

# Observations (2): Assimilating conventional observations in MPAS-JEDI

*Materials prepared by Junmei Ban and Ivette Hernández Baños*

*Presented by BJ Jung*

*NSF NCAR/MMM*



MPAS-A and MPAS-JEDI Tutorial, University of St Andrews, UK  
June 23-27, 2025

# Outline

1. Assimilating non-radiance (conventional) observations
  - a. Set up a variational run (hybrid 3DEnVar)
    - i. Set up a yaml file
  - b. Observation operators available in UFO
  - c. Quality Control available in UFO
  - d. Variational Application (3DEnVar)
2. Diagnostics

# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Set up a variational run (hybrid 3DEnVar)

3DVar cost  
function

$$J(\mathbf{x}) = \frac{1}{2}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_b)^T \mathbf{B}^{-1}(\mathbf{x} - \mathbf{x}_b) + \frac{1}{2}[\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{x}) - \mathbf{y}]^T \mathbf{R}^{-1}[\mathbf{H}(\mathbf{x}) - \mathbf{y}]$$

Hybrid B

$$\mathbf{B} = \beta_s \mathbf{B}_s + \beta_e \mathbf{L} \circ \mathbf{B}_e$$

$\mathbf{B}_s$ : static B;  $\mathbf{B}_e$ : ensemble B;  $\mathbf{L}$ : localization matrix;  $\beta_s$  and  $\beta_e$ : static and ensemble weights

### Inputs:

$x_b$ : background fields

$y$ : observations

$\mathbf{R}$ : observation error covariance matrix

$\mathbf{B}$ : background error covariance matrix

----from forecast

----in **IODA** format; from **obs2ioda** converter

----from observations file (ObsError group), or defined in YAML as a filter

----for pure 3DEnVar, determined from ensemble forecasts; needs localization input (**L**)

### Output:

$x$ : analysis



# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Set up a yaml file

(focus on observations)

observations:

**observers:**

- obs space:  
  name: **Aircraft**

obs error:

obs operator:

obs filters:

- obs space:  
  name: **GnssroRefNCEP**

obs error:

obs operator:

obs filters:

- obs space:  
  name: **Satwind**

obs error:

obs operator:

obs filters:

...

# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Setting up a yaml file

(focus on observations)

observations:  
  observers:  
    - obs space:  
      name: Aircraft  
  obs error:  
  obs operator:  
  obs filters:

```
79 observations:
80   observers:
81     - obs space:
82       name: Aircraft
83       obsdatain:
84         engine:
85           type: H5File
86           obsfile: ./aircraft_obs_2018041500.h5
87       obsdataout:
88         engine:
89           type: H5File
90           obsfile: ./obsout_da_aircraft.h5
91       simulated variables: [airTemperature, windEastward, windNorthward,
92                             specificHumidity]
93       covariance model: diagonal
94       obs operator:
95         name: VertInterp
96       obs filters:
97         - filter: PreQC
98           maxvalue: 3
99         - filter: Background Check
100          threshold: 3.0
```

**PreQC:** Quality markers are assigned by various data pre-processing software

**PreQC** is assigned from **obs2ioda** converter in subroutine `filter_obs_conv` (as in GSI's `read_prepbufr.f90`)

# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Setting up a yaml file

(focus on observations)

observations:

observers:

- obs space:

name: **Satwind**

obs error:

obs operator:

obs filters:

```
152   obs error:
153     covariance model: diagonal
154   obs operator:
155     name: VertInterp
156     observation alias file: obsop_name_map.yaml
157   obs filters:
158   - filter: PreQC
159     maxvalue: 3
160   # Assign the initial observation error, based on height/pressure
161   - filter: Perform Action
162     filter variables:
163     - name: windEastward
164     - name: windNorthward
165     action:
166       name: assign error
167       error function:
168         name: ObsFunction/ObsErrorModelStepwiseLinear
169       options:
170         xvar:
171           name: MetaData/pressure
172           xvals: [100000, 95000, 80000, 65000, 60000, 55000, 50000, 45000, 40000, 35000, 30000, 25000, 20000, 15000, 10000]
173           errors: [1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 2.0, 2.1, 2.3, 2.6, 2.8, 3.0, 3.2, 2.7, 2.4, 2.1]
174   - filter: Bounds Check
175     filter variables:
176     - name: windEastward
177     - name: windNorthward
178     test variables:
179     - name: ObsErrorData/windEastward
180     - name: ObsErrorData/windNorthward
181     minvalue: 0.0
182     maxvalue: 200.0
183   - filter: Gaussian Thinning
184     horizontal_mesh: 145.0
185   - filter: Background Check
186     threshold: 3.0
```

Filter: Perform Action; action: assign error ⇒  
[ufo/src/ufo/filters/actions/AssignError.cc](#)

Error estimates of observations flagged by the filter are set to a specified value. This can be either a constant (specified using the error parameter option) or a variable (specified using the error function option)

# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Setting up a yaml file

(focus on observations)

observations:

observers:

- obs space:

name: GnsstroRefNCEP

obs error:

obs operator:

obs filters:

```
115 obs operator:
116   name: GnsstroRefNCEP
117   obs options:
118     use_compress: 0
119   obs filters:
120   - filter: Domain Check
121     where:
122     - variable:
123       name: MetaData/height
124       minvalue: 0.0
125       maxvalue: 30000.0
126     - variable:
127       name: MetaData/earthRadiusCurvature
128       minvalue: 6250000.0
129       maxvalue: 6450000.0
130     - variable:
131       name: MetaData/geoidUndulation
132       minvalue: -200.0
133       maxvalue: 200.0
134   - filter: RObserror
135     variable: refractivity
136     errmodel: NCEP
137     apply at iterations: 0,1,2
138   - filter: Background Check
139     threshold: 3.0
140     apply at iterations: 0,1,2
```

### Domain Check:

[ufo/src/ufo/filters/ObsDomainCheck.cc](https://ufo/src/ufo/filters/ObsDomainCheck.cc)

Retains all observations selected by the **where** statement and rejects all others; here, the filter is used to control the maximum height one wants to assimilate RO observation.

RObserror (errmodel: NCEP): RO specific filter

# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Setting up a yaml file

(focus on observations)

observations:

observers:

- obs space:

name: SfcPCorrected

obs error:

obs operator:

obs filters:

## Surface pressure

```
201   obs operator:
202     name: SfcPCorrected
203     da_psfc_scheme: UKMO # or WRFDA
204   linear obs operator:
205     name: Identity
206     observation alias file: obsop_name_map.yaml
207   obs filters:
208     - filter: PreQC
209       maxvalue: 3
210     - filter: Difference Check
211       reference: MetaData/stationElevation
212       value: GeoVals/surface_altitude
213       threshold: 200.0
214     - filter: Background Check
215       threshold: 3.0
216       apply at iterations: 0,1
```

**SfcPCorrected operator:** corrects the computation of surface atmospheric P at a location for the discrepancy in model topography at the observation location.

Difference Check:

[ufo/src/ufo/filters/DifferenceCheck.cc](https://github.com/ncar/ufs/blob/master/ufs/obs/obs_filters/DifferenceCheck.cc)

Compares the difference between a reference variable and a second variable and assign a QC flag if the difference is outside of a prescribed range.

# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Observation operators available in UFO

- Vertical Interpolation
- Atmosphere Vertical Layer Interpolation
- Averaging Kernel Operator
- Community Radiative Transfer Model (CRTM)
- RTTOV
- Aerosol Optical Depth (AODCRTM)
- Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD) for dust (Met Office)
- GNSS RO bending angle (NBAM)
- GNSS RO bending angle (ROPP 1D)
- GNSS RO bending angle (ROPP 2D)
- GNSS RO bending angle (MetOffice)
- GNSS RO refractivity (NCEP)
- Ground Based GNSS observation operator (Met Office)
- Identity observation operator
- Product observation operator
- In situ particulate matter (PM) operator
- Radar Radial Velocity
- Scatterometer neutral wind (Met Office)
- SfcPCorrected
- Background Error Vertical Interpolation
- Background Error Identity
- Total column water vapour
- Absolute dynamic topography
- Cool skin
- Insitu temperature
- Vertical Interpolation
- Sea ice thickness
- Sea ice fraction
- Profile Average operator

Radiance

GNSS  
RO

<https://jointcenterforsatellitedataassimilation-jedi-docs.readthedocs-hosted.com/en/latest/inside/jedi-components/ufo/index.html>



# Assimilating non-radiance observations

## Quality Control available in UFO

### Generic filters

- Bounds Check Filter
- Background Check Filter
- Bayesian Background Check Filter
- Bayesian Background QC Flags filter
- Bayesian Whole Report Filter
- PreQC Filter
- Domain Check Filter
- BlackList Filter
- RejectList Filter
- AcceptList Filter
- Perform Action Filter
- Thinning Filter
- Gaussian Thinning Filter
- Temporal Thinning Filter
- Poisson Disk Thinning Filter
- Stuck Check Filter

- Difference Check Filter
- Derivative Check Filter
- Spike and Step Check Filter
- Track Check Filter
- Ship Track Check Filter
- Met Office Buddy Check Filter
- History Check Filter
- Variable Assignment Filter
- Create Diagnostic Flags Filter
- RTTOV 1D-Var Check (RTTOVOneDVar) Filter
- ModelOb Threshold Filter
- Satwind Inversion Filter
- GNSS-RO 1D-Var Check (GNSSROOneDVar) Filter
- Model Best Fit Pressure Filter
- Process AMV QI
- Satname Filter
- Met Office Duplicate Check Filter

### Background

- Observation Filters
- Order of Filter Application
- Derived Variables
- Observation Errors

### Additional QC Filter Options

- Where Statement
- ObsFunction and ObsDiagnostic Suffixes
- Filter Actions
- Outer Loop Iterations

### Profile Specific QC Filters

- Profile Background Check
- Profile Few Observations Check
- Profile Unflag Observations Check
- Impact Height Check
- Conventional Profile Processing
- Ocean Vertical Stability Check
- Average Observations to Model Levels

<https://jointcenterforsatellitedataassimilation-jedi-docs.readthedocs-hosted.com/en/latest/inside/jedi-components/ufo/qcfilters/index.html>





# Diagnostics

## Selection of common group names and meanings

Group Name	Meaning
ObsValue	For when a specific variable is a direct observed/reported measurement, such as satellite radiance or surface weather observations of airTemperature and dewpointTemperature.
Metadata	Use this group name for ancillary data that provides added description to an ObsValue in general. Simple examples are stationElevation and airTemperature to provide the added information needed for the altitude for which a surface temperature observation was made. Similarly, the airPressure, altitude, and eastwardWind for radiosonde or satellite atmospheric motion vector winds.
HofX	This is the end product of the forward operator, known in DA as H(x) or HofX.
ObsError	This group name denotes Observation Errors that arrive from upstream data sources. The values are usually considered to be the standard deviation of observation errors.
EffectiveError	This group name is UFO's computed effective ObsError value after any number of QC steps that may "inflate" or alter the ObsError. In JEDI, this final value given to the DA means that ObsValues with large relative EffectiveError have less impact than relatively small EffectiveError values.
EffectiveQC	This group name is UFO's final QC value given by the QCflags.h enumeration of values associated with various QC rejection or other steps. Examples include Bounds Check, Domain Check, Background Check, etc.

- obsout\_da\_satwind.h5
  - EffectiveError0
  - EffectiveError1
  - EffectiveError2
  - EffectiveQC0
  - EffectiveQC1
  - EffectiveQC2
  - Location
  - MetaData
  - ObsBias0
  - ObsBias1
  - ObsBias2
  - ObsError
  - ObsType
  - ObsValue
  - PreQC
  - hofx0
  - hofx1
  - hofx2
  - nvars
  - oman
    - windEastward
    - windNorthward
  - ombg
    - windEastward
    - windNorthward

hdfview

satwind  
feedback  
file

[https://jointcenterforsatellitedataassimilation-jedi-docs.readthedocs-hosted.com/en/latest/inside/conventions/objects\\_and\\_layouts.html#group-based-data-organization](https://jointcenterforsatellitedataassimilation-jedi-docs.readthedocs-hosted.com/en/latest/inside/conventions/objects_and_layouts.html#group-based-data-organization)

obsout\_da\_satwind.h5

- EffectiveError0
- EffectiveError1
- EffectiveError2
- EffectiveQC0
- EffectiveQC1
- EffectiveQC2

Location

- MetaData
- ObsBias0
- ObsBias1
- ObsBias2
- ObsError
- ObsType

ObsValue

PreQC

hofx0

hofx1

hofx2

nvars

oman

windEastward

windNorthward

ombg

windEastward

windNorthward

hdfview

satwind  
feedback  
file

# Diagnostics

## Quality Control Flags

```

constexpr int pass = 0; // we like that one!
constexpr int passive = 1; // H(x) is computed (for monitoring, BC...) but obs not assimilated
// Single digit values reserved for DA use.
// For now only 0, 1 and >1 are used but keeping space for other potential use cases.

// Actual rejection flags
constexpr int missing = 10; // missing values prevent use of observation
constexpr int preQC = 11; // observation rejected by pre-processing
constexpr int bounds = 12; // observation value out of bounds
constexpr int domain = 13; // observation not within domain of use
constexpr int black = 14; // observation black listed
constexpr int Hfailed = 15; // H(x) computation failed
constexpr int thinned = 16; // observation removed due to thinning
constexpr int diffref = 17; // metadata too far from reference
constexpr int clw = 18; // observation removed due to cloud field
constexpr int fgness = 19; // observation too far from guess
constexpr int seaice = 20; // observation based sea ice detection, also flags land points
constexpr int track = 21; // observation removed as inconsistent with the rest of track
constexpr int buddy = 22; // observation rejected by the buddy check
constexpr int derivative = 23; // observation removed due to metadata derivative value
constexpr int profile = 24; // observation rejected by at least one profile QC check
constexpr int onedvar = 25; // observation failed to converge in 1dvar check
constexpr int bayesianQC = 26; // observation failed due to Bayesian background check
constexpr int modelobthresh = 27; // observation failed modelob threshold check
constexpr int history = 28; // observation failed when compared with historical data
constexpr int processed = 29; // observation processed but deliberately H(x) not calculated

```

<https://github.com/JCSDA/ufo/blob/develop/src/ufo/filters/QCflags.h>



# Diagnostics

Check output log file:

## QC counts for surface pressure

```
QC SfcPCorrected stationPressure: 66147 missing values.  
QC SfcPCorrected stationPressure: 549 rejected by pre QC.  
QC SfcPCorrected stationPressure: 533 rejected by first-guess check.  
QC SfcPCorrected stationPressure: 13122 rejected by difference check.  
QC SfcPCorrected stationPressure: 54233 passed out of 134584 observations.
```

## QC counts for satwnd (U component)

```
QC Satwnd windEastward: 413874 rejected by pre QC.  
QC Satwnd windEastward: 4282 out of bounds.  
QC Satwnd windEastward: 170237 removed by thinning.  
QC Satwnd windEastward: 176 rejected by first-guess check.  
QC Satwnd windEastward: 7468 passed out of 596037 observations.
```

## Cost function and norm reduction

```
Quadratic cost function: J ( 1) = 507631.5061956716  
Quadratic cost function: Jb ( 1) = 6.828370375967046  
Quadratic cost function: JoJc ( 1) = 507624.6778252956  
Quadratic cost function: J ( 2) = 495129.1315379007  
Quadratic cost function: Jb ( 2) = 39.53971478609463  
Quadratic cost function: JoJc ( 2) = 495089.5918231146  
Quadratic cost function: J ( 3) = 478221.3655824636  
.....  
  
Norm reduction ( 1) = 1.280374518688759  
Norm reduction ( 2) = 0.9192503145984233  
Norm reduction ( 3) = 0.8992375745724203  
Norm reduction ( 4) = 0.8075275442766622  
Norm reduction ( 5) = 0.6653240040986598  
.....
```

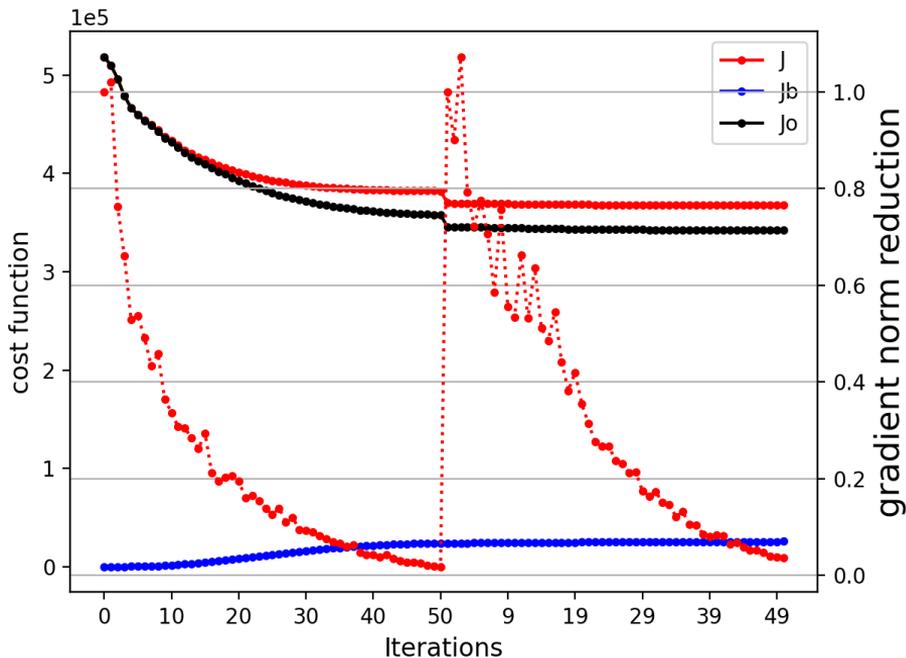
# Diagnostics

Check cost function and norm reduction:

Under **graphics**:

— standalone

— plot\_cost\_grad.py



# Diagnostics

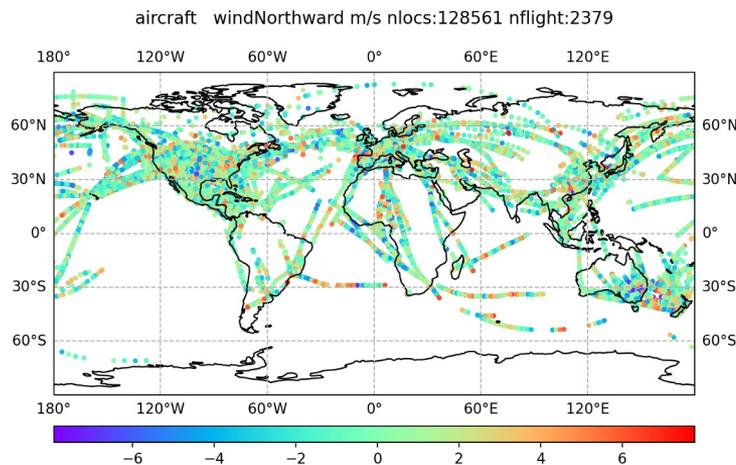
Check observation departures figures:

Under **graphics**:

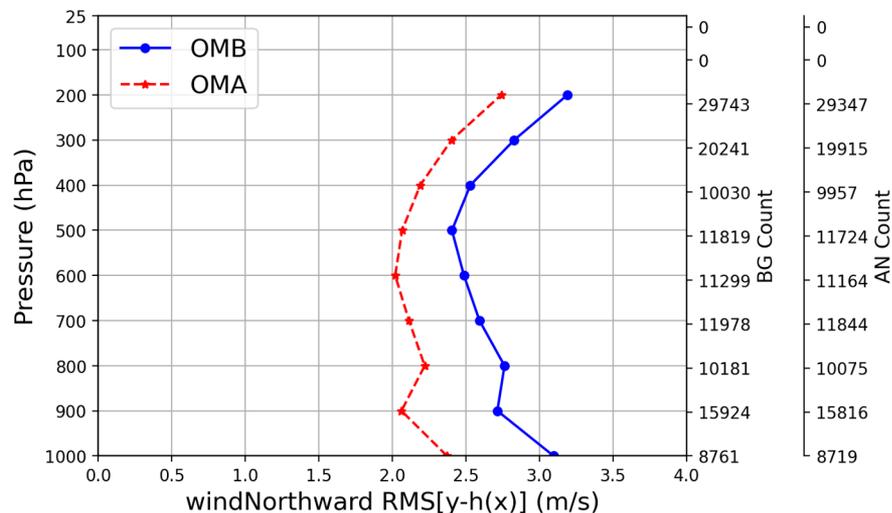
└─ standalone

└─ plot\_diag.py

## OmA distribution



## RMS of OmB/OmA profile



For more scripts for diagnostics, check  
<https://github.com/JCSDA/mpas-jedi/tree/develop/graphics/standalone>