Hurricanes and Climate Change

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Tropical Cyclones, 1945–2006

Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale:
- tropical depression
- tropical storm
- hurricane category 1
- hurricane category 2
- hurricane category 3
- hurricane category 4
- hurricane category 5
Atlantic hurricane power has more than doubled over the past 30 years.

Doubling of Atlantic PDI for ~0.5 C increase in SST
Summertime Tropical Atlantic Sea Surface Temperatures Track Northern Hemisphere Temperature on Decadal Time Scales

10-year Running Average of Aug-Oct Northern Hemisphere Surface Temp and Hurricane Region Ocean Temp
Best Fit Linear Combination of Global Warming and Aerosol Forcing (red) versus Tropical Atlantic SST (blue)

Detrended time series of aerosol optical depth and effective radius

Booth et al., Nature, 2012

Direct (left) and indirect (right) aerosol shortwave forcings
What about the Pacific?
Western North Pacific: Hurricane Activity Strongly Relate to the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)
Summary

- Tropical cyclones account for the majority of insured losses worldwide
- Atlantic hurricane power has more than doubled since the 1980s
- Atlantic hurricane power tracks summer tropical Atlantic ocean temperature
- Summer Atlantic ocean temperature seems to be controlled by radiative forcing, including greenhouse gases
- Tropical cyclone activity in the western North Pacific region seems to be dominated by a natural climate oscillation there.
Tropical Cyclones Tracks: What will happen in warming world?

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Questions being investigated

• Are there robust and significant changes in tropical cyclone tracks (globally and regionally) in a warming world?
• If there are significant changes, what are the causes for these changes?
• Is there predictability for track changes?
Methodology to investigate track changes

• Use cluster analysis as a diagnostic for track changes under a warming climate.
• Tracks from dynamical models (CMIP5 and other model simulations)
• Tracks from statistical-dynamical downscaling (Kerry Emanuel MIT)
• Tracks from statistical models (Tim Hall, NASA GISS)
Cluster Analysis of North Atlantic Tropical Cyclone Tracks

Kossin, Camargo and Sitkowski, 2010
Preliminary Results from a few CMIP5 models in the North Atlantic

• Models:
  – GFDL ESM2M
  – HadGEM2
  – MPI
  – MRI CGCM3

• Scenarios:
  – Historical
  – RCP45 and RCP85
CMIP5 models – Historical runs

N. Atlantic Tracks - GFDL ESM2M, 1861-2005
- 178 TCs

N. Atlantic Tracks - HadGEM2, 1950-2005
- 14 TCs

N. Atlantic Tracks - MPI-ESM-LR, 1950-2005
- 251 TCs

N. Atlantic Tracks - MRI-CGCM3, 1950-2005
- 374 TCs
MPI – Clusters K4 - Historical tracks
MPI - Historical & RCP45
Next steps:

• Apply cluster analysis to other climate models in the North Atlantic
• Examine the optimal way to apply cluster analysis to many models and multiple scenarios.
• Determine statistical significance of track changes
• Apply the methodology to other regions (western North Pacific, southern hemisphere, etc)
• Analysis of statistical-dynamical and statistical tracks under historical and warming conditions