Impact of tropical cyclone relocation in the operational NCEP GFS/GDAS

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Kleist et al. – Relocation for NCEP GFS
2017 TCORF, 71\textsuperscript{st} IHC
14-16 March 2017
Background & Motivation

• Continued improvement in TC track and intensity guidance important due to high societal impact

• Resolution and complexity of global numerical models continues to increase, making vortex initialization ever more important
  – Complicated by fact that few observations within TC region are assimilated
    • Representativeness, scattering (clouds/precipitation), etc.

• Process for initializing TCs in operational NWP suite is complicated and differs by modeling system
  – *NCEP/EMC fields many questions about the process in the GFS/GDAS*
Other Operational Centers & NCEP Models

- **NAM**: Vortex relocation to be implemented for 12km domain with Nam.v4 this week
- **HWRF**: Combination of relocation, vitals minimum sea level pressure, intensity and structure adjustments, and inner core assimilation
- **HMON**: Combination of relocation, vitals minimum sea level pressure, intensity and structure adjustments
- **ECMWF**: Assimilation of real observations only (no vitals), no bogus vortex or relocation
- **UK Met Office**: Assimilation of *hourly* vitals minimum sea level pressure, no bogus vortex or relocation
- **US Navy (NAVGEM)**: Full TC bogusing
- **Canadian GEM**: No TC bogus
TC Initialization for GDAS/GFS

- There is always some component external to assimilation of real observations involved:

  1. “Tracker” is run on GDAS forecast
     a. If storm found in forecast/background, *mechanical relocation* of vortex
     b. If not found, *bogus observations* are generated (winds are assimilated)

  2. Advisory minimum sea-level pressure observations are then assimilated with other observations regardless of (1)
Mechanical Relocation

• Locate tropical cyclone vortex in short forecast/background
  – Automated tracker on post-processed regular grid (grib files)
  – Abort process if storm center over major land mass, if terrain >500m, or if relocation distance is too large

• Separate vortex from environment

• Move vortex to advisory position
  – This then serves as background for assimilation

• Assimilate observations including advisory minSLP
Impact of Relocation (2015093000)
Move Storm SW by ~0.5 degrees

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Advisory MinSLP in GDAS/GFS (Kleist 2011)

Hanna (ob: 989 mb)
Ike (ob: 956 mb)

00 UTC 4 September 2008
Example of Bogus Wind Assimilation

Generally rare in operations, Occurs mainly in genesis situation

Automated tracker “failed” to find coherent vortex to relocate

This can happen because:

- Distance from observation too large
- Too much tilt
- Parameters used to find position misaligned
- Nothing there

For Bud, tracker “failed” and resultant analysis had radically different vortex due to assimilation of bogus winds (and advisory minSLP)
Hurricane Joaquin (2015)

- High Impact in Bahamas
- Some guidance (GFS/HWRF) during early cycles advertised potential U.S. coastal impacts

Figures courtesy NHC TC Report
Pilot Study: Joaquin (2015) Experiment

- Fully-cycled (early and late cut-off) T1534L64 GFS with 80 member EnKF-based ensemble for hybrid data assimilation (3D EnVar)

- Control (with relocation) and Experiment (without) started prior to classification of Joaquin as depression
  - For experiment without relocation the effect is cumulative – we are not evaluating the impact of relocation on any individual operational forecast

- Bogus winds were never generated in operations, control, or experiment

- Advisory MinSLP assimilated into hybrid and EnKF for control and experiment
• During depression and TS phase, relocation distance larger than when storm reached hurricane status

• These are approximate – the tracker operates on quarter degree output and relocation is estimated to precision of tenths of degrees

• Also important to keep in mind that advisory position has uncertainty
Track Summary for Experimental Period

With Relocation

Without Relocation

Figures courtesy Andrew Penny/NHC

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Joaquin Mean Track Errors
w/ and w/out relocation

GFS Track Forecast Error
Hurricane Joaquin

Forecast period (h)

Forecast error (n mi)

-15.7%
-2.2%
7.9%
22%
36%
45%
39%
43%
35%

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Full season at full resolution (June-October 2015)

• This sensitivity has prompted a further evaluation with full season cycling

• Fully-cycled (early and late cut-off) T1534L64 GFS with 80 member T574L64 EnKF-based ensemble for hybrid data assimilation (4D EnVar)

• Control (with relocation) and Experiment (without)
  – Experiment is simply turning off mechanical relocation and bogus vortex wind assimilation

• Advisory MinSLP assimilated into hybrid and EnKF for control and experiment
Summary of Results: Mean Track Error

Control v. Experiment

- Slight degradation < 12h
- Neutral 12h-72h
- Neutral to slight improvement > 72h
Summary of Results: Max Wind Intensity Error

Control v. Experiment

- Slight, systematic improvements to intensity forecasts (winds)
- Central pressure verification similar in Atlantic and East Pacific
  - Slightly worst for Western Pacific
Next Steps for Relocation

• Continue to investigate individual cases
  – Want to understand reasons for degradation
  – Look into impact of other forecast tools that rely on GFS

• Recommendations for operations
  – Turn off relocation and bogus generation schemes in future implementation (?)
  – Increase threshold for minimum distance for performing relocation
  – Perform some form of relocation on ensemble component only (for ensemble covariance)

• Fixes to current relocation scheme
  – Apply on the model native grid (tracker and relocation)
  – Filtering and interpolation options

• Alternatives within the data assimilation itself
  – Explore use of 3 hourly or hourly vitals (as in UKMO) to anchor 4D solver
  – Position assimilation directly in the hybrid-variational solver (underway by PhD student at UMD)
  – Position assimilation in the EnKF to improve covariance representation
  – Feature Calibration and Alignment (FCA) in GSI
  – Cloudy radiances, radar, dropsondes
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