

Thailand National Report

The importance of meteorology for more advanced navigation has been recognized since it was introduced to Thailand for the first time by the Royal Thai Navy. Somehow, safety in all weather conditions is the most desirable factor sought after by hectic ferry and barge operations for both domestic and international trades as well as related industries which are the foundation of the national prosperity nowadays. For that reason, the Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) provides the marine meteorological services to serve international shipping, marine fisheries, oil-drilling industry, water transportation, and offshore recreation.

Marine weather forecasts for shipping are issued twice a day at the TMD's Headquarters in Bangkok.

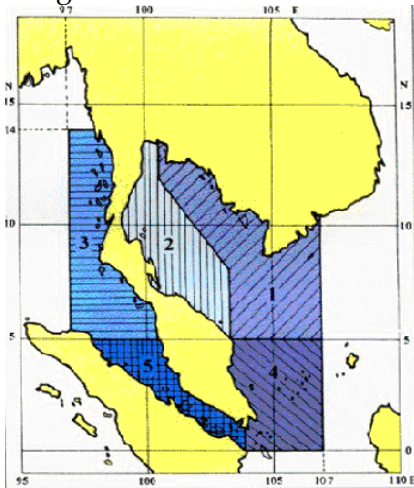


Figure 1

They contain warnings of wind forces at the sea surface level and above, a synopsis of significant meteorological features, and 24-hour forecasts of weather and sea states of 5 marine areas in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. The Boundaries of areas used in weather bulletins for merchant shipping and coastal weather are shown on the left. These forecasts are broadcasted via NAVTEX, an international broadcasting system for disseminating navigational information by the coastal radio broadcasting stations for ships plying in the region.

Once a tropical cyclone entered the tropical cyclone warning areas under the responsibility of Thailand

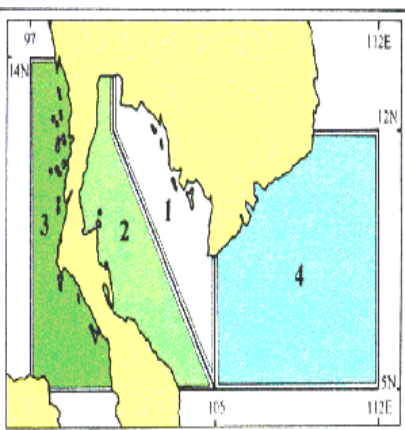


Figure 2

(bounded by the latitudes 5 °N and 14 °N and the longitudes 97 °E and 112 °E) as shown in the left figure, the TMD issues additional warnings for shipping at the 3-hourly intervals giving detailed information on the location, intensity, and forecast movement of the tropical cyclone together with wind and wave conditions associated with it. Such information is also broadcasted by NAVTEX.

Weather bulletins for coastal waters in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea are prepared 6 times a day and broadcasted by local radio stations. They contain warnings of strong winds, fog and hazardous weather, 24-hour forecasts of wind, significant weather, sea state as well as a further outlook for the next 24 hours for 7 fishing areas along the coasts of the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. The latest weather reports from selected coastal and island stations are also included in the bulletins.

In addition, the forecasts are cautiously issued to meet the special users' needs. Specialized forecasts of weather and sea states up to 7 days ahead are made available, upon request, to oil rigs operating in the offshore waters of the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea. Since 1997, the Marine

Meteorological Center (MMC) has been using numerical wave models as supportive tools for specialized forecasting service to forecast wave conditions over the Gulf of Thailand, the South China Sea, and the Andaman Sea as shown on the right. Figure (A) illustrates wind field at 10 meters winds from NOGAPS and WRF while Figure (B) depicts significant wave height from the WAM model which is developed at MMC.

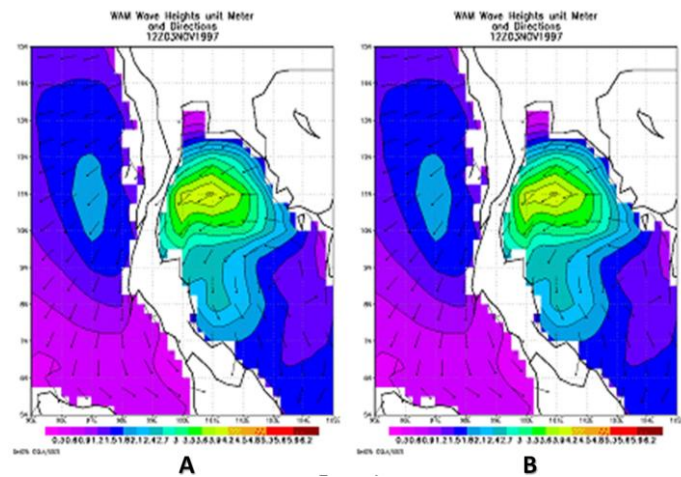


Figure 3

Once the ocean wave model output was obtained, it is compared with satellite data and it was reasonable as shown below.

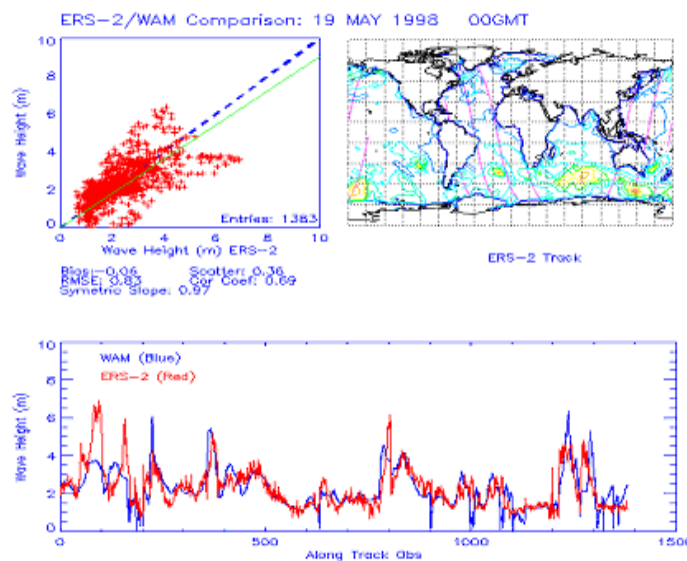


Figure 4

Besides, the MMC has been developing the VirtualWeather3D and VirtualWave3D Program as tools to present the results from the wave and weather forecasts into the virtual displays of which the examples can be seen below.

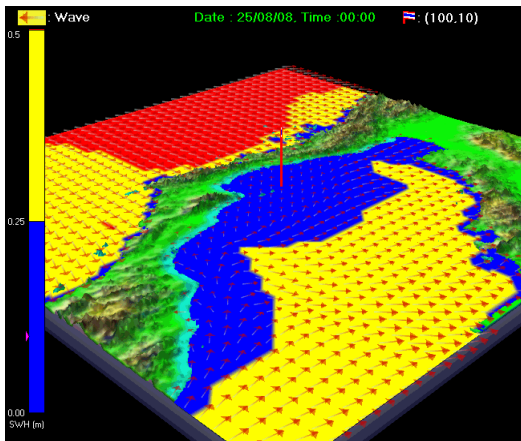


Figure 5 (VirtualWave3D)

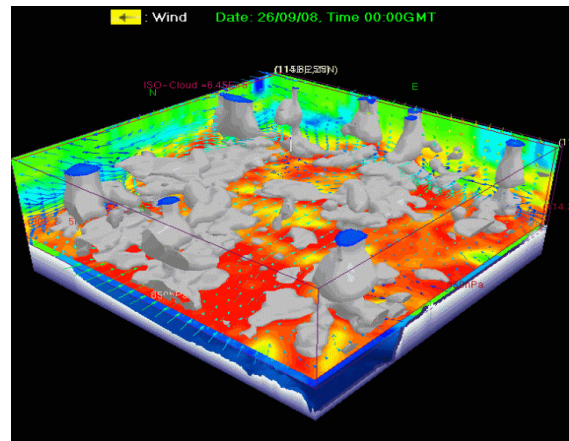


Figure 6 (VirtualWeather3D)

In case of oil spills in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea, special 12-hour forecasts of wind, weather, state of sea, wave height, sea surface temperature, storm surge, and abnormal tidal currents will be issued and dispatched to any requiring agencies which are in charge with this type of disasters.

MMC has an intention to implement the VOS ships by Thailand in the future. However, the implementation may have to be collaborated by concerned authorities in the country, i.e. Thai Meteorological Department, Port Authority of Thailand and Marine Department, and required an appropriate procedure to enable the registered ships in Thailand to apply to be member of Voluntary Observing Ships (VOS) scheme in order to observe marine meteorological elements and transmit them to the center. We will further keep you informed if there is any significant progress on this matter. TMD has provided weather information for shipping via ship radio frequency as voice at 06765.1 and 08743 kHz and facsimile frequency at 07395 kHz which facsimile frequency has serviced both of them such as graphical of weather maps and text also.

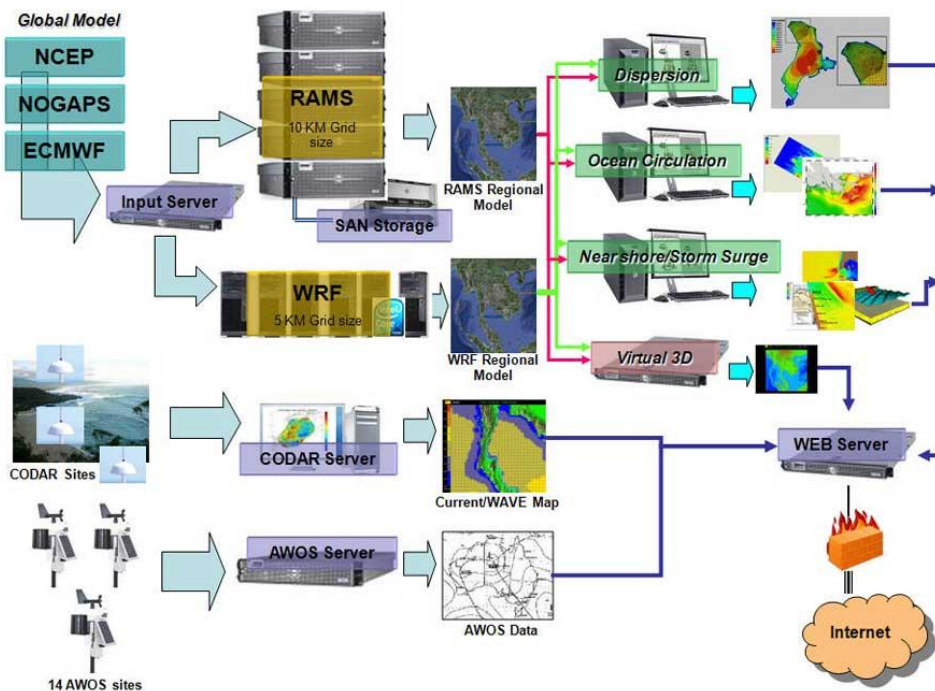


Figure 7 (Marine Meteorological Disaster warning Project Chart)

Now MMC still has a new project as Marine Meteorological Disaster Warning Project because we need to improve about wind-wave prediction and the ocean current prediction in the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea to be more efficiency. Including the improvement of ocean disaster warning systems just like storm surge and tsunami warning system, to prevent and avoid the damage from ocean disaster for marine ship, fishing boat, traveler, people who live near shore and oil rigs, etc. So this ocean meteorological disaster warning system was created. The project proposals are to build the marine meteorological database, with the data collected from remote-sensing network technology as Automatic weather stations and HF radars, to distribute news and create the back up for marine meteorological data, to improve the weather prediction, wind-wave prediction and the ocean current in the Gulf of Thailand and Andaman Sea to suit the Thailand's region, to forecast the weather and wind-wave along the track of fishing boat and marine ship, to cooperate with other government agencies and academic institutions in research and study of oceanography and marine meteorology such as wind driven wave and storm surge, to be using the marine meteorological data for manage, develop and conserve the natural resources and to disseminate news, information and technology of marine meteorology for more development and management of natural resources.