



The snow disaster in the Rhodope mountains in march 2015

Anelia Gocheva, Krastina Malcheva, Dimitar Nikolov, and Ilian Gospodinov
National Institute of Meteorology and Hydrology, Bulgaria (Anelia.Gocheva@meteo.bg)

The snow disaster in the Rhodope Mountains in March 2015 was an exceptional manifestation of a severe weather in Bulgaria. A major Mediterranean storm brought extensive and heavy snowfall. Amongst the damages were many broken trees, hundred kilometers of out of order power supply, blocked transport and generally losses for billions euros and complicated social life in many settlements. On worsening the situation, Bulgaria declared a state of emergency in the snow-hit Rhodope Mountains.

In the present work, this event of severe weather is studied from climatological point of view using data for the whole available period with observations from the representative for the region meteorological stations. The snowfall and the snow depth are analyzed through estimates like normals, minimums and maximums, extremes (percentiles) and values corresponding to different return periods. The case is examined on the background of the usual regime of snowfall and snow depth in the region. Trends and tendencies are also commented.

Attention is paid to the fact that NIMH gives out in advance a special warning for danger of maximum degree, with expectation for material damages and human victims, on the basis of analyses of the meteorological situation and outputs of numerical models. In this way the local municipalities was ensured the opportunity to react adequately.