

■ ECMWF Report on ERS-2 RA for August 2001 ■

Title: Report on ERS-2 Radar Altimeter wave height and wind speed data.

By: *Saleh Abdalla*

Date: *5 September 2001*

Overview:

Based on the data received during the full month, on average, 14306 observations arrived at ECMWF every 6 hours of which 83.0% passed the quality control. The data coverage, which was rather good, can be seen in Figure 1. Data were missed for the '6-hour' time slots in between 18:00 UTC on 06 August and 06:00 UTC on 08 August (inclusively), and the time slots centred at 18:00 UTC on the 25th. and 00:00 and 12:00 UTC on 26 of the month. Significant reduction of data occurred at the time slots: 00:00 on the 5th., 12:00 on the 8th. and the 9th., 18:00 on the 26th. 06:00 on the 27th. Note that we are talking about the raw data which have arrived at ECMWF before they were processed. The quality of the received data is as good as usual.

Backscatter:

ERS-2 $\langle \sigma_0 \rangle = 11.06$ dB (with a main peak at 11.1 dB and a secondary peak at 10.4 dB)



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Wind Speed Comparison with ECMWF wind speeds (bias):

ERS-2 global: -0.059 m/s

ERS-2 northern hemisphere: -0.571 m/s

ERS-2 tropics: -0.076 m/s

ERS-2 southern hemisphere: 0.302 m/s

Wind Speed Comparison with buoy wind speeds (bias):

ERS-2 global: -0.965 m/s

ERS-2 northern hemisphere: -0.997 m/s

ERS-2 tropics: -0.883 m/s

Wave Height Comparison with ECMWF wave heights (bias):

ERS-2 global: -0.016 m (lowest waves measured: 0.6m)

ERS-2 northern hemisphere: 0.043 m

ERS-2 tropics: -0.071 m

ERS-2 southern hemisphere: -0.013 m

Wave Height Comparison with buoy wave heights (bias):

ERS-2 global: 0.02 m

ERS-2 northern hemisphere: 0.04 m

ERS-2 tropics: -0.15 m



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Remarks:

- There are few outliers (RA values higher than model) in the scatter plot for the wave heights in the Northern Hemisphere (Figure 18) for this month (and for the previous month as well). We have traced those outliers and we found them to be due to some of the tropical cyclones at latitudes around 30° N and which was not resolved successfully by the ECMWF atmospheric model. Therefore, it should be noted that those outliers are not due to a malfunction of the RA. In part, same argument can be drawn to some of the wind speed outliers in the Northern Hemisphere. It should be stressed that this can not explain most of the outliers in the wind scatter plots.
- The quality of Altimeter data is as good as they used to be.

Comparison Method:

The Altimeter wave height and wind speed data, as received by ECMWF from ESA through GTS, are the so-called fast delivery products. At ECMWF these data are subject to a quality control method, the details of which are described by Janssen et al. (1989) and Bauer et al. (1992). Consequently, superobservations are formed by averaging 30 consecutive data in order to match the spatial scales of the operational WAM model. Therefore, the collocation statistics are based on the comparison between these superobservations and operational wavemodel products.

In addition, since also wave observations from buoys are received through the GTS, the Altimeter products are also compared against buoy observations. Again, in order to have matching scales, the buoy observations are averaged over a six hour time window. Apart from this, also a height correction is applied to the wind speed observations, since not all buoys observe the winds at the standard height of 10 m. A default observation height of 5 m is assumed, and when available the actual observation height is used. In order to interpolate from the observation height to the standard height a

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3 of 31

■ ECMWF Report on ERS-2 RA for August 2001 ■

logarithmic wind profile with a roughness length as given by the Charnock relation is assumed, where the Charnock parameter is given the constant value of 0.018.

Figure captions:

Figure 1: Time series of data reception for ERS-2 Altimeter data for August 2001.

Figure 2: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter Backscatter after QC for August 2001.

Figure 3: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds after QC for August 2001.

Figure 4: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds after along track averaging for August 2001.

Figure 5: Global distribution of ECMWF ocean surface wind speeds for August 2001.

Figure 6: Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (global).

Figure 7: Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (northern hemisphere)

Figure 8: Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (tropics)

Figure 9: Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (southern hemisphere)

Figure 10: Comparison of buoy wind speed observations with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (global).

Figure 11: Comparison of buoy wind speed observations with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (northern hemisphere).

Figure 12: Comparison of buoy wind speed observations with ERS-2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (tropics).

Figure 13: ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI).

Figure 14: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights after QC for August 2001.

Figure 15: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights after along track averaging for August 2001.

Figure 16: Global distribution of ECMWF wave heights for August 2001.

Figure 17: Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (global).



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Figure 18: Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (northern hemisphere)

Figure 19: Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (tropics)

Figure 20: Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (southern hemisphere)

Figure 21: Comparison of buoy wave height observations with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (global).

Figure 22: Comparison of buoy wave height observations with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (northern hemisphere).

Figure 23: Comparison of buoy wave height observations with ERS-2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (tropics).

Figure 24: ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI) for August 2001.

Figure 25: ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI) from December 1996 to August 2001

Figure 26: ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI) from December 1996 to August 2001



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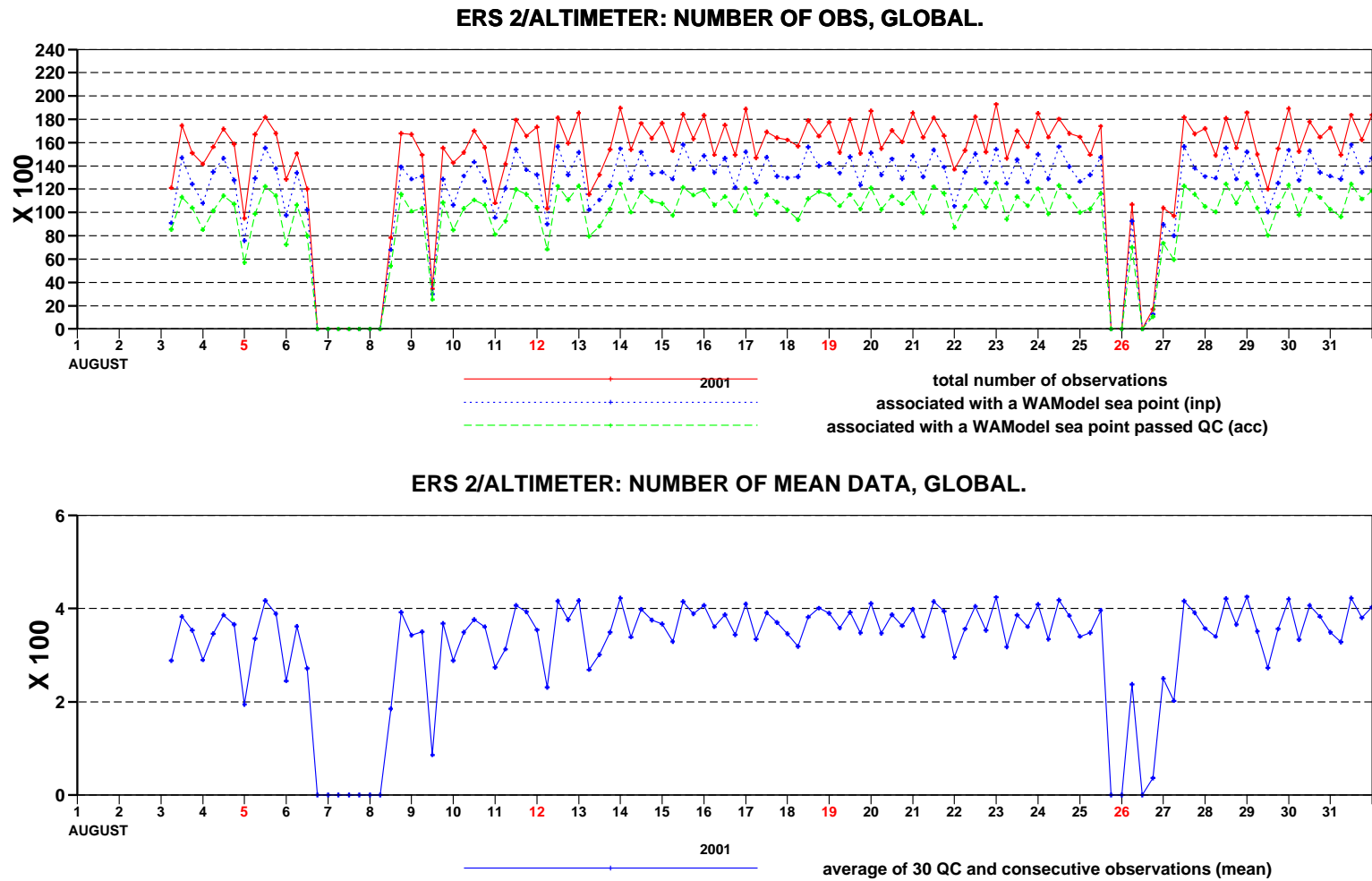
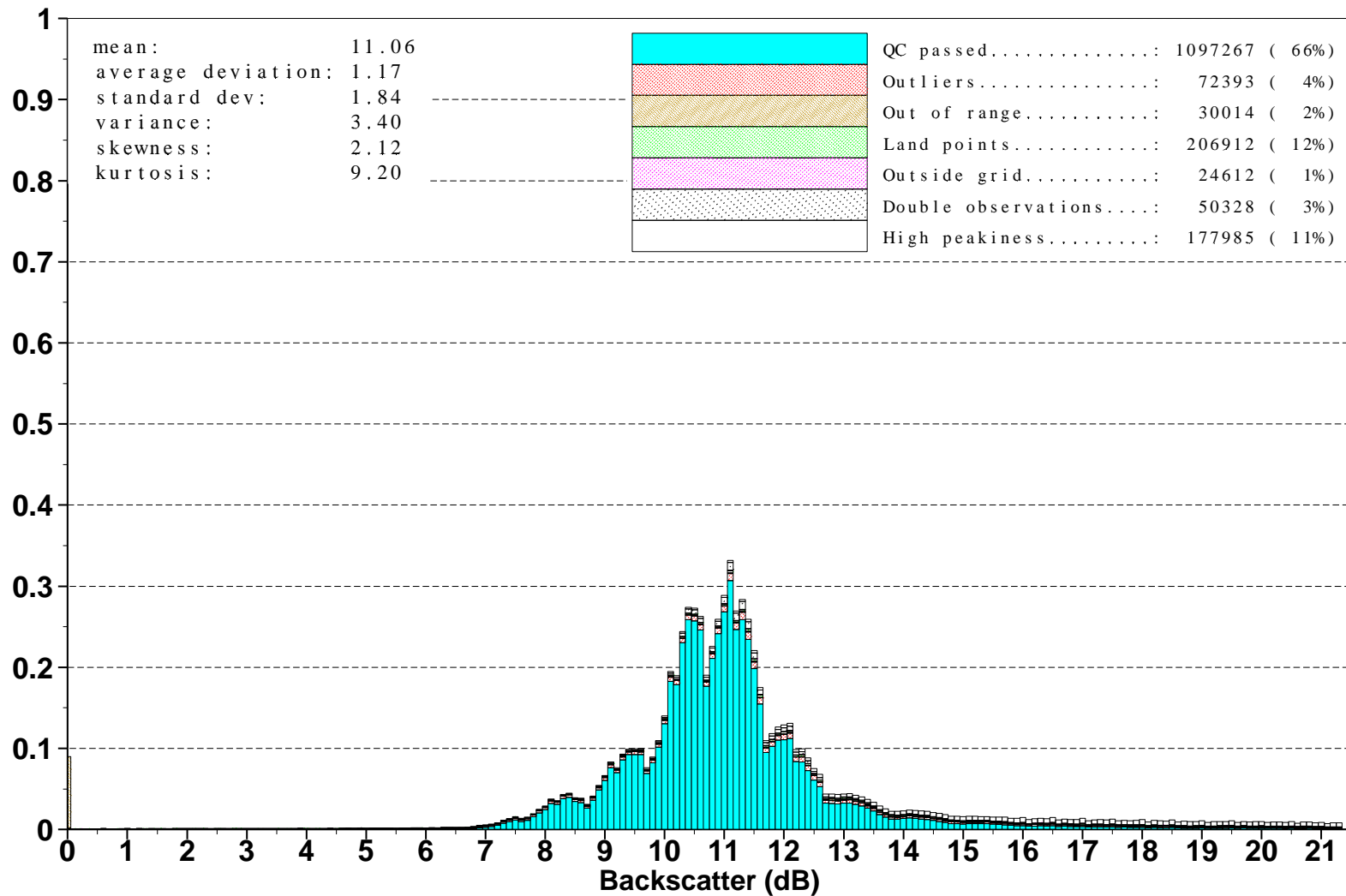


Figure 1: Time series of data reception for ERS-2 Altimeter data for August 2001

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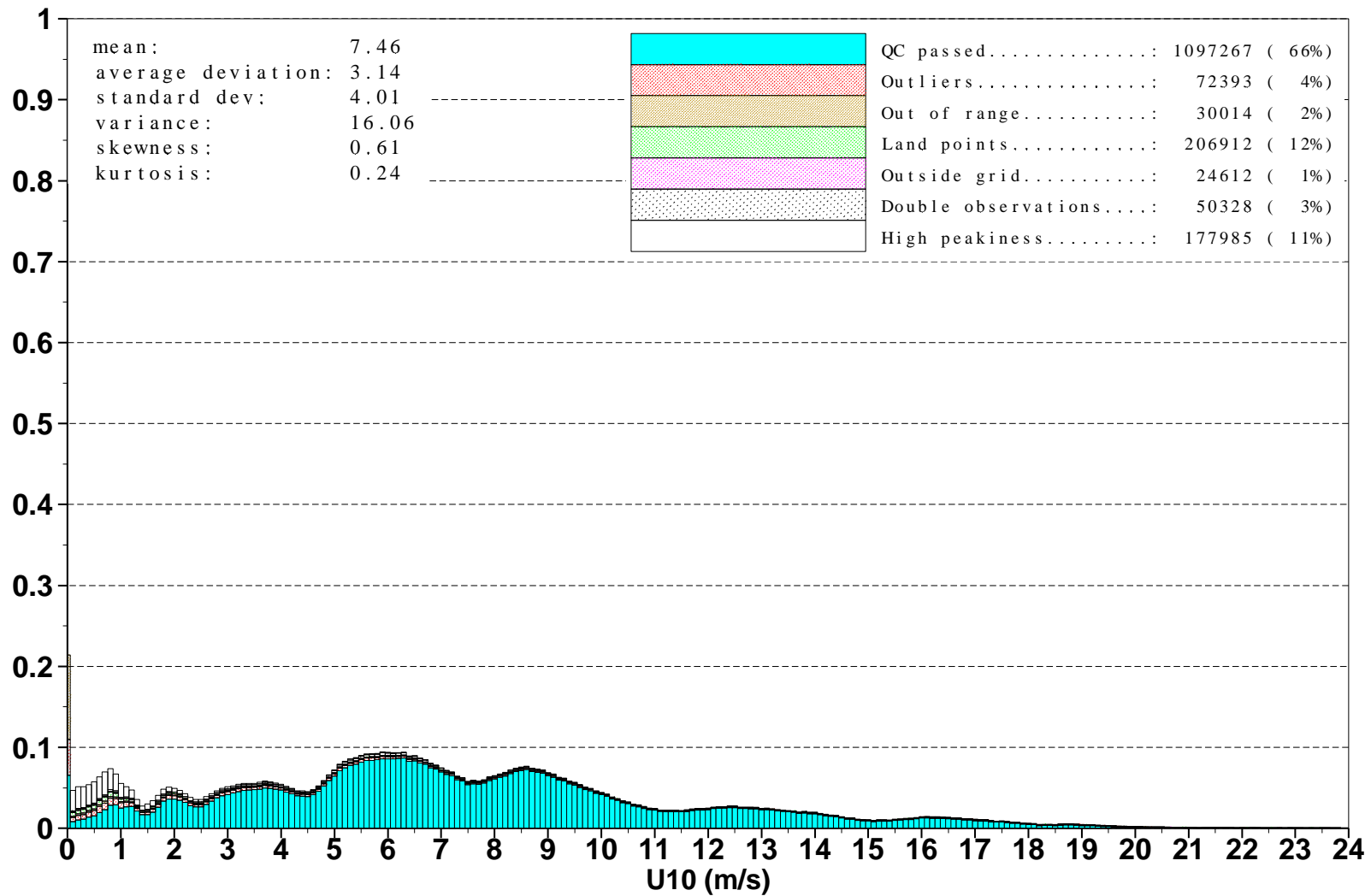


Figure 3: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds after QC for August 2001

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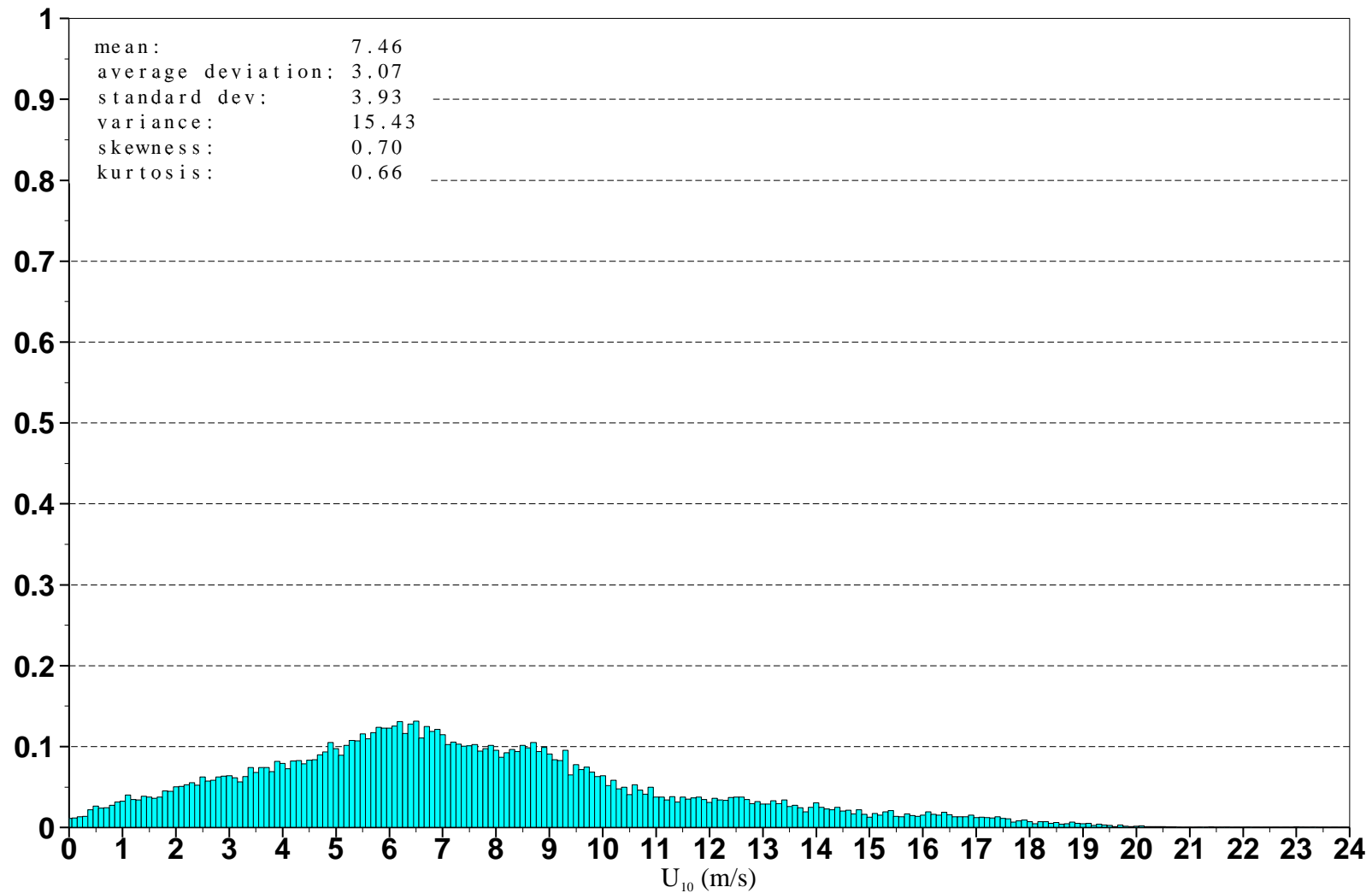


Figure 4: Distribution of ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds after along track averaging for August 2001

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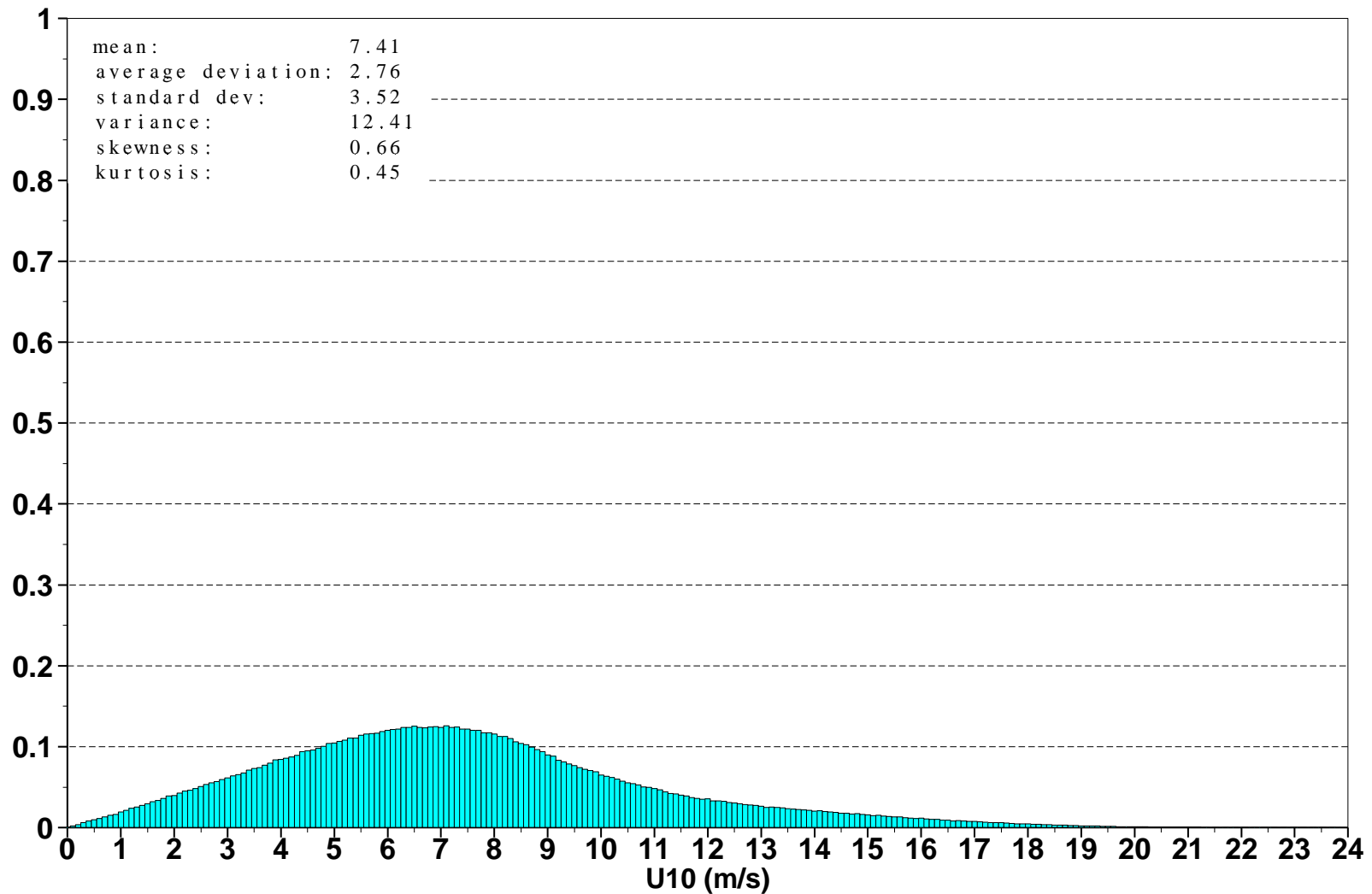


Figure 5: Global distribution of ECMWF ocean surface wind speeds for August 2001



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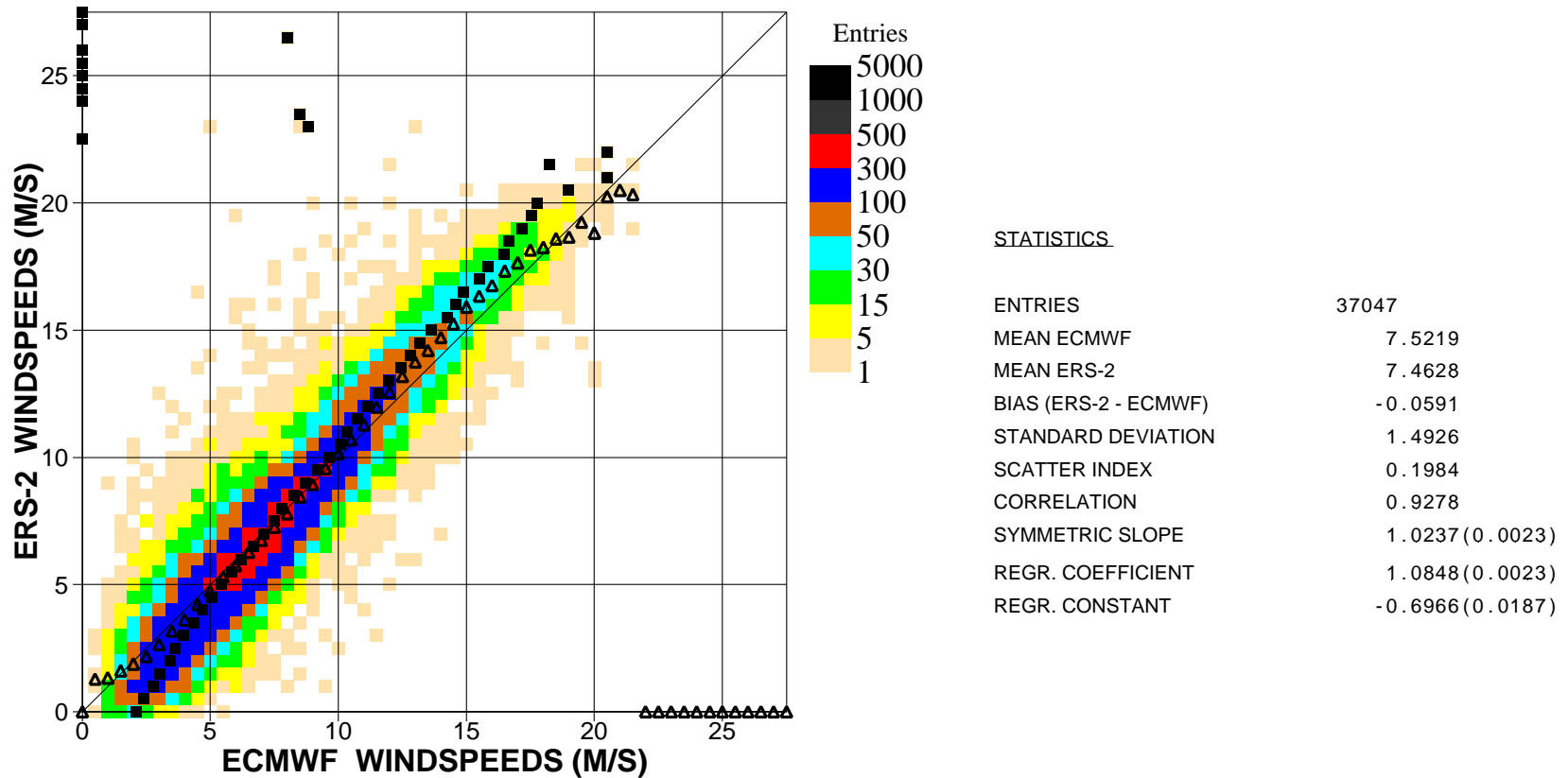


Figure 6. Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (global)

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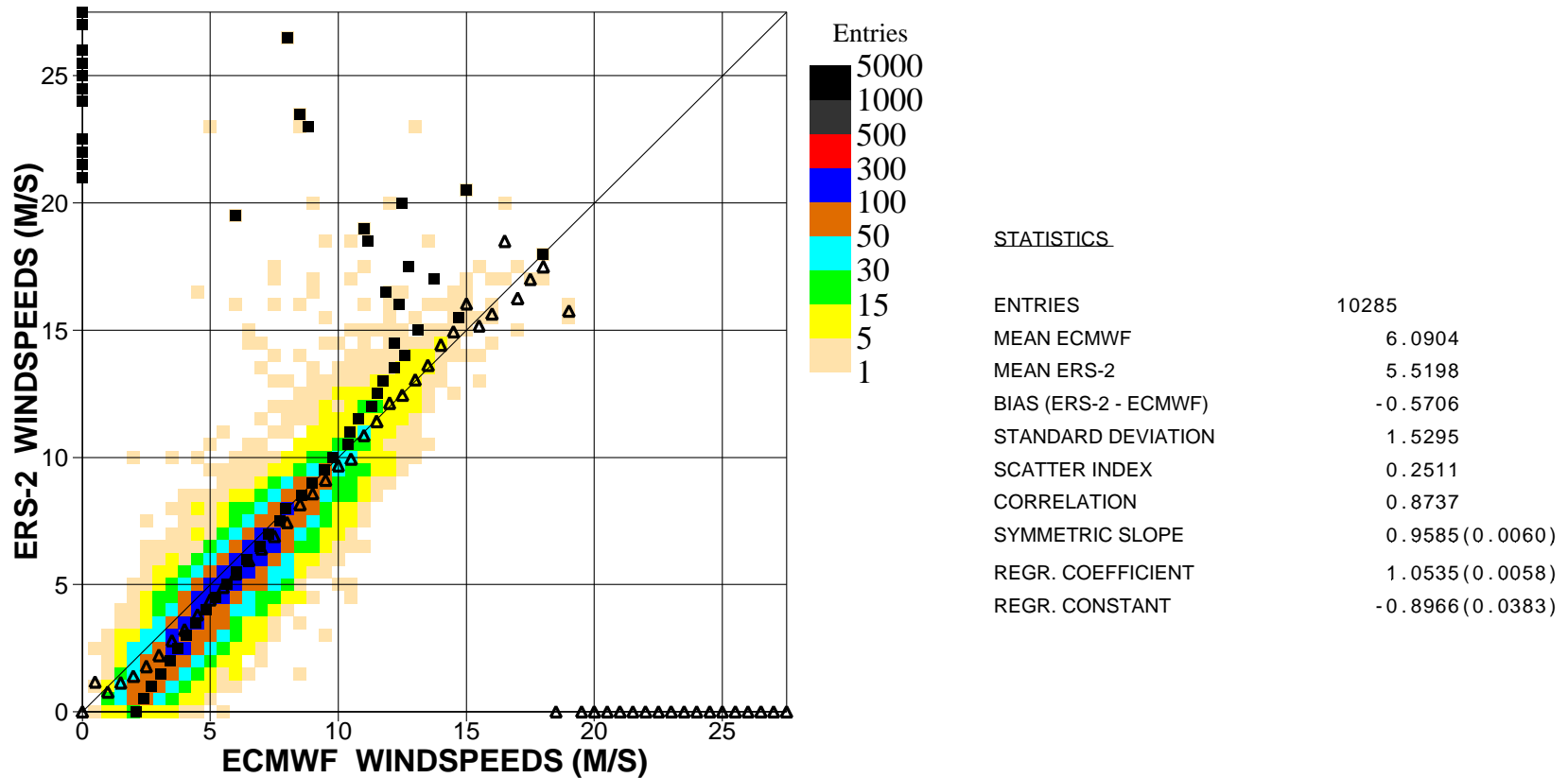


Figure 7. Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (n.hem.)

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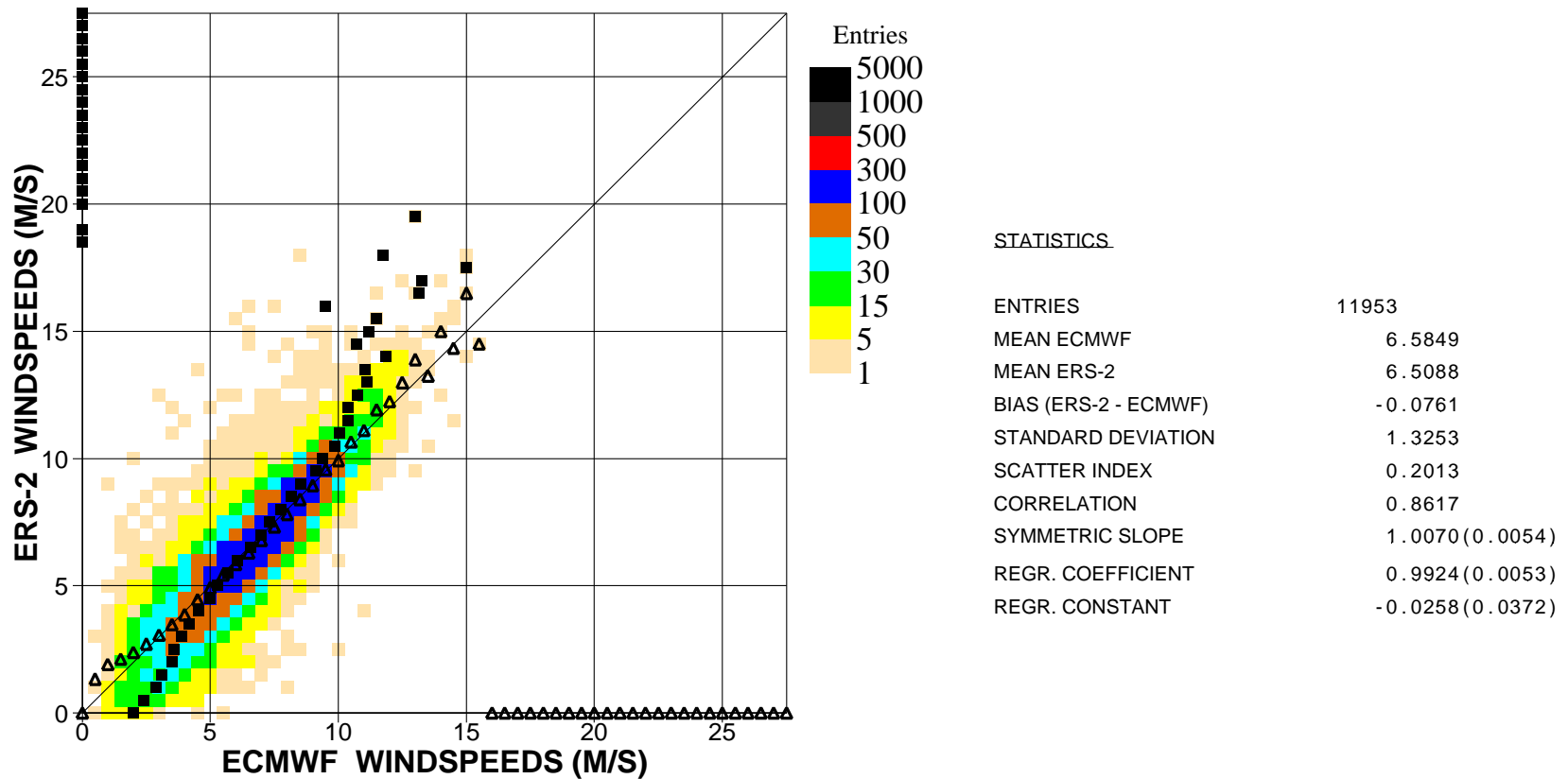


Figure 8. Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (tropics)

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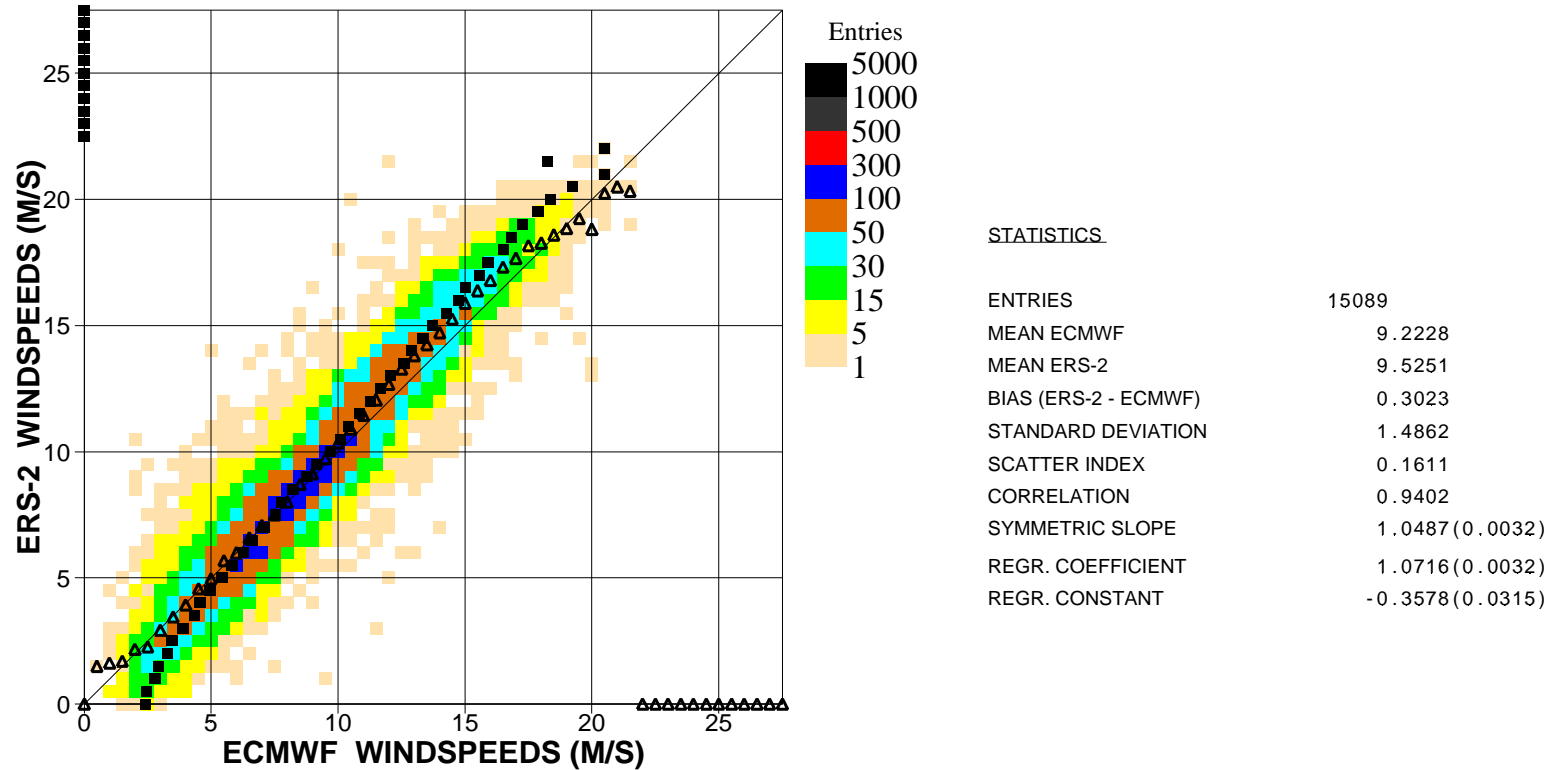


Figure 9. Comparison of ECMWF wind speed results with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (s.hem.)

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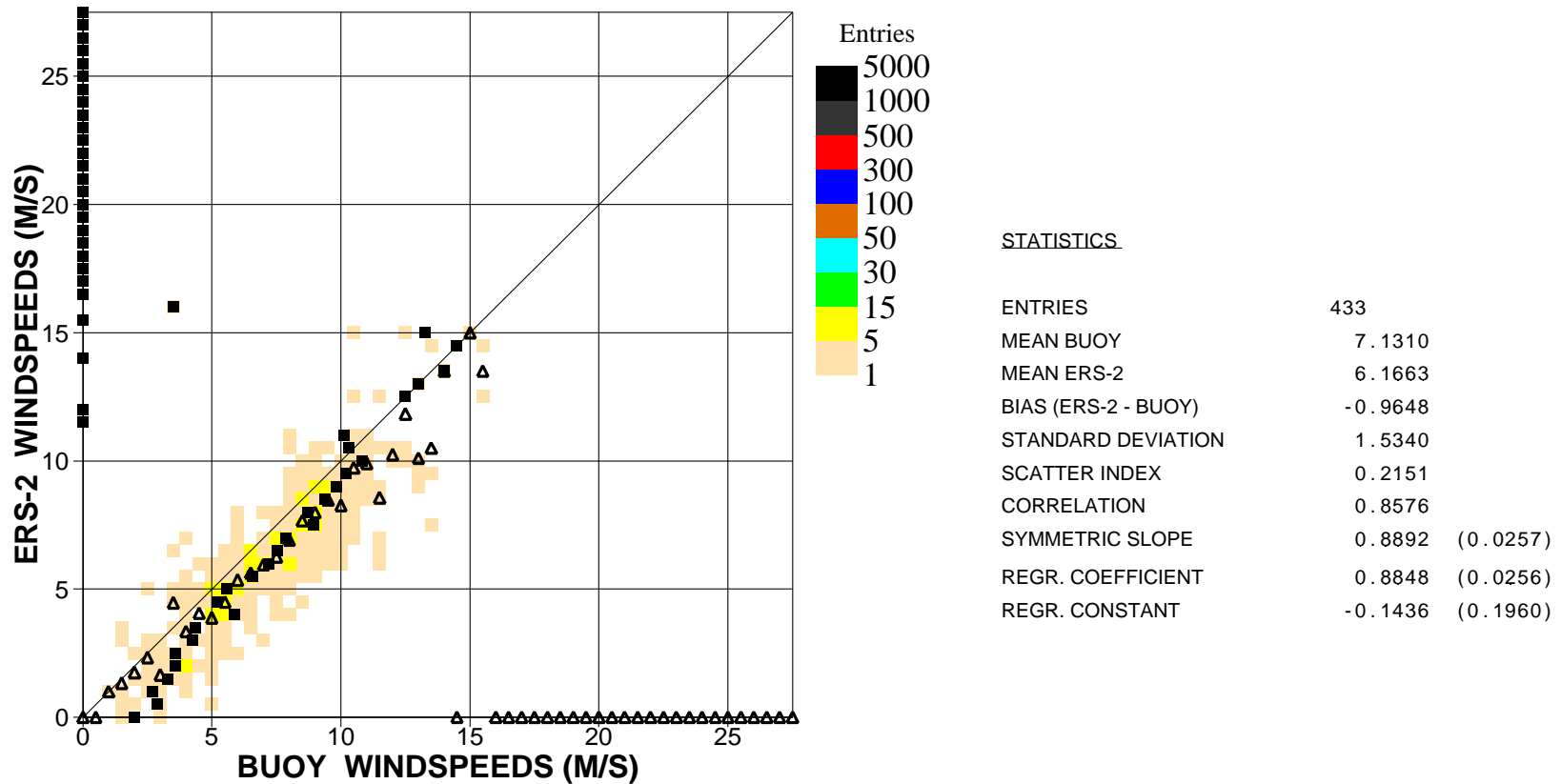


Figure 10. Comparison of buoy wind speed observations with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (global)

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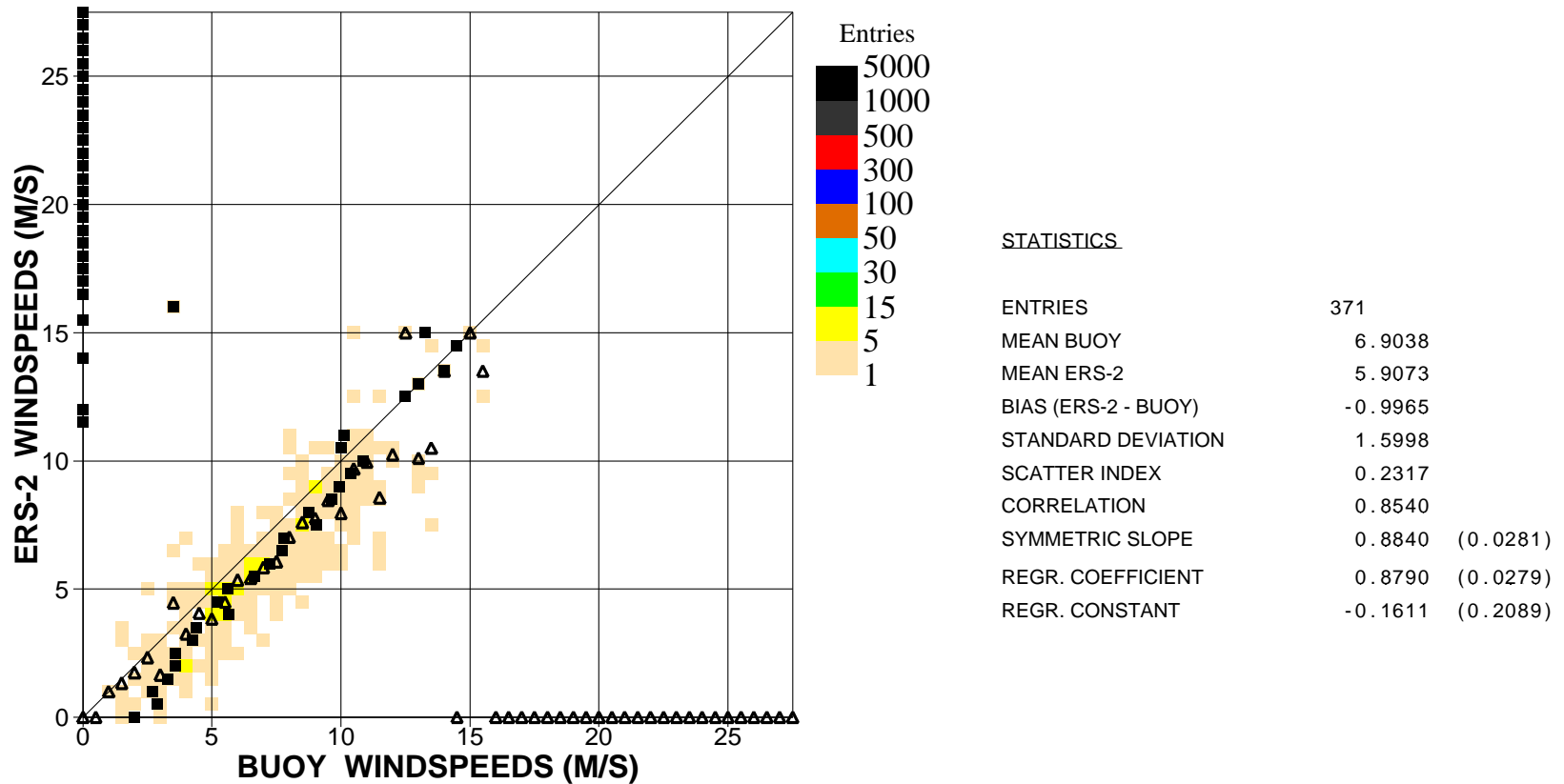


Figure 11. Comparison of buoy wind speed observations with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (n.hem.)

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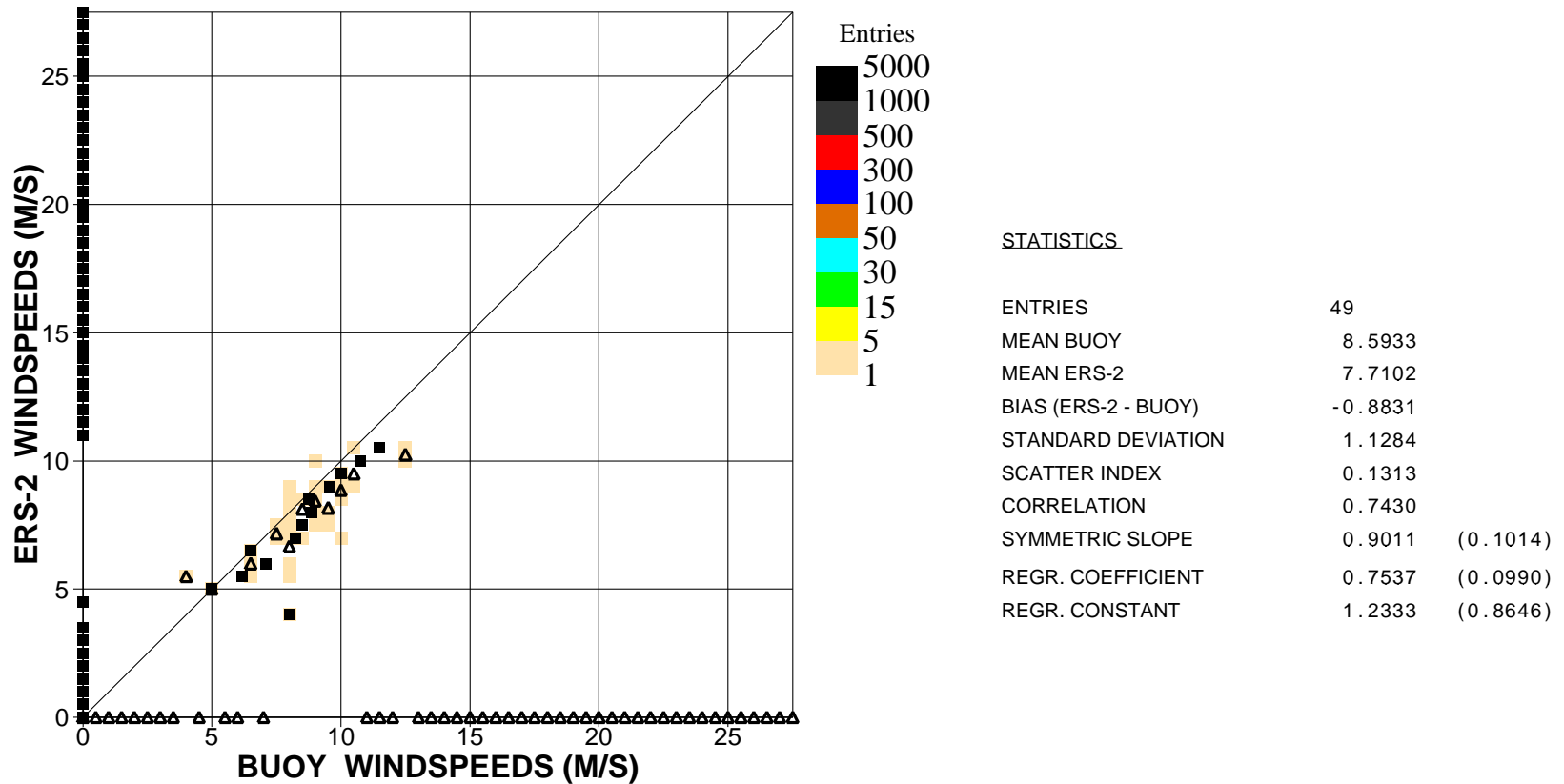


Figure 12. Comparison of buoy wind speed observations with ERS2 Altimeter wind speed data for August 2001 (hawaii)

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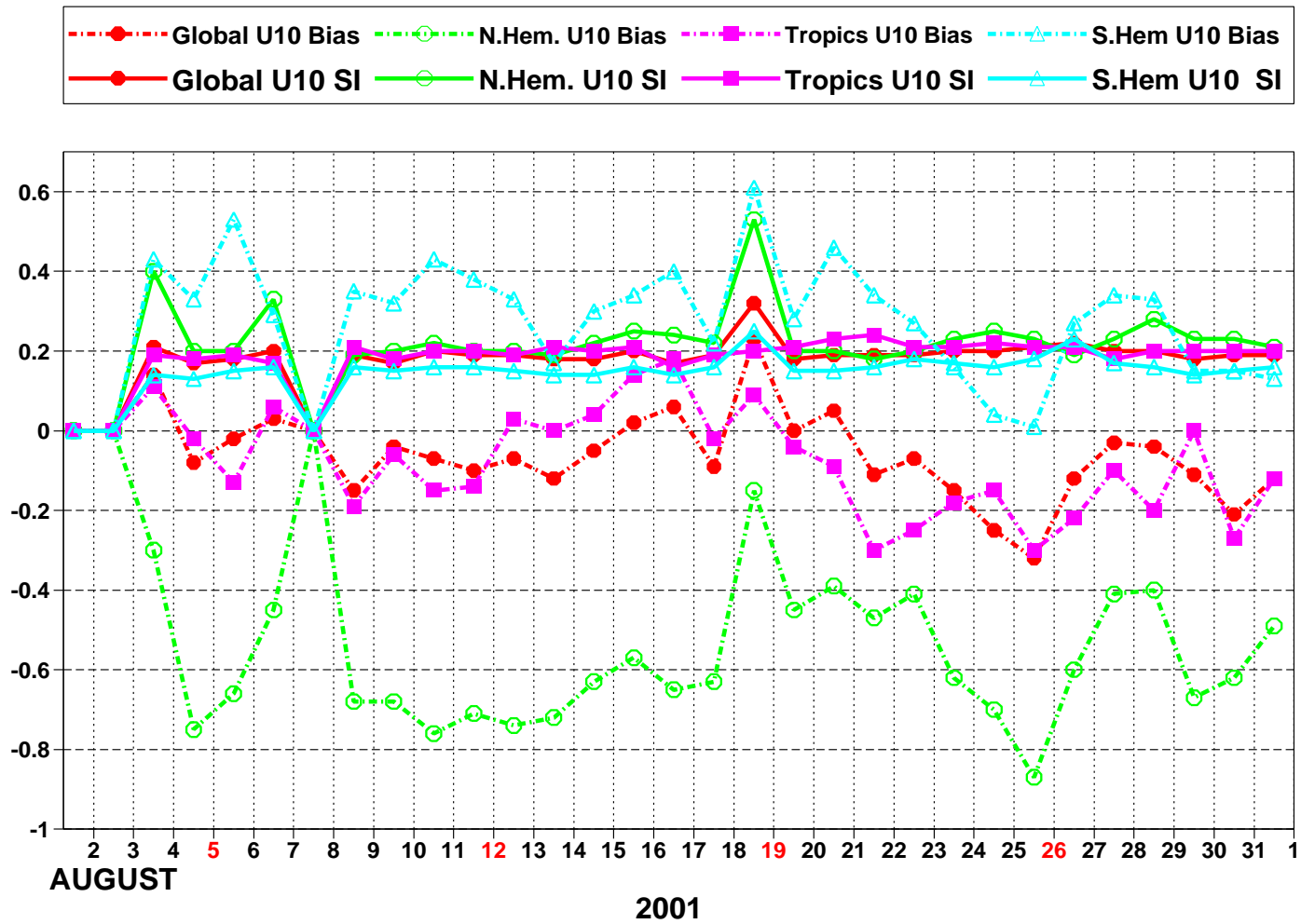


Figure 13: ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI)

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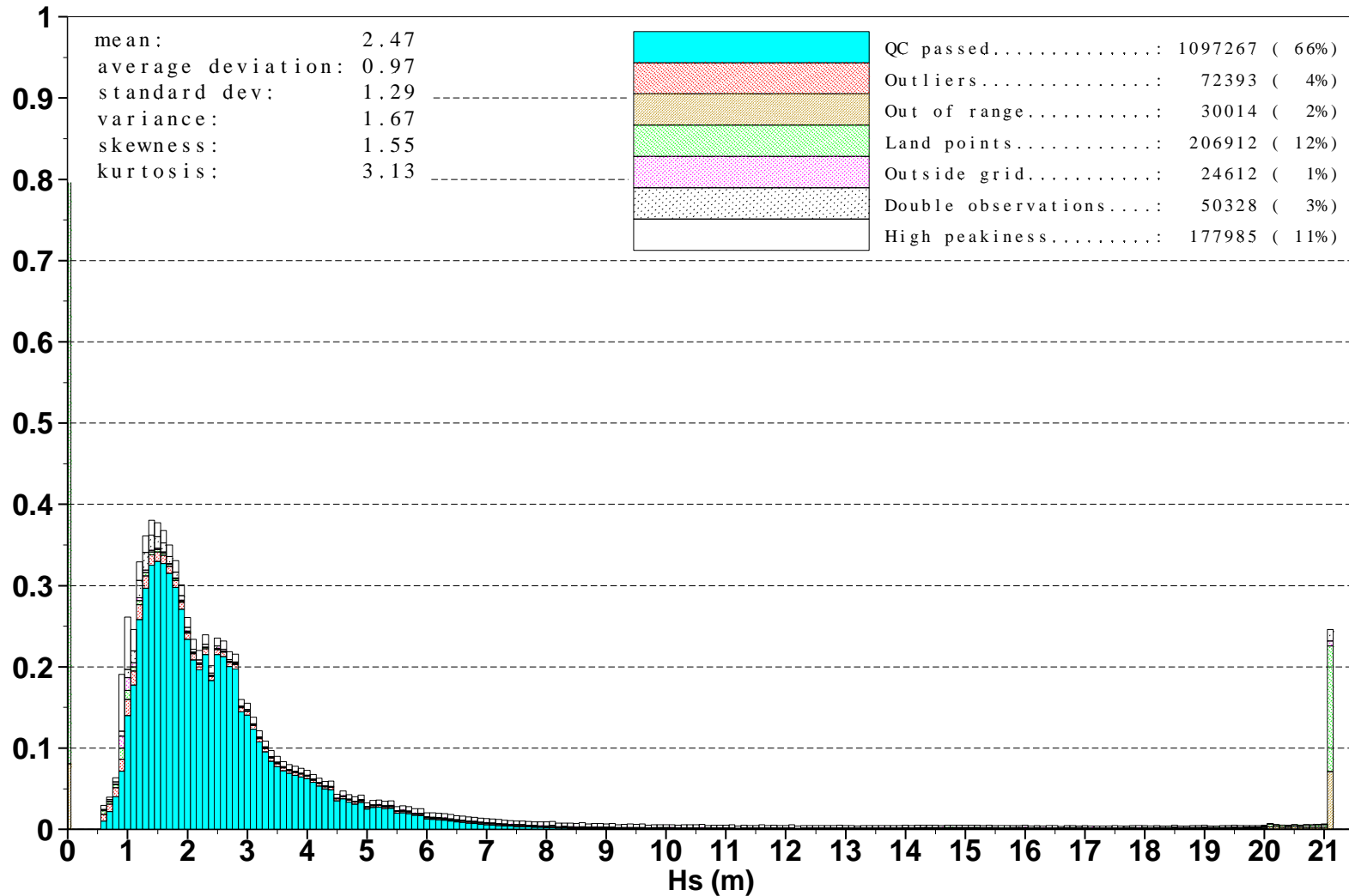


Figure 14: Distribution of the ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights after QC for August 2001

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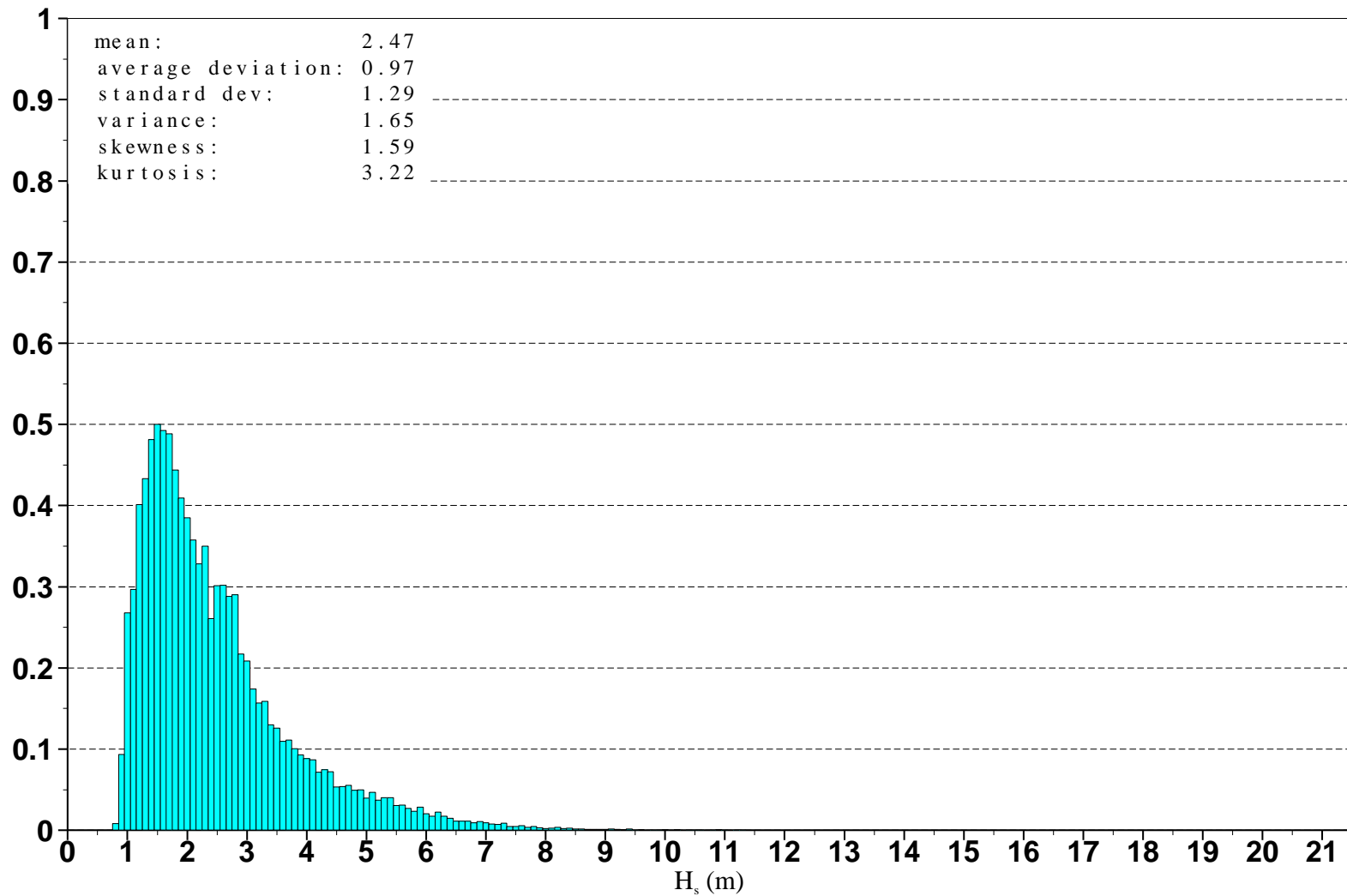


Figure 15: Distribution of ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights after along track averaging for August 2001



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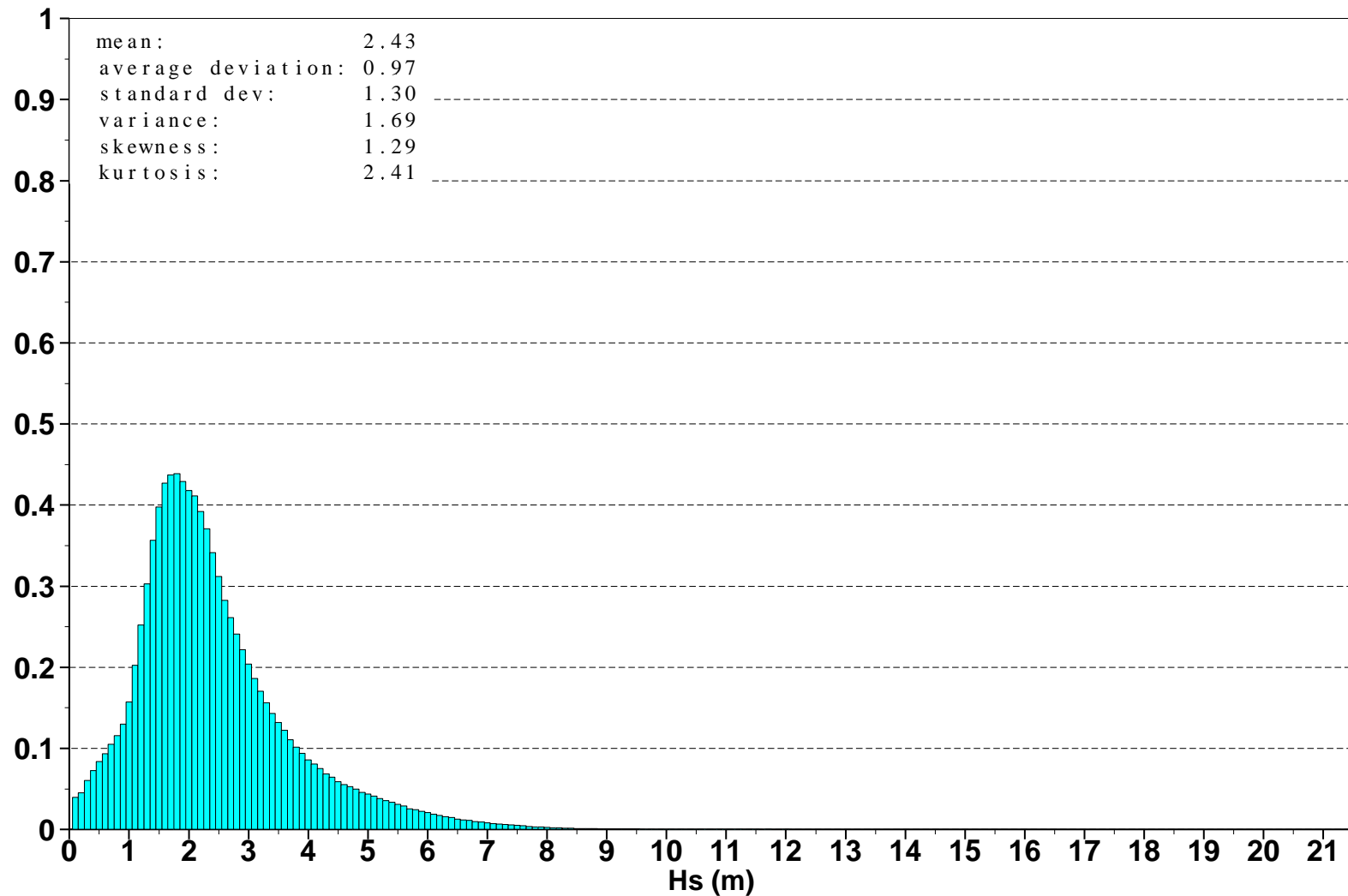


Figure 16: Global distribution of ECMWF wave heights for August 2001



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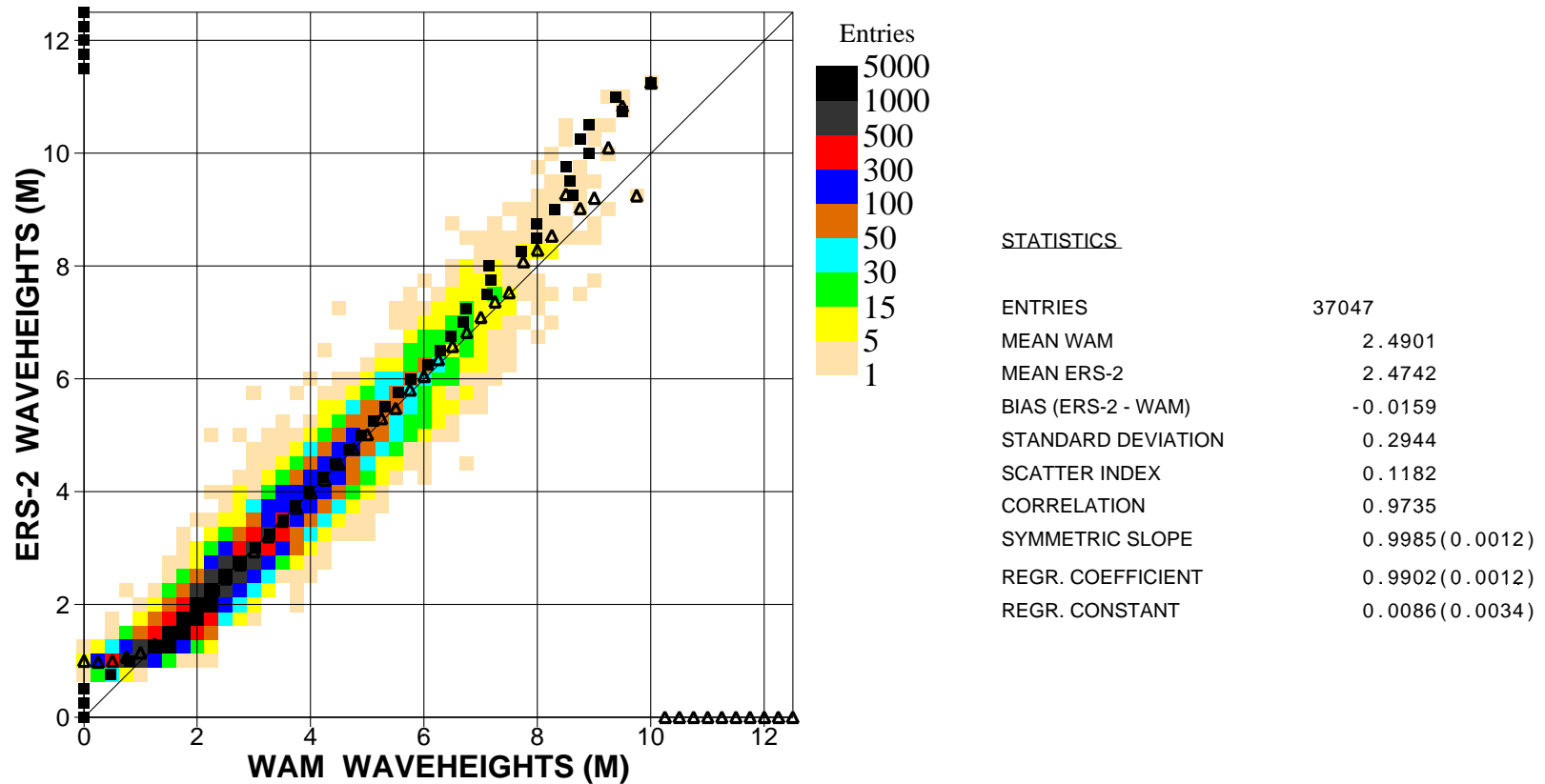


Figure 17. Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (global)

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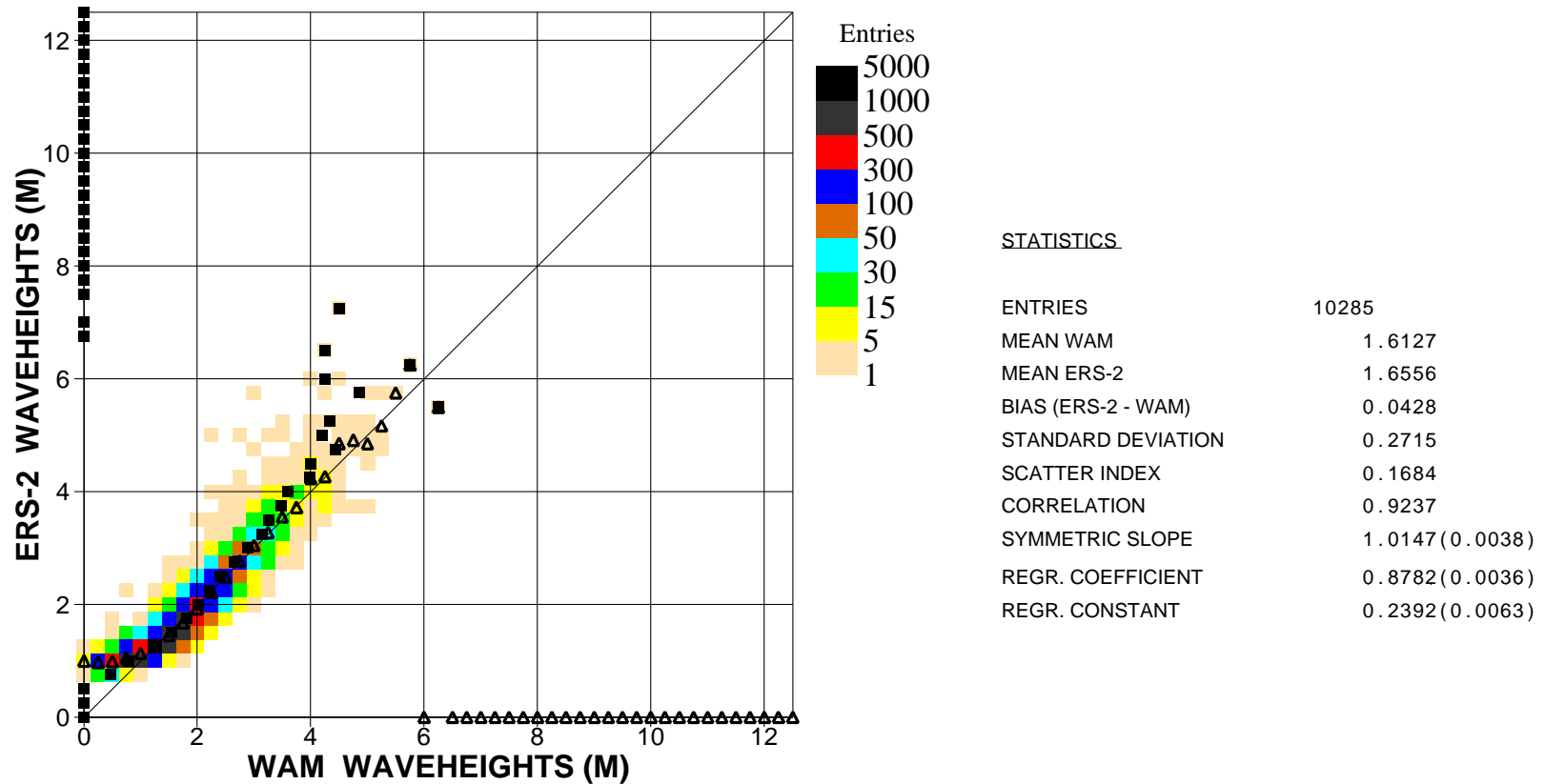


Figure 18. Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (n.hem.)

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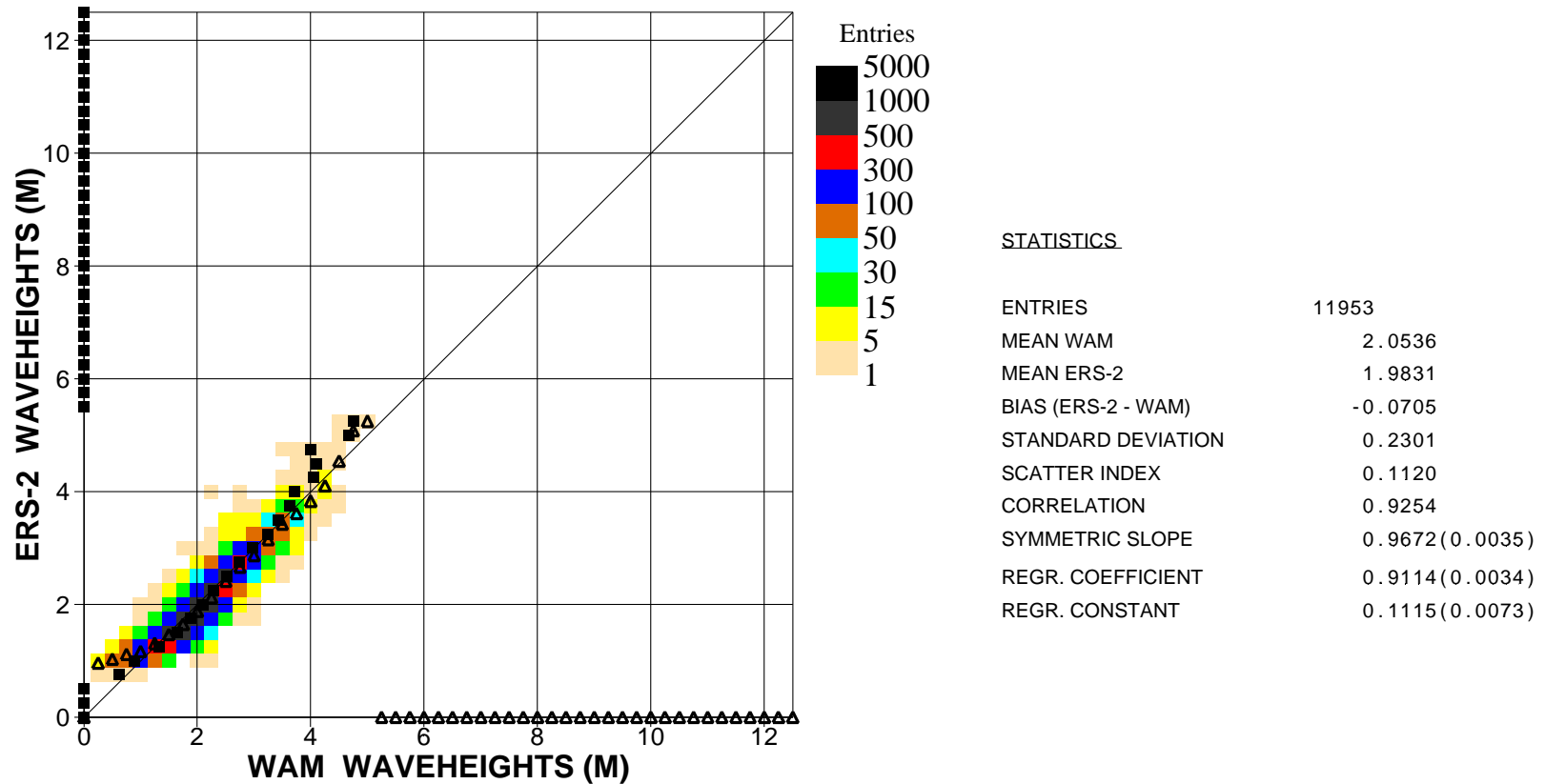


Figure 19. Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (tropics)

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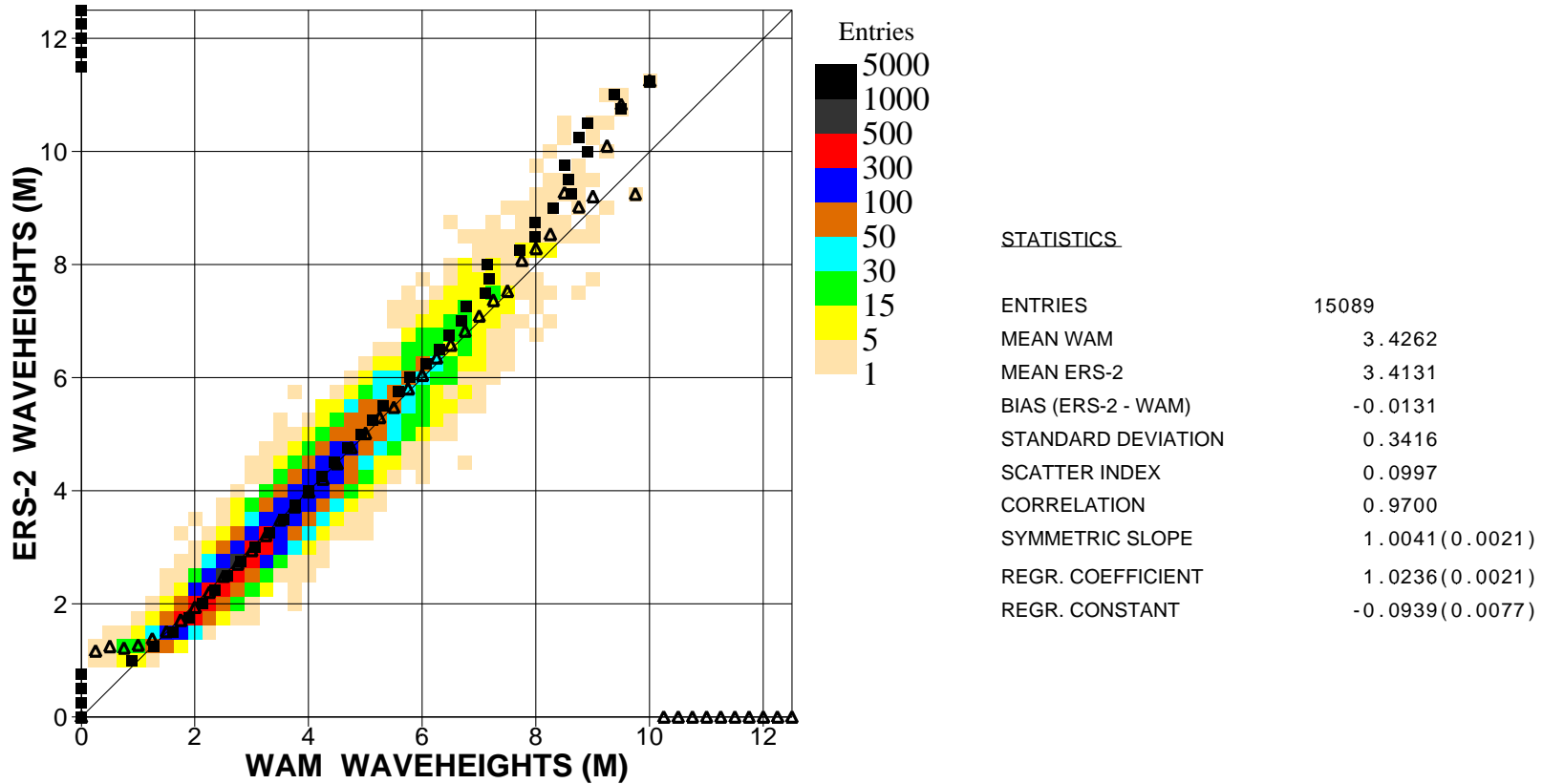


Figure 20. Comparison of ECMWF wave height results with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (s.hem.)

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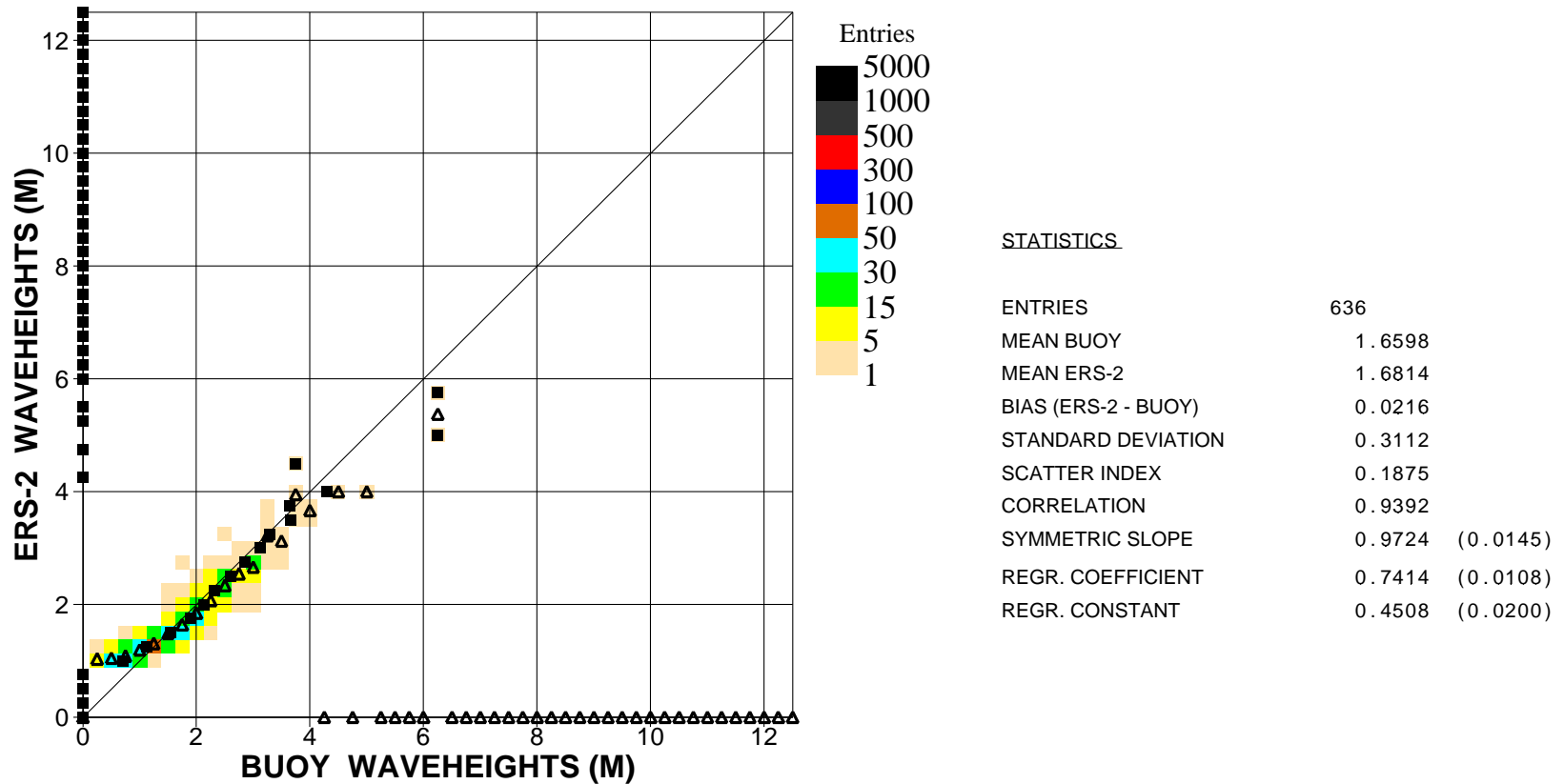


Figure 21. Comparison of buoy wave height observations with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (global)

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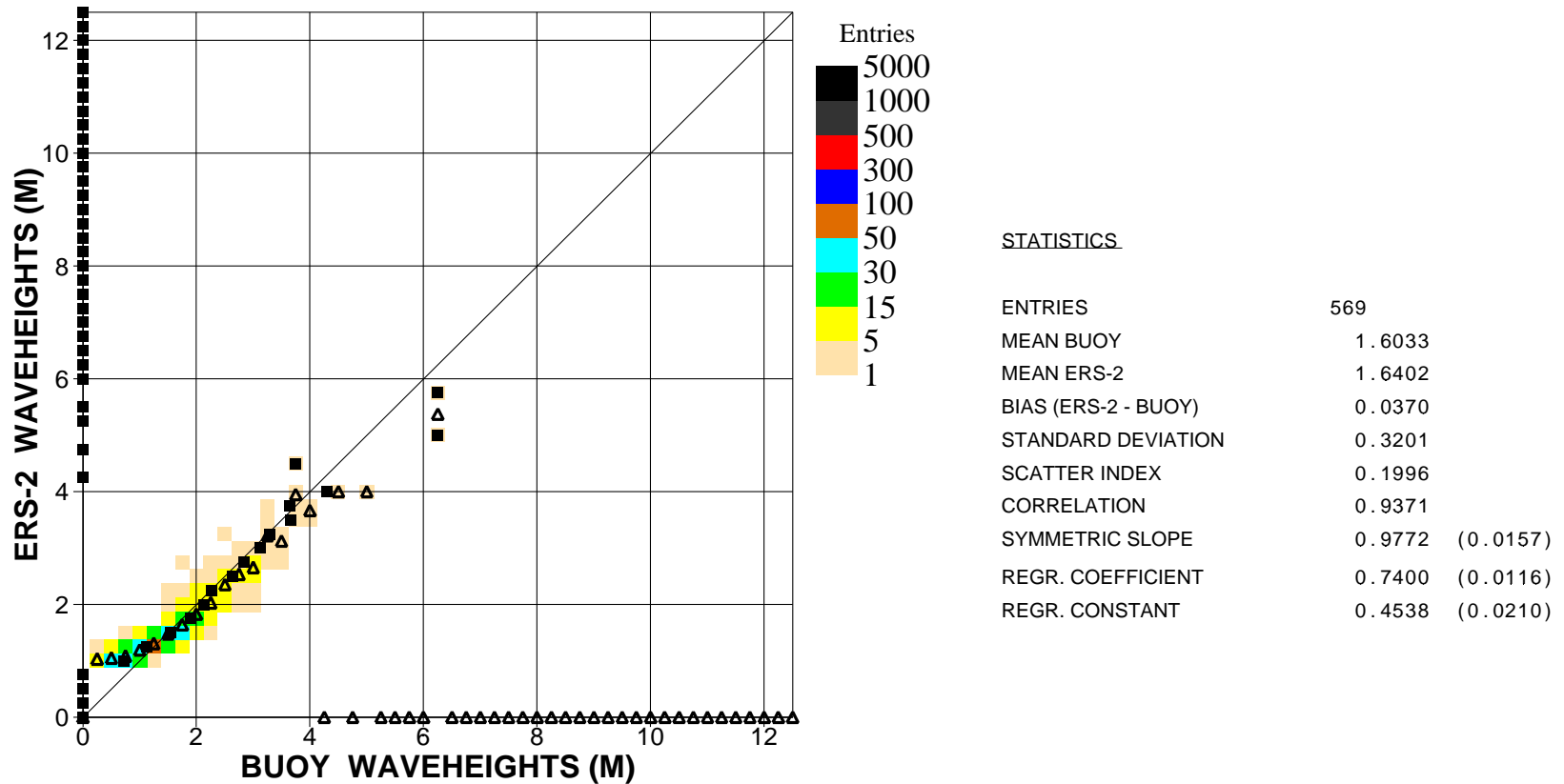


Figure 22. Comparison of buoy wave height observations with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (n.hem.)

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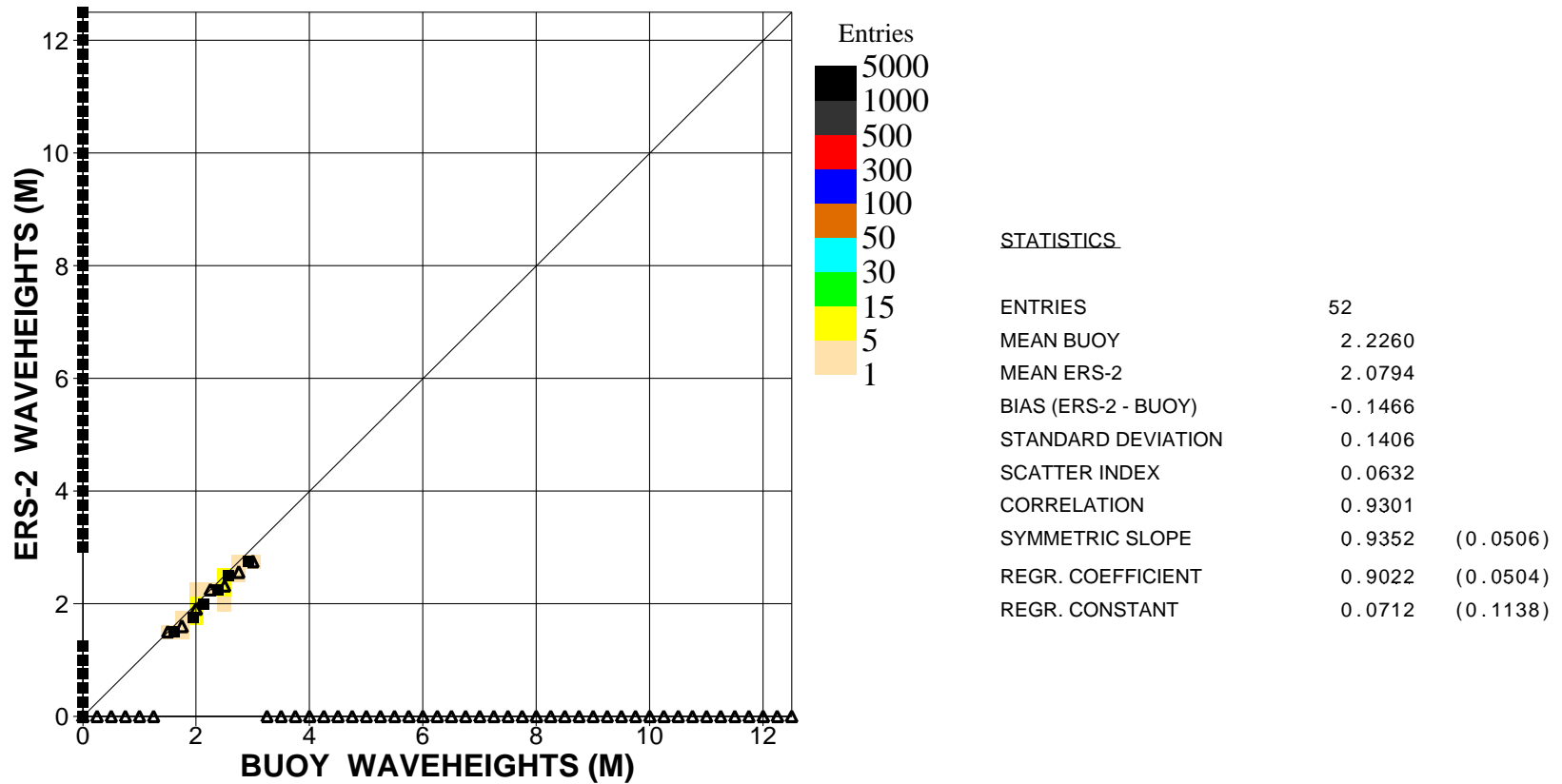


Figure 23. Comparison of buoy wave height observations with ERS2 Altimeter wave height data for August 2001 (hawaii)

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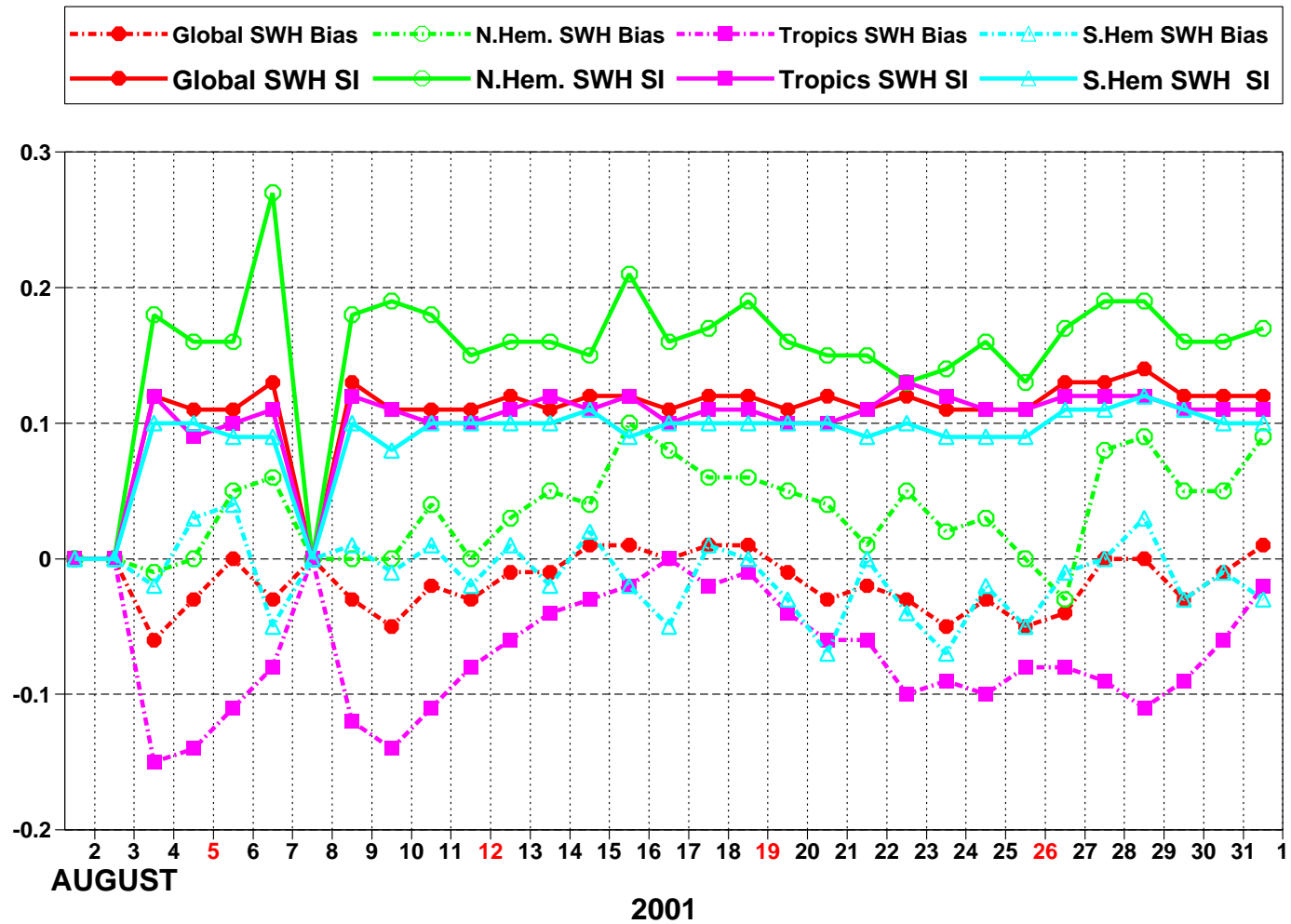


Figure 24: ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI)

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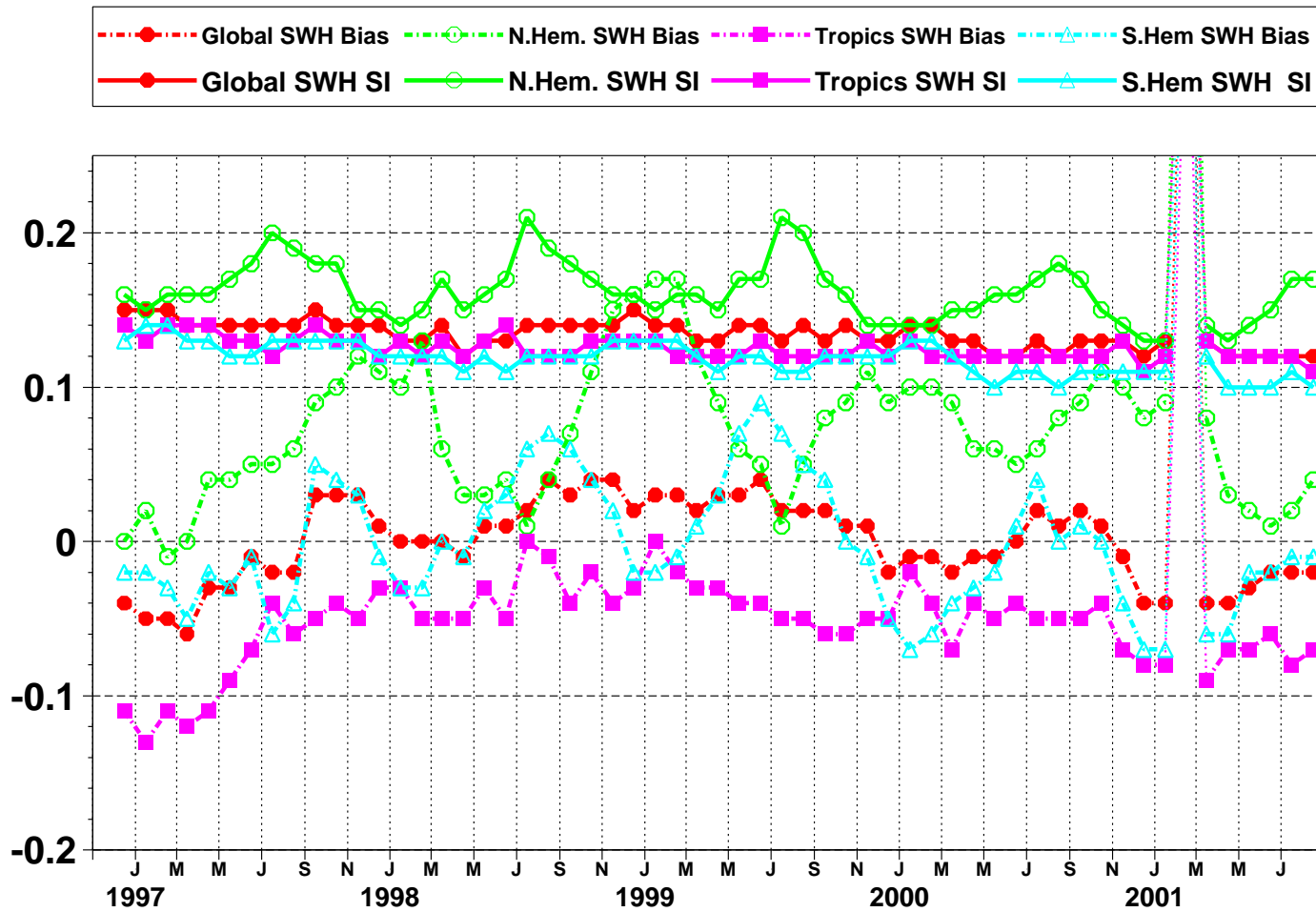


Figure 25: ERS-2 Altimeter wave heights: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI)

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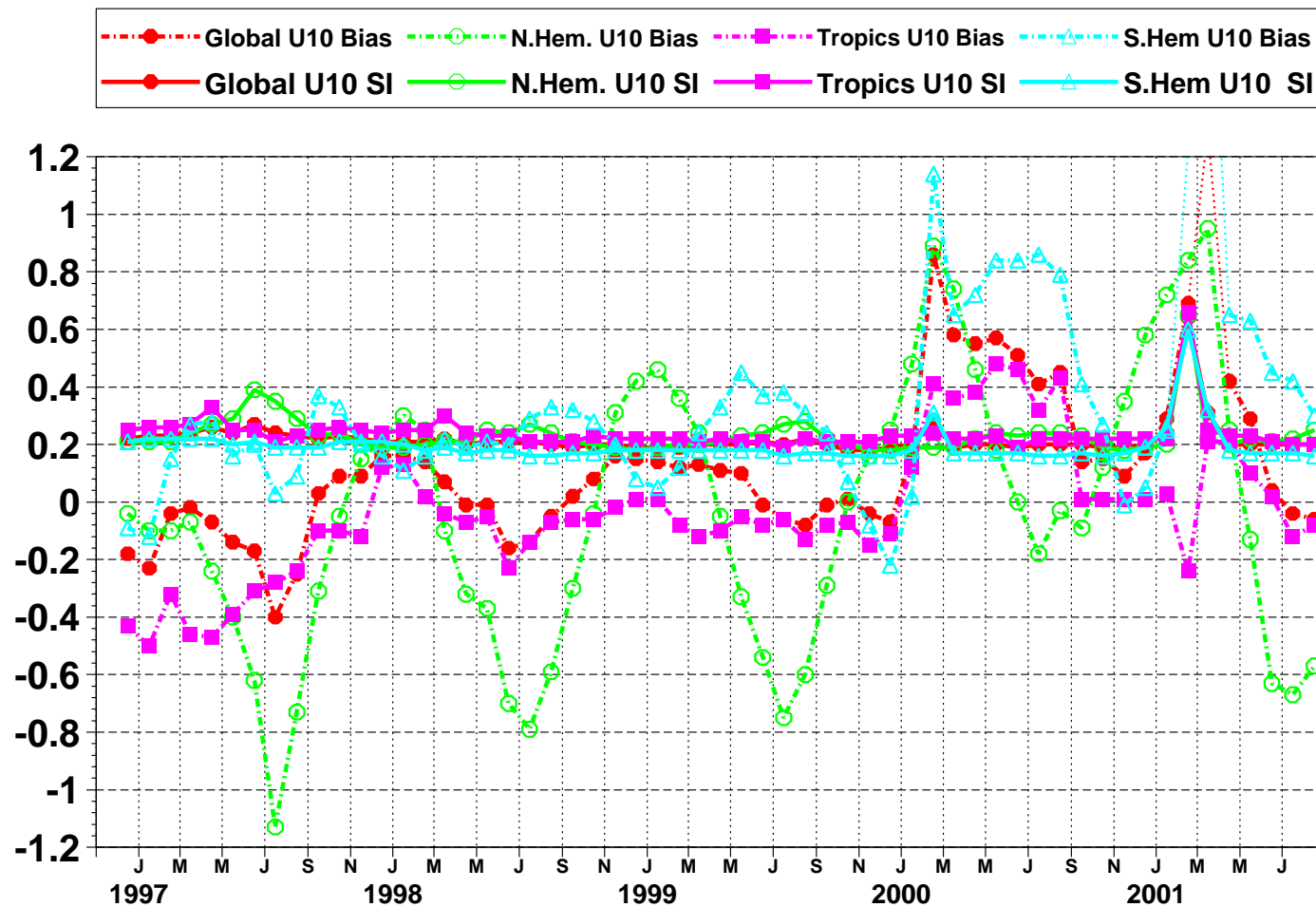


Figure 26: ERS-2 Altimeter wind speeds: Timeseries of bias (ERS-2 - model) and scatter index (SI)



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