Envisat GDR
Quality Assessment Report

Cycle 048

22-05-2006 / 26-06-2006

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1 Introduction. Document overview

The purpose of this document is to report the major features of the data quality from the ocean Envisat mission. The document is associated with data dissemination on a cycle by cycle basis.

The objectives of this document are :

To provide a data quality assessment
To provide users with necessary information for data processing
To report any change likely to impact data quality at any level, from instrument status to software configuration
To present the major useful results for the current cycle

It is divided into the following topics:

General quality assessment and cycle overview
CALVAL main results
Long term performance monitoring
Particular investigations

2 Cycle overview

2.1 Data and software version

This cycle has been produced with the IPF processing chain V5.02 and the CMA Reference Software V7.1_08.

The content of this science software version is described in a document available on the ESA PCS web site ([2]). The main impacts of these evolutions on the SSH are described in section Impact of CMA version 7.1 for the SSH calculation (page 4).

2.2 Parameters

The parameters used to compute the sea surface height (SSH) for Envisat are:
- Ku range (ocean retracking)
- POE orbit
- Dual frequency ionospheric correction
- MWR derived wet troposphere correction
- ECMWF dry tropospheric correction
- Non parametric sea state bias
- MOG2D
- Total geocentric GOT00 ocean tide height
- Geocentric pole tide height
- Solid earth tide height

2.3 Warnings and recommendations

-RFM switched to its nominal configuration side (A-side) on the 2006/06/21 at 13:20:15, Pass 850 (see section 5)
-passes 1-849 (RFM B-side data) have not been delivered to the users (see section 3.1)
-Passes 850 to 1002 are impacted by the USO anomaly. This quality assessment has been performed using the USO correction provided by ESA. Users are strongly advised not to use the range parameter in Ku and S Band without this correction (see section 5).

2.4 Platform and instrument events

-RFM switched to its nominal configuration side (A-side) on the 2006/06/21 at 13:20:15, Pass 850.
-RA-2 Back to Measurement following Uncontrolled S/W Action (2006/06/25 15:01:36 to 2006/06/25 19:46:00, passes 967-971).

2.5 Cycle quality and performances

Good general results are obtained for this cycle of data. Note that the performances have been estimated on a very small data set.

The crossover standard deviation is 4.39 cm rms when using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes (> |50| deg). The standard deviation of Sea Level Anomalies (SLA) relative to the CLS01V1 Mean Sea Surface is 9.7 cm. When using

a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) it lowers to 8.8 cm .

Detailed CALVAL results are presented in section 3.

2.6 Impact of product version "b" (CMA version 7.1) for the SSH calculation

The evolutions having a direct and strong impact on the SSH estimation are described hereafter:

2.6.1 Usage of actual USO clock period

Within the IPF version 5.02, the actual value of Ultra Stable Oscillator clock period is used within the L1b processing instead of the nominal one as it was used in previous IPF versions. This evolution implies a +2.5 cm jump on the Envisat SSH between cycle 40 and 41. To avoid this jump, and correct for the USO drift, users are advised to apply the correction provided by ESA on cycles 9 to 40 ([3]).

2.6.2 Improvement of the SSB correction

The Sea-State bias table has been recomputed (Labroue, 2005 [4])) accounting for the impact of the new orbit and the new geophysical corrections (MOG2D, GOT00 ocean tide correction with the S2 component corrected once only, new wind speed algorithm from Abdalla, 2006). The new SSB correction is shifted in average by +2.0 cm in comparison with the previous one.

2.6.3 New POE orbit solution

New standards are used for the computation of the Envisat Precise Orbit Estimation. One of the main evolutions is the use of the GRACE gravity model EIGEN_CG03C. This new model implies a strong reduction of the geographically correlated radial orbit errors: the systematic differences between ascending and descending passes which were locally higher than 4 cm in South West Pacific and South Atlantic are almost fully removed.

2.6.4 MOG2D correction

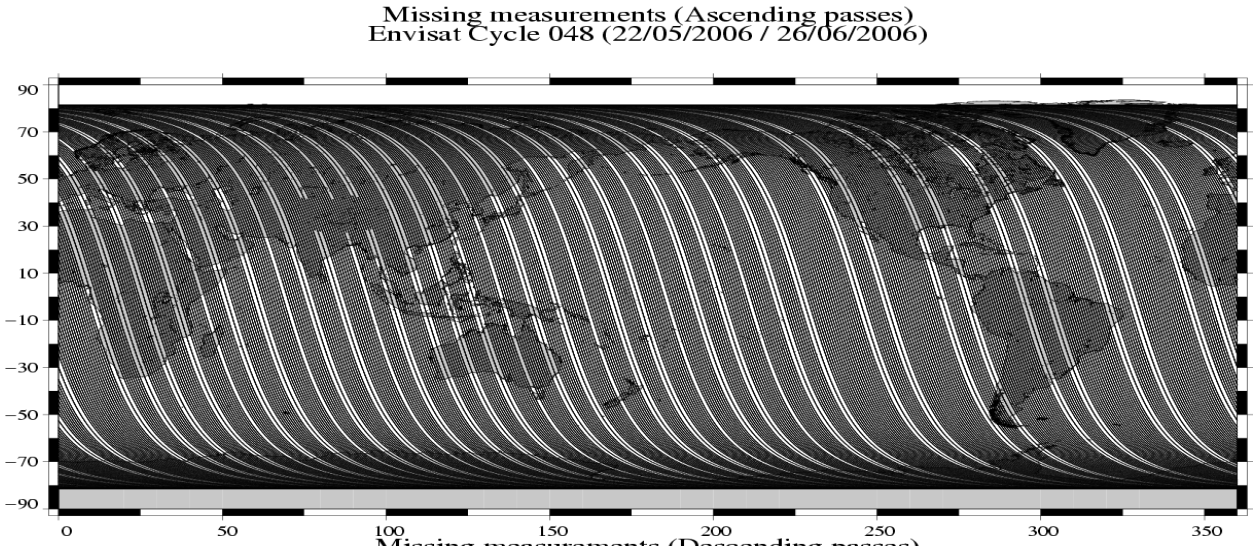
In order to take into account the dynamical effects and wind forcing, a new correction is computed from the MOG2D (Carrere and Lyard, 2003) barotropic model forced by pressure (without S1 and S2 constituents) and wind. The use of such a correction in the SSH strongly improves the performances.

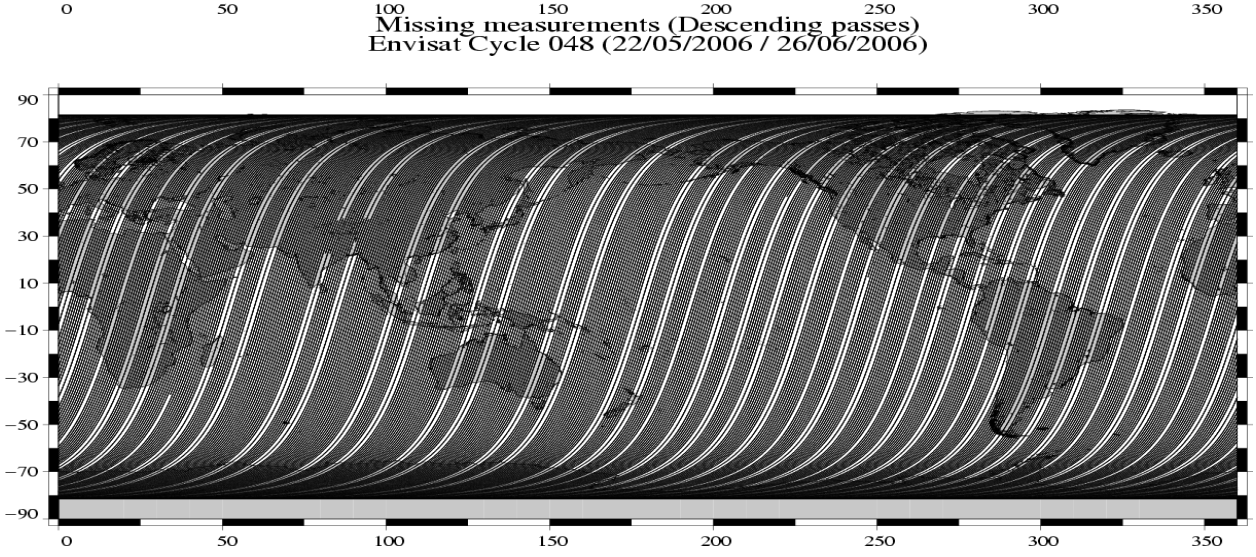
3 CALVAL main results

This section presents results that illustrate data quality during this cycle. These verification products are produced operationally so that they allow systematic monitoring of the main relevant parameters.

3.1 Missing measurements

240430 are present, and 2352629.00000000 (90.7%) are missing. The maps below illustrate missing 1Hz measurements in the GDRs, with respect to a 1 Hz sampling of a nominal repeat track.





-849 passes (1-849) have not been delivered due to: RA2 RFSS configured to side B redundancy (see section 5)
-12 passes (916-927) are missing due to : missing Level1B
-5 passes (967-971) are missing due to : RA-2 Back to Measurement following Uncontrolled S/W Action

3.2 Orbit quality

3.2.1 Doris and Laser performances

The next table gives statistics on Doris and Laser residuals:

7-day Period	Number of Doris measurements	Number of Laser measurements	RMS of Laser measurements (cm)
22/05/2006 to 29/05/2006	68186	1756	2.06040
29/05/2006 to 05/06/2006	69023	1459	1.39710
05/06/2006 to 12/06/2006	69822	3287	1.38680
12/06/2006 to 19/06/2006	68131	3210	1.66480
19/06/2006 to 26/06/2006	67226	2625	1.64860

3.2.2 Impact on SLA

The orbit quality is good for this cycle of data.

3.3 Edited measurements

3.3.1 Statistics

Data editing is necessary to remove altimeter measurements having lower accuracy.
First, there is an editing using flags. Compared to the GDR product, two additional flags are computed:
An ice flag to detect sea ice measurements. A measurement is set to ice if, at high latitudes ($>$ |50| deg), one of the following criteria is valid:
- Number of 20Hz measurement $<$ 17
- |MWR - ECMWF| wet tropospheric correction $>$ 10cm
- Peakiness $>$ 2

A S-band anomaly flag: this flag is set if |Sigma0(Ku)-Sigma0(S)| $>$ 5dB
Notice that this flag is set over land and ice, even when no S-band anomaly occurs.

Parameter	Nb rejected	% rejected
Radiometer land flag	5989	2.98
Ice flag	42823	21.33
S-Band anomaly flag	12721	6.34

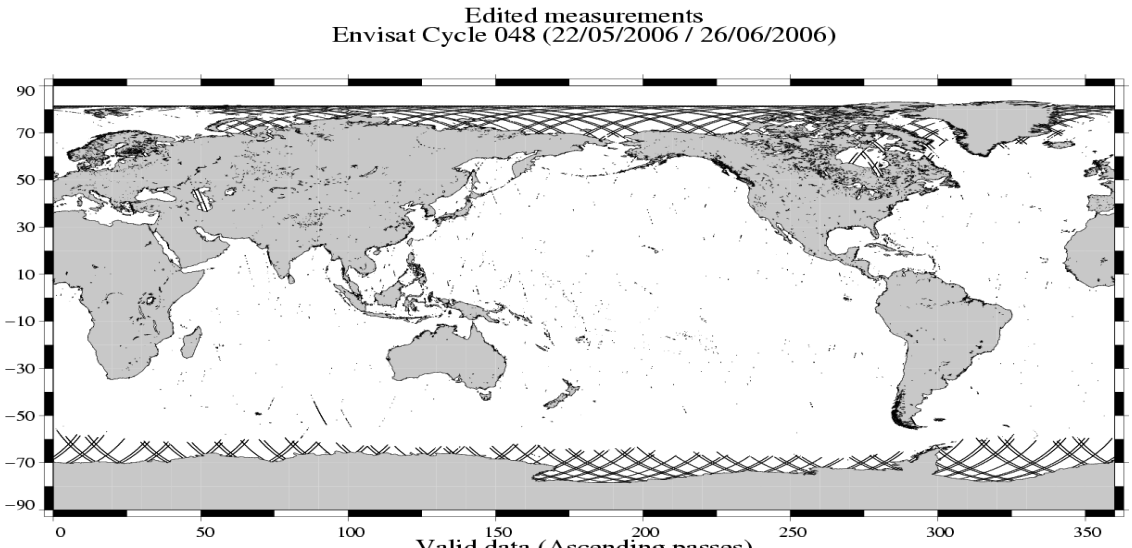
Then, measurements are edited using thresholds on several parameters. These thresholds are expected to remain constant throughout the Envisat mission, so that monitoring the number of edited measurements allows a survey of data quality.
The next table gives for each tested parameter, minimum and maximum thresholds, the number and the percentage of points removed.

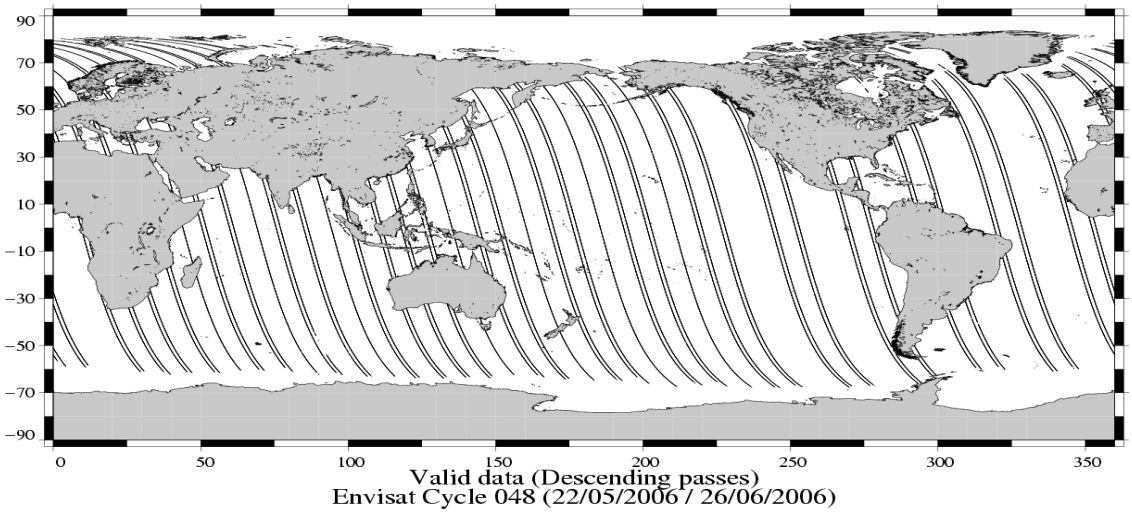
Parameters	Min Thres.	Max Thres.	Nb rejected	% rejected
Sea surface height (m)	-130.000	100.000	134	0.07
Variability relative to MSS (m)	-2.000	2.000	730	0.38
Number of 18Hz valid points	10.000	-	9	0.00
Std. deviation of 18Hz range (m)	0.000	0.250	1953	1.02
Off nadir angle from waveform (deg2)	-0.200	0.160	546	0.28
Dry tropospheric correction (m)	-2.500	-1.900	0	0.00
MOG2D correction (m)	-2.000	2.000	0	0.00
MWR wet tropospheric correction (m)	-0.500	-0.001	141	0.07
Dual Ionospheric correction (m)	-0.400	0.040	470	0.24
Significant wave height (m)	0.000	11.000	220	0.11
Sea state Bias (m)	-0.500	0.000	215	0.11
Backscatter coefficient (dB)	7.000	30.000	186	0.10
GOT00 ocean tide height (m)	-5.000	5.000	420	0.22
Long period tide height (m)	-0.500	0.500	0	0.00
Earth tide (m)	-1.000	1.000	0	0.00
Pole tide (m)	-5.000	5.000	0	0.00
RA2 wind speed (m/s)	0.000	30.000	0	0.00

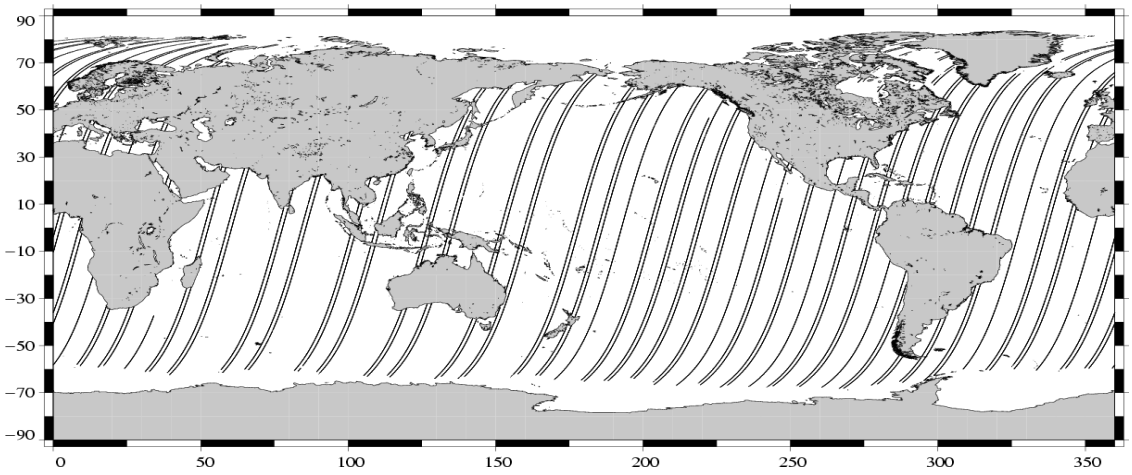
A final editing is then performed on corrected sea surface height, using a spline fitting procedure, leading to remove 74 (0.04 %) measurements.

3.3.2 Figures

The following maps are complementary: they show respectively the removed and selected measurements in the editing procedure.







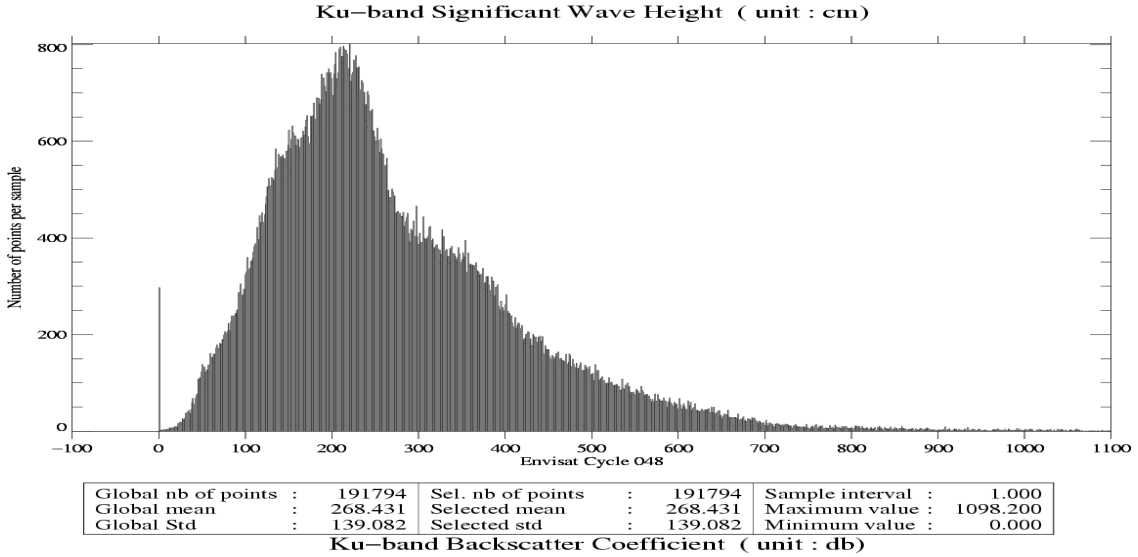
3.3.3 Comments

136 passes have been delivered

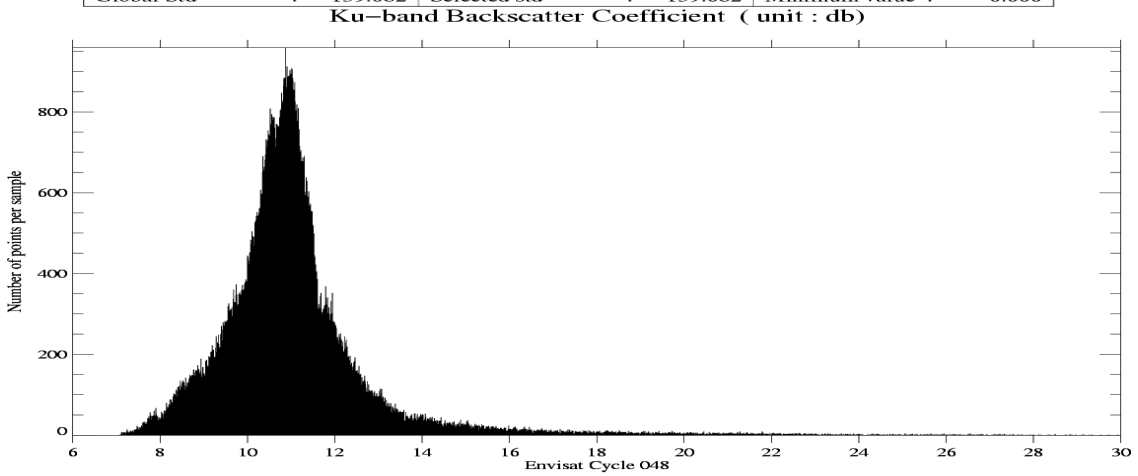
Wet areas appear in the plot of removed data. Similar features are observed with other altimeters (T/P, Jason) mainly due to rain comtamination.

3.4 Altimeter parameters

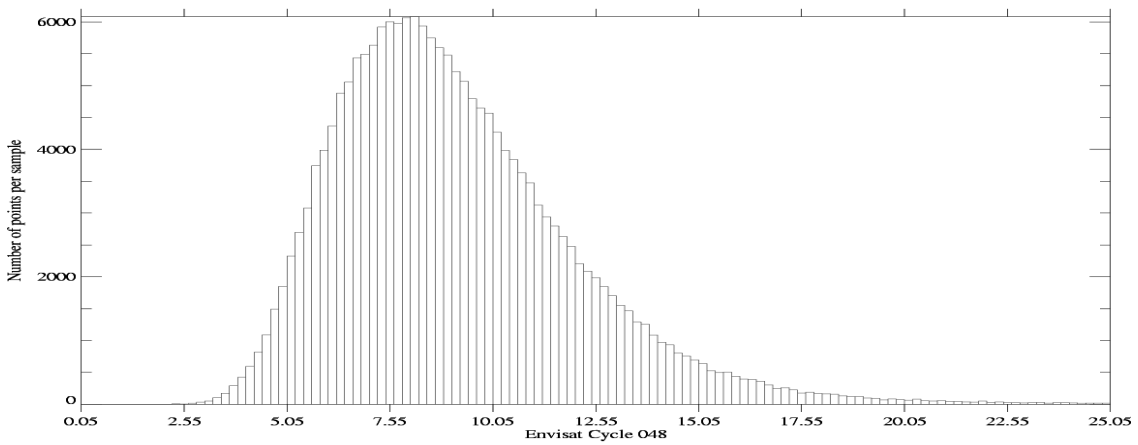
In order to assess and to monitor altimeter parameter measurements, histograms of Envisat Ku-band Significant Wave Height (SWH), Backscatter coefficient (Sigma0) and RMS of altimeter range are computed.



Global nb of points	191794	Sel. nb of points	191794	Sample interval	1.000
Global mean	268.431	Selected mean	268.431	Maximum value	1098.200
Global Std	139.082	Selected std	139.082	Minimum value	0.000



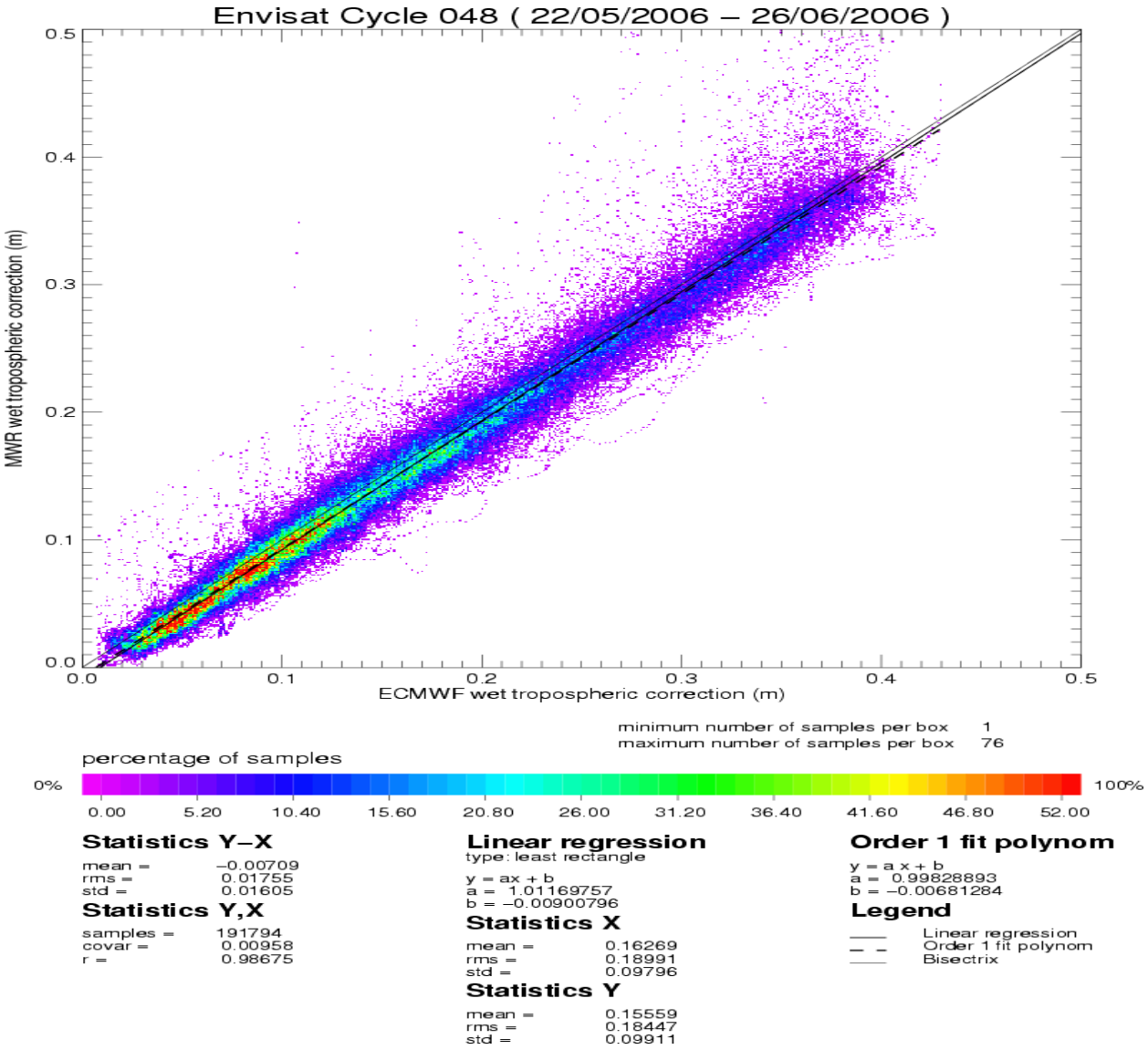
Global nb of points	191794	Sel. nb of points	191794	Sample interval	0.010
Global mean	11.043	Selected mean	11.043	Maximum value	29.930
Global Std	1.825	Selected std	1.825	Minimum value	7.080



Global nb of points	191794	Sel. nb of points	191794	Sample interval	0.200
Global mean	9.019	Selected mean	9.019	Maximum value	25.000
Global Std	2.898	Selected std	2.898	Minimum value	1.900

3.5 Radiometer

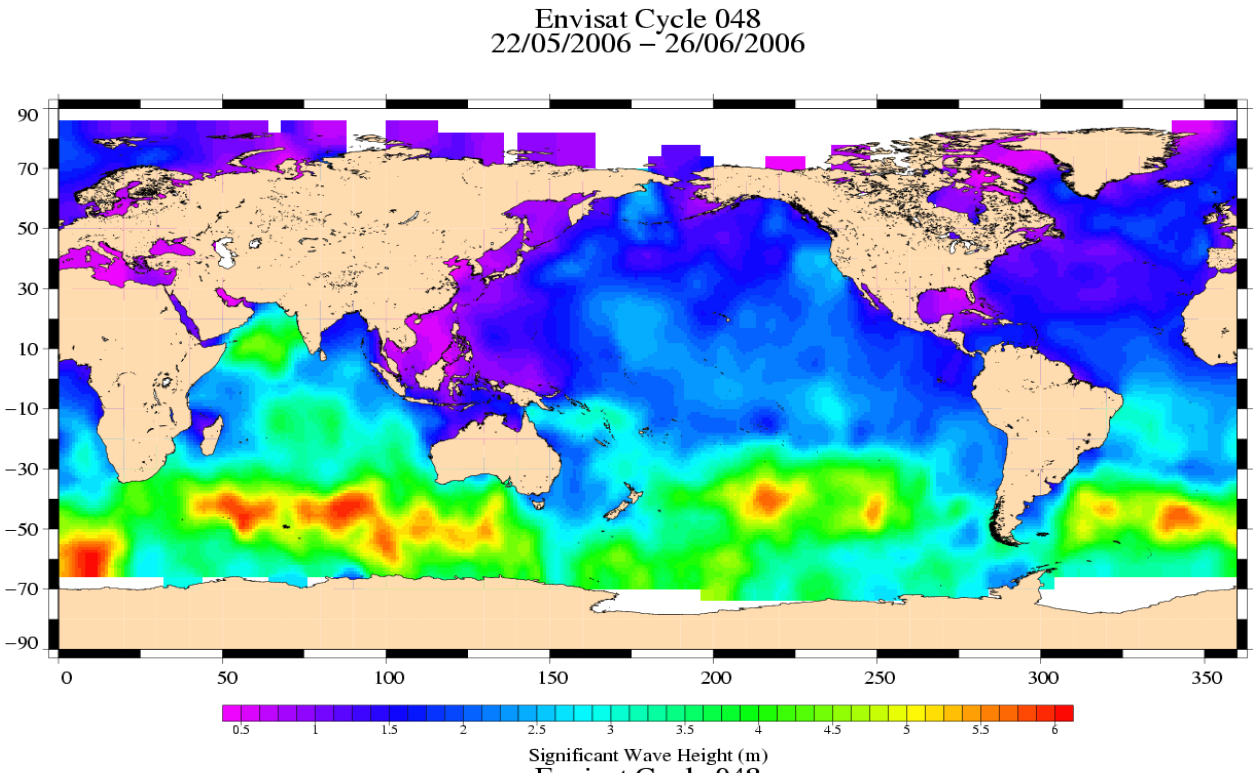
In order to assess and to monitor radiometer measurements, a scatter plot between the radiometer wet troposphere correction and the ECMWF model is computed for the valid data set previously defined.

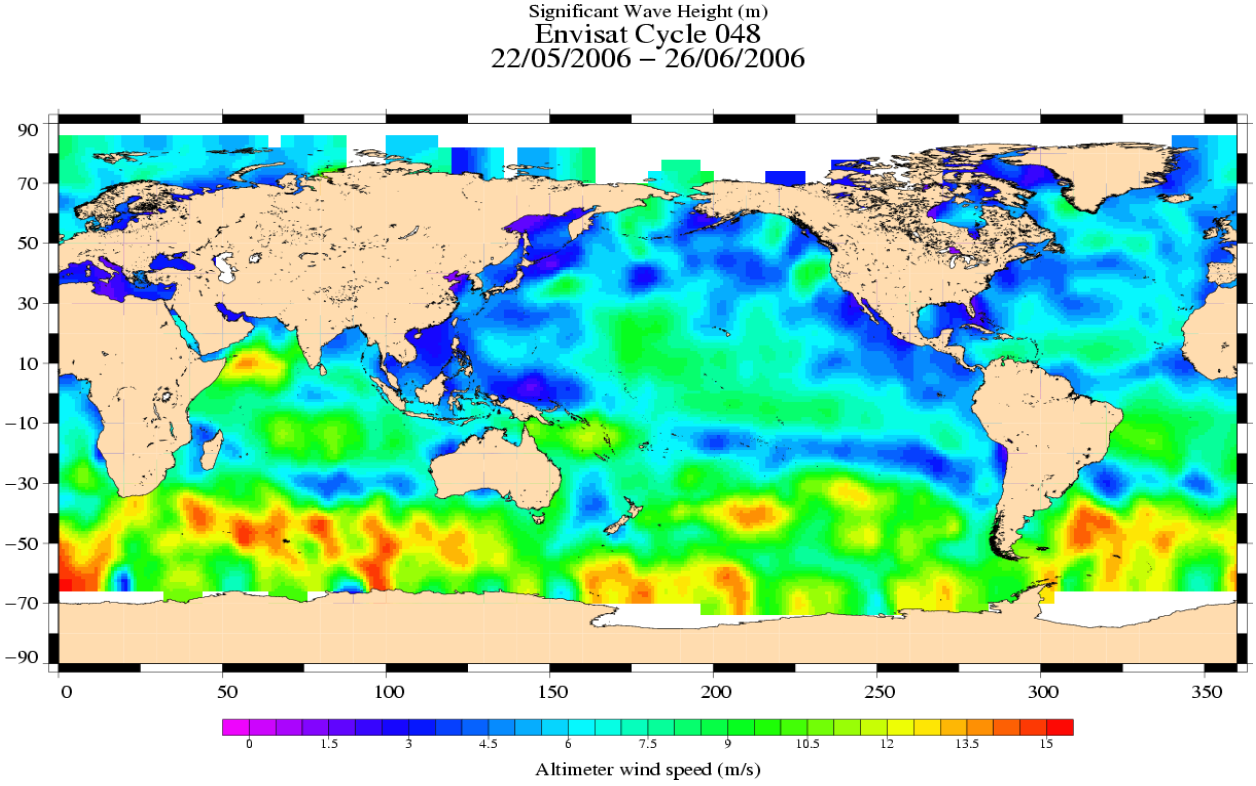


The radiometer-model mean difference is 0.7 cm. A drift on the Envisat 23.8GHz brightness temperature has been detected and has to be monitored on the long term. Note that the neural algorithm is now implemented on Envisat.

3.6 Wind and wave maps

These two figures show wind and wave estimations derived from 35 days of altimeter measurements.





3.7 Crossover statistics

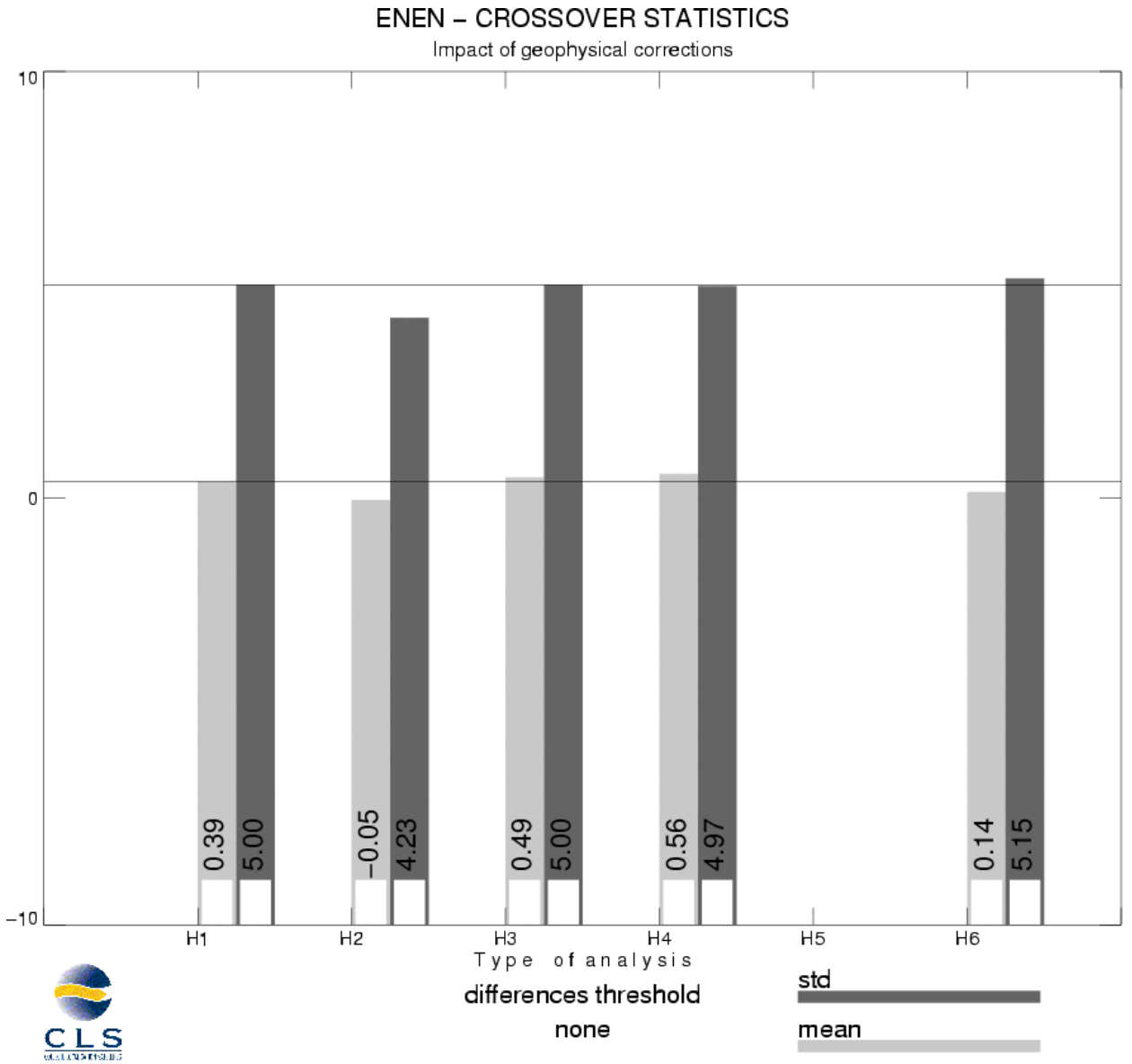
3.7.1 General comment

SSH crossover statistics are computed from the valid data set. They are used to estimate the data quality and to monitor the system performances. After data editing and using the standard Envisat algorithms, the crossover standard deviation is about 5.00 cm rms, when using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m). When using an additional selection to remove areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) it lowers to 4.39 cm rms. This statistic is a stable estimation of the system performance as it is not influenced by sea ice coverage.

3.7.2 Impact of geophysical corrections

This figure shows the impact of geophysical corrections on crossover mean and rms. A selection is used to remove shallow waters (1000 m).

For this analysis two corrections have been computed: a long wave length and a model ionospheric correction. The long wave length estimation is performed by a global minimization of crossover differences using a (1 and 2 cycles/revolution) sinusoidal model. The model ionospheric correction is computed using the JPL's version of the GPS Ionosphere Maps (JPL GIM) thanks to the procedures provided by Remko Scharro (internet communication to the CCVT community, December 12, 2002).



H1 = SSH

H2 = SSH applying a long wave length error (computed)

H3 = SSH with GIM ionospheric correction (computed)

H4 = SSH with DORIS ionospheric correction (in product)

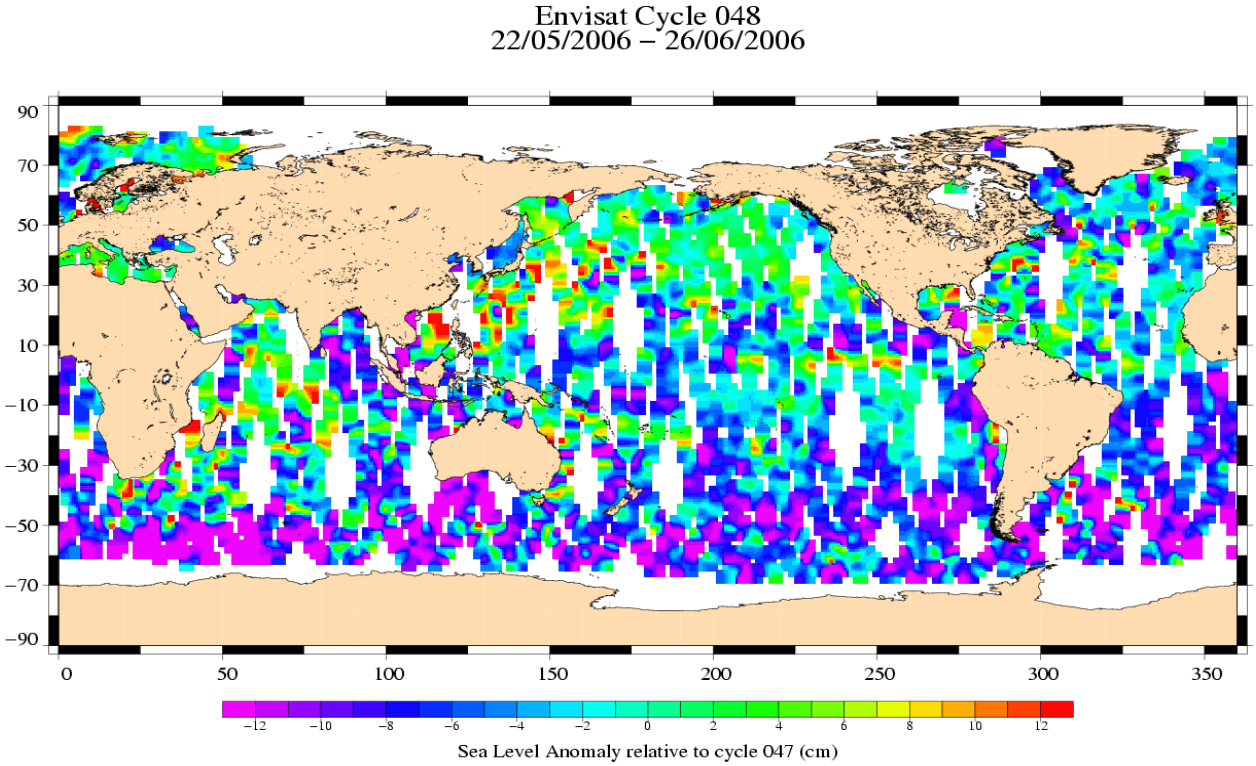
H5 = SSH with FES02 tide model (in product)

H6 = SSH with ECMWF wet tropospheric correction (in product)

3.8 SSH variability

3.8.1 Sea Level Anomaly

Repeat-track analysis is routinely used to compute Sea Level Anomalies (SLA) relative to the previous cycle and relative to a mean profile. The mean profile has been computed using ERS-1 and ERS-2 data and has been ajusted on the 7 year TP mean profile. In order to see fine features SLA are centered about the mean value.



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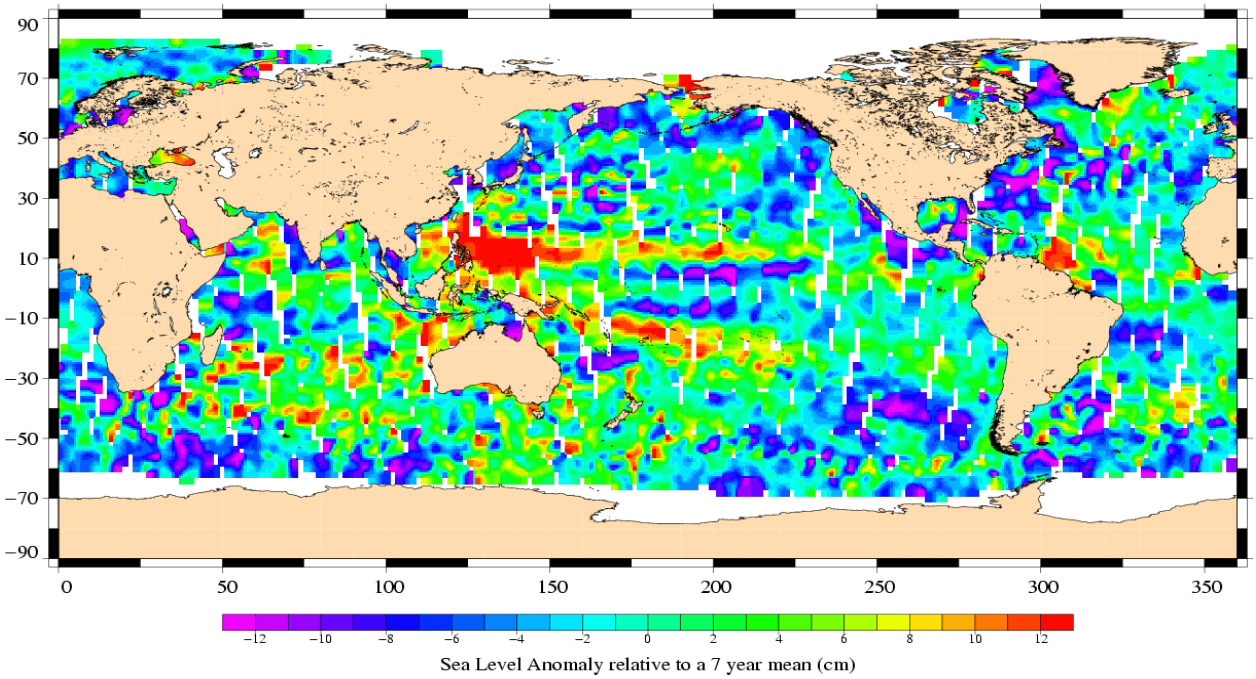


3.8.2 Comparison to a precise Mean Sea Surface

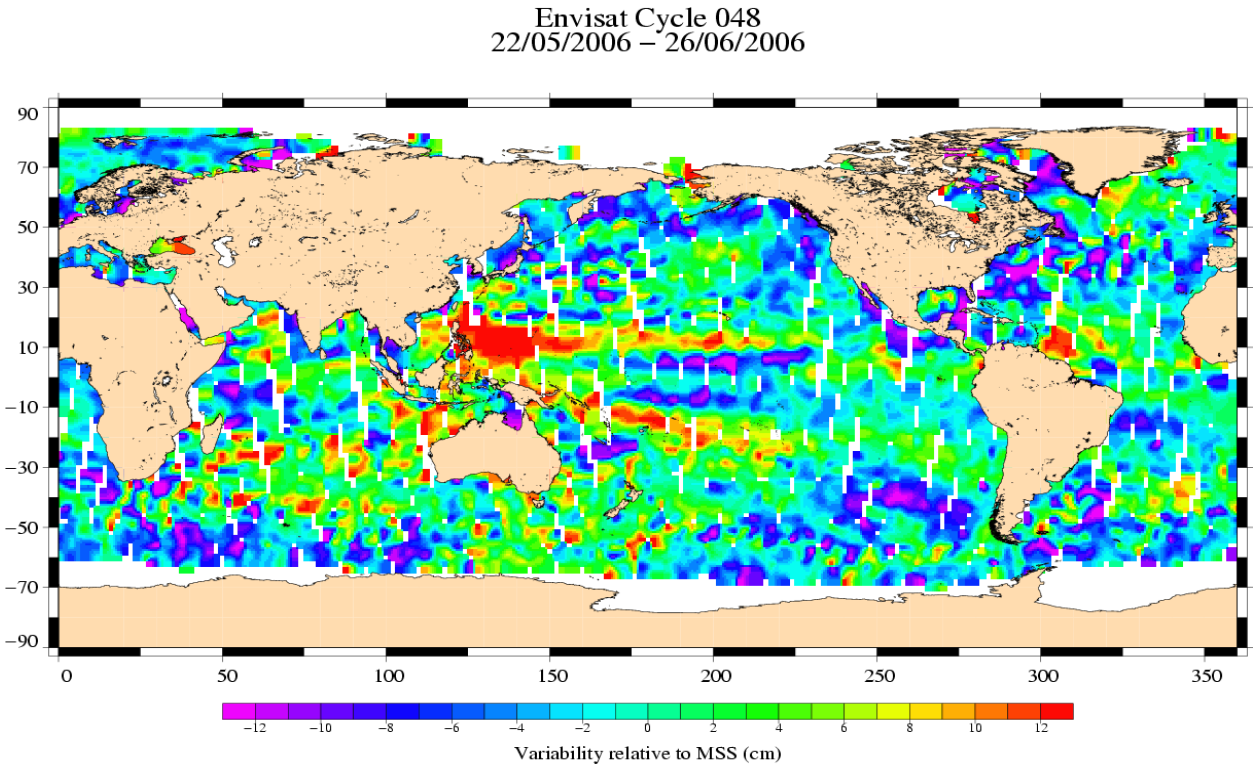
The MSS from the product is used as a reference to compute SLA. Global statistics of Envisat SSH-MSS are (cm):

Number	Mean	Std. dev.
214686	48.47	9.69

When using a selection to remove shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes ($> |50|$ deg) statistics are:

Number	Mean	Std. dev.
132699.00000000	49.10	8.81

The two following maps respectively show the map of Envisat SLA relative to the MSS and differences higher than a 30 cm threshold. In order to see fine features SLA are centered about the mean value. The latter figure shows that apart from isolated measurements, higher differences are located in high ocean variability areas, as expected.



(SSH − MSS) centered, differences greater than 30 cm
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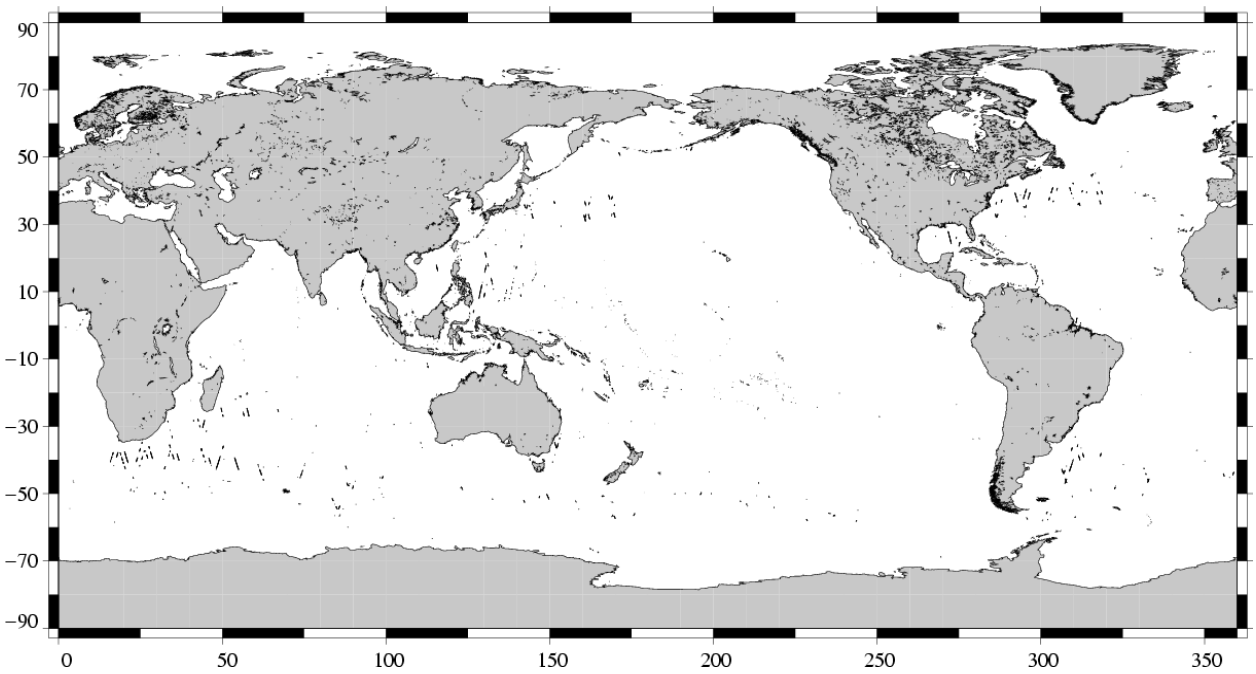


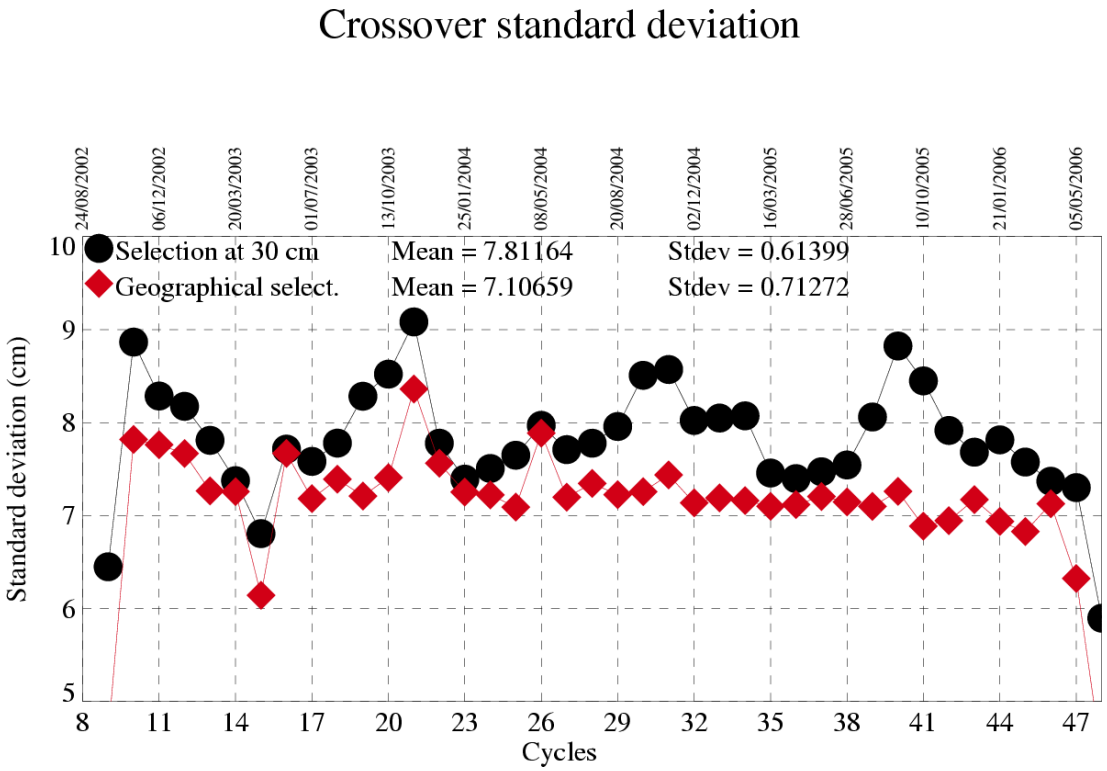
4 Envisat long term performance monitoring

Statistics of SSH variability are computed after crossover and repeat-track analyses. This allows to estimate how Envisat data fulfill the mission objectives in terms of performances.

4.1 Standard deviation of the differences at crossovers

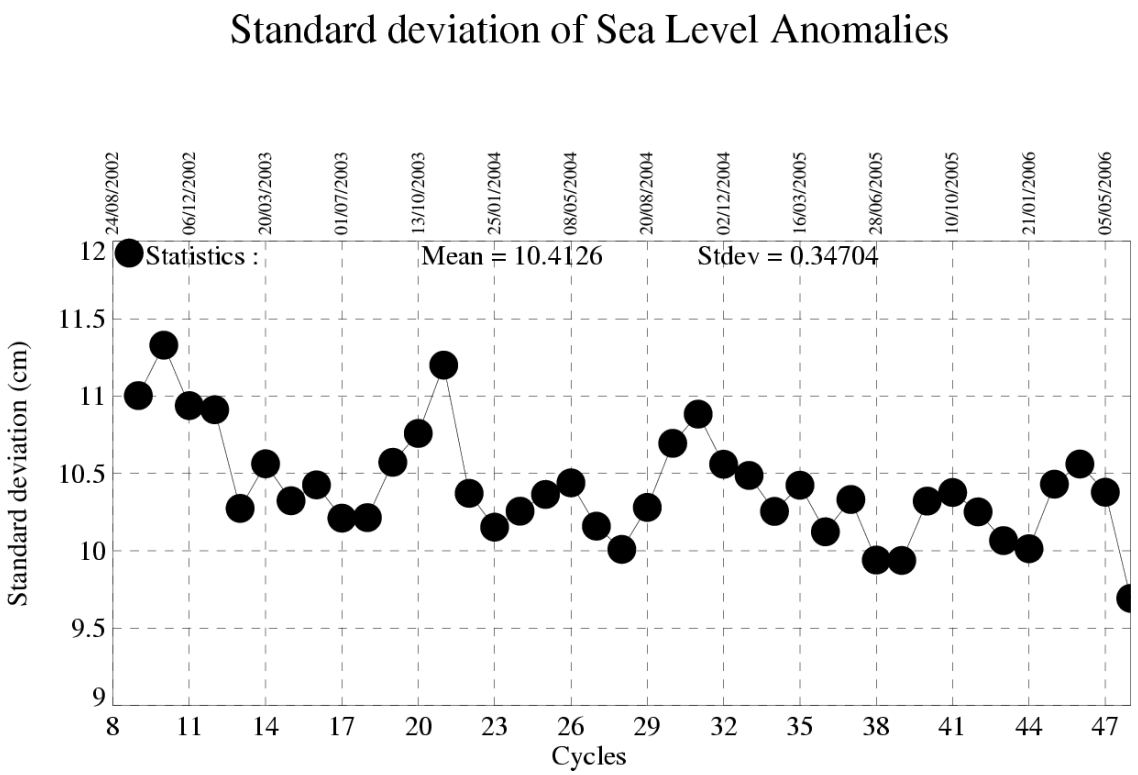
This parameter is plotted as a function of time in a one cycle per cycle basis in the figure below. It is computed after data editing and using 2 aditing selection criteria:

- Selecting crossover differences lower than 30 cm to avoid contamination by remaining spurious data.
- Removing shallow waters (1000 m), areas of high ocean variability and high latitudes (> |50| deg.) to avoid ice coverage effects.



4.2 RMS of Sea Level Anomaly

Sea Level Anomalies relative to a mean profile are computed using repeat-track analysis for each Envisat cycle. To monitor Envisat performances and ocean signals, the cycle per cycle standard deviation of the SLA is plotted as a function of time.



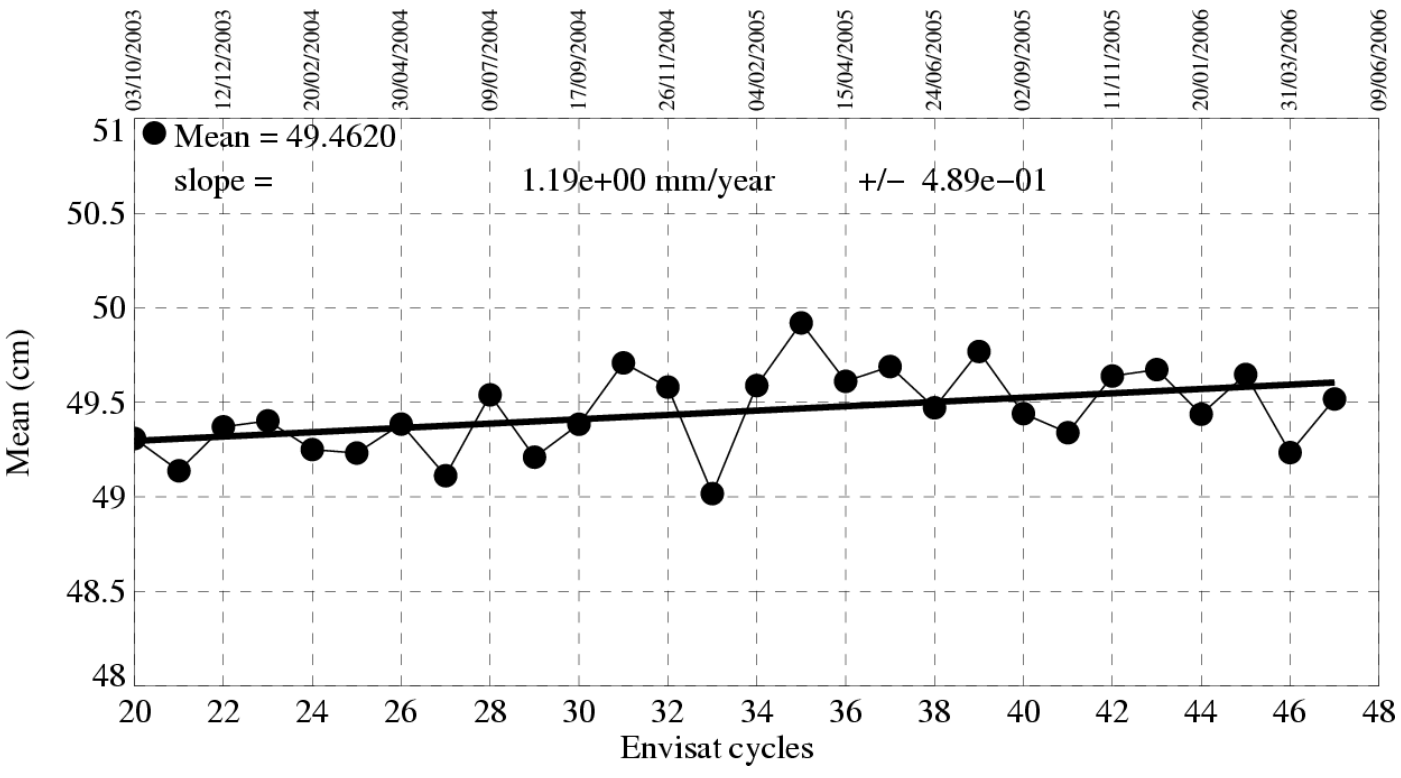
4.3 Mean Sea Level

MSL estimations are performed on a cycle basis averaging Sea Level Anomalies relative to a mean profile.
The SSH is computed using:

- the ECMWF model wet troposphere correction in order to remove the effect of the drift of the 36.5 GHz Brightness Temperature
- the correction provided by ESA to correct the range from the USO drift and bias ([3]) for cycle 9 to 40
- the Labroue (2005 [4]) sea state bias for all cycles

The value for each cycle is calculated from averaging over 2 by 3 degree bins, then weighting by latitude to take into account the relative geographical area represented by the bin. Results plotted on the following figure is obtained after annual and semi-annual signals reduction.

During the first year (cycles 10 to 20) Envisat MSL global trend is not consistent to other flying satellites. This unexplained behavior is under investigation. The following figure shows the MSL global trend from cycle 20 onwards.



5 Particular investigations

5.1 USO anomaly

After the switch back to its nominal A-Side we can confirmed the persistence of the abnormal RA-2 Ultra-Stable Oscillator (USO) behaviour affecting the Altimetric Range by few meters Cycle 48 in Ra2 side A is entirely affected by this anomaly. The quality assessment of these data has been done using the USO temporary correction provided by ESA. Users are strongly advised not to use the range parameter in Ku and S Band without this correction. More information is available on http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/auxdata/.

5.2 RFM switched to its nominal configuration side

During cycle 48 the instrument sub-system Radio Frequency Module (RFM) was switched to its nominal configuration side (A-side) on the 2006/06/21 at 13:20:15, Pass 850. For passes 1-849, the on-ground processing has been performed with Auxiliary Data Files configured on A-side. For this reason, data in B-side are not distributed. Note that before the switch back to its nominal A-Side the S-band transmission power drop was still present, since 20 May 2006 at 13:24:57, making all the S Band related parameters meaningless (passes 1 to 847 are impacted).

References

[1] Abdalla, S., "A wind retrieval algorithm for satellite radar altimeters", ECMWF Technical Memorandum, in preparation, 2006.

[2] EOO/EOX, October 2005, Information to the Users regarding the Envisat RA2/MWR IPF version 5.02 and CMA 7.1 Available at http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/articles/

[3] Martini A., 2003: Envisat RA-2 Range instrumental correction : USO clock period variation and associated auxiliary file, Technical Note ENVI-GSEG-EOPG-TN-03-0009 Available at http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/articles/USO_clock_corr_aux_file.pdf http://earth.esa.int/pcs/envisat/ra2/auxdata/

[4] Labroue S., 2005: RA2 ocean and MWR measurement long term monitoring 2005 report for WP3, Task 2 SSB estimation for RA2 altimeter, Technical Note CLS-DOS-NT-05-200