NTF Australia as an Oceanographic Data Centre

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NTF Australia works in collaboration with a number of Australian and international organisations to collect, maintain and provide quality tidal and meteorological data around Australia, in the South Pacific and in the Southern Ocean. NTF Australia is a fully self-supporting commercial agency within The Flinders University of South Australia specialising in tidal predictions and contemporary marine science issues. Responsibilities include support of the Australian Tsunami Warning Centre and the Southern Ocean Sea Level Centre.

The NTF Australia database of hourly sea level data comprises 2350 station years for a total of 390 stations (short period and historical data are included in this record). Ongoing contributions to this dataset are from the South Pacific Sea Level and Climate Monitoring Project (SPSLCMP), Australian Baseline Sea Level Monitoring Project (ABSLMP), Australian Association of Ports and Marine Authorities (AAPMA) and the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD). Other observed data available includes six-minute sea level and hourly barometric pressure, wind, air and water temperature data from each of the SEAFRAME stations part of either the SPSLCMP or the ABSLMP.

Not only observed data is available. Other products generated from the SEAFRAME data include monthly mean sea levels, monthly anomalies in sea level, barometric pressure, air and water temperature, along with sea level trend estimates. Tide predictions and constants are produced as part of the tidal contract between AAPMA and NTF Australia. For the SPSLCMP, raw observed data is displayed graphically on-line with a lag period of 24 hours. Monthly reports on the SEAFRAME data are also available on-line, providing both comments on the data and presenting it in a graphical format.

Accessibility of data to researchers, clientele and the public is of primary importance to NTF Australia. The NTF Australia website has a section devoted to the supply of data. The addition of subsets of two data inventories to this web page, allow the user to sort the data into the order they require. An addition to the NTF subset of the GLOSS data inventory includes links to survey information from the SPSLCMP and ABSLMP stations. The NTF Australia subset of the “Blue Pages” data inventory can also be used to check for available data. Eventually, the NTF subset of the GLOSS data inventory will be updated for all of the NTF Australia data holdings and tailored specifically for our data user’s requirements. Several databases are available on-line (SPSLCMP, ABSLMP, NTF-WOCE Fast Delivery Dataset, Southern Ocean, AAPMA) from which data can be downloaded at the user’s convenience (once registered). Please see the following web address:

http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au/TEXT/WOCE/databases.html

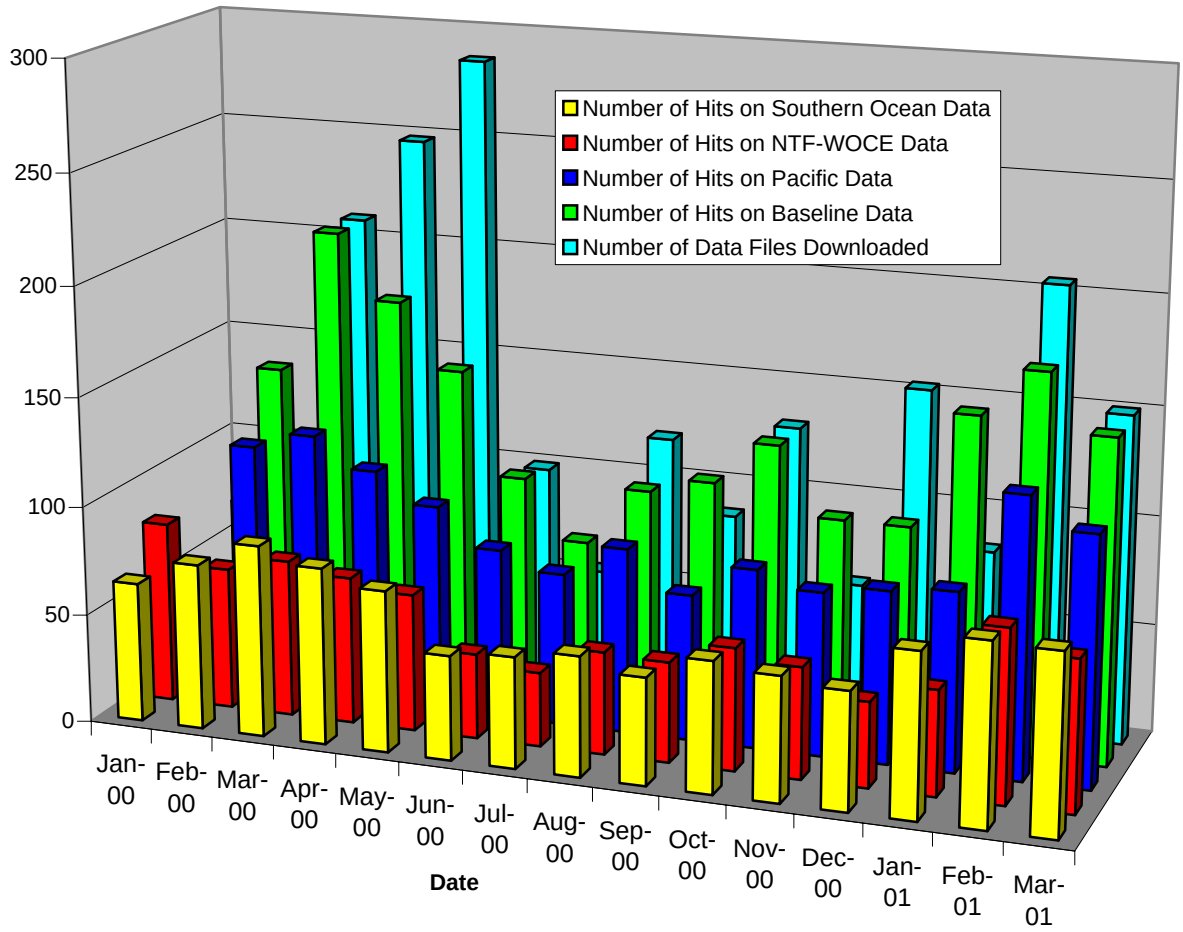
In order to increase the accessibility of the WOCE data set, NTF has set up a ‘mirror’ ftp site that contains our contribution to the WOCE fast delivery data

set run by the University of Hawaii. This allows for faster and more efficient delivery of the data to Australian scientists and also serves as a means of supplying the University of Hawaii. Please see the following web address:

http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au/TEXT/WOCE/wocedata.html

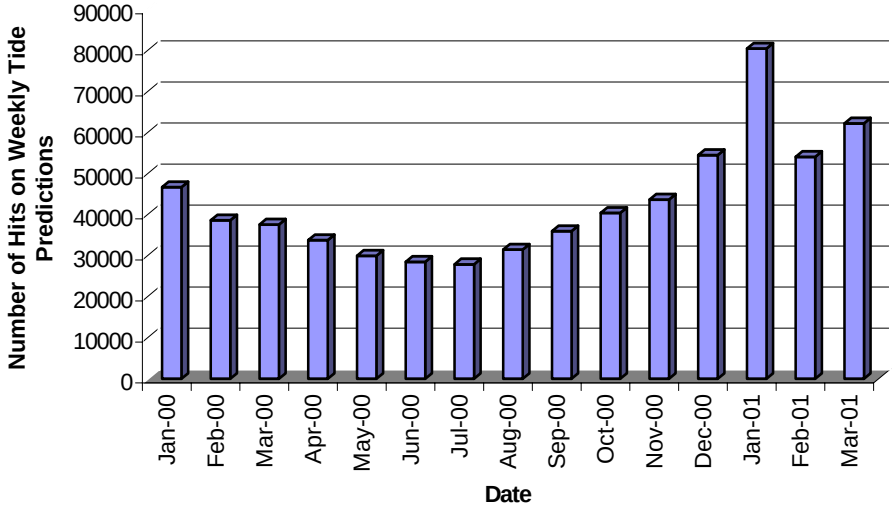
The web statistics indicate that the NTF Australia web site has a large number of hits on data access pages from all of its projects. The high overall number of data files downloaded per month is also quite high and shows that providing access to data via the Internet is a well utilised convenience for data users. In fact, between January 2000 and March 2001, 2034 data files have been downloaded from our web databases.

Statistics on Access to Web Data



Another amazing statistic is the number of hits NTF Australia is getting on weekly tide predictions. Monthly, there is an overall average of 43,000 hits on these pages.

Statistics on Access to Weekly Tide Predictions on the Web



There are a number of regular users of the sea level and meteorological data that NTF Australia archive. Selected hourly sea level data is supplied to the University of Hawaii on a monthly basis for the Fast Delivery WOCE Dataset. Monthly mean sea level data is supplied annually for all ongoing records of sea level to the Permanent Service for Mean Sea Level (PSMSL) in the United Kingdom. On a twice-weekly basis CSIRO Division of Marine Research are supplied with low pass filtered sea level data, with local inverse barometer effect removed, from each of the Baseline SEAFRAME stations.

It is hoped that in the future NTF Australia will be able to keep improving the web data access facilities already set up. This would involve continuing to develop more “user-friendly” data inventories and databases.

In conclusion, it must be noted that national status was conferred by the Commonwealth Government in 1989 to NTF Australia, but no public funding is appropriated. *NTF Australia* is supported by commercial consultancies with government and industry in the areas of defence, transport and the environment. Information for private or commercial purposes is provided on a fee-for-service basis. Services in the national interest, to the scientific and educational sectors and the general public, are currently unfunded and are provided at no cost, as circumstances permit.