# Wind Stress and Wind Stress Curl Over the California Current 

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#### Abstract

Historical surface marine wind observations are summarized by 1-degree square areas and months to describe the seasonal distribution of wind stress over the California Current. Off the coasts of southern California and Baja California, an alongshore equatorward component of surface wind stress is present throughout the year. The distributions of wind stress north of Cape Mendocino are characterized by marked changes in direction and magnitude between summer and winter. The predominant wind stress maximum shifts northward coherently from off Point Conception in March to south of Cape Blanco in September, and extends approximately 500 km in the offshore direction and $1,000 \mathrm{~km}$ in the alongshore direction. Maximum values of surface wind stress occur during July near Cape Mendocino.

The wind stress curl is positive near the cosst and negative in the region offshore. A line of zero wind stress curl parallels the coast 200 to 300 km offshore, except off central Baja California. The patterns of wind stress curl are consistent with the existence of an equatorward Sverdrup transport offshore and a poleward transport near the coast.


## INTRODUCTION

Spatial variation of surface wind stress has long been recognized as a fundamental quantity in discussions of the wind-driven ocean circulation. Sverdrup's (1947) transport balance relates the vertically integrated meridional mass transport in the interior ocean to the open ocean wind stress curl. Munk (1950) extended the theory to a closed basin and estimated the mass transports for several oceanic circulations from a knowledge of the wind stress alone. Recent theoretical developments have attemped to explain the well-known westward intensification, but have largely ignored the wind-driven circulation in eastern boundary currents, such as the California Current.
The California Current flows southeastward along the west coast of the United States as one branch of the large anticyclonic gyre in the North Pacific Ocean. The predominant surface current occurs between a cell of high atmospheric pressure to the west and a continental thermal low situated over California. Seasonal variations in the direction and strength of the surface wind are related to shifts in location of the high pressure system and intensification of the semipermanent thermal low.

The basic flow of the California Current system may be described in terms of the local wind stress (Reid et al. 1958). The equatorward surface current and poleward undercurrent are typical of eastern boundary currents (Wooster and Reid 1963). Munk (1950) has suggested that the average wind distribution off California is consistent with the existence of an equatorward surface current offshore and a poleward current inshore. However,

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lack of an adequate data base has precluded a detailed analysis of the relationships among the distributions of surface wind stress, the southward flowing California Current, and the northward flowing countercurrent which appears seasonally off the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington.
A related phenomenon in eastern boundary currents is the process of coastal upwelling. The role of upwelling in bringing nutrients into the surface layers where they are available for organic production is widely recognized. According to the simplified model (Sverdrup 1938), equatorward wind stress parallel to the coast induces flow in the surface Ekman layer of the ocean which is deflected offshore by the earth's rotation (Ekman 1905). When this occurs over an expanse of coast where horizontal surface flow cannot compensate for that driven offshore, the balance is maintained by upwelling of subsurface water. Smith (1968) suggested that wind stress, being the driving force in this mechanism, may be the most important single variable in coastal upwelling.
Previous estimates of the surface wind stress over the oceans have been based primarily on wind data taken from the U.S. Hydrographic Office Pilot Chart wind roses (Hidaka 1958; Hellerman 1967). The large-scale features evident in these distributions are consistent with the occurrence of the major cyclonic and anticyclonic circulations in the oceans. However, the coarse spatial and temporal resolution of these data (5-degree quadrilateral space average and 3 -mo time average) are not adequate to describe the locally driven processes evident in the California Current system.
Wooster and Reid (1963) used Hidaka's estimates of surface wind stress to calculate the offshore Ekman transport and described the locations and seasonal timing of the major coastal upwelling regimes in terms of
these "upwelling indices." Bakun (1973) extended the concept of the upwelling index by computing estimates of Ekman transport from routinely available analyzed surface atmospheric pressure fields. Temporal fluctuations are well described by these data. However, both the derived quantities based on Hidaka's wind stress data and Bakun's upwelling indices suffer from an inability to characterize small-scale features of the Ekman transport field, particularly near the coast. For example, where these data may indicate surface divergence on the large scale, smaller scale surface convergence might exist, with associated effects on distributions of organisms within the coastal upwelling zone.

This report provides more detailed descriptions of the surface wind stress distributions over the California Current. The study differs from previous work by calculating monthly mean values on a 1 -degree square area basis. Surface marine wind observations have been utilized in the computations. Roden (1974) evaluated the surface wind stress on a 1 -degree latitude-longitude grid. However, Roden's distributions were derived from monthly mean surface atmospheric pressure analyses based on a 5 -degree latitude-longitude grid. Thus, any information concerning space scales smaller than 5 degrees is due to the particular interpolation scheme used to refine the data to a 1 -degree grid, rather than due to observed data.
The monthly mean data described in this report adequately resolve the seasonal cycle, which is the dominant time scale for coastal upwelling (Mooers et al. 1976). The high resolution in space and time may provide the observational background for more detailed investigations of the relationships among the local wind stress distributions, the equatorward surface current offshore, the poleward surface and subsurface flow inshore, and distributions of certain species of fishes, such as the northern anchovy, Engraulis mordax, and the Pacific mackerel, Scomber japonicus.

## DATA REDUCTION

The monthly mean distributions of surface wind stress presented in Appendix I are based on summaries of data contained in the National Climatic Center's file of surface marine observations (Tape Data Family-11). The total file contains approximately 40 million individual ship reports dating from the mid-19th century. Over 1 million of the reports are within the area of the California Current system.
I have compiled long-term composite monthly fields of surface wind stress on a 1 -degree square area basis within the geographical area outlined in Figure 1. The data grid extends from lat. $20^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ to $50^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and parallels the coastline configuration, extending 10 degrees of longitude in the offshore direction. Each 1-degree quadrilateral is centered on a whole degree of latitude and longitude. Approximately $25^{\circ}$; of the total available reports contain positions recorded to the nearest whole degree of latitude and longitude. The grid orientation used in this study
thus minimizes spatial bias which might be introduced by summarizing the data according to the Marsden square numbering system.

The historical data contain errors in position, measurement, and processing. A single pass editor was used to remove gross errors in the data, including duplicate reports ( $0.5 \%$ ), position errors ( $0.1 \%$ ), and measurement errors $(0.5 \%)$. Erroneous wind directions and wind speeds greater than $100 \mathrm{~m} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$ were removed. Reports of variable winds were treated as calms.
An estimate of the surface wind stress was calculated for each wind velocity report according to the bulk formula:

$$
\begin{equation*}
(\tau,, \tau,)=\rho_{a} C_{b}\left(\left|\vec{W}_{10}\right| U_{10},\left|\vec{W}_{10}^{\prime}\right| V_{10}\right) \tag{1}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $\tau_{x}$ and $\tau_{V}$ denote the eastward and northward components of stress, $\rho_{a}$ is the density of air which was considered to have a constant value of $0.00122 \mathrm{~g} \mathrm{~cm}^{-3}$, $\left|\vec{W}_{t 11}\right|$ is the observed wind speed, and $U_{11}$ and $V_{10}$ are the eastward and northward components of the wind velocity measured at a height of 10 m . The empirical drag coefficient $C_{D}$, referred to the $10-\mathrm{m}$ level, was given a constant value of 0.0013 (Kraus 1972).
The resultant long-term monthly mean wind stress vectors were computed as the arithmetic means by east and north components of all available reports from 1850 to 1972 within a 1 -degree square area. The appropriate average is defined in Equation (2):

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left(\bar{\tau}_{v}, \bar{\tau}_{y}\right)=\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^{\cup}\left(\tau_{2}, \tau_{y}\right) \tag{2}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $N$ is the total number of reports within a 1-degree square area and month. The values $\left(\tau_{1}, \tau_{y}\right)_{i}$ were evaluated according to Equation (1). A mean value for each long-term month and square is therefore formed from a data set which is independent of ali other months and squares. The monthly fields of surface wind stress are displayed in Appendix I as vector quantities (Charts 1 to 12) and as east (Charts 13 to 24) and north (Charts 25 to 36) components. No attempt has been made to smooth the fields, either by removing data which do not appear to fit the distributions or by applying objective smoothing procedures. The mean values were contoured by computer and "bull's-eyes" in the contours, even where they possibly reflect erroneous data, were left in the charts as indications of the general degree of consistency in the composite distributions. The bull's-eyes may reflect either a paucity of ship observations, or extreme variability associated with inadequate sampling of strong winds.
The spatial distribution of observations is biased in that "ship of opportunity" reports are generally confined to coastwise shipping lanes. Contours indicating the total numbers of observations per 1 -degree square area are shown in Figure 2. The highest density of reports is found within 300 km of the coast, exceeding $40,000 \mathrm{ob}-$ servations per 1 -degree square in the area south of Point Conception. The number of reports per 1 -degree square


Figure 1.-Chart of the west coast of the United States showing the grid of 1 -degree squares used for summaries of wind observations. Large dots indicate squares for which frequency diagrams are displayed in Figures 9-12.


Figure 2.-Distribution of observations per 1-degree square. The contour interval is $\mathbf{2 , 5 0 0}$ observations. Values greater than 5,000 are shaded.
per month varies from less than 20 (in January off Vancouver Island) to more than 3,800 (in May off Los Angeles). A significant increase in the number of observations is evident along the shipping route between San Francisco and Hawaii. Less than $20 \%$ of the vector means are based on fewer than 50 observations per 1-degree square per month. Some temporal bias may also exist, since approximately $50 \%$ of the total reports have been taken since 1945. However, the general coherence of the resulting vector fields indicates that the composite wind stress distributions can be used to describe the dominant seasonal cycle in the California Current system.
The historical surface marine observations used in this study have been obtained primarily from ship logs, ship weather reporting forms, and published ship observations. The reports differ markedly in method and precision of measurement, ranging from observations made aboard 19th century vessels, to those taken aboard modern oceanographic research ships. Possible errors in wind measurement have been summarized by Hantel (1970). These include influences of anemometer height, atmospheric stability, wind gusts, and duration of the observation. Sources of error in wind estimates include the wind effects observed, error in determining the true wind from the observed apparent wind, and the unavoidable subjectivity of the observer.
A substantial portion of the historical data consists of wind reports based on the antiquated Beaufort wind force scale (Kinsman 1968). Table 1 lists the conversion

| Table 1.-Wind speed equivalents of <br> Beaufort force estimates in <br> and meters per second. |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | ---: |
| Beaufort | Knots | $\mathrm{ms}^{-1}$ |
|  |  |  |
| 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| 1 | 2 | 0.9 |
| 2 | 5 | 2.4 |
| 3 | 9 | 4.4 |
| 4 | 13 | 6.7 |
| 5 | 18 | 9.3 |
| 6 | 24 | 12.3 |
| 7 | 30 | 15.5 |
| 8 | 37 | 18.9 |
| 9 | 44 | 22.6 |
| 10 | 52 | 26.4 |
| 11 | 60 | 30.5 |
| 12 | 68 | 34.8 |

scale between the Beaufort number and the equivalent wind speed in knots and meters per second. These estimates are equivalent to a wind speed measurement at a height of $10 \mathrm{~m} .{ }^{2}$

Based on the documentation for the National Climatic Center's data file (TDF-11), ${ }^{3}$ a determination was made of the number of wind observations estimated and those actually measured by an anemometer. Approximately $35 \%$ of the reports in this study consisted of Beaufort

[^0]wind force estimates. An additional $53 \%$ of the reports were estimated wind speeds which did not correspond to the Beaufort wind force scale. Less than $12 \%$ of the total reports consisted of measured quantities.
In addition to the errors introduced by the necessary calculation of true wind from the measured apparent wind, the reported directions varied in precision. Resolution varied from $\pm 11.25^{\circ}$ to $\pm 5^{\circ}$ corresponding to observations based on 16 points of a 32 -point compass and a 36 -point compass, respectively.

The above considerations lead to the conclusion that random observational errors may be as large as real nonseasonal fluctuations in the distributions of surface wind stress. The problem may be formalized by expressing the individual stress estimates $\tau_{x}$ and $\tau_{y}$ as the sums of monthly mean values $\bar{\tau}_{x}$ and $\bar{\tau}_{y}$, deviations from the monthly means $\tau_{x}^{\prime}$ and $\tau_{y}^{\prime}$, and error terms $\tau_{x}^{\epsilon}$ and $\tau^{\epsilon}$. The second and higher moment statistics will consist of the nonzero correlations between the deviations from the monthly means and the error terms. If the observational errors are greater than the real fluctuations, then the standard deviations of the monthly means will reflect observational noise rather than actual nonseasonal variability. However, provided that these errors are not systematic, the resultant first moment statistics will be the appropriate estimates of the monthly mean wind stress.

The standard error of the mean provides a more appropriate quantitative measure of the relation between the standard deviation of a set of measurements and the precision of the mean value of the data set (Young 1962). The standard errors of the means are defined by:

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left(S_{\bar{\tau}_{v}}, S_{\bar{\tau}_{v}}\right)=\left(S_{\tau} / \sqrt{x}, S_{\tau_{v}} / \sqrt{N}\right) \tag{3}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $S_{\bar{\tau}_{v}}$ and $S_{\bar{\tau}_{v}}$ are the standard errors of the means of the eastward and northward components, respectively, $S_{\tau_{x}}$ and $S_{\tau_{,}}$are the standard deviations, and $N$ is the number of observations. Large values of $N$ and small values of $S_{\tau_{x}}$ and $S_{\boldsymbol{\tau}_{v}}$ correspond to mean values $\bar{\tau}_{x}$ and $\bar{\tau}_{v}$ which closely approximate the population means.

The computed standard errors of the means and numbers of observations of each 1-degree square area and long-term month are tabulated in Appendix II. Values less than 0.1 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ occur throughout a large portion of the summary area, although spatial and seasonal dependence is evident. Standard errors greater than 0.1 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ occur over large areas north of Cape Mendocino and between 500 and $1,000 \mathrm{~km}$ off the coast of Baja California. High values are generally associated with regions of sparse date, although inadequate sampling of intense storms may also lead to large values. Typical ratios of the standard error to the mean stress ( $S_{\bar{\tau}_{x}} / \bar{\tau}_{x}$ ) range from 0.01 off southern California to 1.0 offshore from Cape Blanco. Near Cape Mendocino, this ratio varies between 0.02 and 0.10 . Minimum values adjacent to the coast south of lat. $40^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and along the shipping lane between San Francisco and Hawaii are well correlated with the distribution of observations shown in Figure 2.

## DEPENDENCE OF STRESS ESTIMATES ON $C_{D}$

A constant drag coefficient was used to compute the surface wind stress data displayed in Appendix I. Stress calculations were made for each wind report and then averaged to form the resultant monthly mean vectors. Different results might have been obtained if the stress were calculated from monthly mean wind ace or if $p$. fects of atmospheric stability were considered. Tinese as pects are discussed below.
Errors associated with the observational data used in this study place certain limitations on the form of the bulk exchange formula expressed in Equation (1). If measurement errors are large, there may be little value in refining the parameterization by replacing $C_{D}$, by a variable drag coefficient which is a function of stability or wind speed. Even with a constant $C_{D}$, the bulk formula contains nonlinearities. Therefore, the drag coefficient must be appropriate for the particular timeaveraged winds used in the calculations. That is, a drag coefficient appropriate for synoptic wind observations would not be appropriate for winds averaged over a month.

## Effects of Averaging

The empirically derived transfer coefficient $C_{D}$, determined by eddy correlation and profile methods, is based on wind measurements averaged over periods of 30 to 60 min . Pond (1975) indicated that the appropriate values of $\left|\vec{W}_{10}\right|, U_{10}$, and $V_{10}$ should be obtained over a period of a few minutes to a few hours at most. If the surface stress were calculated using winds averaged over much longer periods, a higher drag coefficient would be required. The surface stress calculated from a monthly mean surface wind field will be significantly less than the surface stress field calculated as the mean of the individual stress estimates, if the same drag coefficient is used and all other parameters are held constant.
The difference described above has been determined for the data used in this study. For each 1-degree square area and long-term month, the following ratio has been calculated:

$$
\begin{equation*}
\left(C_{D}\right)_{\text {equ }}=|\overline{\bar{\tau}}| /\left[\rho_{\mathrm{a}}\left(\left|\overline{\bar{W}_{10}}\right|\right)^{2}\right] \tag{4}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $\left.\vec{\tau}\right|_{\text {is }}$ the magnitude of the monthly mean surface stress, $\left|\overline{\bar{W}_{10}}\right|$ is the magnitude of the monthly mean surface wind, and ( $C_{D}$ ) equ is an equivalent drag coefficient. This is the value which would be necessary to make the stress values calculated from the monthly mean wind data agree with the values calculated as the means of individual stress estimates.

Values of $\left(C_{D}\right)$ equ for the months of June and December are shown in Figures 3 and 4. The values are significantly different from the constant value of $C_{D}=0.0013$ employed in this study. In all cases, ( $C_{D}$ ) equ is greater than $C_{D}$. Spatial and seasonal
variability is marked. There is a tendency for much higher values in the northern section of the grid than in the southern area. Large values of ( $C_{D}$ ) equ are more evident in December than in June. Geographical and seasonal variations in the quantity $\left(C_{D}\right)$ equ agree with the general geographical and seasonal fluctuations in metmorlogical conditions over the northeast Pacific Ocray. this would indicate that a large part of the monthly variance of the wind stress data is due to actual intramonth fluctuations and not due to observational errors. If a resultant surface wind stress were calculated from the monthly mean wind field, these calculations imply that the wind stress estimates would be underestimated, on average, by as much as $50 \%$ to $100 \%$. The departures would be even larger off Oregon and Washington.

## Effect of Atmospheric Stability

Investigations on the functional form of the drag coefficient have alternately suggested constant values, or a dependence on wind speed. Wilson (1960) gave a detailed review of the available data and adopted values of $C_{l}=0.0024 \pm 0.005$ for strong winds and $C_{D}=0.0015$ $\pm 0.0008$ for light winds. Smith (1970) proposed a constant value of $C_{D}=(1.35 \pm 0.34) \times 10^{-3} . \mathrm{Wu}(1969)$ adopted the form $C_{D}=\left(0.5 \times \bar{U}_{10}\right) \times 10^{-3}$. Considering the large scatter in the open ocean determinations of $C_{D}$, the lack of conclusive data at wind speeds greater than $15 \mathrm{~ms}^{-1}$, and the lack of agreement among individual observers, a constant value for the neutral drag coefficient was used in this study.
Recent investigations by Davidson (1974) and Denman and Miyake (1973) have demonstrated the dependence of the drag coefficient on atmospheric stability and the spectral shape of the ocean wave field. A generally accepted formulation of the dependence of $C_{D}$ on wave properties does not seem well enough established to be incorporated in the calculations of surface wind stress based on historical ship observations. However, effects of atmospheric stability on the momentum exchange may be significant in regions where seasonal upwelling typically produces a stable boundary layer.

The specific effects of atmospheric stability on the exchange of momentum have not been completely determined and are still under investigation. However, for a given wind speed, the effect of stable (unstable) stratification is to decrease (increase) the magnitude of the momentum exchange (surface wind stress) across the atmosphere-ocean interface.

In order to investigate the effects of atmospheric stability, the monthly mean fields of surface wind stress were recomputed, replacing the constant value $C_{D}$ in Equation (1) by a coefficient varying with atmospheric stability. Deardorff (1968) defined the bulk Richardson number as an appropriate dimensionless measure of atmospheric stability. Deardorff's method was adopted to parameterize the dependence of the drag coefficient on stability, while neutral stability was assumed when the absolute value of the air-sea temperature difference was
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Figure 3.-Equivalent neutral drag coefficient for June. The plotted value is the drag coefficient ( $\times 10^{3}$ ) appropriate for wind observations averaged over a month. The contour interval is $\mathbf{2 . 5}$.
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Figure 4.-Equivalent neutral drag coefficient for December. The plotted value is the drag coefficient ( $\times 10^{3}$ ) appropriate for wind observations averaged over a month. The contour interval is $\mathbf{2 . 5}$.
less than $1^{\circ} \mathrm{C}$. Details of the calculations will be reported elsewhere.

The effect of atmospheric stability was computed as a percentage increase (decrease) in the magnitude of the monthly mean surface wind stress above (below) the appropriate neutral values. The following ratio was calculated:

$$
\begin{equation*}
R=\left(\frac{|\vec{\tau}|_{\text {var }}}{|\vec{\tau}|_{\text {neut }}}-1\right) \times 100 \tag{5}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $\vec{\Gamma} \mid$ var is the magnitude of the monthly mean surface wind stress calculated using a drag coefficient which varies with stability, and $|\vec{\tau}|_{\text {neu }}$ is the magnitude of the monthly mean surface wind stress computed with a constant (neutral) coefficient. A value of $R=0.0$ corresponds to neutrally stable conditions.
The ratio defined by Equation (5) is displayed in Figures 5 and 6 for the months of June and December, respectively. The average percentage difference is between 2 and $5 \%$. Values greater than $10 \%$ are rare. In December, the values are positive, indicating unstable conditions. Negative values occur in June. These are related to the stable stratification induced by positive air-sea temperature differences within the coastal upwelling zone. The effects of atmospheric stability determined in this study are less than the values of 6 to $15 \%$ reported by Husby and Seckel (1975) for Ocean Weather Station "Victor," but consistent with the values of less than $5 \%$ reported by Dorman et al. (1974) for Ocean Weather Station "November."

## WIND STRESS DISTRIBUTIONS

The long-term composite monthly mean fields of surface wind stress are displayed in Appendix I as resultant vectors (Charts 1 to 12), east components (Charts 13 to 24), and north components (Charts 25 to 36). These data indicate two characteristic features. The mean stress tends to be directed equatorward along the coast from Cape Mendocino to Baja California throughout the year. Off the coasts of Oregon and Washington, the wind stress exhibits marked seasonal variability in both magnitude and direction.
The distributions of surface wind stress off Baja California have been previously discussed by Bakun and Nelson (1975). ${ }^{4}$ They concluded that most of the seasonal variability is in magnitude rather than direction. The mean surface wind stress tends to have an alongshore, equatorward component during all months, implying conditions generally favorable for coastal upwelling throughout the year. This is contrasted with the situation to the north. Off the coasts of Oregon and Washing. ton, patterns of surface wind stress change seasonally. From December to February, the stress impinges on the

[^1]coast at Cape Blanco, forming the southern boundary of the low pressure system which develops in the Gulf of Alaska during the winter. From May through September, the surface wind stress veers toward the south. The components are directed onshore and equatorward. The months of March-April and October-November appear as transition periods. The surface wind stress is directed primarily onshore off Washington and Oregon during these months.

The most evident feature in these distributions is the position and extent of the predominant wind stress maximum. For purposes of discussion, this maximum is defined by the 1.0 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ contour and is highlighted by light shading in Charts 1 to 12. Large values of stress occurring between lat. $45^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and $50^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ during winter are probably associated with either high winds or sparse data, and will be ignored in this discussion.

The maximum is first evident in March, south of Point Conception. During succeeding months, the maximum trengthens, increases in size, and shifts northward. In A pril, values exceeding 1.0 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ cover an area from Point Conception to San Francisco. Winds off Oregon have veered, suggesting an alongshore component and implying conditions generally favorable for coastal upwelling. The pattern of surface wind stress is repeated in May. The northern boundary of the central maximum reaches the coast south of Cape Blanco.

The mean wind stress reaches maximum intensity during June and July off Cape Mendocino, where characteristic values exceed 1.5 dynes $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. The large-scale maximum extends approximately 500 km in the offshore direction and $1,000 \mathrm{~km}$ in the longshore direction. A more intense coastal maximum ( $|\overrightarrow{\vec{\tau}}| \geq 1.5$ dynes $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ ) is coherent over an area approximately one-fifth this size. Maximum values of mean surface wind stress typically accur 200 to 300 km off the coast, rather than adjacent to the coast. This feature was previously observed by Munk 1950) and Reid et al. (1958). Mean distributions for August and September suggest relaxing conditions; the maximum is reduced in extent and intensity. These months still exhibit a degree of equatorward stress along the coasts of Oregon and Washington, but in October, the direction backs to the north. The poleward components correspond to onshore Ekman transport and subsequent downwelling at the coast. The distributions for November, December, January, and February indicate characteristic winter conditions. Mean values are typically less than 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. High winds associated with intense storm activity in the North Pacific Ocean result in regions of mean surface wind stress exceeding 1.0 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ off the coasts of Oregon and Washington.

Seasonality of the surface wind stress and its assuciation with coastal upwelling are easily observed along the northern section of the grid. Large changes in mean direction are apparent. Maximum magnitudes occur during the winter. Winds favorable for coastal upwelling "ccur from April to September. During the remaining months, the direction of the mean surface wind stress corresponds to downwelling at the coast.

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Figure 5.-The effect of atmospheric stability on surface wind stress for June. Plotted values are the percentage increase (decrease) in the surface wind stress above (below) neutrally stable conditions. The contour interval is 10.0. Positive values correspond to unstable conditions. Negative values are shaded.

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Figure 6.-The effect of atmospheric stability on surface wind stress for December. Plotted values are the percentage increase (decrease) in the
surface wind stress above (below) neutrally stable conditions. The contour interval is 10.0 . Positive values correspond to unstable conditions. Negative values are shaded.

The coast along southern California and Baja California is characterized by winds favorable for upwelling throughout the year. Peak values of surface wind stress occur in Apr 1 and May. Values exceeding 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ are evident from February to July. A local maximum immediately north of Punta Eugenia is easily observed in May. This fature is consistent throughout the year. A region of loc:1 wind stress minima is indicated along the coast south of Point Conception. This feature corresponds in location with the semipermanent cyclonic eddy which dominates the ocean surface circulation in the Souther:1 California Bight (Reid et al. 1958).

## Spatial aid Temporal Variability

Spatial and seasonal variability of the monthly distributions $\because$ ill be described in terms of standard errors of the means : Equation (3)), constancy of the wind stress, and frequency diagrams for selected 1-degree square areas and nionths. In general, these data indicate greater variability in magnitude and direction in the region north of Ciape Mendocino than in the area to the south. Summer distributions are characterized by well-defined mean dire tions and magnitudes. Broad-banded frequency his:ograms are typical of winter months.

The degre of variability in direction and magnitude of the surfac, wind stress is reflected in the spatial distributions w the standard errors of the means. In regions outside of the primary shipping lanes (see Fig. 2), monthly man distributions are based on approximately the same number of observations per 1 degree square area. If one assumes that there are no systematic sampling error: in these regions, then the magnitudes of the computed itandard errors of the means should be a function of the wind stress variability. Accordingly, standard errors to the north of Cape Mendocino are larger by a factor of 2 to: (Appendix II) than those to the south of Cape Mendocino. Thus, the data imply a greater degree of variation in the direction and magnitude of the surface wind stress off Oregon and Washington than off California.
A contrast between winter and summer conditions is also evident. South of Cape Mendocino, magnitudes of the standard errors of the means remain nearly constant throughout the year. Off Oregon and Washington, the computed values decrease to a minimum during the summer, and increase to a maximum during the winter. Typical values range from $0.10 \mathrm{dyne}^{\mathrm{cm}^{-2}}$ in June to 0.30 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ in December.
Similar features of the large-scale temporal and spatial variations are evident in monthly distributions of constancy of the wind stress as defined by the ratio of the magnitude of the average stress to the average mag. nitude of the stress. Figures 7 and 8 show the patterns for June and December. During December, values greater than 0.5 occur south of Point Conception. To the north, wind stress constancy decreases to relatively small values, implying a high degree of directional variability. An increase in directional constancy is indicated during

June. Values greater than 0.50 extend from Baja California to Vancouver Island. Values less than 0.50 occur only in the northwest section of the grid. South of Cape Mendocino, the ratios approach a value of 1.0 , implying very little variation in wind stress direction.
The patterns of wind stress constancy indicate possible error in estimates of the total mechnical energy transfer at the air-sea interface. In the region off California, the magnitude of the mean vector wind stress appears to be a good estimator of the total stress acting on the sea surface. However, in the northern regions of the data grid, these data show that the magnitude of the mean vector wind stress underestimates the total stress acting on the sea surface. This has important implications for mixed-layer modelling, in which the input of turbulent energy depends on the total stress acting on the sea surface (Denman 1973), the direction of the surface stress, and the rate at which the stress is applied to the sea surface (Niiler 1975).
The large-scale spatial and temporal variations in surface wind stress distributions are finally described in terms of selected frequency diagrams. Data for the 10 squares indicated in Figure 1 are displayed in Figures 9 to 12 . Figures 9 and 10 show data for June and December taken from the five squares indicated in the inset. Similar data at five different locations are presented for July and January in Figures 11 and $12 .{ }^{5}$
Available wind stress data have been classed by direction and magnitude for each 1-degree square area and month. Relative frequencies have been determined for 16 direction bands and for 11 magnitude bands. A category for calm winds also includes variable winds. The direction bands are $22.5^{\circ}$ wide and the magnitude bands correspond to equivalent wind speed intervals of $2.0 \mathrm{~m} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$.
The relative frequency surfaces shown in these figures display contours of percentage of total reports falling within a given direction and magnitude band. The $2.5 \%$ and $7.55^{\circ}$ contours are indicated by a solid line. Dashed line contours indicate relative frequencies of $5.0 \%$ and $10.0 c_{i}$. The mean vector magnitude and direction is indicated by an arrow. Note that directions are defined with the oceanographic convention (i.e., the direction toward which the wind blows).

The histograms shown to the right of each frequency surface display relative frequencies for magnitude at the top, and direction at the bottom. Relative percent is labelled along the ordinate. Midpoints of the magnitude and direction class intervals are labelled on the abscissa.
The contrast between winter and summer distributions in the southern section of the grid appears as a change in the character of the frequency surfaces (Figs. 9, 10). In general, the number of contours indicated for June is greater than the number of contours appearing in December. Evidently, the wind stress is relatively constant in magnitude and direction during the summer

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Figure 7.-Wind stress constancy for June. The plotted values are defined as the ratios of the vector means to the scalar means. The contour interval is 0.25 .
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Figure 8.-Wind stress constancy for December. The plotted values are defined as the ratios of the vector means to the scalar means. The contour interval is $\mathbf{0 . 2 5}$.


Figure 9.-Relative frequency surfaces and frequency histograms for June. Data are shown for the 1 -degree squares labelled 1 through 5 in the upper left inset. Contours of relative frequency are drawn at intervals of $2.5 \%$. Mean vector wind stress is indicated by an arrow.
months. A slight shift in direction and magnitude of the wind stress is indicated between summer and winter. The mean stress in December is directed more toward the south, and the magnitude has decreased.
The frequency histograms also show these features. During June, the direction histogram is characteristically narrow-banded. Over $70 \%$ of the observations may be concentrated within three direction intervals. In December, the observations tend to be spread over a wider range of directions. The histograms are broader and the peaks in direction are less well-defined. Peak magnitudes in June are generally one class interval larger
than peak magnitudes in December. However, the winter distributions are characterized by an increase in relative frequency at high values of wind stress magnitude.
A similar pattern of contrasts between summer and winter distributions is apparent in the northern section of the grid. As shown in Figures 11 and 12, the direction histograms are generally well-defined during the summer, although bimodal distributions are evident. During winter, observations are nearly uniformly spread among all directions. There is a lack of consistency in the frequency surfaces in Figure 12. Direction histograms for


Figure 10.-Relative frequency surfaces and frequency histograms for December. Data are shown for the 1 -degree squares labelled 1 through 5 in the upper left inset. Contours of relative frequency are drawn at intervals of $2.5 \%$. Mean vector wind stress is indicated by an arrow.

January are broad and flat and the peaks which generally characterize the summer distributions are missing. Mean directions shift from equatorward to poleward between summer and winter. A complete reversal in the mean direction occurs at point 7 (Figs. 11, 12). A shift in magnitude is equally pronounced. Peak magnitudes are higher in January than in July indicating a greater contribution of high wind speeds in January.
The above discussion adds a new dimension to the seasonal descriptions of the surface wind stress distributions over the California Current. Pronounced
seasonal variations in magnitude and direction of the monthly mean wind stress are indicated along the entire west coast of the United States. These changes are most evident off the coasts of Oregon and Washington. In addition, these data suggest month to month changes in the large-scale spatial variability. Frequency histograms for direction and magnitude are broad and flat during the winter months, and along the northern coast. Welldefined peaks in magnitude and direction characterize the distributions during the summer and along the southern coast.

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Figure 11.-Relative frequency surfaces and frequency histograms for July. Data are shown for the 1 -degree squares labelled 6 through 10 in the upper left inset. Contours of relative frequency are drawn at intervals of $2.5 \%$. Mean vector wind stress is indicated by an arrow.

## Seasonal Cycle at the Coast

Time series of the surface wind stress within the 1degree square areas immediately adjacent to the coast are displayed in Figure 13 as the alongshore component, and in Figure 14 as the onshore component. For these displays, the vector means have been resolved into components parallel and perpendicular to the coast. The coastline angles were determined by visually fitting a line to the dominant trend of the coast within each 1 degree square. The months are indicated along the tops of the figures. The latitudes of the 1-degree squares are
indicated on the right and left sides of the figures. Negative values are shaded and indicate equatorward along. shore stress in Figure 13 and offshore stress in Figure 14.

Several characteristic features are apparent in these figures. South of lat. $40^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ there is an equatorward component throughout the year, implying conditions favorable for coastal upwelling in all months. Off the coasts of Oregon and Washington, the data suggest that upwelling occurs seasonally between the months of April and September.

Three relative maxima occur in the time/space domain. Off the coast of Baja California, maximum values


Figure 12.-Relative frequency surfaces and frequency histograms for January. Data are shown for the 1 -degree squares labelled 6 through 10 in the upper left inset. Contours of relative frequency are drawn at intervals of $\mathbf{2 . 5 \%}$. Mean vector wind stress is indicated by an arrow.
of wind stress are evident near Punta Eugenia in May. A large maximum occurs just south of Cape Mendocino between May and August. A smaller, local maximum occurs in May and June at lat. $36^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$.
Figure 13 is similar in appearance to a time series of offshore Ekman transport shown by Bakun et al. (1974). They showed a good correlation between the occurrence of maximum offshore transport at lat. $39^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and a suppression of seasonal warming in the adjacent coastal waters during early summer, which is indicative of upwelling. The timing of the central wind stress maximum off the coast from Cape Mendocino agrees with the description of the mean yearly cycle of indicated up-
welling given by Bakun (1973). However, Bakun's data are spatially distorted, and indicate maximum values at lat. $33^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$, long. $119^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ in the middle of the Southern California Bight. The spatial distortion is primarily caused by development of an intense thermal low over southern California during the summer. The influence of this low pressure system, and the effects of coastal mountain ranges distort the analyzed pressure fields used in Bakun's computations.
The time series of alongshore surface wind stress (Fig. 13) suggests a slight tilt, with time and space, to the region of maximum values. This corresponds to a northward shift in the intensity of the surface wind stress from
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April and May off the coast of Baja California to June, July, and August off Cape Mendocino and Cape Blanco.

Figure 14 indicates a tendency for the surface wind stress to be directed onshore throughout the year north of lat. $30^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$. Off the coast of Baja California, surface stress is characterized by offshore components, except between the months of April and October. Offshore components are also apparent in the vicinity of Cape Mendocino and Point Conception. Near these points, abrupt changes in coastline orientation may influence the direction and magnitude of the surface wind stress.

## WIND STRESS CURL

The surface wind stress curl is the forcing function for the vertically integrated mass transport of the winddriven ocean circulation. Under linear, steady-state conditions on the " $\beta$-plane," in the absence of friction and interactions with bottom topography, the meridional component of mass transport ( $M_{y}$ ) is directly proportional to the vertical component of the curl of the wind stress as expressed in Equation (6):

$$
\begin{equation*}
M_{y}=\frac{\vec{k} \cdot \mid \nabla \times \vec{\tau}}{\beta} \tag{6}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $M_{y}$ is the meridional component of the vertically integrated mass transport, $\beta$ is the meridional derivative of the Coriolis parameter $f$, and $\vec{k} \cdot(\nabla \times \vec{r})$ is the vertical component of the wind stress curl. According to the simplified model, positive (negative) wind stress curl is associated with northward (southward) meridional transport. Surface Ekman divergence (convergence) corresponding to positive (negative) wind stress curl is balanced by geostrophic convergence (divergence) in the northward (southward) meridional flow.

Coastal upwelling occurs only at the ocean boundary. However, wind induced upwelling will occur whenever divergence in the surface wind drift is not balanced by other modes of horizontal surface flow. Figure 15 shows a mechanism by which the wind stress curl determines the divergent or convergent nature of the surface wind drift offshore of the primary coastal upwelling zone. A seaward increase in the equatorward wind stress parallel to the coast (Fig. 15A) is characterized by positive wind stress curl. In this situation, the offshore component of Ekman transport increases in the offshore direction, resulting in continued surface divergence. Upwelling is required to maintain the mass balance. If the equatorward longshore surface wind stress decreases in the offshore direction (Fig. 15B), the wind stress curl is negative. Convergence in the surface wind drift will result. Frontal formation and downwelling may occur just offshore of the primary coastal upwelling zone.

Figure 13.-Seasonal cycle of alongshore surface wind stress near the coast. Means of the alongshore components of wind stress were computed by month for the 1 -degree squares immediately adjacent to the coast. Units are dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. The contour interval is 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. Equatorward alongshore stress is shaded. Numbers along ordinate are degrees north latitude.

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Figure 15.-A conceptual diagram of the relationship of wind stress curl to the divergence and convergence of surface Ekman transport offshore of the primary coastal upwelling zone.

Direct measurements of wind stress curl are not available; however, the curl of the monthly mean surface wind stress fields has been computed. The vertical component of the curl of the wind stress in spherical coordinates is defined by:

$$
\begin{equation*}
\vec{k} \cdot\left(\nabla \times \overrightarrow{\tau_{r}}\right)=\frac{1}{R \cos \varphi}\left[\frac{\partial \bar{\tau}_{y}}{\partial \lambda}-\frac{\partial}{\partial \varphi}\left(\bar{\tau}_{x} \cos \varphi\right)\right] \tag{7}
\end{equation*}
$$

where $R$ is the radius of the earth, $\varphi$ and $\lambda$ denote geographic latitude and longitude, respectively, and $\bar{\tau}_{x}$ and $\bar{\tau}_{y}$ denote the eastward and northward components of the mean surface wind stress. A finite difference equation approximating the curl at the grid point $(i, j)$ in Figure 16 is given by:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\vec{k} \cdot\left(\Gamma \times \overline{\overline{\tau_{1.1}}}\right) & =\frac{1}{R \cos \hat{\psi}_{i, j}}\left[\frac{\bar{\tau}_{i+1, j}-\bar{\tau}_{y_{i-1, j}}}{2 \Delta \lambda}\right. \\
& \left.-\left(\frac{\left(\bar{\tau}_{x} \cos \varphi\right)_{1, i+1}-\left(\bar{\tau}_{x} \cos \varphi\right)_{i . j-1}}{2 \Delta \varphi}\right)\right](8)
\end{aligned}
$$

where $\Delta \varphi=\Delta \lambda=1^{\circ}$. The method is similar to calculations described by Hantel (1970). Centered differences were utilized throughout the interior of the data grid. Forward and backward differences were required along the boundaries. As a result, certain artificial features may have been introduced at these boundaries.

## Monthly Curl Distributions

Monthly fields of surface wind stress curl are displayed in Appendix III (Charts 37 to 48). These distributions correspond to the monthly mean wind stress distributions shown in Appendix I. Values are plotted in units of dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km . A value of 1 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$

Figure 14.-Seasonal cycle of onshore surface wind stress near the coast. Means of the onshore components of wind stress were computed by month for the 1 -degree squares immediately adjacent to the coast. Units are dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. The contour interval is 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. Offishore stress is shaded. Numbers along ordinate are degrees north latitude.


Figure 16.-Discretization grid used in calculating the wind stress curl.
per 100 km is equivalent to $1 \times 10^{-i}$ dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-3}$. Negative values of wind stress curl are shaded.

Small scale features evident in these distributions should be viewed with caution. Detail within a single 1degree square area which is not supported by similar values in surrounding squares probably reflects "noise" in the monthly means of surface wind stress. Objective smoothing procedures applied to the monthly mean wind stress fields would result in more homogeneous distributions of wind stress curl. A particular method has been described by Evenson and Veronis (1975).

Characteristic absolute magnitudes of the spatially averaged wind stress curl are $1 \times 10^{-8}$ dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-3}$. This value is approximately a factor of two less than the summertime mean reported by Halpern (1976) for an upwelling region near the Oregon coast. Considering the time and space averages used in the present study, this difference appears to be reasonable. However, the values are consistent with wind stress curl calculations reported by Saunders (1976). The probable errors associated with these estimates of wind stress curl may be calculated from a knowledge of the spatial distributions of standard errors of the (wind stress) component means (see Appendix II). On average, the expected error is $1 \times 10^{-8}$ dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-3}$, with maximum and minimum errors of $4 \times 10^{-8}$ dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-3}$ and $1 \times 10^{-10}$ dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-3}$, respectively. Of course, these values apply to particular individual 1 degree squares. Large values generally correspond to "holes" in the distributions, which are easily seen in the monthly charts. For larger space scales, errors associated with the gradients of the mean wind stress components would tend to cancel. Thus, greater confidence may be expected for the patterns of wind stress curl which are consistent over several degrees of latitude and longitude.

The large-scale features of positive and negative curl along the coast are significant. Important details to note are the sign of the wind stress curl at the coast, and the position of the line of zero wind stress curl. A general feature common to all months is the occurrence, on average, of positive wind stress curl near the coast, and negative curl at some distance offshore. This feature is well developed from May to September. Greater spatial variability is evident in winter distributions.
Existence of an offshore wind stress maximum results in a line of zero wind stress curl approximately parallel to the coast. Positive curl occurs inshore of the maximum wind stress. Negative curl in the offshore region is associated with the anticyclonic atmospheric circulation over the interior ocean. The positive curl near the coast is related to topography and to local features in the surface wind stress distributions.
The distributions from December to March are characterized by positive wind stress curl near the coast from San Francisco to northern Baja California, and south of Punta Eugenia. Large areas of associated Ekman divergence extend several hundred kilometers off the coast. The patterns of wind stress curl are less well behaved near the coasts of Oregon and Washington. However, negative wind stress curl near this coastal region appears to be typical of the distributions during the winter.
During spring and summer upwelling seasons, the dominant patterns of surface wind stress curl are easily recognized. The line of zero wind stress curl parallels the coast approximately 200 to 300 km offshore, along the entire boundary from northern Baja California to Vancouver Island, and from June through September. Yoshida and Mao (1957) placed this line at approximately 500 km from the coast. Considering the coarse resolution (5-degree squares of latitude and longitude) of their data, this disparity is not surprising.
The months of April-May and October-November appear as transitional periods. During transition from spring to summer, the negative curl along the coasts of Oregon and Washington shifts to positive curl. The offshore distribution takes on a more uniform character. Scattered regions of positive and negative curl are replaced by a large area of negative curl. The late fall transition is marked by a total breakdown in the curl distributions within the northern sector of the grid.

Several local (positive) curl maxima are associated with major topographic changes in the coastline configuration. Large values of positive wind stress curl are found near Cape Blanco, Cape Mendocino, San Francisco, and Point Conception. These features may be real, or they may be artifices of the finite difference calculations or the data distributions. However, one does note that near Point Conception, the values of positive wind stress curl are consistent with a decrease in the magnitude of the surface wind stress in the lee of the point. Where areas of positive wind stress curl extend offshore of capes, there would tend to be a continued, although much reduced, level of upwelling outside of the primary coastal upwelling regime.

A region of negative wind stress curl (Ekman convergence) reaches the coast of Baja California between Punta Eugenia and Punta Baja to the north. This feature appears consistently throughout the year. A partial breakdown in this system occurs in August, October, and November. However, considering the probable uncertainties in these derived data, one might reasonably conclude that the coastal region near Punta Eugenia can be characterized in the mean by convergence in the surface wind drift. The distributions of wind stress curl in this area imply favorable conditions for formation of fronts and convergent patches of recently upwelled water.

## Coastal Time Series

The mean annual cycle of wind stress curl near the coast is shown in Figure 17. Positive wind stress curl occurs along most of the coast throughout the year. Exceptions to this generalization are found in the region south of lat. $30^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and between lat. $40^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and $47^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$. The temporal persistence of the negative wind stress curl near Punta Eugenia (lat. $29^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ ) is clearly seen in this time series. A similar feature occurs near the tip of Baja California. Seasonal variation between positive and negative curl is apparent from Cape Mendocino to the Columbia River.
Yoshida and Mao (1957) presented evidence indicating that open-ocean upwelling is related to wind stress curl. This process is distinct from coastal upwelling which is primarily a boundary phenomenon. However, the two mechanisms are not totally independent. In regions where positive wind stress curl occurs, such as between lat. $30^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ and $40^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ throughout the year, and near the coasts of Oregon and Washington during the summer, ascending motion related to the wind-induced divergence offshore enhances the upwelling associated with the more dominant coastal divergence.

## DISCUSSION

Monthly distributions of surface wind stress show an offshore maximum which progressively develops over a large extent of the California Current and shifts northward and intensifies from winter to summer. This process is a primary forcing function for coastal upwelling. Off Baja California, wind-induced surface divergence occurs on average throughout the year. Downwelling occurs near the coast of Vancouver Island, except during the restricted period between May and August when a small equatorward component of surface wind stress is observed.
The major seasonal variations in the magnitude and direction of the surface wind stress can be described

Figure 17.-Seasonal cycle of wind stress curl near the coast. The wind stress curl is shown by month for the 1 -degree squares immediately adjacent to the coast. The calculations were based on the monthly mean surface wind stress distributions. Units are dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{\mathbf{- 2}}$ per 100 km . The contour interval is 0.25 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km . Negative values are shaded. Numbers along ordinate are degrees north latitude.

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simply in terms of the general atmospheric circulation over the northeast Pacific Ocean. Monthly mean surface pressure charts typically show two well-developed pressure cells. A high pressure system over the ocean shifts northward and increases in strength from winter to summer. The center of the cell moves in a northwestward direction. This shift in the large-scale anticyclonic circulation results in the observed winter to summer reversal in the alongshore component of wind off the coasts of Oregon and Washington. A low pressure system is situated over the southwestern United States. This semipermanent thermal low is fully developed over the Central Valley in California during the summer. Cy clonic circulation associated with the low leads to equatorward surface wind stress parallel to the coast. The amplitude of the annual cycle is large. During winter, both of these pressure cells weaken. The high pressure system moves southward and the coasts of Oregon and Washington come under the influence of the intense low pressure system in the Gulf of Alaska.
The primary mechanism controlling the location and strength of the wind stress maximum and the associated coastal upwelling is described by seasonal variations in the gradient between the two pressure cells. During the winter, this gradient is weak. Strong heating over the continent during summer deepens the low and increases the amplitude of the onshore-offshore pressure gradient. As a result of the northward shift and strengthening of the high, and deepening of the low, the region of maximum wind stress moves from the area south of Point Conception to the vicinity of Cape Mendocino. These variations are, of course, a function of differential oceancontinent heating related to the annual cycle of solar radiation.

## Physical Implications

Climate of the adjacent coastal regions is influenced by upwelling. During summer, the dome of high pressure which develops over the North Pacific Ocean favors large-scale subsidence and a strong temperature inversion over the west coast of the United States. This suppresses deep cloud formation and greatly inhibits precipitation. Unpublished distributions of cloud cover," summarized from ship observations, show a large on-shore-offshore gradient in the total cloud amount. Minima occur at the coast. The effect of the large-scale subsidence is noted in the true desert climate of Baja California, and in the almost complete lack of rainfall along the coasts of California, Oregon, and Washington during the summer. Coastal upwelling primarily influences the local climate of the nearshore zone within 10 to 20 km of the coast and contributes to the formation of low stratus clouds and fog typical of much of the coast along California and Oregon.

[^3]A secondary mechanism may account for local intensification of surface wind stress and persistence of coastal upwelling over periods ranging from several weeks to a few months (Bakun 1974). In a simplified positive feedback model, wind stress parallel to the coast brings cold water to the surface and cools the adjacent air. The resulting temperature contrast between the continent and the ocean increases the local pressure gradient. Alongshore surface winds are increased and upwelling is enhanced (Ramage 1971). This mechanism may be slightly modified by the effect of atmospheric stability. In the summertime coastal upwelling zone, the air-sea temperature difference is usually positive. This stable stratification decreases the magnitude of the surface wind stress. The resulting negative feedback may partially offset the increase in surface winds associated with the described changes in the local pressure gradient.

The existence of maximum wind stress some 200 to 300 km from the coast is an interesting feature. Of course, a maximum in the onshore-offshore pressure gradient offshore may explain this phenomenon. Positive feedback associated with wind-induced upwelling extending hundreds of kilometers off the coast may act to intensify the alnngshore winds. However, this feature also suggests a coastal boundary layer which acts to frictionally retard the winds near the coast, leading to a positive wind stress curl in the nearshore region.
A characteristic feature of the wind stress curl distributions is the occurrence of a line of zero curl at some distance from the coast. Observations show positive curl inshore of this line and negative curl in the offshore region. A theoretical analysis suggests that a poleward undercurrent along an eastern boundary is favored by positive wind stress curl along the coast and a poleward decrease in surface heating (Pedlosky 1974a). The monthly distributions of wind stress curl presented in this study are generally consistent with an equatorward Sverdrup flow offshore and a poleward Sverdrup flow near the coast, except in the region from Punta Eugenia to Punta Baja, where the wind stress curl is negative. The general pattern of positive wind stress curl along the coast and observations of the California Countercurrent (Wooster and Jones 1970; Wickham 1975) are consistent with Pedlosky's theory.

The Sverdrup transport balance expressed in Equation (6) may provide a simple and reasonable explanation for the existence of the current-countercurrent system observed along the west coast of the United States. Transport calculations, based on the July wind stress curl data for the line of 1 -degree squares extending offshore of Cape Blanco (lat. $43^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ ), show a net southward transport of $3.5 \times 10^{12} \mathrm{~g} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$. Within 300 km of the coast, an integrated northward transport of $2.2 \times 10^{12} \mathrm{~g} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$ is required. Negative wind stress curl between long. $127^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ and $133^{\circ} \mathrm{W}$ is associated with a southward vertically integrated mass transport of $5.7 \times 10^{12} \mathrm{~g} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$. These values underestimate, by a factor of two, the total volume transport of 10 sv ( 1 sverdrup $=10^{6} \mathrm{~m}^{3} \mathrm{~s}^{-1}$ ) for the California Current suggested by Sverdrup et al. (1942:724).

A relationship between wind stress curl and the California Current system has been suggested. The data indicate that the poleward undercurrent observed along the west coast of North America may be driven locally by positive wind stress curl. However, a possibility does exist that the boundary current is not entirely the result of local forcing. Coastal areas may respond to wavelike disturbances propagating from other regions of the ocean (Wyrtki 1975), or to other nonlocal processes (Pedlosky 1974b).

## Biological Implications

Relationships among patterns of coastal and equatorial upwelling and distributions of primary production have been discussed by Cushing (1969). Favorable conditions for phytoplankton growth are maintained within surface photic layers by upwelling of nutrient-rich subsurface water. Offshore divergence related to the curl of the wind stress effectively extends the width of the biological upwelling zone. Fronts may form in areas of negative wind stress curl just offshore of the primary coastal convergence, such as near Punta Eugenia. These fronts would tend to concentrate both the available food and the grazers within the same areas. This process may be important to survival of fish stocks which spawn in this coastal region.

Seasonal changes in surface circulation may also provide mechanisms for survival and possible separation of stocks along the coast. The current-countercurrent system characteristic of southern California suggests a mechanism whereby pelagic fish could migrate seasonally from primary feeding grounds within the coastal upwelling regime off northern California to spawning grounds off Baja California.
A general requirement for vertically integrated northward Sverdrup transport along the coast apparently breaks down near Punta Eugenia where negative wind stress curl is observed (Fig. 18A). In this region, there must be southward vertically integrated Sverdrup transport.
With this consideration in mind, it is interesting to note the winter distribution of surface currents depicted in Figure 18B. The large-scale pattern suggests two separate cyclonic gyres associated with positive wind stress curl in the Southern California Bight, and south of Punta Eugenia. In the region of negative wind stress curl, the indicated surface flow is toward the south.
The importance of coastal upwelling, offshore divergence, and patterns of surface circulation to the early survival of larvae in the California Current region has been recognized (Anonymous 1952). The correspondences of features in the patterns of wind stress curl, surface currents, and winter distributions of the northern anchovy, Engraulis mordax, (Vrooman and Smith, 1971), shown in Figure 18C, are highly suggestive of larval transport mechanisms which could lead to formation of subpopulations of pelagic fishes in the California Current. These mechanisms have been described by

128W 126W 124W 122 W I20W 118 W II6W 114 W II2W 110 W


Figure 18.-Distributions of: A. wind stress curl, B. surface currents, and C. anchovy subpopulations. Wind stress curl is shown for September. Units are dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km . The contour interval is 0.25 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km . Negative values are shaded. The winter distribution of surface currents is depicted in terms of 2 -degree summarizations of ship drift data. Vector symbols are scaled according to the key on the chart. Units are $\mathrm{cm} \mathrm{s}^{-1}$. Large arrows suggest the split cyclonic circulation which develops off southern California and Baja California. The winter distributions of the three subpopulations of northern anchovy are shown in the bottom figure. Figure $\mathbf{C}$ is after Vrooman and Smith (1971).

Parrish (1976). Distributions of Pacific mackerel, Scomber japonicus, are similar to those for central and southern subpopulations of northern anchovy shown in Figure 18C.

## CONCLUSIONS

The present study has demonstrated the utility of historical marine observations in describing details of surface properties over an area of the North Pacific Ocean. Resolution by 1 -degree square and long-term month is feasible when the amplitude of the seasonal cycle is large. This method of summarization may fail in regions of sparse data, or in the tropics where long-term fluctuations frequently obscure the seasonal cycle.
Summarization of these data by 1-degree square, month, and year often fails to produce consistent time series. The resulting fields may not be statistically significant if the mean values are based on too few observations. Objective analysis provides a method to obtain consistency in time and space. However, with these methods, continuity in time is gained at the expense of spatial resolution. An empirical approach might be used to calibrate the large-scale analyzed fields in terms of the features evident in higher resolution distributions, such as those presented in this report. The resulting time series could be related to fluctuations of marine biological communities which must respond to wide variations in environmental conditions on time scales ranging from a few days to several years.

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## APPENDIX I

## Monthly Surface Wind Stress Distributions

The long term composite monthly mean surface wind stress distributions are displayed in Charts 1 to 12 as resultant vectors, in Charts 13 to 24 as the eastward components, and in Charts 25 to 36 as the northward components. The values are plotted in units of dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. The month is indicated in the figure legend in the upper right corner of the charts. The two years displayed below the month, for example 1858-1972, correspond to the year of the earliest report and the year of the most recent report, respectively. The coastline configuration is superimposed on the grid as a visual aid and does not represent a conformal mapping.

In Charts 1 to 12, the vectors are plotted according to the scale shown below the figure legend. The mean vector magnitudes are contoured at intervals of 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. Magnitudes greater than 1.0 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ are shaded.

Charts 13 to 24 display contoured values of the eastward component of the resultant surface wind stress. The contour interval is 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. Positive values correspond to eastward components. Negative values are shaded.

The northward component of the resultant stress is plotted in Charts 25 to 36 . The contour interval is 0.5 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. Positive values correspond to northward components. Negative values are shaded.


Chart 1.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for January.


Chart 2.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for February.
ncc - tof-11 - dNe degree summarization


Chart 3.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for March.


Chart 4.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for April.


Chart 5.-Hesultant surface wind stress vectors for May
nCC - tof-11 - one degree sumyprization


Chart 6.-Hesultant surface wind stress vectors for June.


Chart 7.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for July.

NCC - TDF-1i - ONE DEGREE SUMMARIZGTION


Chart 8.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for August.


Chart 9.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for September.


Chart 10.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for October.

NEC - TDF-11 - dNE DEGREE SUMMPRIZATION


Chart 11.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for November.
nCE - tDF-11 - dNE DEGREE SUMMARIZATION


Chart 12.-Resultant surface wind stress vectors for December.


Chart 13.-East component surface wind stress for January.
nCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMARIZATION


Chart 14.-East component surface wind stress for February.

NCE - TDF~-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZATJON


Chart 15.-East component surface wind stress for March.


Chart 16.-East component surface wind stress for April.

NLC - TRF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZRTION


Chart 17.-East component surface wind stress for May.

NCC - TOF-11 - ONE DEGREE SLIMMPRIZATION


Chart 18.- East component surface wind stress for June.
nCC - tof-1! - dNe deghee sumpraization


Chart 19.-East component surface wind stress for July.
nCC - tof-11 - dNe deghee summatization


Chart 20.-East component surface wind stress for August.


Chart 21.-East component surface wind stress for September.
nCC - tDF-11 - ONE deghei slimaritzation


Chart 22.-East component surface wind stress for October.

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMTAPIZATION


Chart 23.-East component surface wind stress for November.

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZATION


Chart 24,-East component surface wind stress for December.

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZATION


Chart 25.-North component surface wind stress for January.
nCC - tof-11 - ONE degree summarization


Chart 26.-North component surface wind stress for February.
nCC - TDF-IL - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRRIZATION


Chart 27.-North component surface wind stress for March.


Chart 28.-North component surface wind stress for April.

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZATION


Chart 29.-North component surface wind stress for May.

NCE - TDF-11 - DNE DEGREE SUMMARIZATICN


Chart 30.-North component surface wind stress for June.

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGAEE SUMMRRIZRTION


Chart 31.-North component surface wind stress for July
nCC - tdf-11 - one degree sumyrirization


Chart 32.-North component surface wind stress for August.
nCC - tof-11 - one degree summarization


Chart 33.-North component surface wind stress for September.
nCC - tda-11 - ane degree summarization


Chart 34.-North component surface wind stress for October.


Chart 35.-North component surface wind stress for November.


Chart 36.-North component surface wind stress for December.

## APPENDIX II

## Standard Errors of the Means

The following tables list the computed standard errors of the monthly means by 1 -degree square area for the eastward and northward components of the resultant surface wind stress. The standard errors of the means are defined by Equation (3). Each page contains values for 301 -degree squares blocked in groups of 10 . Within each group of 10 , all 1 -degree squares are defined by a common latitude. The first set of values corresponds to the 1 degree square immediately adjacent to the coast. The final tabulations refer to the 1 -degree square farthest from the coast.
The standard error of the mean is tabulated for each month and square. The latitude and longitude of the center of the 1 -degree square is listed at the left. The first two numbers below each month are the standard errors of the means for the eastward and northward components, respectively. The units are dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$. The last value is the number of observations.

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| + 234 | - $9^{5}$ |  |  |  | - ${ }^{.03}$ |  |  | - ${ }^{02}$ | - 0.05 |  | - ${ }^{\mathbf{0 3 5}} \mathbf{8 5}$ | - 0.048 |
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| 23\% ${ }^{37}$ |  | - 374 | $\begin{array}{r}.83 \\ \hline 805 \\ \hline 8.5\end{array}$ | - 814 | - ${ }^{50}$ | -085 | -03 ${ }^{5}$ | -02 ${ }^{0} 5$ |  | -63 | - 0.02 |  |
| 123 | - i $^{5}$ | - ${ }^{4} 5$ | - ${ }^{.32}$ | - 8.32 |  | -62 | -023 | - 80 | - 92 |  | - ${ }^{02}$ | - 02 |
| 123 n | $5{ }^{6} 5$ | - 80 | - 8.8 | - 80 | - 685 | - ${ }_{\text {ci }}$ |  | :019 |  | - ${ }^{81}$ |  | -02 |
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| $\stackrel{37}{123}$ | : 413 | - ${ }^{06}$ |  | - 8.53 | - $\begin{array}{r}022 \\ 369 \\ \hline 09\end{array}$ |  | - ${ }^{0.36}$ |  | - 8 | $4{ }^{\text {a }}$ | -34 3 | -66\% 3 |
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| $12{ }^{4} 7{ }^{6} \mathrm{~N}$ |  | -09 | - ${ }^{113}$ | - 10 |  | - ${ }^{\text {c }}$ | - 204 |  | - | - 8.95 |  | - ${ }^{123}$ |
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|  | - ${ }_{\text {\% }}$ | - 26 | - ${ }^{865}$ | - 3 | - ${ }^{3}$ | ( $\begin{gathered}62 \\ 319\end{gathered}$ | $\begin{array}{r}802 \\ 499 \\ \hline 89\end{array}$ |  |  |  |  | - ${ }^{8198}$ |
| $1.31{ }^{4} \mathrm{~N}$ | + ${ }^{10} 15$ |  |  | - ${ }^{.07}$ | - $\mathrm{if}^{195}$ | ${ }^{-63}$ | - 204 | - 024 | - 9.95 |  |  | - ${ }^{11}$ |
| $132{ }^{4} \mathrm{~N}$ | - ${ }_{-11}^{10}$ | -19\% |  |  |  | - ${ }^{0}$ |  |  | - 204 |  |  | - ${ }^{10}$ |
| $13{ }^{4} 3 \mathrm{~N}$ N | -179 | -176 | - 808 |  | ${ }^{2} 85$ | - 002 | - 020 |  | - ${ }^{.03}$ | - | - 808 |  |
| $124{ }^{41}$ N | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{\text {it }}$ | - $\mathrm{il}_{1} \mathrm{i}_{1}$ |  |  |  | - 124 |  | - $\begin{array}{r}02 \\ i 86 \\ 180\end{array}$ |  |  |  |  |
| 425 M |  | - ${ }_{(15}^{15}$ | - ${ }^{\text {- }}$ | - ${ }^{13}$ |  | - 083 | - ${ }^{0} 8$ |  |  | - ${ }^{14}$ | -23 -246 $i 46$ | - $\begin{array}{r}19 \\ \text { i } \\ 9\end{array}$ |
| $4{ }^{4} 85$ | : 17 | : 019 | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{12}$ | : 018 | - ${ }^{1 / 5}$ | : 018 | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{8}$ | :064 | - ${ }_{\text {O }}^{18}$ | - ${ }^{\text {c }}$ | - ${ }^{105}$ | -10 |
| 127 |  | - 215 | : ${ }^{16}$ |  | - ${ }^{0} 4$ | - 088 | - ${ }^{\text {: }}$ | -068 | - ${ }^{09}$ | : 97 | :119 | . 14 |
| 12814 | - 295 | ( 214 | : 20 |  |  | : $0 \cdot 9$ | - $\begin{array}{r}\text { :14 } \\ \hline 83\end{array}$ | - ${ }^{184}$ |  | - ${ }_{(18}^{88}$ | $\stackrel{: 16}{8}$ | . 14 |
| ${ }^{4} 29$ \% | ${ }_{\text {- }}^{\text {- }}$ |  |  | $\stackrel{06}{0}$ | - 0.19 | - 0 | -033 | -957 | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{\text {ify }}$ | - 119 | - ${ }_{-1}^{10}$ |  |
| $438{ }^{41}$ N |  | - ${ }_{-11}^{15}$ | - 16 | - ${ }^{0} 8$ | - ${ }_{\text {\% }}$ | - 80 | - 96 | - 80 | -859 |  | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{\text {i }}$ | -120 |
| $1{ }^{41} 12 \mathrm{M}$ | - ${ }^{19}$ | - 212 | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{\text {i }}$ | - ${ }^{\mathbf{0} 56}$ | -34 | - 202 | - 315 | ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | 2094 | ${ }^{\text {citi }}$ | - ${ }^{08}$ | - ${ }^{16}$ |
| $1{ }^{41} \frac{1}{2}$ N | ${ }^{1} 125$ | : ${ }_{\text {: }}^{14} 18$ | $\underset{+10}{10}$ | -089 | - ${ }^{\text {cisid }}$ | - 0 05 |  | - ${ }^{04}$ | - 806 | - ${ }^{\text {¢ }} 8$ | ${ }^{1} \mathbf{1} 12$ | ${ }^{-12}$ |
| $13^{4} 3$ N | $\stackrel{-12}{12}$ | : ${ }_{\text {: }}^{12}$ | ${ }_{-1}^{16}$ | -9\% | - 0.08 | - $80{ }^{65}$ | - ${ }^{8}$ | - ${ }^{8} 85$ |  | - ${ }_{\text {- }}^{18}$ | ${ }_{\text {- }} \mathrm{i}_{12}^{12}$ | - ${ }^{10}$ |




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## APPENDIX III

## Monthly Wind Stress Curl Distributions

The monthly mean wind stress curl distributions are displayed in Charts 37 to 48. The plotted values are estimates of the vertical component of the wind stress curl, calculated by applying a finite difference, spherical coordinate curl operator to the fields of monthly mean surface wind stress. The contoured values are plotted in units of dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km . A value of 1.0 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km is equivalent to $1.0 \times 10^{-7}$ dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-3}$. The contour interval is 0.25 dyne $\mathrm{cm}^{-2}$ per 100 km . Positive wind stress curl is associated with surface Ekman divergence (upwelling). Negative values are shaded. These correspond to surface Ekman convergence (downwelling).

In the following charts, the month is indicated in the figure legend in the upper right corner of the charts. The coastline configuration is superimposed on the grid as a visual aid and does not represent a conformal mapping.
nCC - tDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMAPIZATION


Chart 37.-Wind stress curl for January.


Chart 38.-Wind stress curl for February

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGRELE SLIHMARIZRTION


Chart 39.-Wind stress curl for March.

NCC - TDF-11 - DNE DEGREE SUMMRRIZRTION


Chart 40.-Wind stress curl for April.


Chart 41.-Wind stress curl for May.
nCL - tof-11 - one degree summaization


Chart 42.-Wind stress curl for June.

NCC - TOF-11 - DNE DEGREE SUMMARIZATION


Chart 43.-Wind stress curl for July.

NCC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZRTION


Chart 44.--Wind stress curl for August.

NCC - TIAF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMTARIZATION


Chart 45.-Wind stress curl for September.
nCC - tDF-11 - DNE DEGAEE SUMMPRIzATION


Chart 46.-Wind stress curl for October.

Chart 47.-Wind stress curl for November.

NLC - TDF-11 - ONE DEGREE SUMMPRIZATION


Chart 4x.-Wind stress curl for December.


[^0]:    Resolution 9, International Meteorological Committee, Paris, 1946.
    National Climatic Center, Tape Data Family 11, NOAA/EDS/NCC, Asheville, N.C.

[^1]:    'Bakun, A. and C. S. Nelson, 1975. Climatology of upwelling related processes off Baja California. Unpubl. manuscr., 41 p. On file at Pacific Environmental Group, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, Monterey, CA 93940.

[^2]:    Wind roses for all 1 -degree squares within the area north of lat. $34^{\circ} \mathrm{N}$ may be found in Climatic study of the near coastal zone; West Coast of the (Tnited States, published by the Director, Naval Oceanography and Meteorology, June 1976, 133 p.

[^3]:    ${ }^{\text {a }}$ Distributions of monthly mean cloud cover over the California Current are on file at Pacific Environmental Group. National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, Monterey, CA 93940.

