



Envisat GDR Quality Assessment Report

Cycle 113

20-03-2012 / 08-04-2012

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1. Introduction. Document overview

The purpose of this document is to report the major features of the data quality from the ocean Envisat mission. The document is associated with data dissemination on a cycle by cycle basis.

The objectives of this document are :

- To provide a data quality assessment
- To provide users with necessary information for data processing
- To report any change likely to impact data quality at any level, from instrument status to software configuration
- To present the major useful results for the current cycle

It is divided into the following topics :

- General quality assessment and cycle overview**
- CALVAL main results**
- Long term performance monitoring**
- Particular investigations**

2. Cycle overview

2.1. Data and software version

This cycle has been produced with the V2.1 reprocessing configuration : IPF processing chain V6.04 and the CMA Reference Software V9.3_05

The content of this science software version is described in a document available on the ESA PCS web site ([2]). The main impacts of these evolutions on the SSH are described in section [Impact of product version V2.1 for the SSH calculation](#).

2.2. Parameters

The parameters used to compute the sea surface height (SSH) for Envisat are :

- Ku range (ocean retracking)
- POE orbit
- Bifrequency ionospheric correction before 65, GIM ionospheric correction afterwards (S-Band Loss)
- MWR derived wet troposphere correction
- ECMWF dry tropospheric correction
- Non parametric sea state bias
- MOG2D
- Total geocentric GOT4.7 ocean tide height
- Geocentric pole tide height
- Solid earth tide height

2.3. Warnings and recommendations

Users are warned that (see section [Particular investigations](#)) :

- WARNING : Ten hours after the recovery of the HSM anomaly on the 17 January 2008, a drop of the RA2 S-band transmission power occurred. Consequently, all the S-band parameters, as well as the dual ionospheric correction and rain flag are not relevant and **MUST NOT** be used from the following date : 17 January 2008, 23 :23 :40 (Cycle 65 pass 289). Users are advised to use the Ionospheric correction from GIM model, which is available in GDR data products.
- WARNING : With this new IPF/CMA version, even in USO anomaly period, the range is corrected from the proper USO Period

On Sunday 8th April afternoon, the communication links with Envisat was suddenly lost, preventing reception of telemetry data. An extended network of ground stations was immediately activated to send commands to the satellite. While it is known that Envisat remained in a stable orbit around Earth, efforts to resume contact with the satellite were unsuccessful.

2.4. Platform and instrument events

From 2012/04/08, 10 :54 :23 : no telemetry data ; communication lost with Envisat.

2.5. Cycle quality and performances

Good general results are obtained for this cycle of data.

The crossover standard deviation is 5.47 cm rms when using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) with an additional selection of 10 days on the crossovers datation. The standard deviation of Sea Level Anomalies (SLA) relative to the CLS01V1 Mean Sea Surface is 11.2 cm. When using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) it lowers to 10.4 cm .

Detailed CALVAL results are presented in section [Calval Main Results](#).

2.6. Impact of product version "b" (CMA version 7.1) for the SSH calculation

The evolutions having a direct and strong impact on the SSH estimation are described hereafter :

2.6.1. Usage of actual USO clock period

Within the IPF version 5.02, the actual value of Ultra Stable Oscillator clock period is used within the L1b processing instead of the nominal one as it was used in previous IPF versions. This evolution implies a +2.5 cm jump on the Envisat SSH between cycle 40 and 41. To avoid this jump, and correct for the USO drift, users are advised to apply the correction provided by ESA on cycles 9 to 40 ([3]).

2.6.2. Improvement of the SSB correction

The Sea-State bias table has been recomputed (Labroue, 2005 [4]) accounting for the impact of the new orbit and the new geophysical corrections (MOG2D, GOT00 ocean tide correction with the S2 component corrected once only, new wind speed algorithm from Abdalla, 2006). The new SSB correction is shifted in average by +2.0 cm in comparison with the previous one.

2.6.3. New POE orbit solution

New standards are used for the computation of the Envisat Precise Orbit Estimation. One of the main evolutions is the use of the GRACE gravity model EIGEN_CG03C. This new model implies a strong reduction of the geographically correlated radial orbit errors : the systematic differences between ascending and descending passes which were locally higher than 4 cm in South West Pacific and South Atlantic are almost fully removed.

2.6.4. MOG2D correction

In order to take into account the dynamical effects and wind forcing, a new correction is computed from the MOG2D (Carrere and Lyard, 2003) barotropic model forced by pressure (without S1 and S2 constituents) and wind. The use of such a correction in the SSH strongly improves the performances.

2.7. Impact of CMA version 9.2_01 for the SSH calculation

2.7.1. New POE orbit solution

From the cycle 68 onward, new standards are used for the computation of the Envisat Precise Orbit Estimation (POE GDR-C configuration).

2.7.2. MOG2D correction

From the cycle 68 onward, data are produced with the new Dynamic Atmospheric Correction (DAC/MOG2D High Resolution).

2.8. Impact of product version V2.1 (IPF v6.04 and CMA v9.3_05) for the SSH calculation

2.8.1. Instrumental corrections impacting the range

Two major changes were performed in the new IPF chain :

- The introduction of USO correction directly in the range at the L1b level. Users are advised NOT to correct any more the range with the auxiliary data provided in the past.
- The improvement of the PTR resolution. This has 2 impacts on the data :
 - A direct impact on the Calibration factors included in the Level2 Instrumental Corrections :
 - o On the range through the Time Delay Calibration Factor.
 - o On the sigma0 through the Sigma0 Calibration Factor.
 - An undirect impact on the data provided that the retracking is performed on a slightly modified waveform :
 - o On all retracked parameters (Range through Epoch, SWH through SigmaC2, Wind through Sigma0, Mispointing, Peakiness)

2.8.2. Changes impacting SWH and SSB correction

2 changes were performed impacting the SSB correction :

- The Sea-State bias table has been recomputed (Labroue, 2007) accounting for the impact of the new orbit and the new geophysical corrections (MOG2D, GOT00 ocean tide correction with the S2 component corrected once only, new wind speed algorithm from Abdalla, 2006). The new SSB correction is shifted in average by +2.0 mm in comparison with the previous one.
- Furthermore, the improvement of the PTR SigmaC estimation has an impact on the SWH value ($SWH^2 = \text{SigmaP}^2 + \text{SigmaC}^2$). It has a mean impact of -13cm with a slight dependence in SWH.

2.8.3. New MWR

Changes were performed on the MWR characterisation files with an impact on the brightness temperatures. These changes have a small impact for users on the wet tropospheric correction.

2.8.4. New/Updates quality flags

- Updated Rain flag : In the algorithm the coefficients and look-up tables have been updated, in order to set the value of the flag. It is a 6 states flag using MWR, and Ku and S band inputs. It is thus not possible to validate this flag for cycle 85 (No S band data). Note that the method was presented in a paper ("Validation of Envisat Rain Detection and Rain Rate Estimates by Comparing With TRMM Data" N. Tran et al. IEEE Geoscience and Remote Sensing Letters, oct 2008).
- New Sea-Ice algorithm includes a 2-state sea ice flag (ice-free ocean and sea-ice) and 4 values indicating the membership of the pixel to each class (ice-free ocean, first-year ice, multi-year ice and wet ice). They are provided as percentages between 0 and 100 in the product.

2.8.5. Ocean Tide and Tidal Loading

Evolution on FES2004 : new loading tide + K2 and S1 coefficients. This has no impact on our analysis as we used the GOT tidal model.

2.8.6. Slope model used over ice sheets

New slope models have been implemented. This has no impact on our analysis as this is only applicable over ice sheets.

2.8.7. Total bias evaluated on the SLA monitoring

The global impact noticed on the SLA monitoring due to the new IPF+CMA versions consists of the sum of :

- Around **-6.4mm** due to the increase of the PTR resolution (included in the range instrumental correction)
- Around **-4.3mm** due to the new SSB solution (algorithm part : +2mm and 4 to 5% of 13cm SWH bias part)

==> Resulting in a **-10.7 mm jump** with geographical patterns (see map of figure ??).

Note that those statistics result from the comparison of the previous SLA corrected from USO with auxiliary files with a SLA using a range now directly corrected from USO.

Impact is also noticed on SWH monitoring :

- Around **-13cm** bias on the SWH due to the PTR width modification

Due to this global reduction of SWH, the population of null SWH increases. The managing of those null values has slightly changed between the previous and new SSB model. Users must be advised that this might cause a slight over editing due to the SSB if thresholds are not updated accordingly.

Thus, we suggest to relax the thresholds on this parameter (ex, for DUACS processing, this threshold was relaxed from [-50cm,0] to [-50cm,1cm]).

Other parameters are not or slightly impacted (weak impact on the range of the MWR new characterisation files).

Sigma0 : +0.016dB through Atmospheric attenuation + resolution noise from the sigma0 calibration factor.

Atmospheric attenuation : +0.016dB

Wind : -0.05m/s

Brightness Temperature 23.8 GHz : +0.9K (0.5K expected on all surfaces)

Brightness Temperature 36.5 GHz : +2.7K (1K expected on all surfaces)

Radiometer wet correction : +0.3mm

All these aspects including Geographic and temporal differences of New and Old versions, are detailed and can be consulted in the dedicated note comparing data with both successive IPF/CMA versions on the same cycle (85) :

CalVal status on the Envisat V2.1 reprocessing impact on main altimetric parameters - A. Ollivier, J.F. Legeais, N. Granier, Y. Faugere, F-PAC Calval Team

It is available with the release notes and all GDR and SGDR on the following address :

<ftp://diss-nas-fp.eo.esa.int>

under the directory : altimetry_dataset_v2.1.

with the name : V2.1_reprocessing_impact_on_altimetric_parameters.pdf

Compared with the previous version of April (IPF V6.02L04 and CMA 9.3_02 / Cycles 86 to 92), the only change concerns the USO algorithm. The anomalous behaviour previously noticed (jumps and default values) is now solved.

From cycle 93 onwards (and for the future reprocessed data), no more USO auxiliary file is needed.

This version is the one used for the global reprocessing initiated in January 2011.

3. CALVAL main results

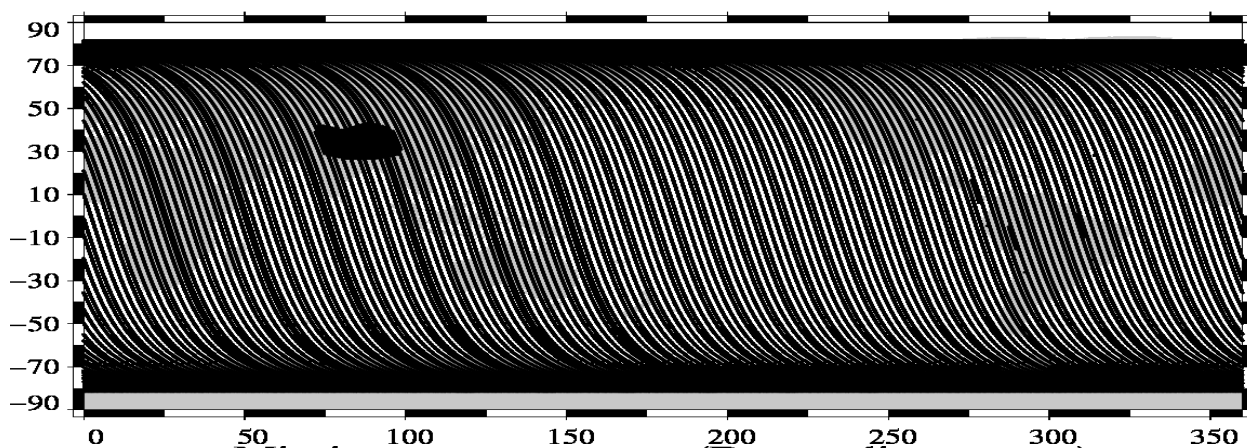
This section presents results that illustrate data quality during this cycle. These verification products are produced operationally so that they allow systematic monitoring of the main relevant parameters.

After that it follows a drifting orbit with a pseudo period of 30 days and each cycle contains 862 tracks instead of the 1002 previous splitting.

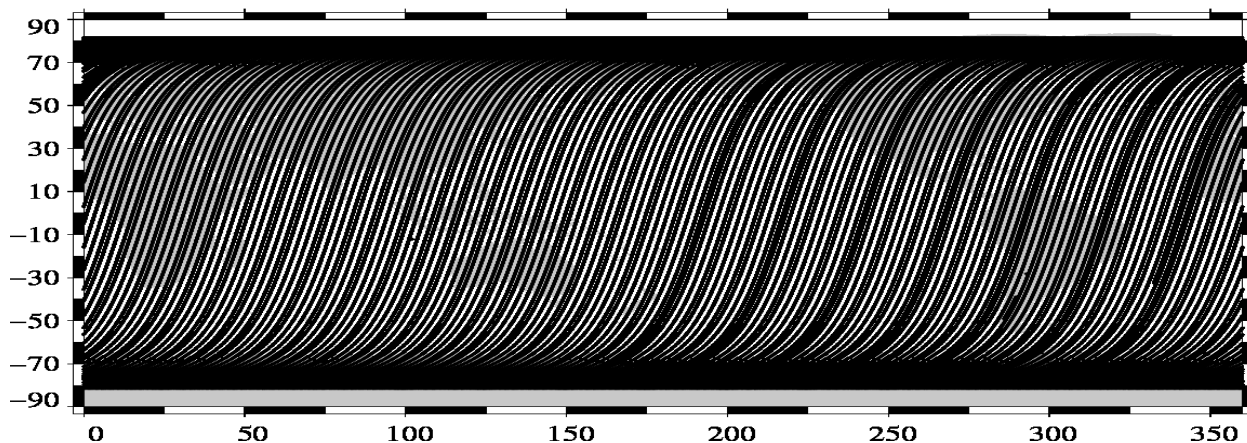
3.1. Missing measurements

943942 are present, and 894056 (48.6%) are missing. The maps below illustrate missing 1Hz measurements in the GDRs, with respect to a 1 Hz sampling of a nominal repeat track.

**Missing measurements (Ascending passes)
Envisat Cycle 113 (20/03/2012 / 08/04/2012)**



**Missing measurements (Descending passes)
Envisat Cycle 113 (20/03/2012 / 08/04/2012)**



534 passes produced over 862. 328 passes are missing :

-Passes 535-862 : [2012/04/08 10 :54 :23 => 2012/05/14 14 :29 :25] : no telemetry data ; communication lost with Envisat

1 pass is incomplete :

-Pass 534 : [from 2012/04/08 10 :54 :23] : no telemetry data ; communication lost with Envisat

3.2. Orbit quality

Good.

3.3. Edited measurements

3.3.1. Statistics

Data editing is necessary to remove altimeter measurements having lower accuracy.

First, there is an editing using flags. Compared to the GDR product, two additional flags are computed :

An ice flag to detect sea ice measurements. A measurement is set to ice if, at high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg), one of the following criteria is valid :

- Number of 20Hz measurement < 17
- $|MWR - ECMWF|$ wet tropospheric correction > 10 cm
- Peakiness > 2

Parameter	Nb rejected	% rejected
Radiometer land flag	20131	2.50
Ice flag	152580	18.97
	1428	0.18

Then, measurements are edited using thresholds on several parameters. These thresholds are expected to remain constant throughout the Envisat mission, so that monitoring the number of edited measurements allows a survey of data quality.

The next table gives for each tested parameter, minimum and maximum thresholds, the number and the percentage of points removed.

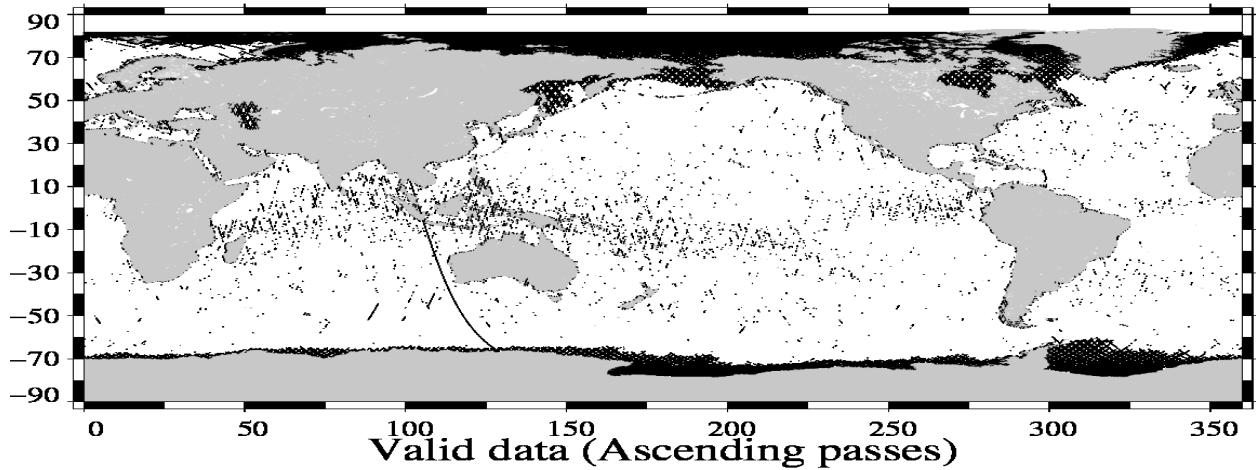
Parameters	Min Thres.	Max Thres.	Nb rejected	% rejected
Sea surface height (m)	-130.000	100.000	120	0.02
Variability relative to MSS (m)	-2.000	2.000	676	0.09
Number of 18Hz valid points	10.000	-	150	0.02
Std. deviation of 18Hz range (m)	0.000	0.250	7800	1.01
Off nadir angle from waveform (deg2)	-0.200	0.160	2370	0.31
Dry tropospheric correction (m)	-2.500	-1.900	0	0.00
MOG2D correction (m)	-2.000	2.000	0	0.00
MWR wet tropospheric correction (m)	-0.500	-0.001	1571	0.20
Bifrequency iono before cycle 65, GIM Ionospheric correction afterwards (S-Band loss) (m)	-0.400	0.040	0	0.00
Significant wave height (m)	0.000	11.000	573	0.07
Sea state Bias (m)	-0.500	0.010	89	0.01
Backscatter coefficient (dB)	7.000	30.000	1263	0.16
GOT4.7 ocean tide height (m)	-5.000	5.000	810	0.10
Long period tide height (m)	-0.500	0.500	0	0.00
Earth tide (m)	-1.000	1.000	0	0.00
Pole tide (m)	-15.000	15.000	0	0.00
RA2 wind speed (m/s)	0.000	30.000	89	0.01

A final editing is then performed on corrected sea surface height, using a spline fitting procedure, leading to remove 332 (0.04 %) measurements.

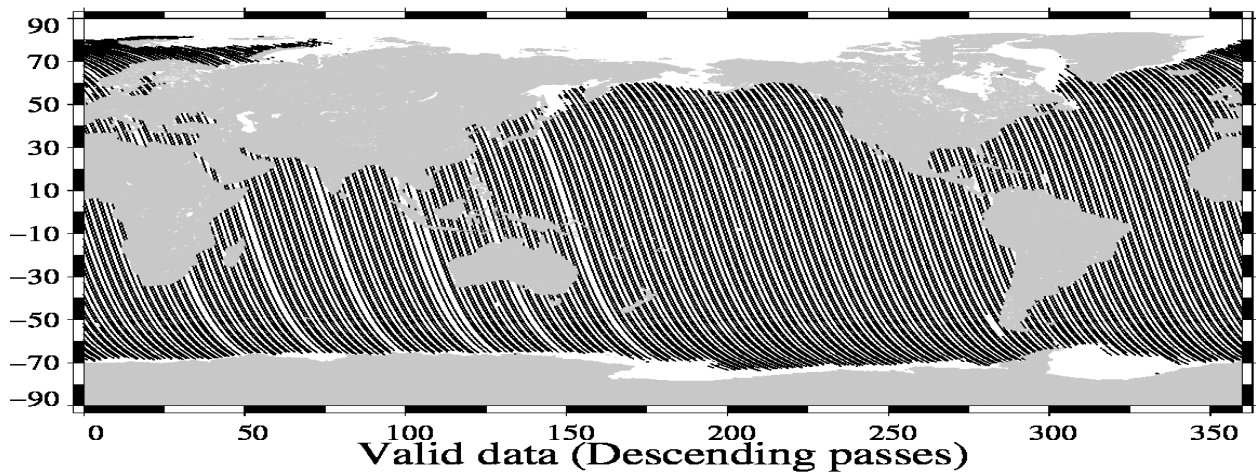
3.3.2. Figures

The following maps are complementary : they show respectively the removed and selected measurements in the editing procedure.

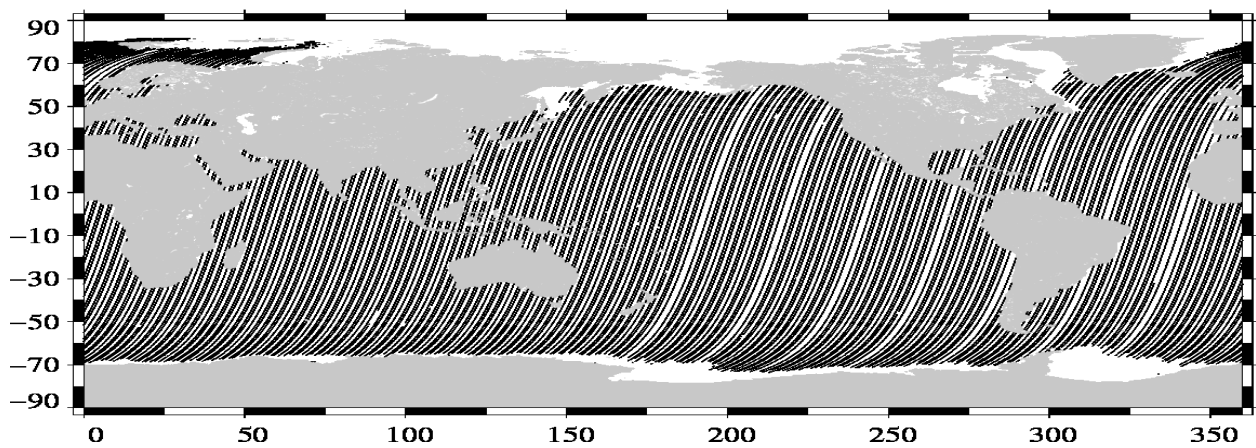
Edited measurements
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Envisat Cycle 113 (20/03/2012 / 08/04/2012)



Envisat Cycle 113 (20/03/2012 / 08/04/2012)



Wet areas appear in the plot of removed data. Similar features are observed with other altimeters (T/P, Jason) mainly due to rain contamination.

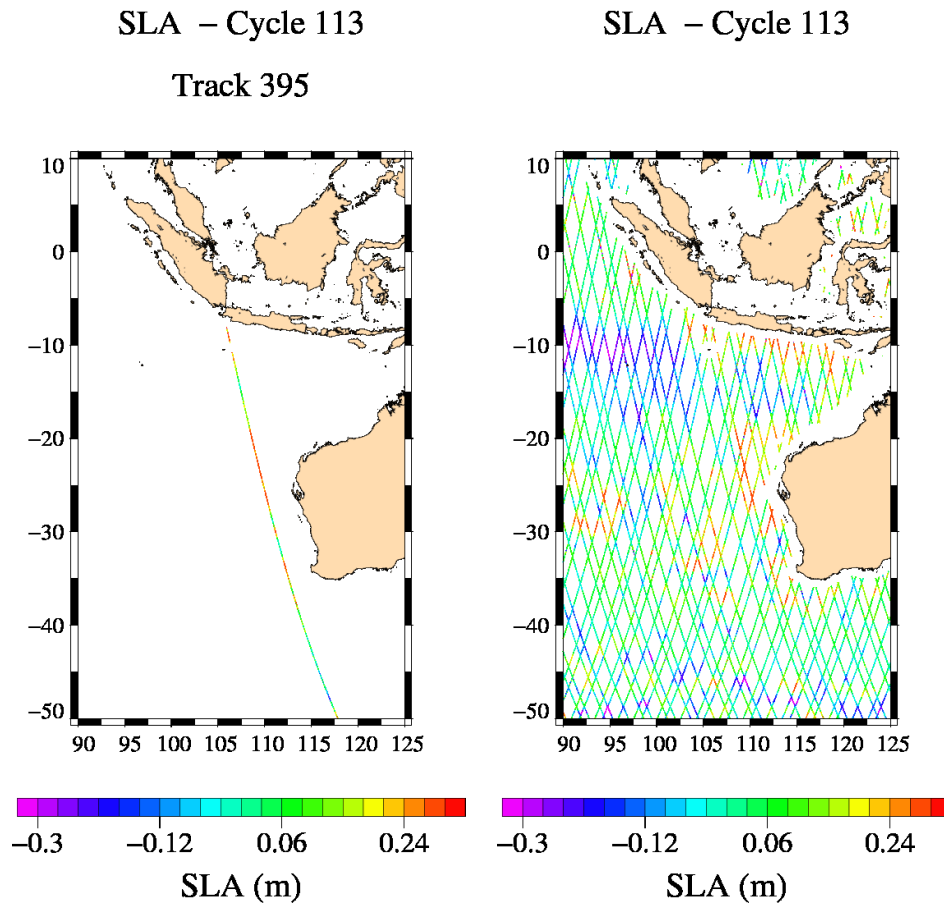
3.3.3. Comments

No pass is entirely edited on the radiometer land flag (no MWR correction)

1 pass is entirely edited by SLA stats per track out of threshold :

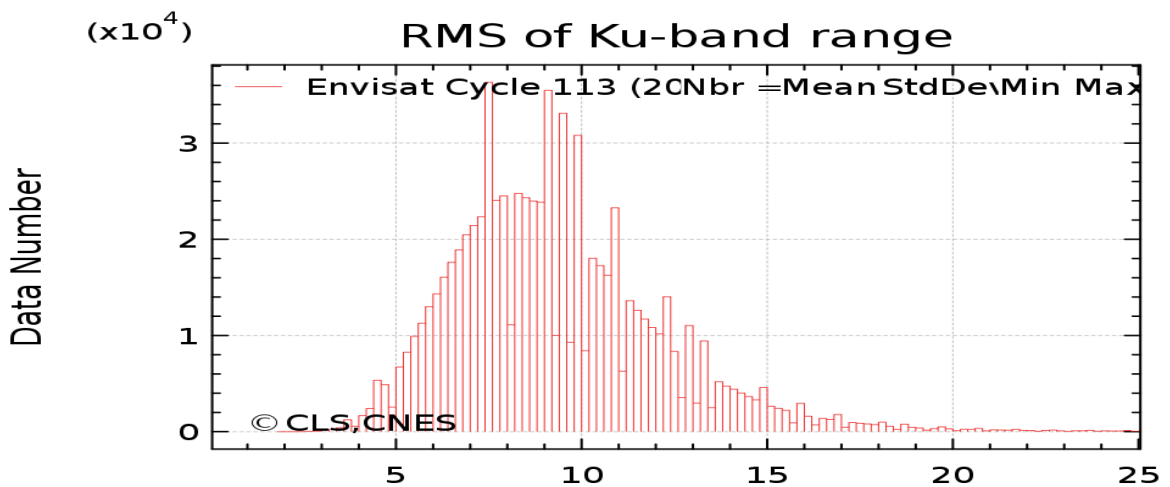
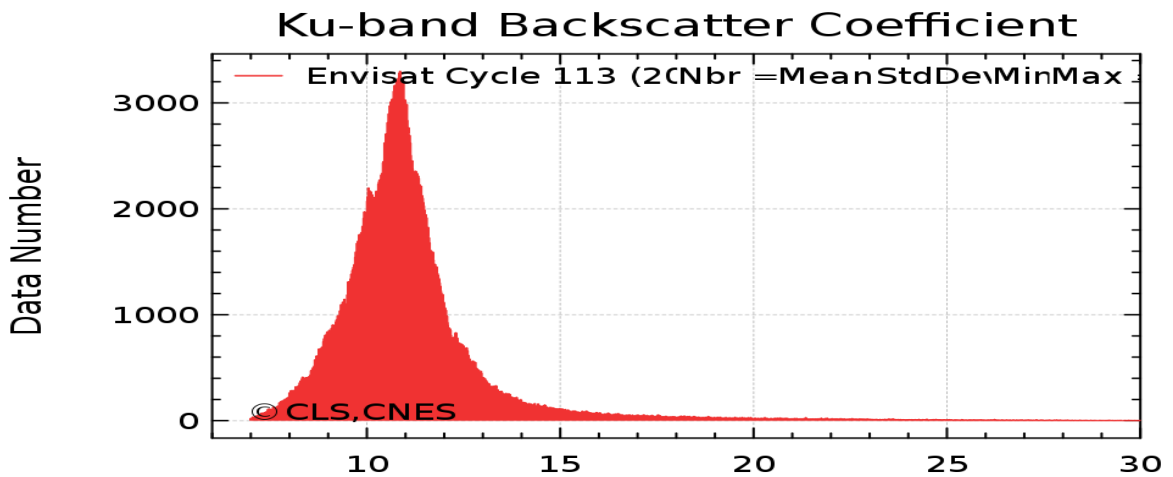
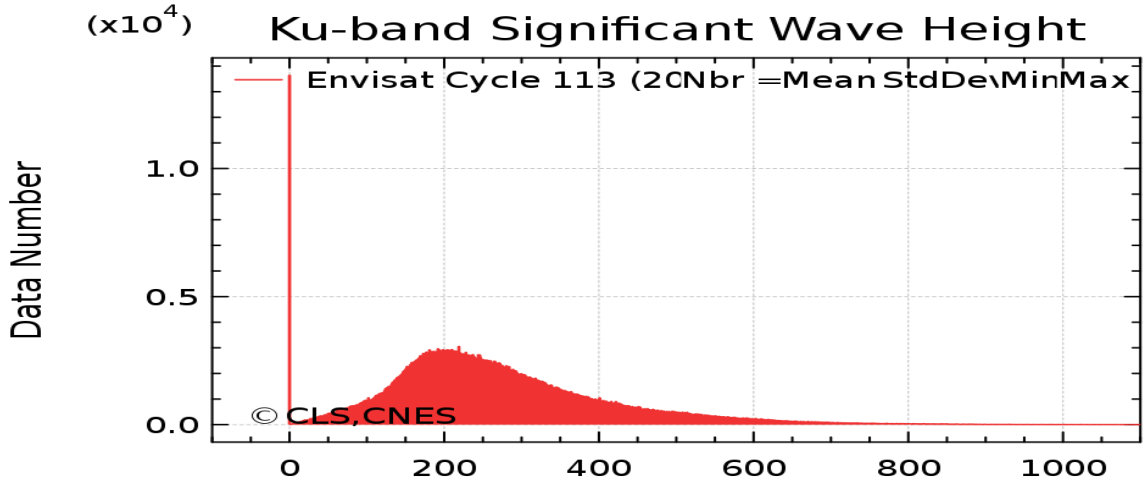
- Pass 395 :2012/04/03, from 14 :45 :18 to 15 :35 :23 ;

For this pass, the standard deviation of the SLA is slightly higher than the threshold, probably due to a high oceanic variability observed near West Australia :



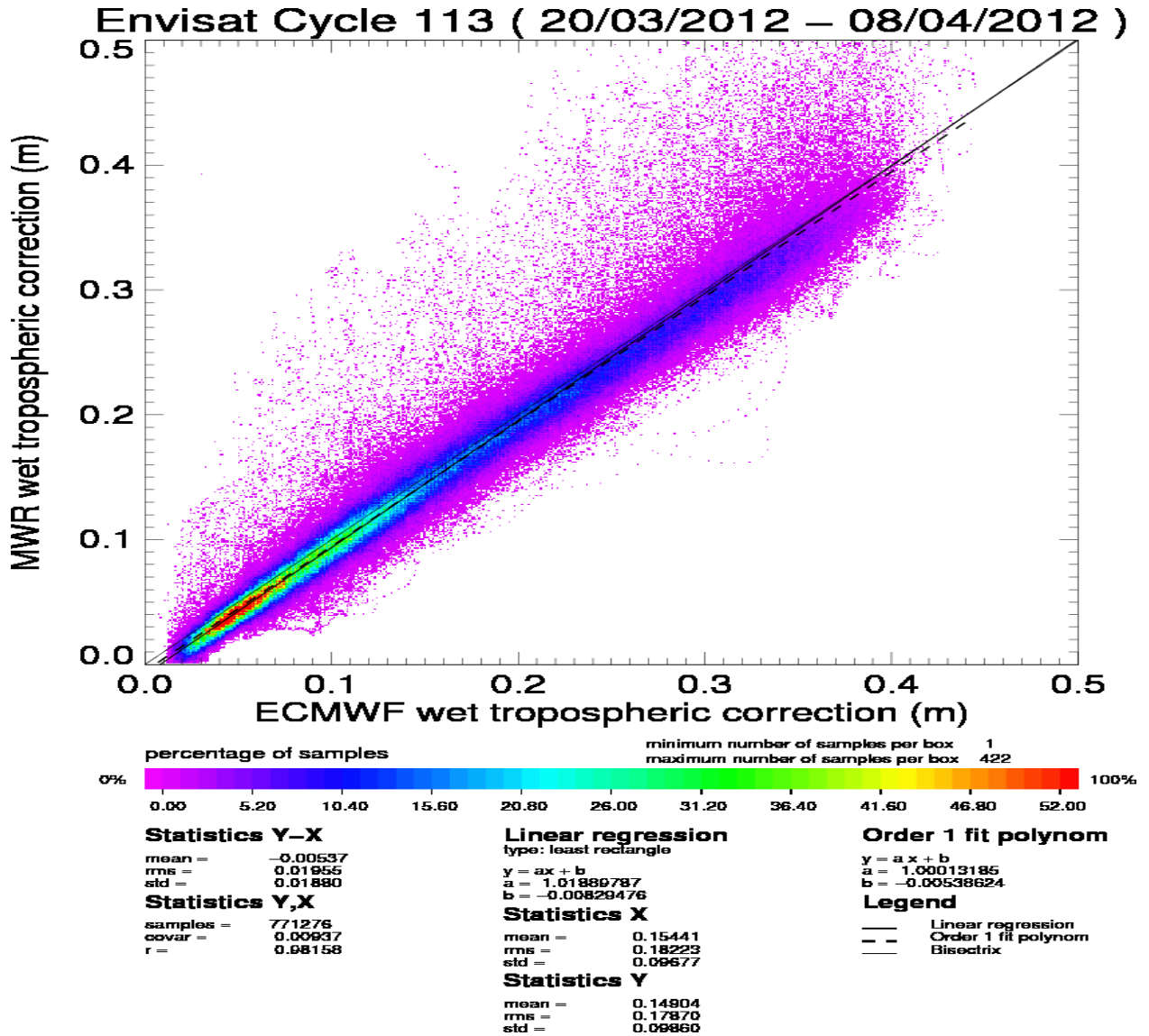
3.4. Altimeter parameters

In order to assess and to monitor altimeter parameter measurements, histograms of Envisat Ku-band Significant Wave Height (SWH), Backscatter coefficient (σ_0) and RMS of altimeter range are computed.



3.5. Radiometer

In order to assess and to monitor radiometer measurements, a scatter plot between the radiometer wet troposphere correction and the ECMWF model is computed for the valid data set previously defined.

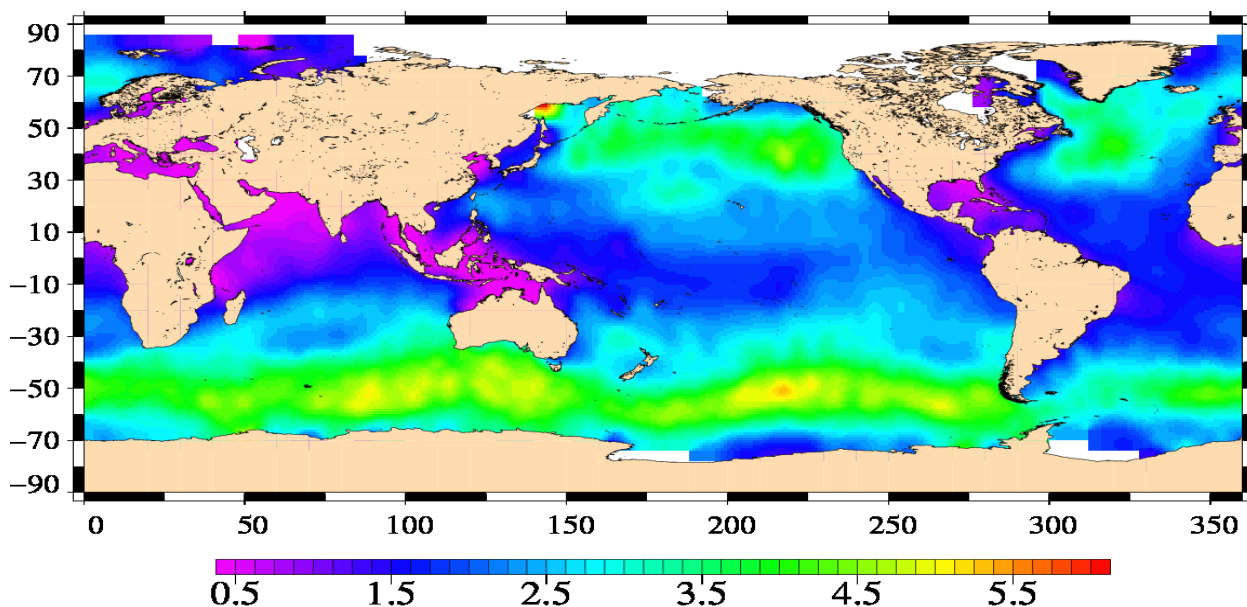


The radiometer-model mean difference is 0.5 cm. A drift on the Envisat 23.8GHz brightness temperature has been detected and has to be monitored on the long term. Note that the neural algorithm is now implemented on Envisat.

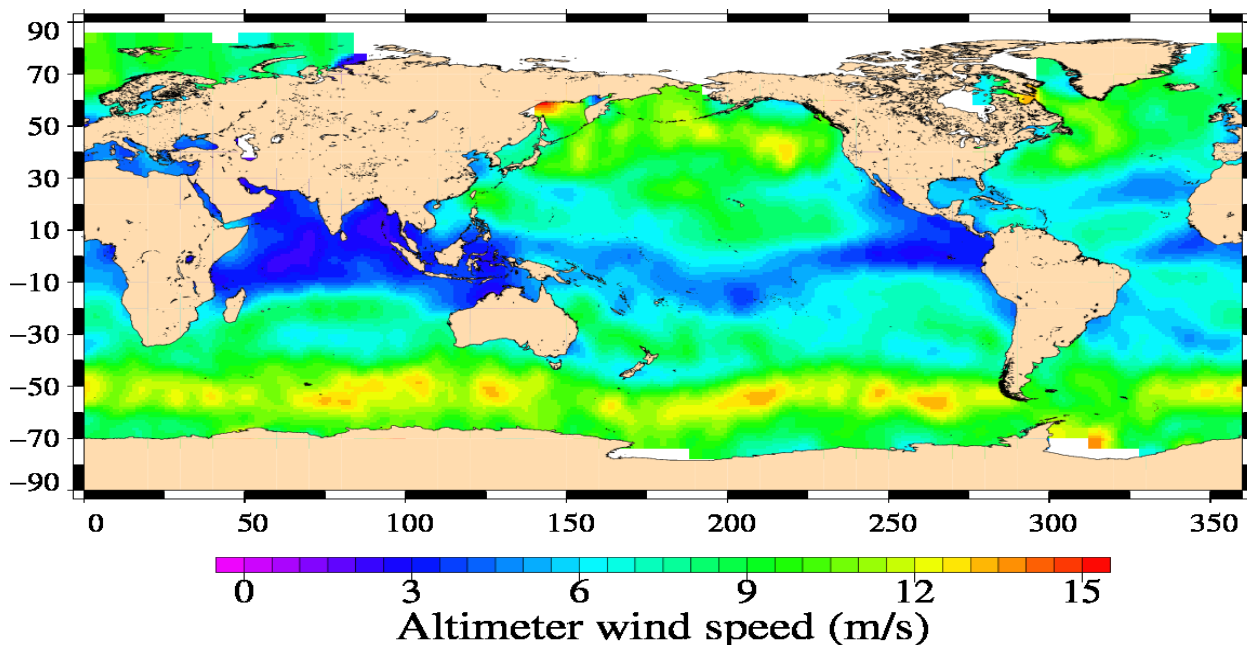
3.6. Wind and wave maps

These two figures show wind and wave estimations derived from 35 days of altimeter measurements.

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Significant Wave Height (m)
Envisat Cycle 113
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3.7. Crossover statistics

3.7.1. General comment

SSH crossover statistics are computed from the valid data set. They are used to estimate the data quality and to monitor the system performances. After data editing and using the standard Envisat algorithms, the crossover standard deviation is about 5.84 cm rms, when using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m). When using an additional selection to remove areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) it lowers to 5.47 cm rms. This statistic is a stable estimation of the system performance as it is not influenced by sea ice coverage.

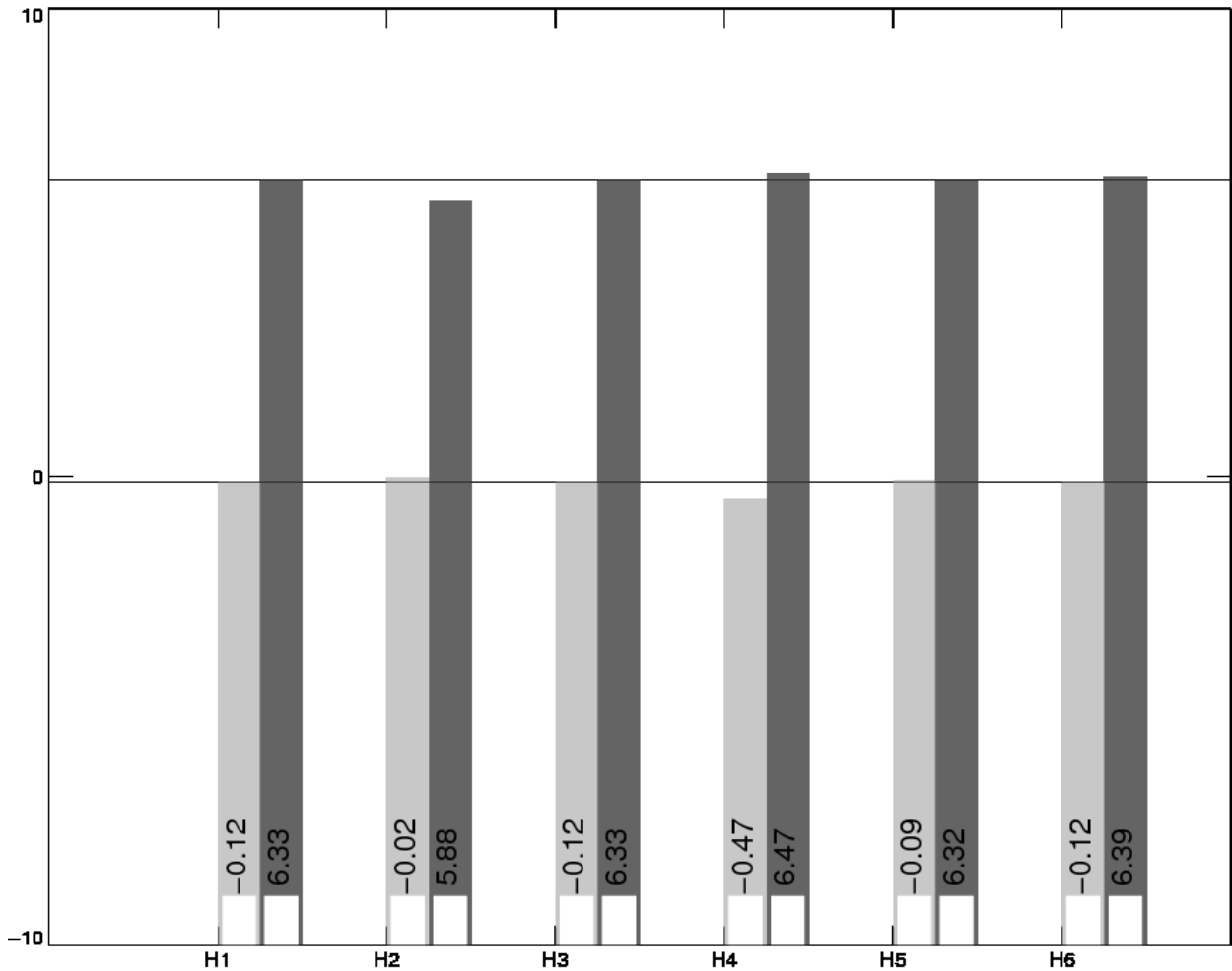
3.7.2. Impact of geophysical corrections

This figure shows the impact of geophysical corrections on crossover mean and rms. A selection is used to remove shallow waters (1000 m).

For this analysis two corrections have been computed : a long wave length and a model ionospheric correction. The long wave length estimation is performed by a global minimization of crossover differences using a (1 and 2 cycles/revolution) sinusoidal model. The model ionospheric correction is computed using the JPL's version of the GPS Ionosphere Maps (JPL GIM) thanks to the procedures provided by Remko Scharro (internet communication to the CCVT community, December 12, 2002).

ENEN – CROSSOVER STATISTICS

Impact of geophysical corrections



Type of analysis
differences threshold
none

std
mean

H1 = SSH	H4 = SSH with DORIS ionospheric correction (in product)
H2 = SSH applying a long wave length error (computed)	H5 = SSH with FES tide model (in product)
H3 = SSH with GIM ionospheric correction (computed)	H6 = SSH with ECMWF wet tropospheric correction (in product)

3.8. SSH variability

3.8.1. Sea Level Anomaly

For the drifting phase (after cycle 95) no mean profile exists. The only possible reference is the MSS, available everywhere see hereafter.

3.8.2. Comparison to a precise Mean Sea Surface

The MSS from the product is used as a reference to compute SLA. Global statistics of Envisat SSH-MSS are (cm) :

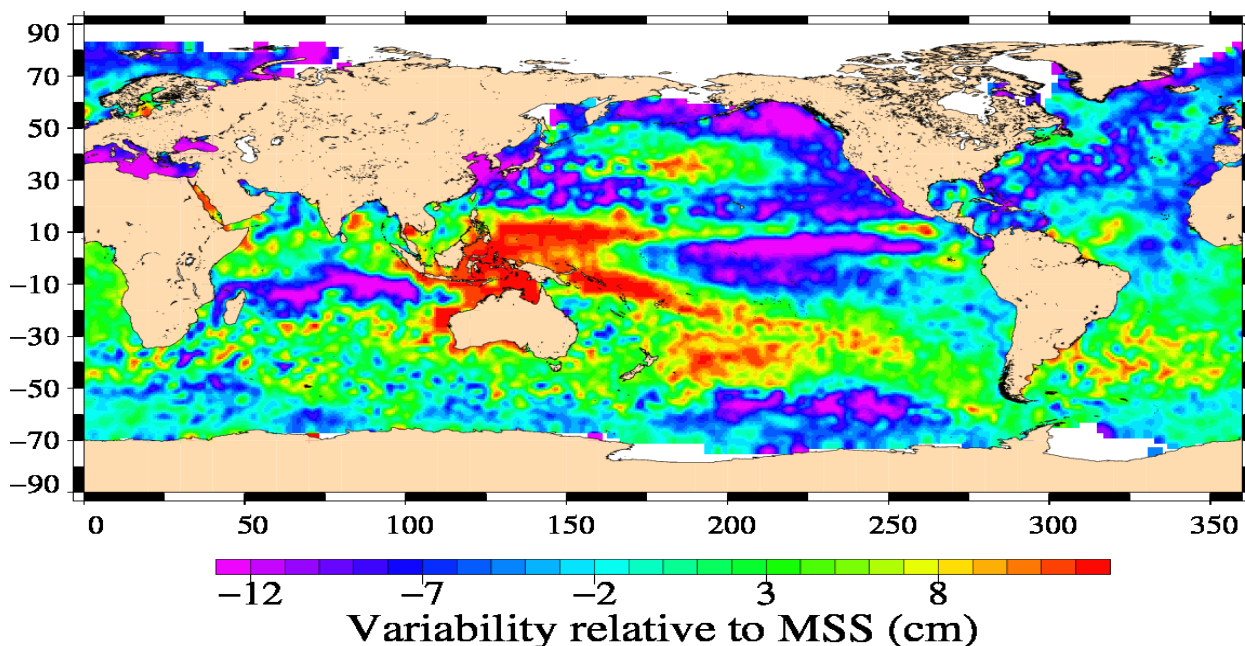
Number	Mean	Std. dev.
771276.00000000	47.51	11.20

When using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) statistics are :

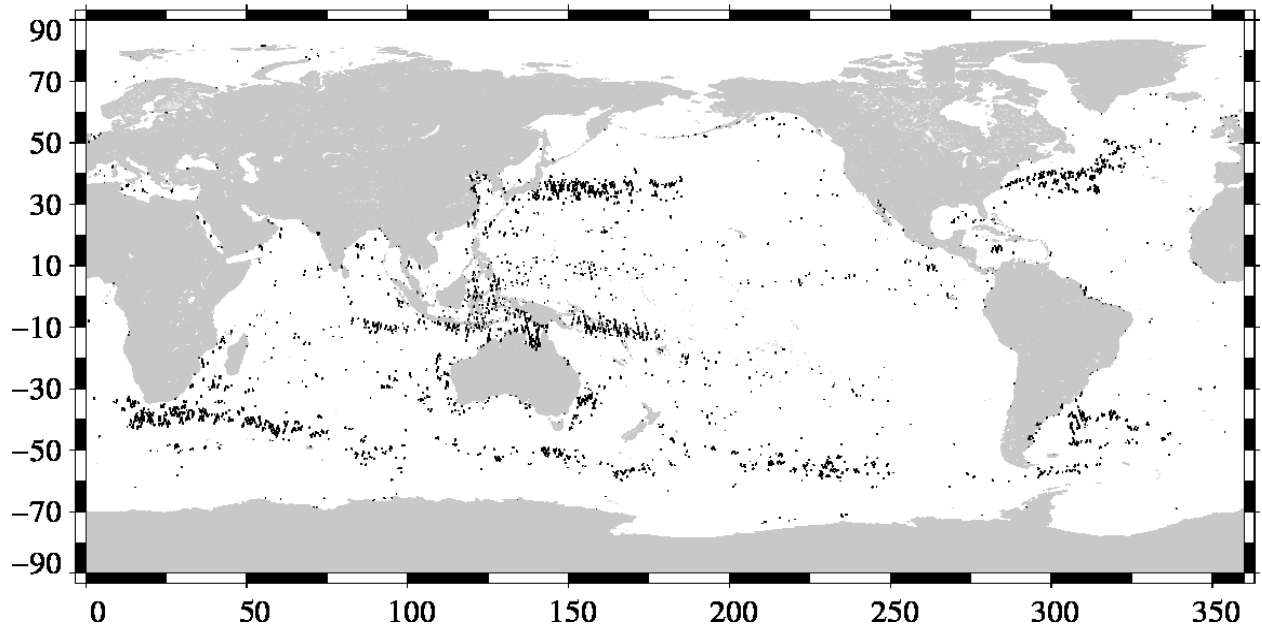
Number	Mean	Std. dev.
521230.00000000	48.27	10.39

The two following maps respectively show the map of Envisat SLA relative to the MSS and differences higher than a 30 cm threshold. In order to see fine features SLA are centered about the mean value. The latter figure shows that apart from isolated measurements, higher differences are located in high ocean variability areas, as expected.

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(SSH – MSS) centered, differences greater than 30 cm
Envisat / Cycle 113



4. Envisat long term performance monitoring

Statistics of SSH variability are computed after crossover and repeat-track analyses. This allows to estimate how Envisat data fulfill the mission objectives in terms of performances.

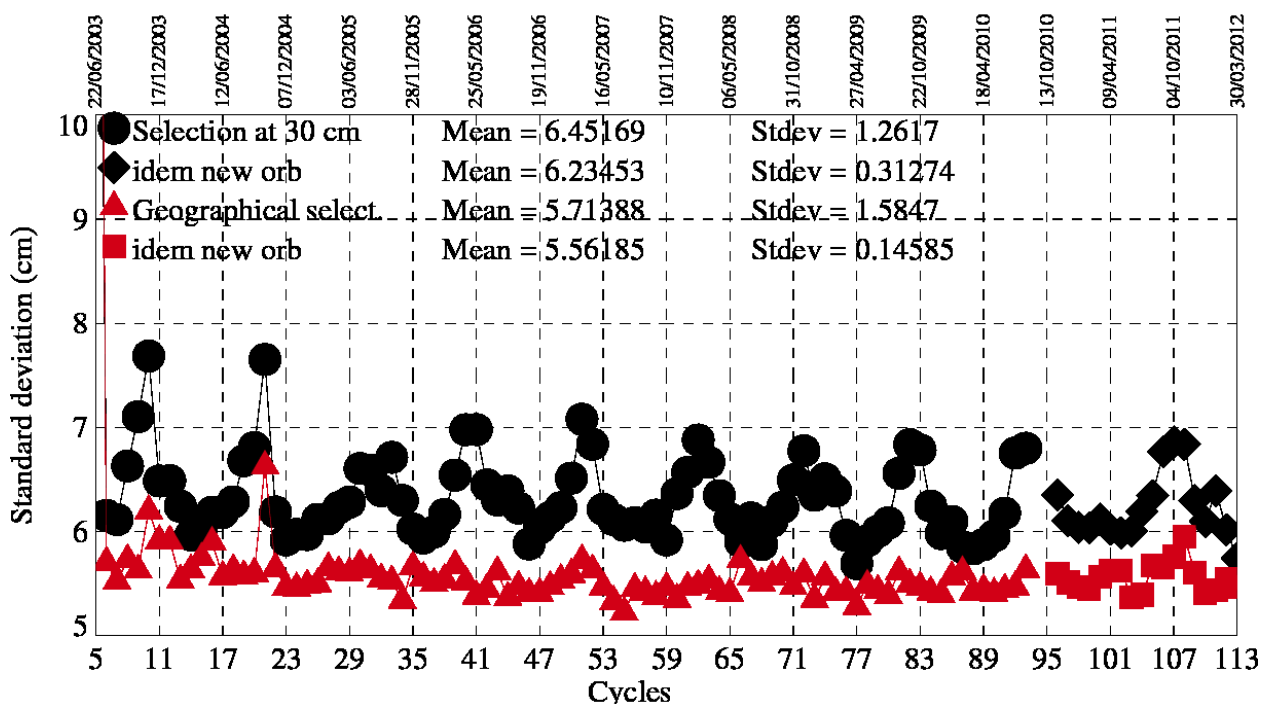
4.1. Standard deviation of the differences at crossovers

This parameter is plotted as a function of time in a one cycle per cycle basis in the figure below. It is computed after data editing and using 2 editing selection criteria :

- Selecting crossover differences lower than 30 cm to avoid contamination by remaining spurious data.
- Removing shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg.) to avoid ice coverage effects.

Note, from cycle 86 onwards and for all reprocessed cycles, a selection at 10 days is applied to generate the crossover differences. This selection explains the jump on the monitoring of standard deviation of the differences at crossovers (not visible on the reprocessed time series).

Crossover standard deviation



4.2. RMS of Sea Level Anomaly

Sea Level Anomalies relative to a mean profile are computed using repeat-track analysis for each Envisat cycle. This diagnostic is not relevant anymore for the drifting phase (after cycle 95).

4.3. Mean Sea Level

The global mean level of the oceans is one of the most important indicators of climate change. It incorporates the reactions from several different components of the climate system. Precise monitoring of changes in the mean level of the oceans, particularly through the use of altimetry satellites, is vitally important, for understanding not just the climate but also the socioeconomic consequences of any rise in sea level. This subject is developed in <http://www.aviso.oceanobs.com/en/news/ocean-indicators/mean-sea-level>.

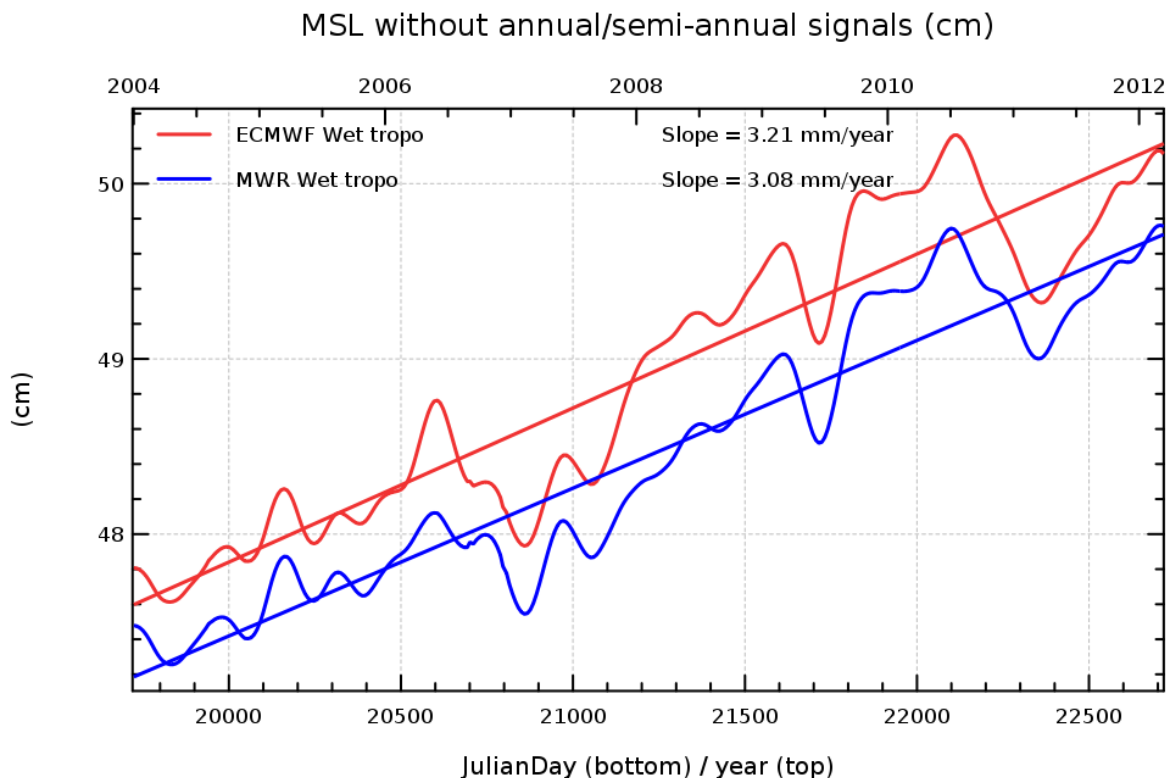
MSL estimations are performed by averaging Sea Level Anomalies relative to a mean profile when available (before drifting phase). After cycle 95, for the drifting phase, msl is still computed using MSS as a reference.

For further information about data used to compute this MSL, see <http://www.aviso.oceanobs.com/en/news/ocean-indicators/mean-sea-level/processing-corrections/index.html>.

Unlike other statistics, it is not performed on a cyclic basis but on a 250 tracks basis (around 9 days), in order to have approximately a temporal sampling close to Jason-1 mission (around 10 days). The curve is then filtered with a 6 months and 6 months cut of frequency for a better readability.

The value for each point is calculated from an average over 2 by 3 degree bins, then weighted by latitude to take into account the relative geographical area represented by the bin.

During the first year (cycles 10 to 22) Envisat MSL global trend is not consistent to other flying satellites. This unexplained behavior is under investigation. Results plotted on the following figure is obtained after annual and semi-annual signals reduction after cycle 22.



For other comparison or data selection see <http://www.aviso.oceanobs.com/en/news/ocean-indicators/mean-sea-level/products-images/index.html>.

5. Particular investigations

- WARNING : Ten hours after the recovery of the HSM anomaly on the 17 January 2008, a drop of the RA2 S-band transmission power occurred. Consequently, all the S-band parameters, as well as the dual ionospheric correction and rain flag are not relevant and MUST NOT be used from the following date : 17 January 2008, 23 :23 :40 (Cycle 65 pass 289). Users are advised to use the Ionospheric correction from GIM model, which is available in GDR data products.
- WARNING : With this new IPF/CMA version, even in USO anomaly period, the range is corrected from the proper USO Period

On Sunday 8th April afternoon, the communication links with Envisat was suddenly lost, preventing reception of telemetry data. An extended network of ground stations was immediately activated to send commands to the satellite. While it is known that Envisat remained in a stable orbit around Earth, efforts to resume contact with the satellite were unsuccessful.

The end of the mission's operations was declared by European Space Agency on the 9th of May 2012.

6. Conclusion

Cycle fully certified for distribution to users from CALVAL point of view.

- [1] Abdalla, S., "A wind retrieval algorithm for satellite radar altimeters", ECMWF Technical Memorandum, in preparation, 2006.
- [2] EOO/EOX, October 2005, Information to the Users regarding the Envisat RA2/MWR IPF version 5.02 and CMA 7.1 Available at <http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/articles/>
- [3] Martini A., 2003 : Envisat RA-2 Range instrumental correction : USO clock period variation and associated auxiliary file, Technical Note ENVI-GSEG-EOPG-TN-03-0009 Available at http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/articles/USO_clock_corr_aux_file.pdf
<http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/auxdata/>
- [4] Labroue S., 2005 : RA2 ocean and MWR measurement long term monitoring 2005 report for WP3, Task 2 SSB estimation for RA2 altimeter, Technical Note CLS-DOS-NT-05-200
- [5] Labroue, S., 2007 : RA2 ocean and MWR measurement long term monitoring, 2007 report for WP3, Task 2 - SSB estimation for RA2 altimeter. Contract 17293/03/I-OL. CLS-DOS-NT-07-198, 53pp. CLS Ramonville St. Agne