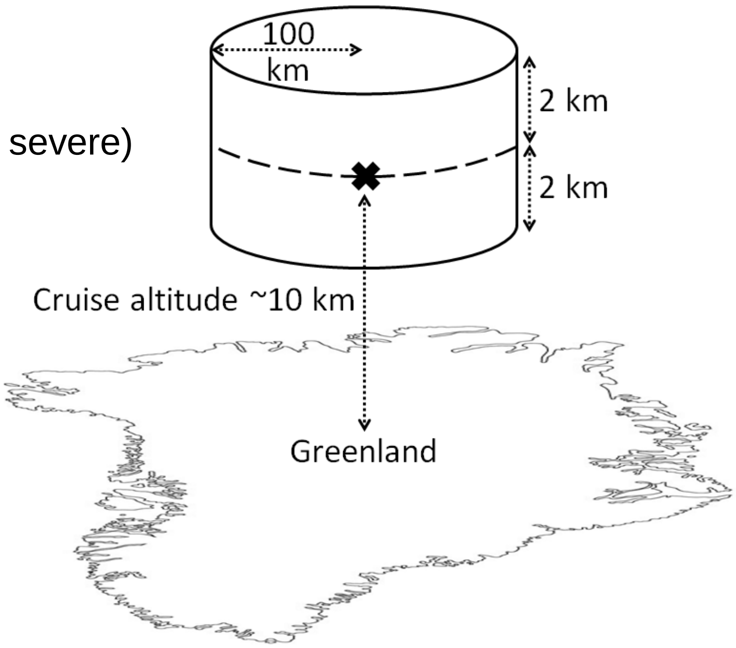
- over Greenland
- 17 month period (1st August 2014 to end December 2015).

Corresponding **model diagnostics:**

- closest forecast time, and must be within one hour of each report
- averaged over area within 100 km (radius) and over depth +/- 2 km of each report

Evaluated for:

- **All turbulence** reports:
  482 reports (16 of which moderate to severe)
- **1 % of no-turbulence** reports:
  2124 reports



Long-term verification: **results**

	No turbulence	Light turbulence	Moderate-severe turb.
Number of reports	2124	466	16
Mean TKE_{mean}	**0.04**	**0.52**	**0.91**

Hit rate = likelihood of detection = Hits / (Hits + Misses)
False alarm rate = FalseAlarms / (Hits + FalseAlarms)

Aim to **maximise hit** rate and **minimise false alarm** rate

Forecast	**Turbulence Reported**	
	True	False
True	HIT	False Alarm
False	MISS	NULL

Long-term verification

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Define [report = 1] where DEVG >= 2
Define [forecast = 1] TKE threshold so that **hit rate** >= 80 %

Using mean TKE (within cylinder):

(a)	Reported 1 (DEVG ≥ 2)	Reported 0 (DEVG < 2)
Forecast 1 (TKE ≥ 0.085)	386 (15 %)	237 (9 %)
Forecast 0 (TKE < 0.085)	96 (4 %)	1887 (72 %)

Hit rate = 80 %
False alarm rate = 38 %

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Conclusions

- Modern global NWP models are capable of representing a sufficient proportion of the gravity-wave spectrum to allow mountain wave CAT to be **directly diagnosed** from model **resolved wave** motions
- TKE diagnostic has
  - demonstrated skill in predicting mountain CAT
  - superior skill compared with current operational product.