

MyOceanWx On Demand – New Weather Information Delivery Service for Shipping Community

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The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has been providing marine meteorological services since its establishment in 1883. In 1915, marine weather forecasts were broadcast to ships for the first time using radio telegraphy. Traditionally, meteorological information for safety of navigation have been provided to ships cruising in the South China Sea and the western North Pacific using text messages, such as the forecast and warnings provided under the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) via the SafetyNET system, Tropical Cyclone Warnings for Shipping and Marine Weather Forecasts for ships via Navigational Telex (NAVTEX). While internet access has been widely available to people on land, it is still of limited use on many commercial ships due to costing concern. Therefore, transmission of graphical weather products through internet to ships is still not very common today.

To strengthen the provision of meteorological information to ships at sea and in response to feedback from ship masters received through HKO's annual marine meteorological surveys, HKO has developed a new "MyOceanWx On Demand" weather information delivery service via email system. This new free service is intended to provide the requested information to marine users who do not have full internet access on board the ships but have the email capability to send and receive information. Through an offline webpage (Fig. 1) provided by HKO, users can select the meteorological information they are interested at, such as the newly-developed sea wave/swell forecast charts covering the northern Indian Ocean, South China Sea and western North Pacific (Figs. 2 and 3), computer model weather charts such as the mean sea level pressure charts and temperature forecast charts, satellite images and textual weather forecasts and bulletins. Upon returning the configuration file generated by the webpage to HKO by email, the requested information will be automatically sent back to the users as email attachments. This service has been under trial since 2018 by the Hong Kong Voluntary Observing Ships and members of the HKO's Liaison Group for the Shipping Community. Invitation is now extended to all members of the shipping community to take part in the trial. Interested members may contact us for more details (email: hkopmo@hko.gov.hk). HKO will continue to enhance the service based on user's feedback and more products and features will be added in phases as they become available.

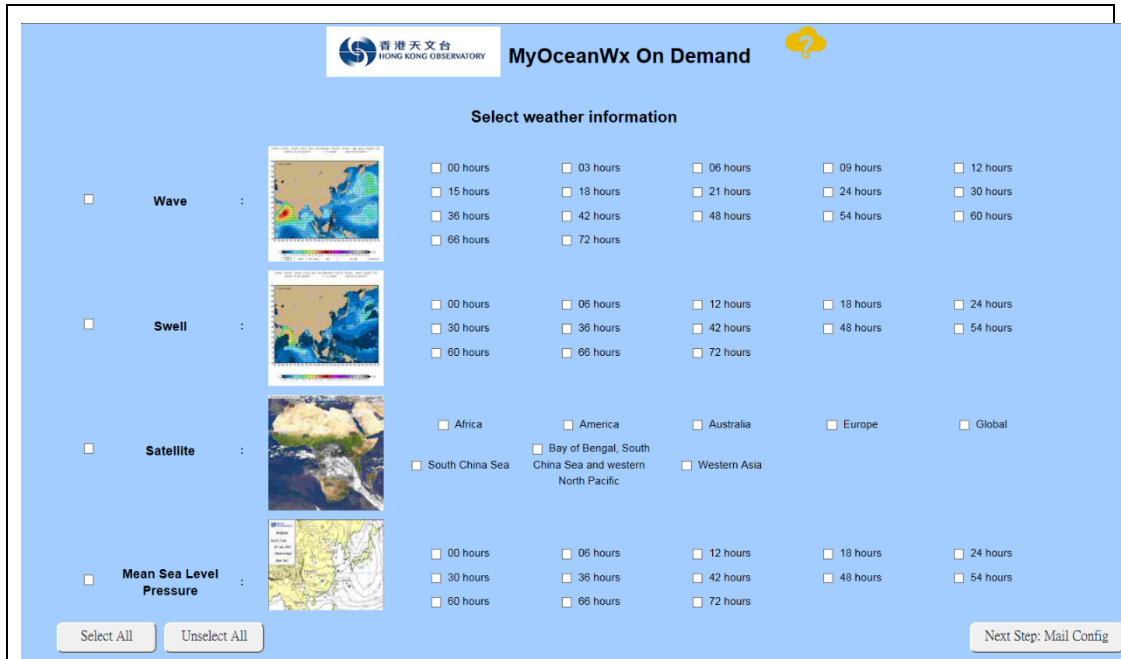


Figure 1. Offline interface of MyOceanWx On Demand

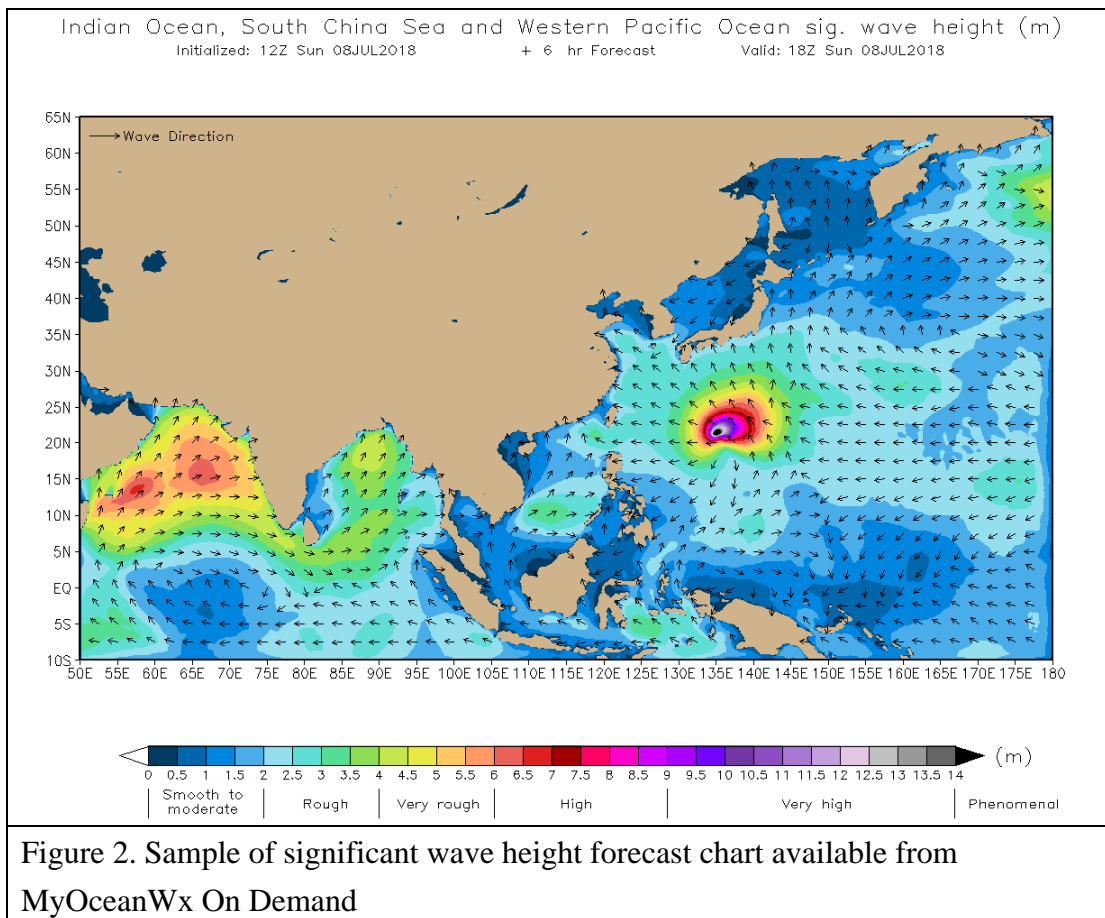


Figure 2. Sample of significant wave height forecast chart available from MyOceanWx On Demand

