15 November 2020

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Summer 2020-2021 sea ice prediction experiment
Submission deadline: Tuesday December 8ᵗʰ, 2020

Overview and objectives

The Sea Ice Prediction Network South (SIPN South) is pleased to invite contributors to participate in the **fourth coordinated sea-ice prediction experiment in the Southern Ocean**. SIPN South is an international project endorsed by the Year of Polar Prediction (YOPP). Its goal is to make an initial assessment of the ability of forecasting systems to predict circumpolar average, regional average, and local Antarctic sea-ice conditions, with a focus on the summer season. More information can be found under the section "To go further" at the end of this document.

Over the past three years, we have received 518 forecasts from 17 unique contributors (institutions or individuals). **We warmly thank all contributors for their interests, efforts and feedbacks**. An evaluation 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 forecasts is available in three technical reports (Massonnet et al. (2018, 2019, 2020)). While a few forecasts did have skill in forecasting the total Antarctic sea-ice area, the skill was lower at the regional level. In particular, sea ice in the Ross Sea appeared to be very difficult to predict. It was also found that statistical models appeared to be superior to dynamical models in terms of spatial distribution of sea ice.

SIPN South is currently in its "consolidation phase", following the timeline of YOPP. We hereby invite a fourth round of contributions for summer 2020-2021, with the objective to establish the robustness of conclusions drawn from the three first exercises. It is indeed the accumulation of forecasts, year after year, that will eventually guide the developments needed to improve these forecasts, as seen in the case of seasonal Arctic sea-ice prediction.

This document outlines the protocol for contributing to the summer 2020-2021 experiment. The protocol is similar in many aspects to the one of last year. This year, we encourage groups to submit their daily fields of grid-point sea-ice volume, if they are in the capacity to do so.

All groups are invited to participate regardless of the approach they follow.

Finally, we are aware that the ongoing sanitary crisis related to the global pandemic is affecting research at the institutional, group and individual levels. If the above schedule is too tight but a delayed contribution would still be possible, please do not hesitate to let us know and we will find a flexible solution that accommodates everyone.

Diagnostics requested

Participants are invited to issue one, two, three or four of the following diagnostics, ordered by descending priority. The submission process is described at the end of this document. The diagnostics are:

1. High priority

Diagnostic: Antarctic (circumpolar) daily mean sea-ice area[1] from December 1st 2020 to February 28th 2021 included (90 days).

Format: One text file with one row and 90 comma-separated values, each expressing daily sea-ice area for the 31 + 31 + 28 days of the December-February period. Units must be 10^6 km². Numbers must be rounded to four decimal digits and trailing zeroes must be included.

File name: `<group-name>_<forecast-id>_total-area.txt`

- `<group-name>` is the name of the participating group (university, research center, institution)
- `<forecast-id>` is a 3-digit identifier for the forecast (`001`, `002`, ...)

Remarks: Ensemble forecasts are welcome. Please keep one file per forecast and increment each time the `<forecast-id>` by one unit: `001` for the first forecast, `002` for the second, etc. If only one forecast is submitted, set `<forecast-id>` to `001`.

Example: A fictitious example is given here for a group named "ucl" contributing three forecasts: https://goo.gl/LLfQaD.

2. Medium priority

Diagnostic: February Antarctic daily mean sea-ice area per 10° longitude bin, from December 1st 2020 to February 28th 2021 included (90 days).

Format: A text file with 36 rows each displaying 90 comma-separated values following the same requirements as diagnostic 1. Each row corresponds to a 10° longitude bin. First row: 0° ≤ longitude < 10°, second row, 10° ≤ longitude < 20°, ..., 36th row: 350° ≤ longitude < 360°.

File name: `<group-name>_<forecast-id>_regional-area.txt`

Example: A fictitious example is given here for a group named "ucl" contributing three forecasts: https://goo.gl/LLfQaD

3. Low priority

Diagnostic: February Antarctic daily mean sea-ice concentration

Format: A NetCDF file with 90 timesteps (one per day in the December 1st 2020 to February 28th 2021 period). Each time step displays the spatial field of sea-ice concentration. The file format must follow the CMIP6 conventions:

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[1] Sea ice area is defined as the oceanic surface covered by sea ice.

- Sea-ice concentration is defined as the fraction of the grid cell covered by sea ice, is named `siconc`, and is expressed in %.

- Longitude and latitude are reported under variables `longitude` and `latitude`.

- A land-sea mask is provided through a variable named `sftof` that expresses the percentage of the grid cell covered by ocean (units %).

- Areas of grid cells are provided through a variable named `areacello` that expresses the area of the grid cell in m².

File name: `<group-name>_<forecast-id>_concentration.nc`

Example: A fictitious example is given here for a group named "ucl" contributing three forecasts: https://goo.gl/LLfQaD

4. Low priority

Diagnostic: February Antarctic daily mean sea-ice volume per unit grid cell area

Format: A NetCDF file with 90 timesteps (one per day in the December 1st 2020 to February 28th 2021 period). Each time step displays the spatial field of sea-ice volume per unit grid cell area. The file format must follow the CMIP6 conventions:

- Sea-ice volume per unit grid cell area is calculated by dividing the volume of sea ice in a grid cell by the grid cell's total area. Following CMIP6 conventions, this variable is named `sivol` and has units of meters. (Note that this variable is sometimes called "equivalent thickness". It is *not* the average thickness of sea ice in the ice-covered part of the grid cell).

- Longitude and latitude are reported under variables `longitude` and `latitude`.

- A land-sea mask is provided through a variable named `sftof` that expresses the percentage of the grid cell covered by ocean (units %).

- Areas of grid cells are provided through a variable named `areacello` that expresses the area of the grid cell in m².

File name: `<group-name>_<forecast-id>_volume.nc`

Verification products

The forecasts will be assessed against two observational references:

- The Near-Real-Time DMSP SSMIS Daily Polar Gridded Sea-Ice Concentrations, Version 1 (Data Set ID: NSIDC-0081; http://nsidc.org/data/nsidc-0081).
- The OSI SAF SSMIS Sea-Ice Concentration Maps on 10 km Polar Stereographic Grid (Data Set ID: OSI-401-b; http://osisaf.met.no/p/ice/index.html#conc-ssmis).

Both data sets are publicly available. Sea ice areas will be computed directly from the sea ice concentration fields.

Submission process

The submission of a forecast by a group is done in two steps.

1. First, the contributing group gathers the diagnostics (see "Diagnostics Requested" above) in an online archive of its choice. The archive must be accessible with a simple URL, so that the SIPN South leadership team can easily retrieve the information. A Google Drive, a Dropbox archive, WeTransfer or a public FTP are all fine.
2. Then, the groups fill in an online form (https://forms.gle/GM8VSppqJU5z3LVz9) where they provide meta-data such as forecasting method, contact information but also the link where their data can be retrieved from. **In case this information has not changed compared your submission last year, do not hesitate to indicate "see last year" in the fields.**

Groups are invited to send an e-mail to francois.massonnet@uclouvain.be upon completion of the submission process to ensure that the data and meta-data have been well received.

The deadline for submitting the online form (containing the link pointing towards the data) is the **Tuesday 8ᵗʰ of December 2020.**

Outcomes and timeline

The SIPN Leadership Team will process the forecasts that are available by December 8ᵗʰ and publish a summary note by the 15ᵗʰ of December. This note will describe how sea ice is predicted to evolve over the summer period around Antarctica, according to the contributions that will have been received. Once the summer period is over, a full report will be published and made publicly available, in which forecasts will be inter-compared and assessed against observational references.

Note that all forecast and verification data will be made publicly available, as for the first three exercises.

Contact and questions

Any question, comment or feedback should be addressed to François Massonnet (francois.massonnet@uclouvain.be).

Good luck, and enjoy!

The SIPN South Leadership team
F. Massonnet, P. Reid, J. L. Lieser, C. M. Bitz, J. Fyfe, W. Hobbs

To go further

SIPN South website:

       https://fmassonn.github.io/sipn-south.github.io/

Access to forecast data and analyses:

       https://github.com/fmassonn/sipn-south-public

EGU Cryosphere blog article on SIPN South:

       https://blogs.egu.eu/divisions/cr/tag/sipn/

BAMS paper:

Lieser, J L, F Massonnet, W Hobbs, J Fyfe, C M Bitz, and P Reid. 2020. "Sea Ice Prediction Network-South: Coordinating Seasonal Predictions of Sea Ice for the Southern Ocean." *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 101 (8): S313–S315. https://dx.doi.org/10.1175/BAMS-D-20-0090.1

Video summarizing SIPN South's first experiment:

       https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUeWapsdSwQ

Post-season reports of the first experiments:

Massonnet, F., P. Reid, J. L. Lieser, C. M. Bitz, J. Fyfe, W. Hobbs (2018). "Assessment of February 2018 sea-ice forecasts for the Southern Ocean". https://eprints.utas.edu.au/27184/
— (2019). "Assessment of Summer 2018-2019 Sea-Ice Forecasts for the Southern Ocean". https://eprints.utas.edu.au/29984/
— (2020). "Assessment of Summer 2019-2020 Sea-Ice Forecasts for the Southern Ocean". https://fmassonn.github.io/sipn-south.github.io/doc/2019-2020/SIPN-South_2019-2020_postseason.pdf