

THE AUSTRALIAN BASELINE SEA LEVEL MONITORING PROJECT

MONTHLY DATA REPORT

FEBRUARY 2001



NOTES ON THE DATA FOR FEBRUARY 2001

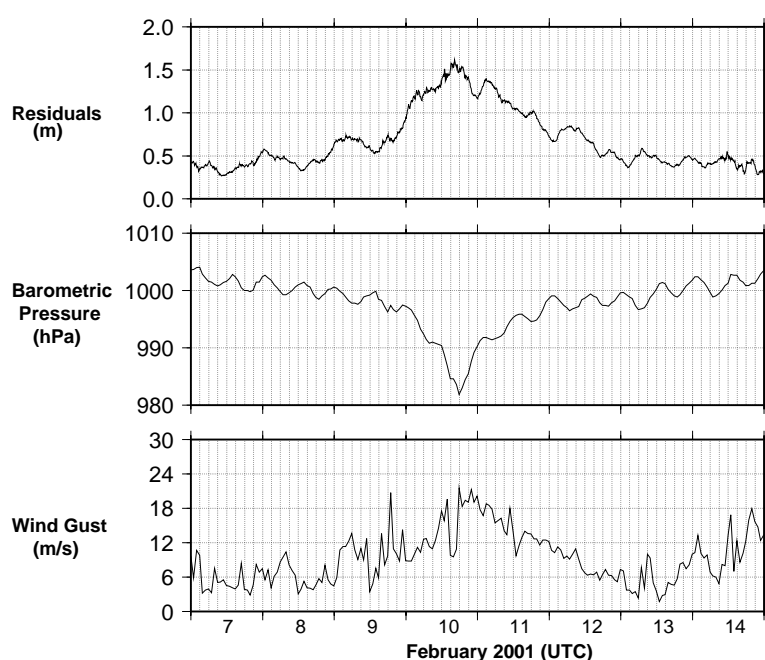
Sea level data return this month was excellent at all stations.

At Portland, data from the backup water temperature sensor was used up until the 19th February, as the data from the primary water temperature sensor appears to be erroneous. Unfortunately from the 20th February onwards the backup also became erroneous. Similarly, at Broome the primary water temperature sensor failed so data from the backup was used. At Thevenard the air temperature sensor readings were too high this month so were removed from the record.

Looking at the sea level anomalies this month (Figure 10), the majority of the stations have positive anomalies (with the exceptions of Cocos Islands and Hillarys which are close to zero, and Rosslyn Bay which is slightly negative).

The barometric pressure anomalies, presented in Figure 11, correlate reasonably well with the sea level anomalies this month for most stations. Strongly positive sea level anomalies correspond to strongly negative barometric pressure anomalies as would be expected.

The residuals (Figures 2 and 3), or difference between the observations and the tidal predictions, are the non-tidal components of the sea level observations. The residuals are primarily the consequence of short-term meteorological effects (Figures 4, 6 and 9) and may give the result of elevated or depressed sea level observations. This month the passage of Tropical Cyclone Winsome through Groote Eylandt is clearly evident in the sea level residuals between the 9th and 12th February. The following plot shows the influence of the cyclone on sea level, barometric pressure and winds.



Residual heights attained during this event were around 1.4 metres above average. A corresponding drop in barometric pressure, reaching a low of 981.9 hPa, is also evident over the same time scale as the rise in sea level. The maximum wind gust reached during this period was approximately 23m/s. The track of Tropical Cyclone Winsome can be viewed at the following web address. This track was produced by Thomas R. Metcalf at the University of Hawaii.

<http://www.solar.ifa.hawaii.edu/Tropical/GifArchive/WINSOME-01.gif>

With regard to the water and air temperature anomalies in Figures 12 and 13 respectively, it must be noted that there are large gaps in the data for several stations, where the data collected appeared to be erroneous. Please note that for several stations there were no backup water temperature sensors in operation, so the quality of this data is unknown. Similarly, air temperatures are compared to the temperature recorded by a sensor located in the upper levels of the environmental housing of the tide gauge. These will not exactly agree, as in locations where the housing is in the sun, the housing temperature will be higher than the actual air temperature. The temperature fluctuations inside the housing will also be less pronounced compared to the actual temperature fluctuations. This is due to the smaller amount of ventilation within the environmental housing. So although this can be used as a rough gauge in determining the quality of air temperature data, it is not an exact measure, and so is not used to fill the gaps.

It is difficult to relate the water and air temperature anomalies directly to those of barometric pressure and sea level without considering other effects, such as localised currents, wind speeds and directions. However, the anomalies are very useful in controlling the quality of the water and air temperatures at the Baseline stations.

The mean, maximum and minimum values for barometric pressure, air and water temperatures at each station for February 2001 are compared with the long-term February values. These comparisons are shown in Figure 16. Please remember that the long-term ranges are calculated using the historical sets of February data for each station *excluding* the current month of data.

The mean barometric pressures for February for all of the southern stations were all quite consistent with the long term February means. In the north mean barometric pressures for this month were slightly lower than the long term February mean. A Baseline record low barometric pressure was recorded at Groote Eylandt (a result of the passage of Tropical Cyclone Winsome).

A similar comparison was made between the long-term spread of February air temperature data and that which occurred this month. The means for this month at all of the Baseline station were consistent with the long term February means. Record Baseline high air temperatures were recorded at Port Stanvac, Portland and Groote Eylandt.

The mean water temperatures for February 2001 were quite consistent with the long-term means for all locations (Figure 16). A record low water temperature was evident at Portland this month.

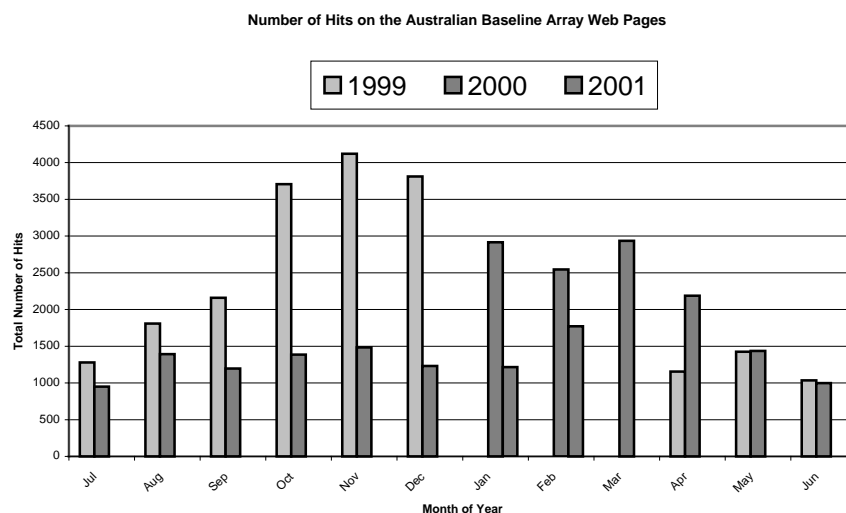
The month of commencement of operation of each gauge is listed in Table 1. Also shown is the short-term sea level trend for the entire record and the change from the previous month's analysis. Figure 14 shows the short-term sea level trends for each station.

Table 1: Installation dates and short-term sea level trends for the Baseline array.

Station	Installation Date	Sea Level Trend (mm/yr)	Change from previous month
Cocos Islands	Sep 1992	+9.8	+0.0
Groote Eylandt	Sep 1993	+35.2	+1.4
Darwin	May 1990	+19.7	+0.3
Broome	Nov 1991	+27.4	+0.2
Hillarys	Nov 1991	+22.4	-0.1
Esperance	Mar 1992	+16.5	+0.2
Thevenard	Mar 1992	+11.8	+0.2
Port Stanvac	Jun 1992	+10.3	+0.2
Portland	Jul 1991	+5.4	+0.1
Lorne	Jan 1993	+4.3	+0.1
Stony Point	Jan 1993	+4.5	+0.1
Burnie	Sep 1992	+5.9	+0.2
Spring Bay	May 1991	+4.2	+0.2
Port Kembla	Jul 1991	+4.7	+0.0
Rossllyn Bay	Jun 1992	+8.8	-0.1
Cape Ferguson	Sep 1991	+11.0	+0.1

Figure 17 shows the monthly mean sea levels with respect to an arbitrary fixed offset from the zero of the tide gauge. This plot clearly shows significant correlation in seasonal signals between stations, in contrast to the sea level anomalies plot, which has had the seasonal signal removed from the data. It is also interesting to note that the mean sea level this month at Groote Eylandt (increased due to Tropical Cyclone Winsome) is the highest ever recorded in the Baseline record.

The following chart shows the number of hits on the Australian Baseline project web pages over 1999, 2000 and 2001.



Please note:

Tide gauges at Stony Point and Lorne do not record air temperature, water temperature and barometric pressure data and are not present in Figures 3,7,8,9,11,12,13 and 16. The tide gauge at Lorne does not record wind data and is not present in Figures 4,5 and 6.

The *Monthly Data Report* is prepared by NTF Australia for Environment Australia. Staff members produce the text, plots and tables.

Further information on the *Monthly Data Report* and other projects conducted by NTF Australia can be obtained from the following address.

Contact address: NTF Australia
 The Flinders University of South Australia
 GPO BOX 2100, Adelaide SA 5001
Tel: [+61 8] 8201 7534
Fax: [+61 8] 8201 7523
Email: ntf@flinders.edu.au
Website: <http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au>

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Individuals and organisations are advised that quality controlled six-minute or hourly data from these stations are available on request from NTF Australia. Some handling fees may be charged. For commercial agencies requesting data, some additional costs may be levied.

Figure 1

FEBRUARY 2001
SIX MINUTE OBSERVATIONS FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (m)

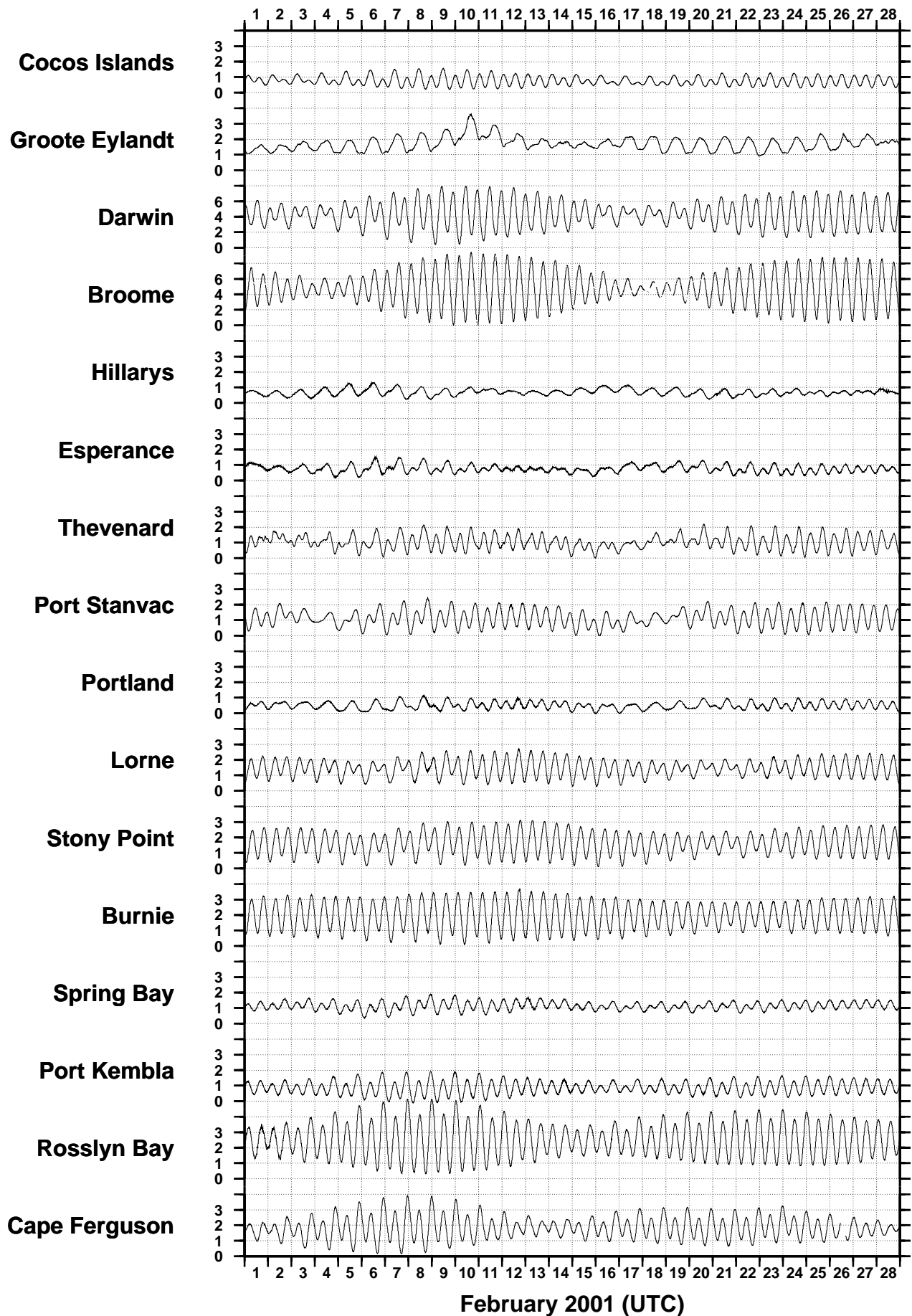


Figure 2

FEBRUARY 2001
RESIDUALS AT SIX MINUTE INTERVALS FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (m)

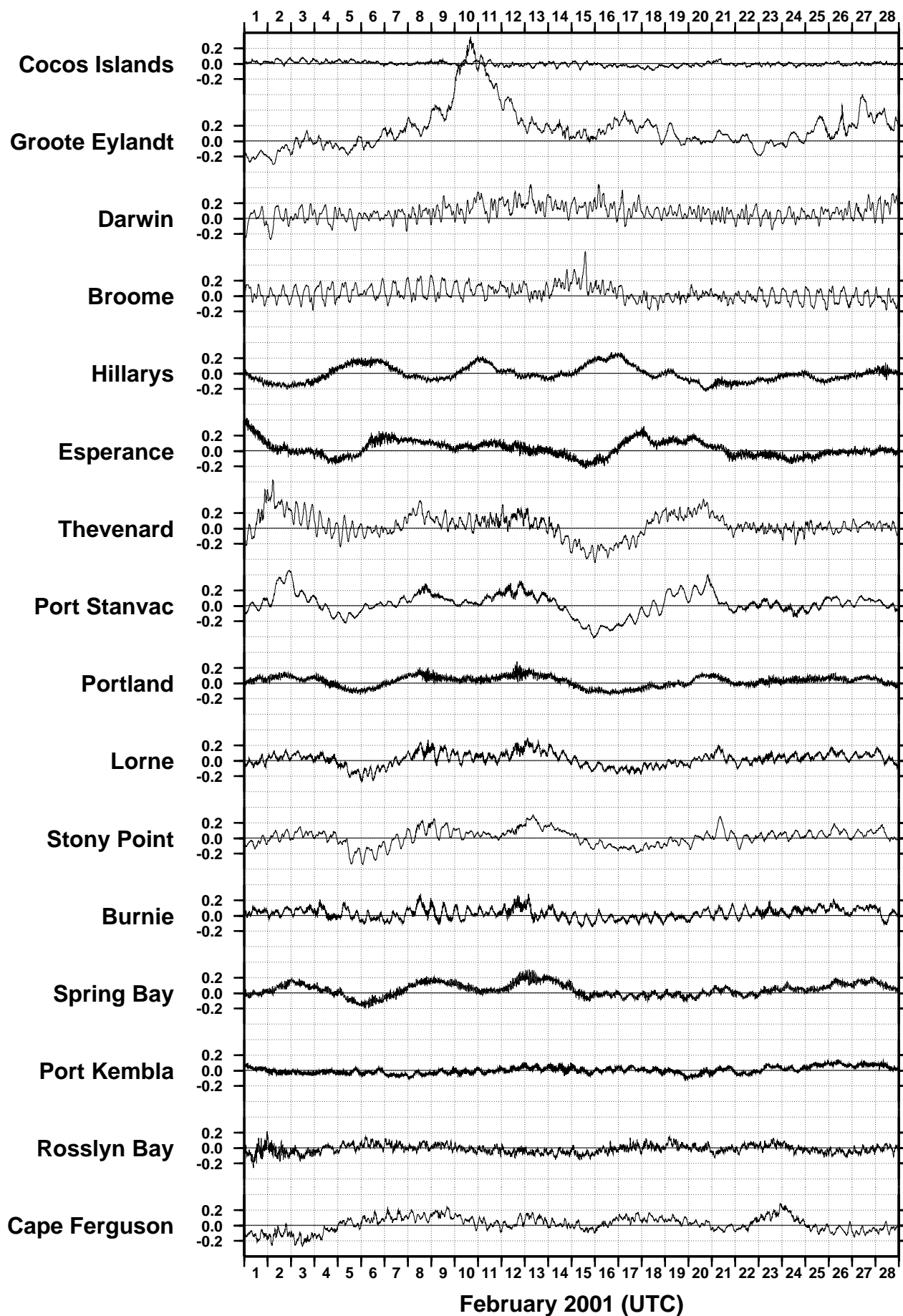


Figure 3

FEBRUARY 2001
RESIDUALS AT SIX MINUTE INTERVALS FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (m)
ADJUSTED FOR ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE

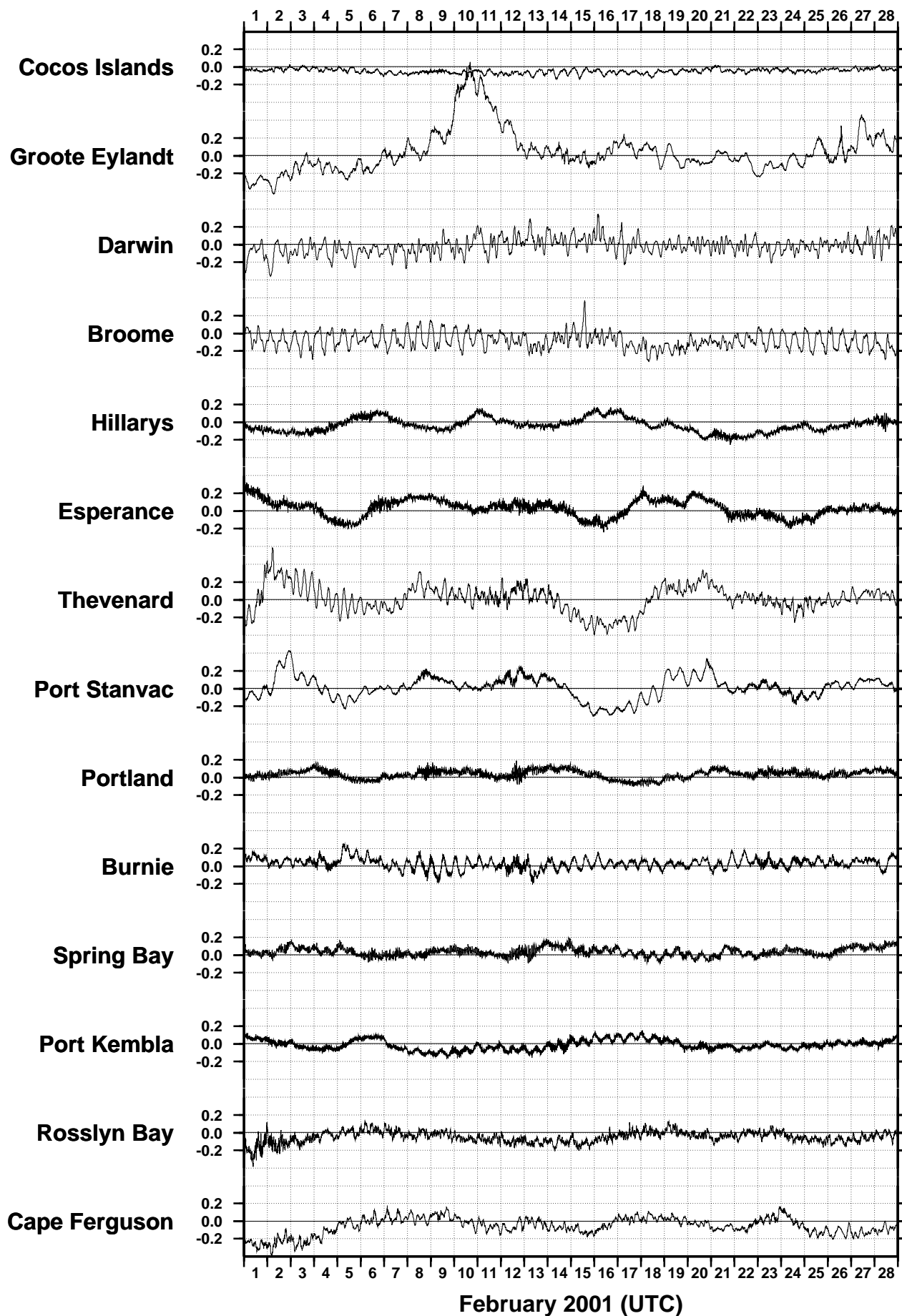


Figure 4

FEBRUARY 2001
HOURLY WIND SPEEDS FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (m/s)

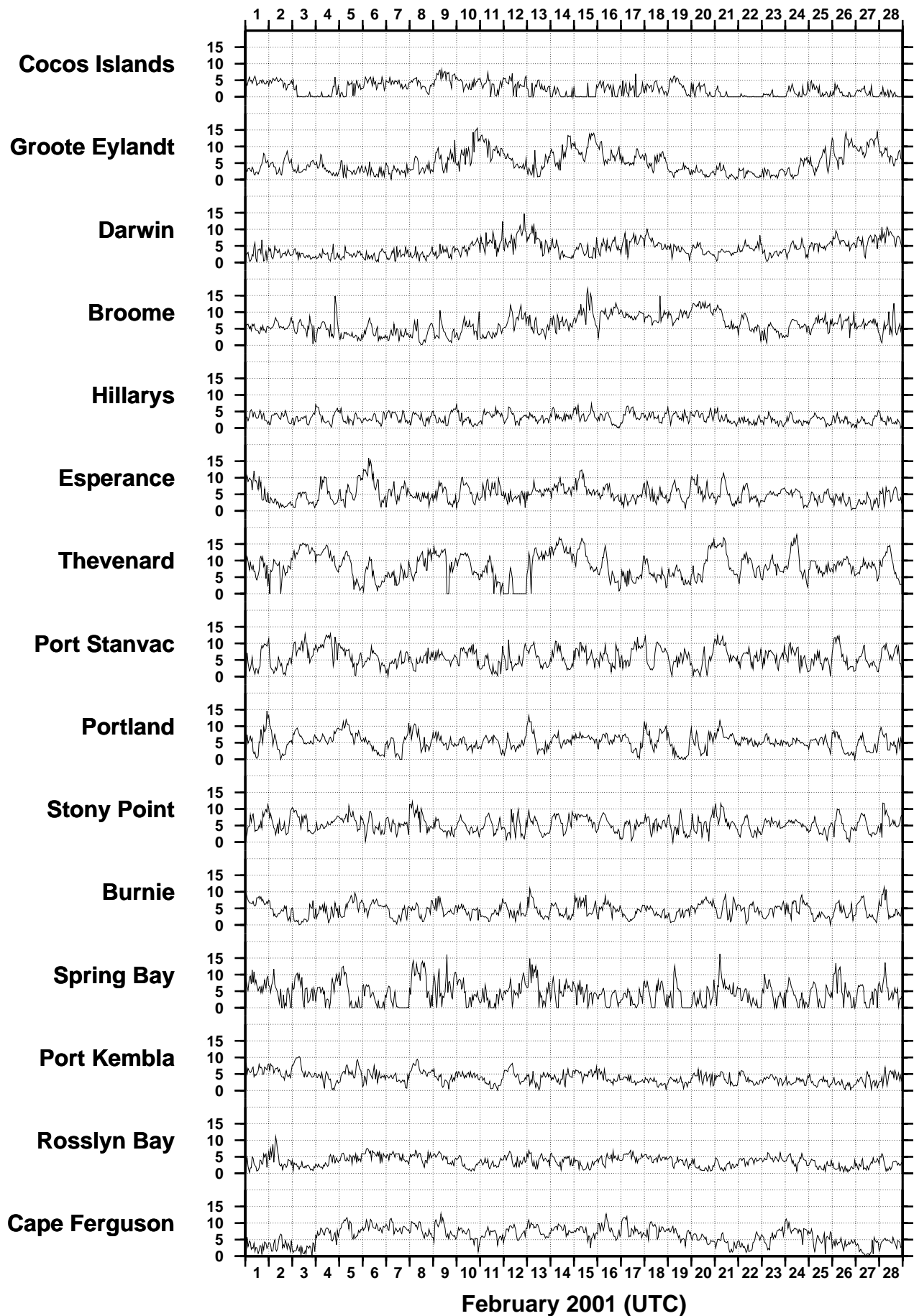


Figure 5

FEBRUARY 2001
HOURLY INCIDENT WINDS FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (m/s, deg True)

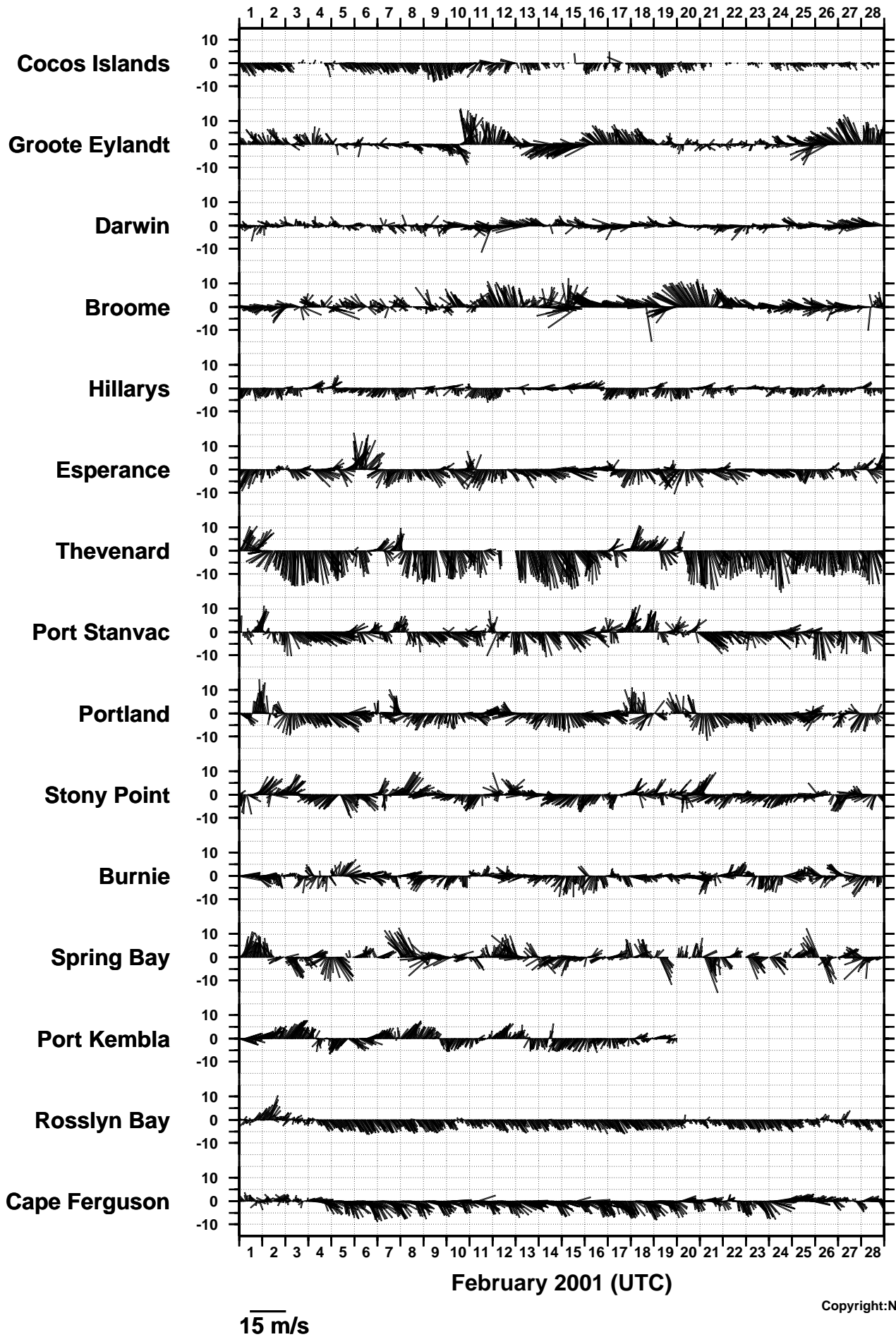


Figure 6

FEBRUARY 2001
HOURLY MAXIMUM WIND GUSTS FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (m/s)

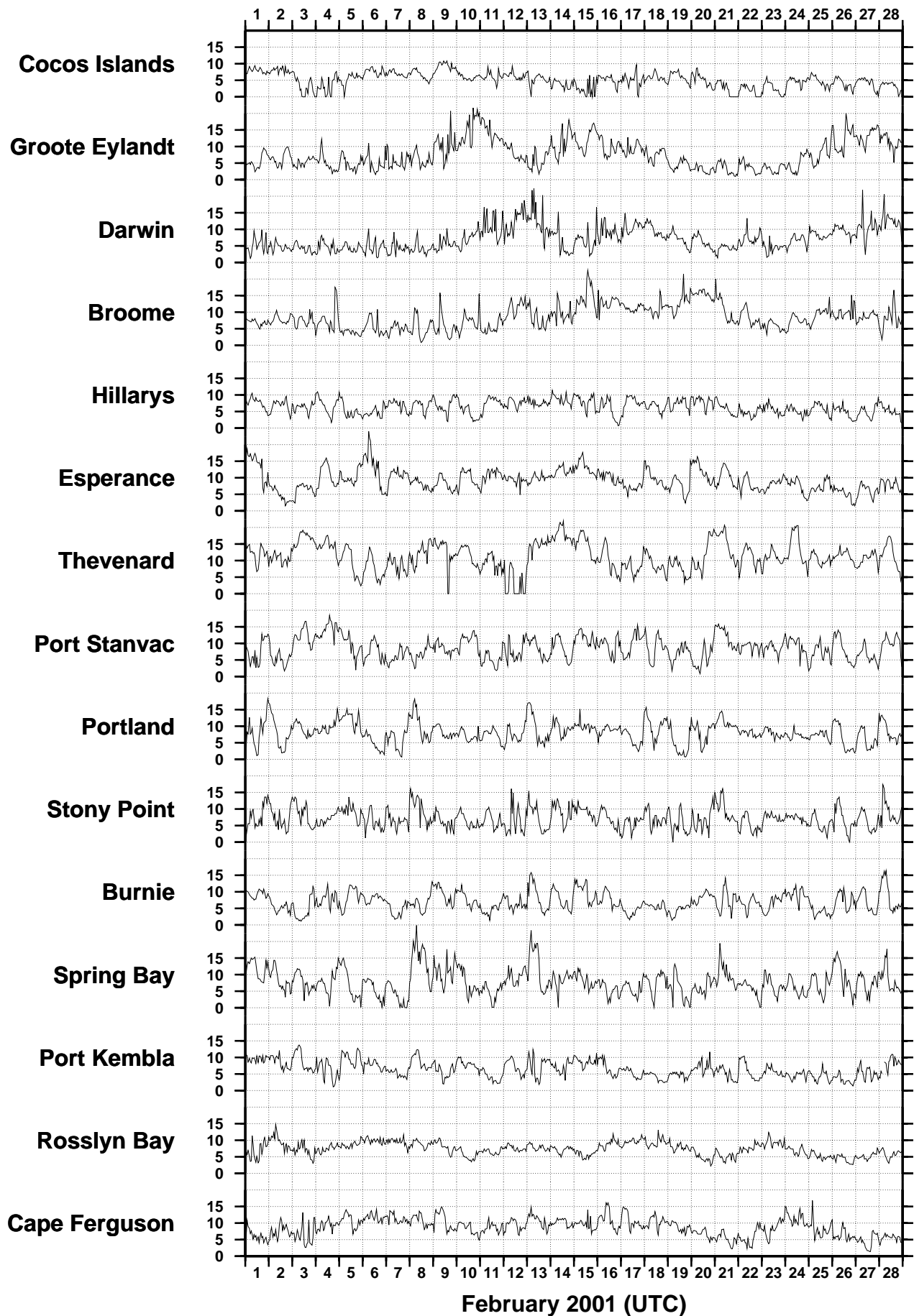


Figure 7

FEBRUARY 2001
HOURLY AIR TEMPERATURES FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (°C)

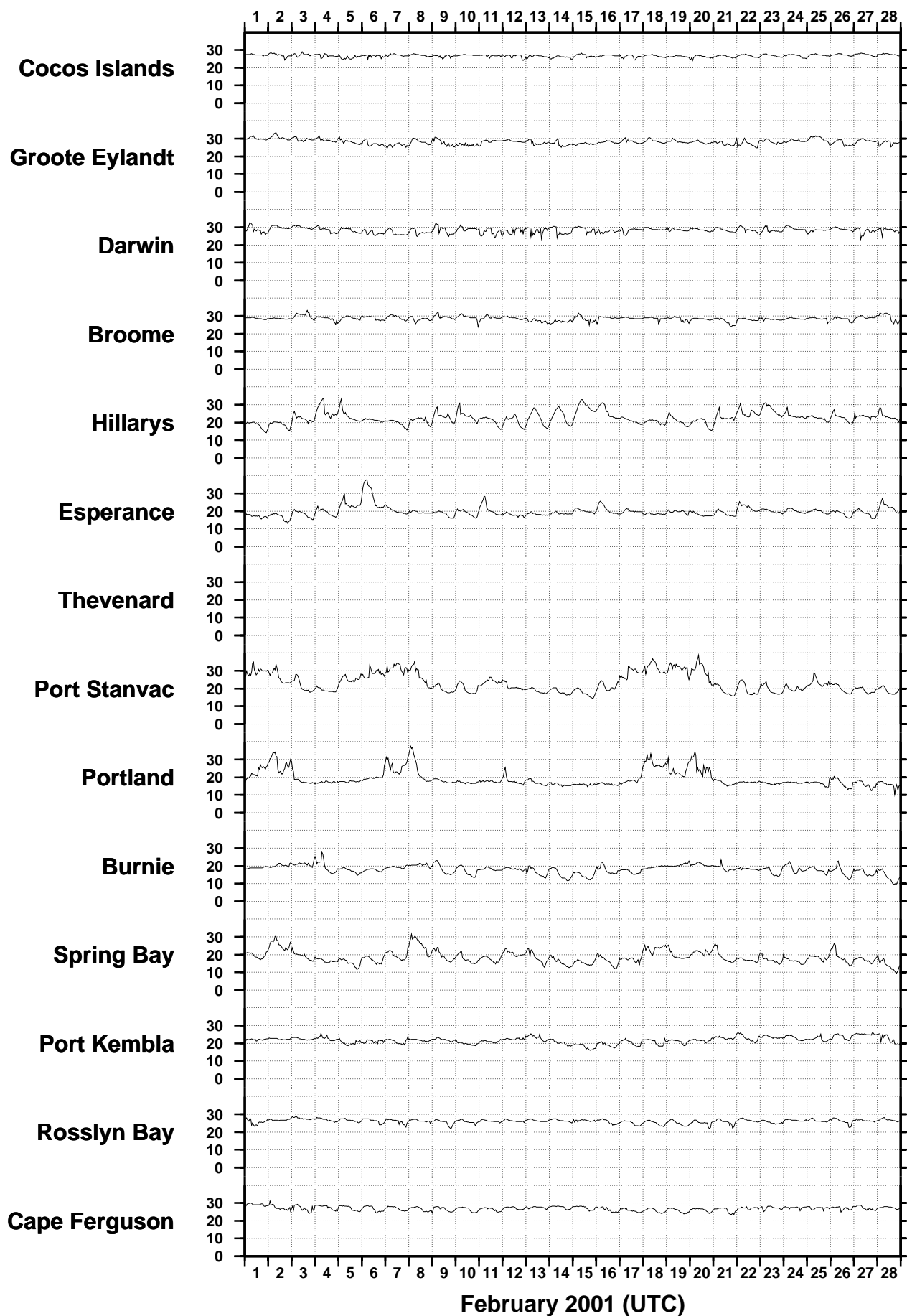


Figure 8

FEBRUARY 2001
HOURLY WATER TEMPERATURES FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (°C)

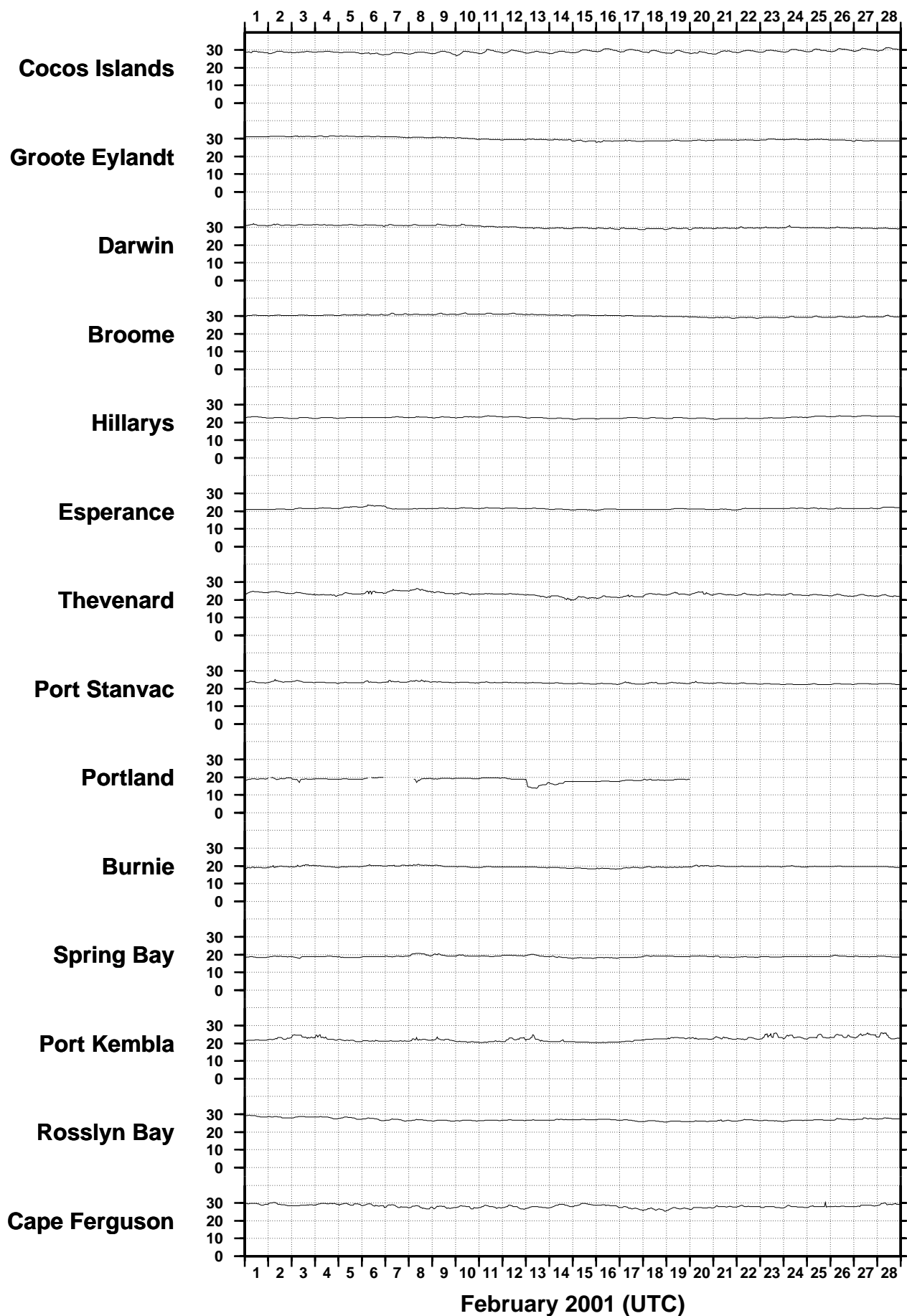
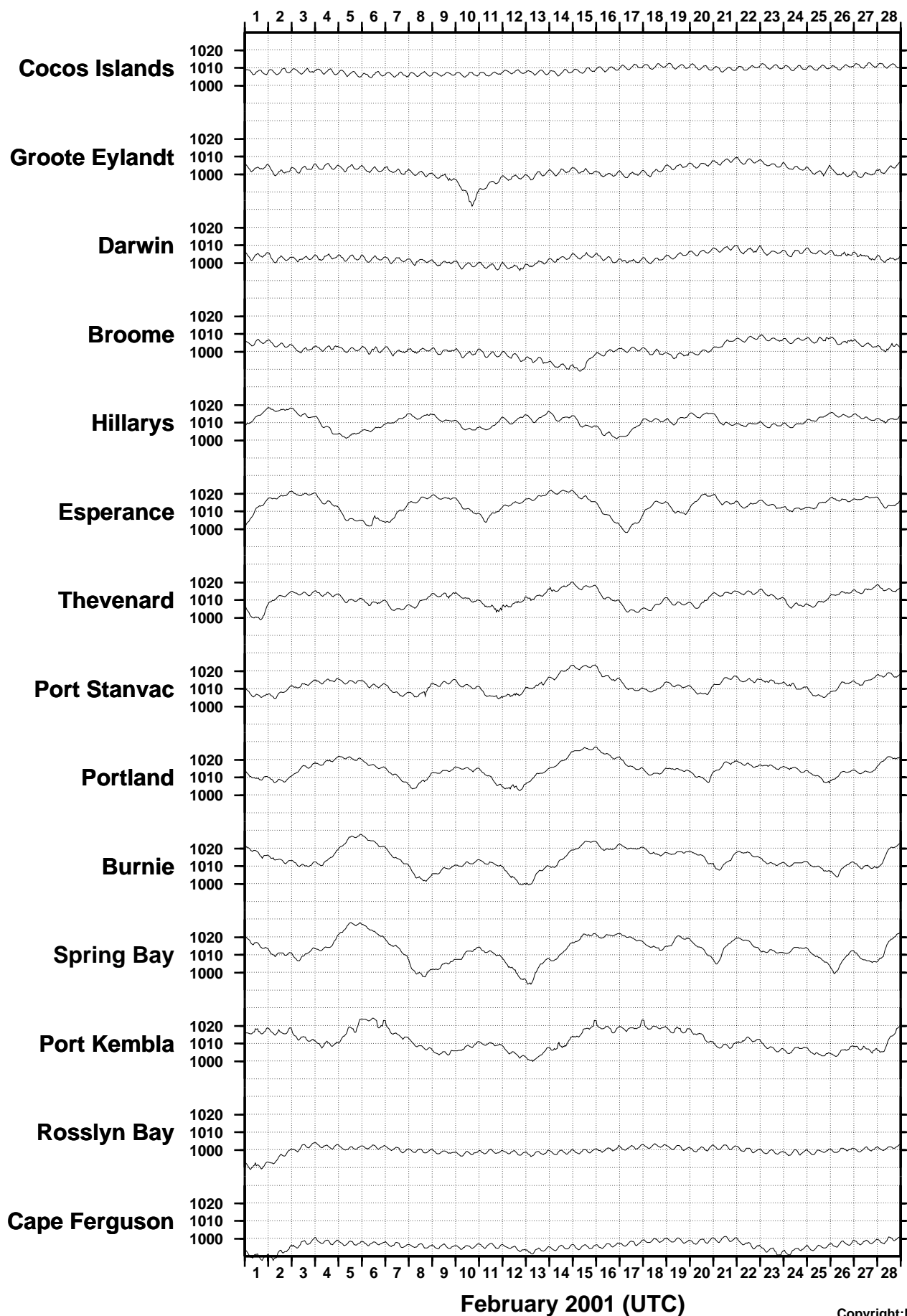


Figure 9

FEBRUARY 2001

HOURLY ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE FROM SEAFRAME STATIONS (hPa)



February 2001 (UTC)

Figure 10
SEA LEVEL ANOMALIES THROUGH FEBRUARY 2001 (m)

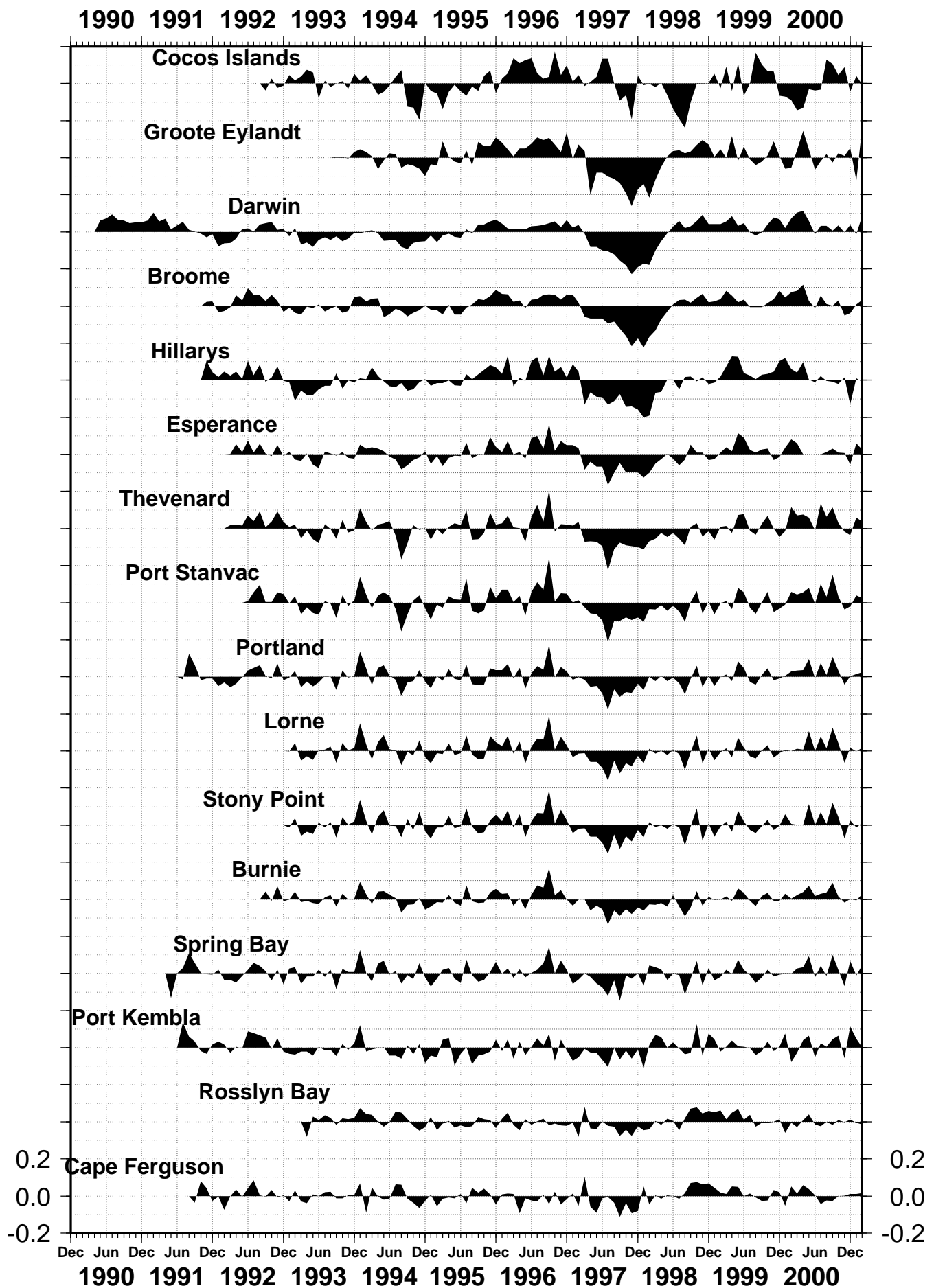


Figure 11

BAROMETRIC PRESSURE ANOMALIES THROUGH FEBRUARY 2001 (hPa)

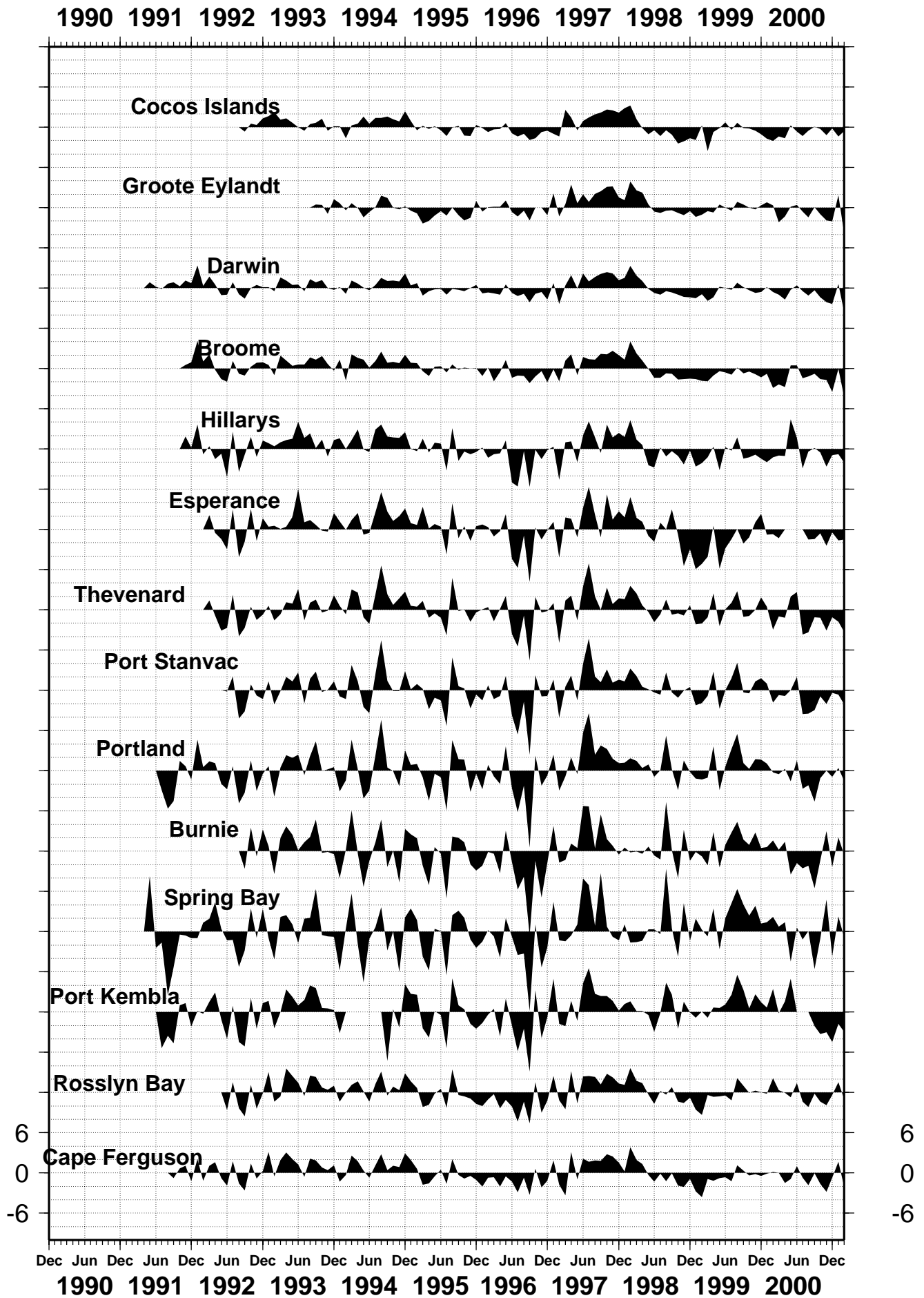


Figure 12

**WATER TEMPERATURE
ANOMALIES THROUGH FEBRUARY 2001 (°C)**

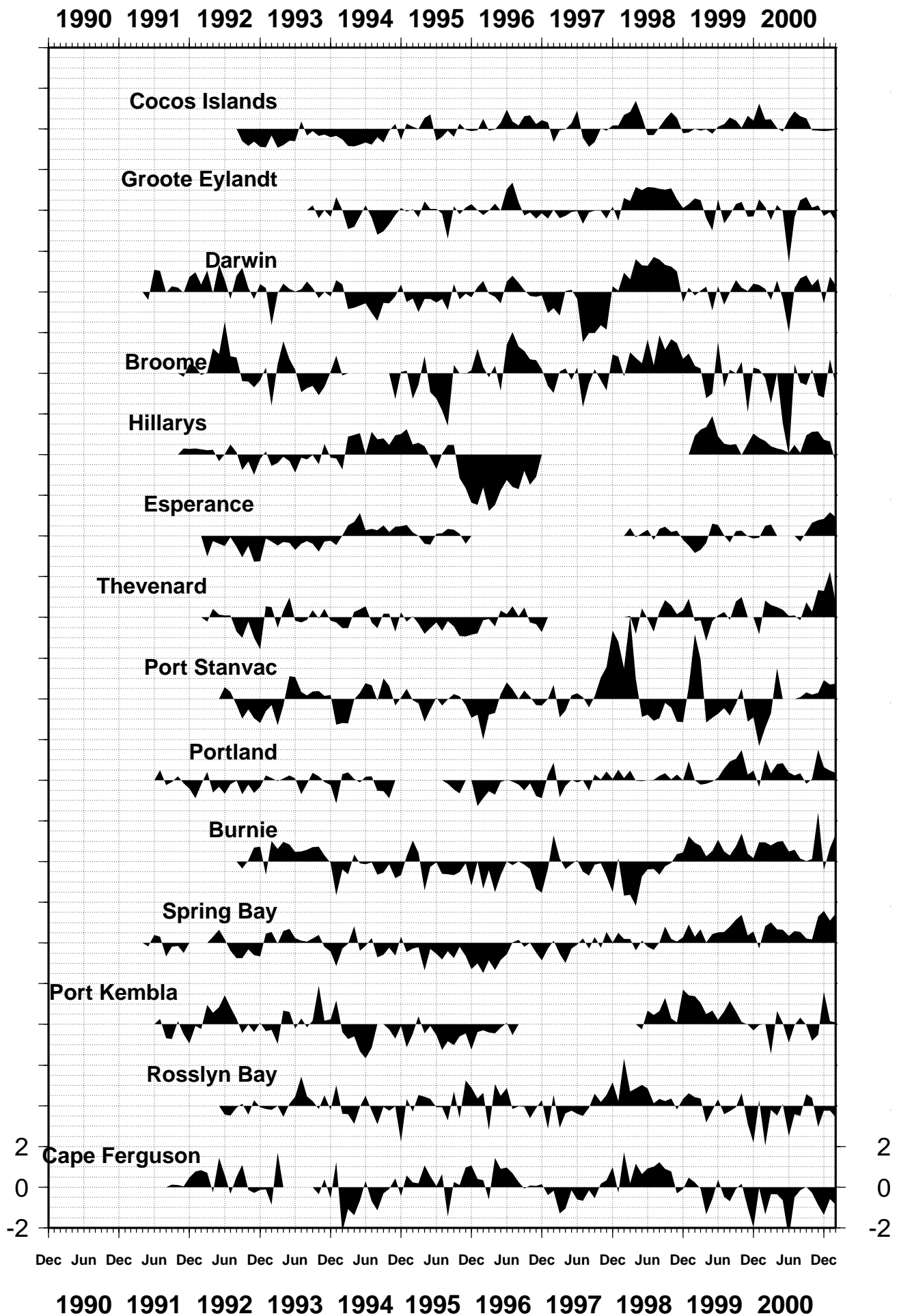


Figure 13

**AIR TEMPERATURE ANOMALIES
THROUGH FEBRUARY 2001 (°C)**

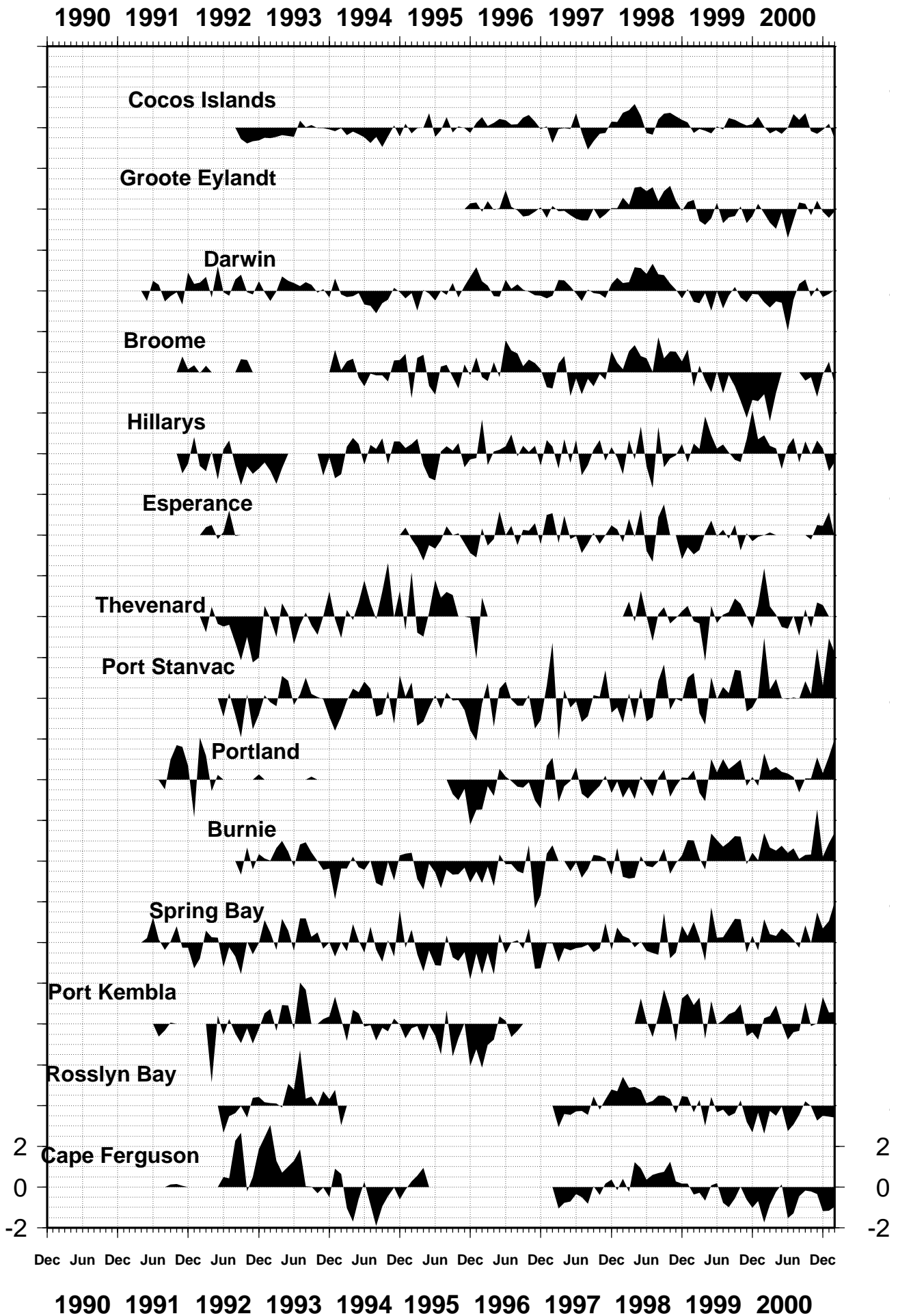
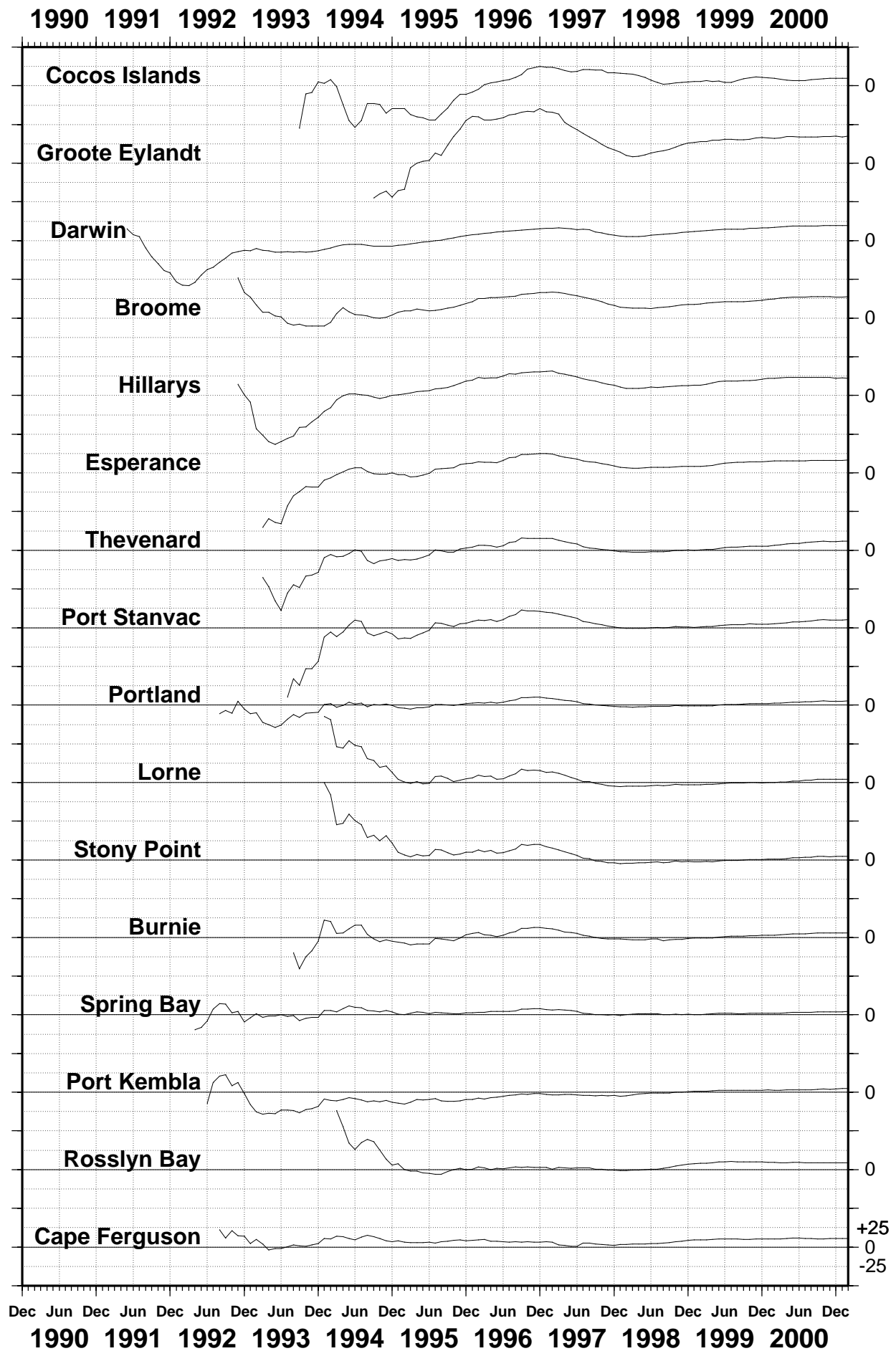


Figure 14

SEA LEVEL TRENDS THROUGH FEBRUARY 2001 (mm/year)



SEA LEVEL DATA RETURN

Figure 15

THE NUMBER OF DAYS OF MISSING DATA ARE INDICATED
GAPS INCLUDE TRANSMISSION, POWER AND LOGGER FAILURE
* Patchy record

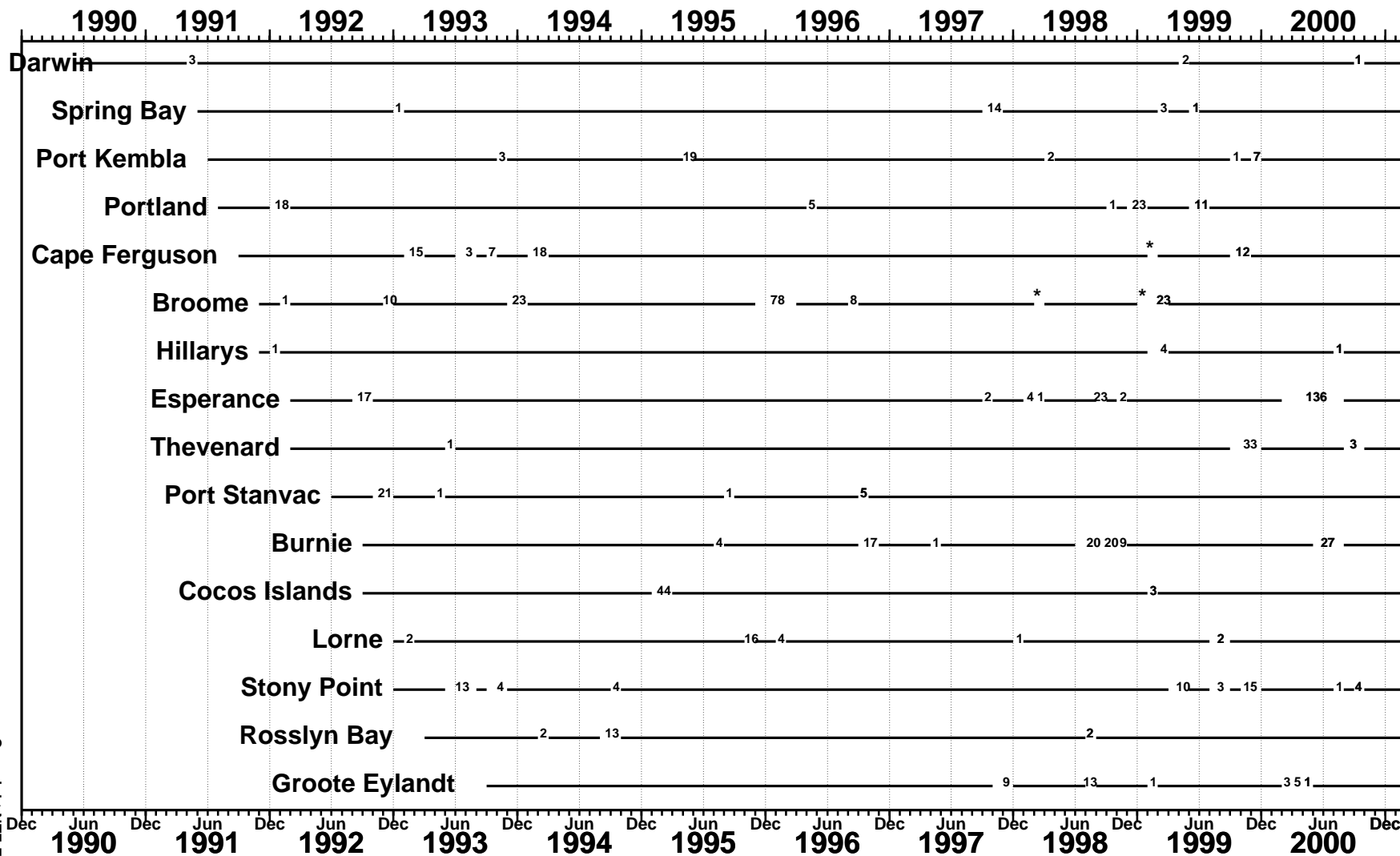
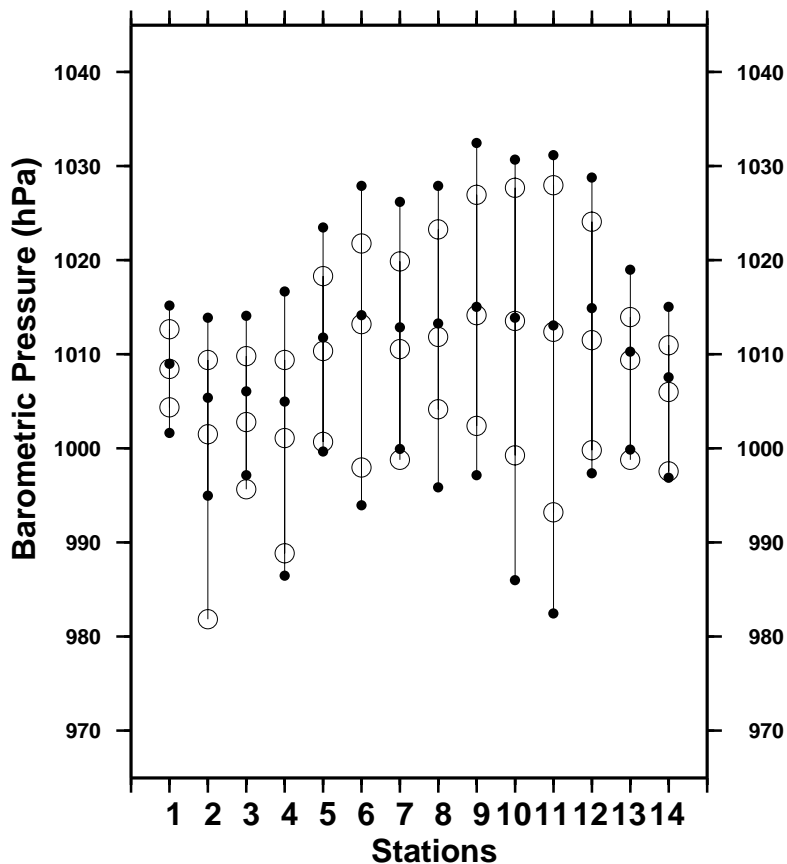
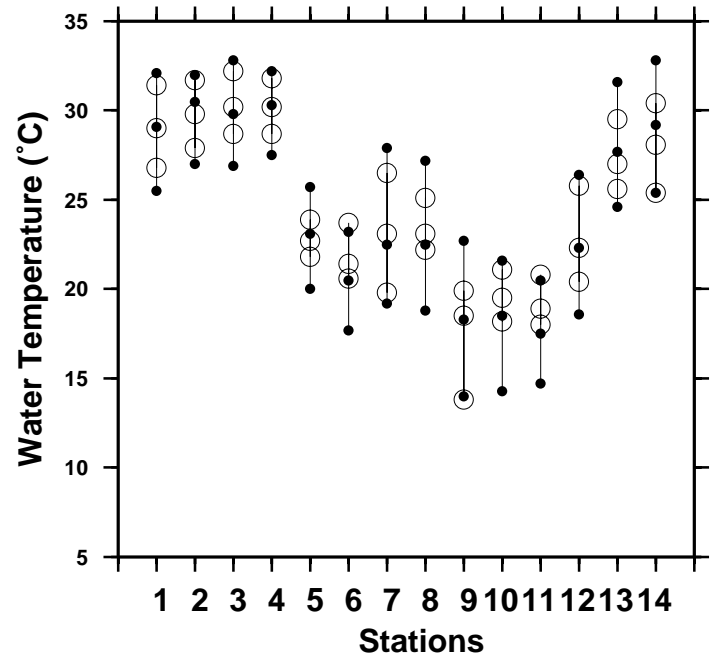
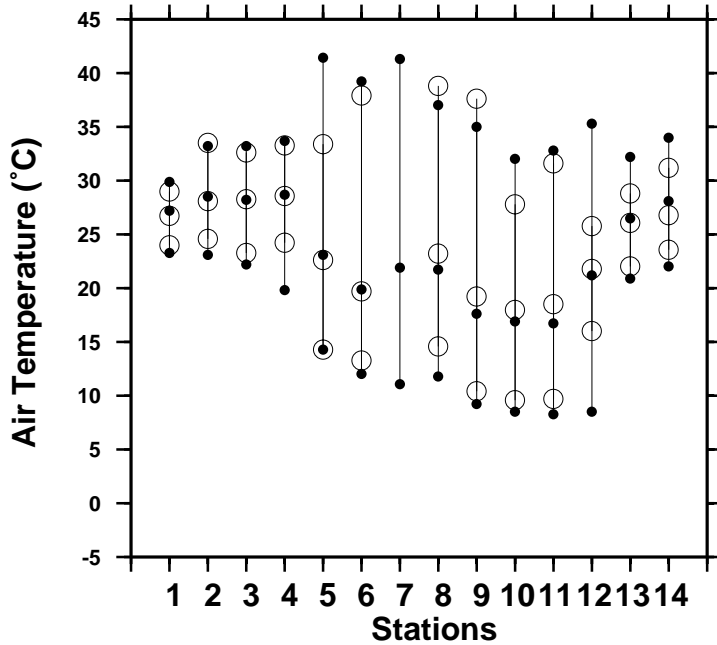


Figure 16

Comparison of February 2001 Max, Min & Mean with Long Term February Values.



Stations

- 1 - Cocos Islands
- 2 - Groote Eylandt
- 3 - Darwin
- 4 - Broome
- 5 - Hillarys
- 6 - Esperance
- 7 - Thevenard
- 8 - Port Stanvac
- 9 - Portland
- 10 - Burnie
- 11 - Spring Bay
- 12 - Port Kembla
- 13 - Rosslyn Bay
- 14 - Cape Ferguson

- February 2000 Maximum
- February 2000 Mean
- February 2000 Minimum
- Long Term February Maximum
- Long Term February Mean
- Long Term February Minimum

MONTHLY MEAN SEA LEVELS TO FEBRUARY 2001 (m)

1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000

