

# CPC's Seasonal Precipitation Forecasts versus Climatology: How Different Are They?

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**Abstract.** The Climate Prediction Center, a branch of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, produces climate forecasts that predict average temperature and total precipitation over three-month periods out to a year in advance. A visual inspection of past precipitation forecasts versus 30-year average precipitation values, called climatology, suggests that the forecasts rarely differ much in magnitude from corresponding climatology. Based on the available archived forecasts from 1995 through 1999, an initial evaluation of the frequency and degree of departure of precipitation forecasts from climatology was performed for three forecast divisions. For these three regions combined, forecast departures were larger than 10% of climatology in only 12% of the forecasts. This may limit the usefulness of these forecasts for certain applications. Further analysis on this subject is underway, part of a comprehensive, user oriented evaluation of the value of CPC's seasonal precipitation forecasts for applications in agriculture and natural resource management.

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