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Objective Verification of the UK inshore waters forecast

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Many meteorological service providers issue text-based forecasts for geographical areas; such area forecasts are particularly popular in marine products. The UK Met Office uses an automated generic verification system to objectively verify these services - including the inshore waters forecast which is issued for a 12nm strip surrounding the United Kingdom. Each forecast is written by hand by a forecaster according to a predefined set of rules; therefore, an interpreter has been developed to automatically process the text of each forecast into a sequence of wind speed, wind direction and wave height ranges. The verification system compares each of these against the corresponding distribution formed by hourly nowcast analysis data or wave height observations reported within each area. The wind speed distribution is used to populate multi-category contingency tables from which a range of performance scores (including the Gerrity Score) are generated and instant web-based forecaster feedback is provided in an attempt to help improve the service. This includes a particularly useful graphical comparison between the forecast and the hourly distribution formed by the truth data.