



The Performance of Minimet Wind and Temperature Chain Drifters in Hurricane Rita

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Between 1998 and 2003 wind drifters have been deployed in the tropical Atlantic in regions where hurricanes tend to develop in strength or approach landfall. However, projection of winds from NCEP reanalysis on these drifters has revealed that, during that time period, no wind drifter south of 30N has experienced winds in excess of 27m/sec. Starting in 2003, fifty five buoys have been deployed by air directly in front of hurricanes and have measure sea surface temperature, atmospheric pressure, wind direction, and wind speed below 25 m/s. In order to test whether wind speeds above 25 m/s and subsurface temperatures down to 100m can be measured from a drifting buoy platform, twelve standard Minimet buoys and eight Minimet buoys fitted with a 100m long temperature chains were successfully deployed on September 21, 2005 at a distance of about 24 hours in front of the projected path of a category-5 hurricane, Rita, in the vicinity of 26N, 92W. The data from this experiment is presented and reviewed.