



New Offshore Waters Forecast Zones

The Tropical Analysis Forecast Branch (TAFB) of NOAA's National Hurricane Center will begin producing gridded offshore waters forecasts through the use of the AWIPS Gridded Forecast Editor (GFE) for the Caribbean Sea, the southwest and tropical North Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, effective 1800 UTC (2 p.m. EDT) on April 3, 2012.

In addition, nine forecasts zones currently covering the TAFB area of responsibility will be subdivided into thirty-two zones. The smaller zones will result in more concise and areal specific forecasts for the marine community. These two additions represent the most significant changes in TAFB's marine program since the unit acquired marine forecast responsibilities in 1988.

"This will be a culmination of nearly five years of planning and executing a vision of producing gridded marine forecasts over large forecast domains," said Hugh Cobb, Chief of the Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch. "Many individuals played a key role in carrying out this vision. I am very proud that TAFB has taken the lead in this effort."

Through the production of gridded marine forecasts in GFE, a forecaster can provide high resolution forecasts for many weather parameters. While this has already been done in the U.S. coastal waters zones, basin-wide gridded forecasts are a new challenge in the AWIPS/GFE environment for national marine centers due to the large areal coverage.

NOAA's Ocean Prediction Center and the National Weather Service forecast office in Honolulu, Hawaii, are expected to introduce gridded marine forecasts soon.

Gridded Marine Forecasts: http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/tafb/gridded_marine/

Service Change Notice: http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/news/20111206_scn_offshores.php

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