

**THE AUSTRALIAN BASELINE SEA LEVEL
MONITORING PROJECT**

MONTHLY DATA REPORT

APRIL 2004



Australian Government

Bureau of Meteorology

This report was prepared under the Australian Greenhouse Science Program for the Australian Greenhouse Office, supported by the National Tidal Centre, Bureau of Meteorology.



Australian Government

Bureau of Meteorology

**National Tidal Centre
Bureau of Meteorology
Australia**

GPO Box 421
Kent Town, SA 5071
Australia

Tel: (+618) 8201 7532
Fax: (+618) 8201 7523
Email: <http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au/TEXT/STAFF/contact.html>
Website: <http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au>

Quality Certification:

I authorise the issue of this Australian Baseline Sea Level Monitoring Project Monthly Data Report for April 2004 in accordance with National Tidal Centre Quality Assurance procedures.

William Mitchell
Manager - National Tidal Centre

The Australian Baseline Sea Level Monitoring Project

Monthly Data Report

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of this project is to operate and maintain a national array of high-resolution sea level gauges and associated meteorological instruments, in order to acquire observations that are quality controlled and processed to build a national database of information that is accessible by the scientific and wider communities.

The Baseline Array, and a similar array in the South Pacific, has been widely acknowledged in the global science community as two of the most accurate and reliable sources for information on sea level and climate change anywhere in the world.

The visualisation techniques included in this report, and the comments provided, are for the purposes of quality control analysis. Interpretation of the sea level record for the trends or climatic episodes is not the purpose of these reports. Provisional interpretation may be undertaken from time to time for reporting purposes and may be found in other publications.

Readers are cautioned against drawing any conclusions from short duration records, particularly when in isolation from other phenomena. The sea level record includes natural variability, such as El Nino events and the effects of atmospheric, oceanographic and geological processes. Vertical movement of the instrumentation relative to local topography is monitored and the results are listed on the Geosciences Australia web site. Movement of each station relative to the International Terrestrial Reference Frame is not monitored. It is important to note that as the sea level record becomes longer, the short-term trend estimate becomes more stable and reliable.

NOTES ON THE DATA FOR APRIL 2004

Sea level data return (Figures 1 and 15) in April was excellent for most stations with the exception of Port Kembla and Rosslyn Bay where some small gaps remain in the data due to calibration and maintenance of the tide gauges.

The residuals (Figures 2 and 3), the 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 5 and 9).

Wind speed and wind gust data from Stony Point remained intermittently erroneous throughout April. All of the wind data from Cocos Islands was also erroneous in April. These values and the corresponding incident wind directions have been removed (Figures 4, 5 and 6). The air temperature data from Rosslyn Bay was erroneous up to the 19th of April and was also removed from the record.

The sea level anomalies (Figure 10) changed from positive to negative at Cape Ferguson, Rosslyn Bay, Spring Bay and Cocos Islands and remained negative at all other stations in April.

The barometric pressure anomalies (Figure 11) remained negative at Port Kembla and positive at Esperance and Hillarys, and changed from negative to positive at the remaining stations in April.

It is difficult to relate the water and air temperature anomalies (Figures 12 and 13) directly to those of barometric pressure and sea level without considering other effects, such as localised currents, wind speeds and directions. The anomalies are primarily used to quality check the water and air temperature data.

Figure 14 compares the mean, maximum and minimum values for air temperature, water temperature and barometric pressure for the current month with the long-term April values. Note that the long-term ranges are calculated using the historical sets of April data for each station *excluding* the current month of data.

The mean air temperatures for April 2004 were generally consistent with the long term April means for most sites. A maximum air temperature of 32.7 °C exceeded the previous maxima for April at Groote Eylandt.

The mean water temperatures for April 2004 were consistent with the long term April means for all sites.

The mean barometric pressures for April 2004 were generally consistent with the long-term April means for most sites. A minimum barometric pressure of 994.5 hPa was lower than the previously recorded minima at Port Kembla.

Figure 16 shows the monthly mean sea levels with respect to an arbitrary fixed offset from the zero of the tide gauge. The mean sea level plot shows seasonal variations in sea level in contrast to the sea level anomalies plot (Figure 10), which has the seasonal signal removed from the data.

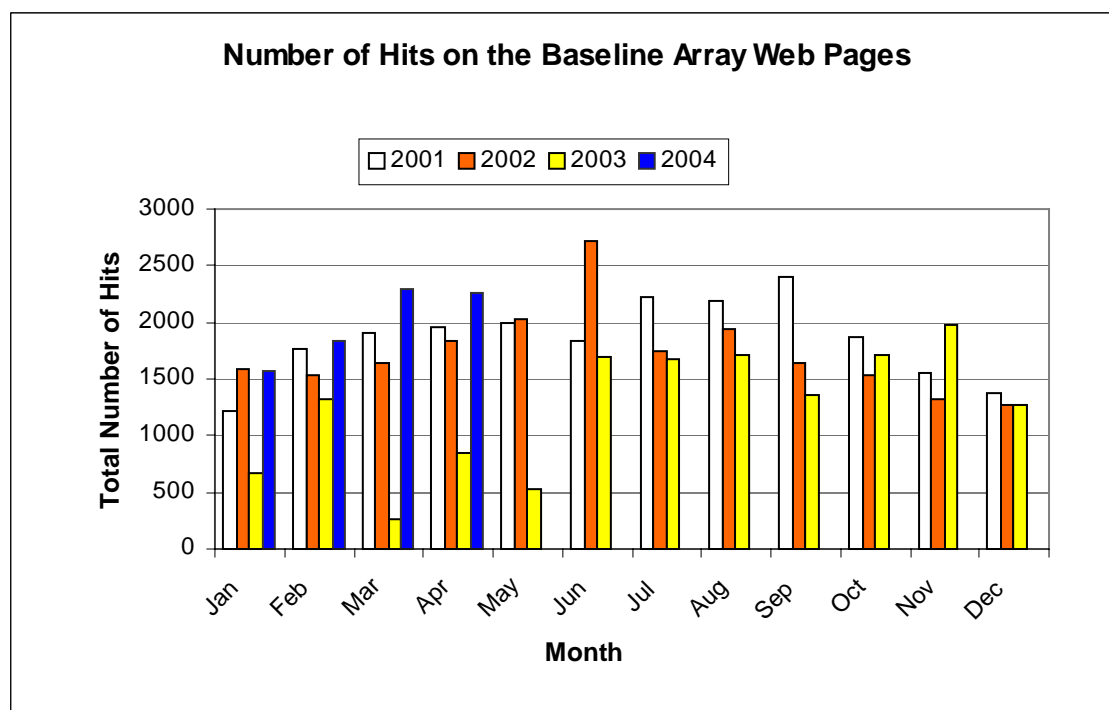
Figure 17 shows the short-term sea level trends for each site included in the Australian Baseline Sea Level Monitoring Project. Table 1 lists the commencement of operation, the sea level trend for the entire record (plotted in Figure 17) and the change in trend with respect to the analysis of the previous month.

The number of hits to the Australian Baseline Sea Level Monitoring project web pages from 2001 to April 2004 is given in Table 2.

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.

Table 1: Tide gauge installation dates, short-term sea level trends and change in trend from the previous month for the Australian Baseline array to April 2004.

Location	Installation Date	Sea Level Trend (mm/yr)	Change from previous month
Cocos Islands	Sep 1992	+11.6	-0.1
Groote Eylandt	Sep 1993	+13.0	-0.4
Darwin	May 1990	+10.8	-0.1
Broome	Nov 1991	+13.3	-0.2
Hillarys	Nov 1991	+10.1	-0.2
Esperance	Mar 1992	+7.3	-0.1
Thevenard	Mar 1992	+5.6	-0.1
Port Stanvac	Jun 1992	+6.6	-0.1
Portland	Jul 1991	+3.1	-0.1
Lorne	Jan 1993	+2.2	-0.1
Stony Point	Jan 1993	+1.7	-0.1
Burnie	Sep 1992	+3.6	-0.1
Spring Bay	May 1991	+3.8	-0.1
Port Kembla	Jul 1991	+5.0	-0.2
Rosslyn Bay	Jun 1992	+3.9	-0.1
Cape Ferguson	Sep 1991	+5.3	0.0

Table 2: Number of hits on the Australian Baseline Sea Level Monitoring Project web pages from 2001 to April 2004.

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

Further information on the *Monthly Data Report* and other projects conducted by the NTC, Bureau of Meteorology can be obtained from the following address.

Contact address:

National Tidal Centre
The Commonwealth Bureau of Meteorology
GPO BOX 421, Kent Town SA 5071
Tel: [+61 8] 8201 7532
Fax: [+61 8] 8201 7523
Email: <http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au/TEXT/STAFF/contact.html>
Website: <http://www.ntf.flinders.edu.au/>

Please note the following:

While all care has been taken in the collection, analysis and compilation of the data, it is supplied on the condition that neither the *Commonwealth of Australia* nor the NTC, Bureau of Meteorology shall be liable for any loss or injury whatsoever arising from the use of the data. The Commonwealth of Australia holds copyright for material contained in this document.

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

Figure 1

APRIL 2004
SIX MINUTE SEA LEVEL OBSERVATIONS (m)

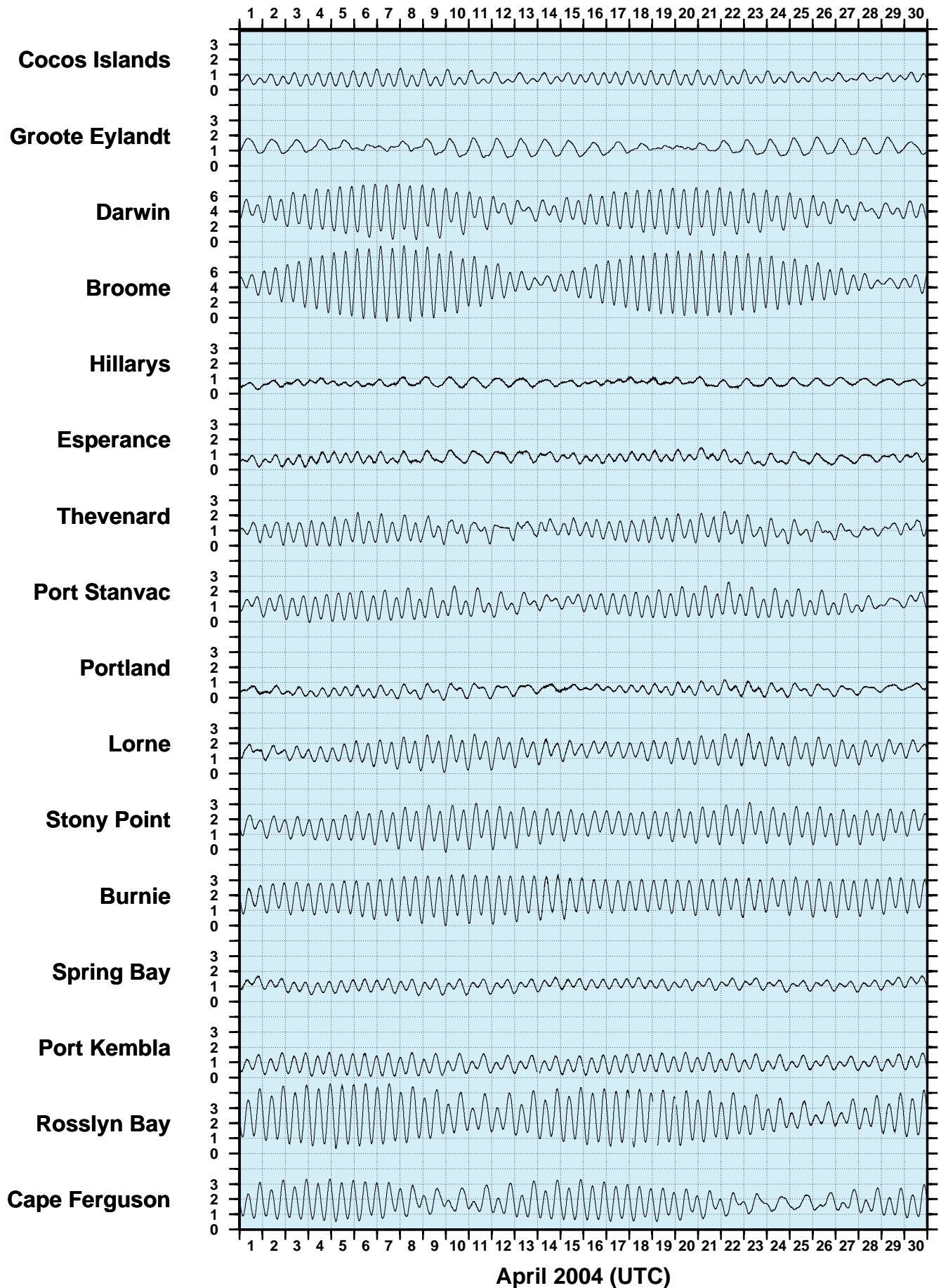


Figure 2
APRIL 2004
SIX MINUTE RESIDUAL WATER LEVELS (m)

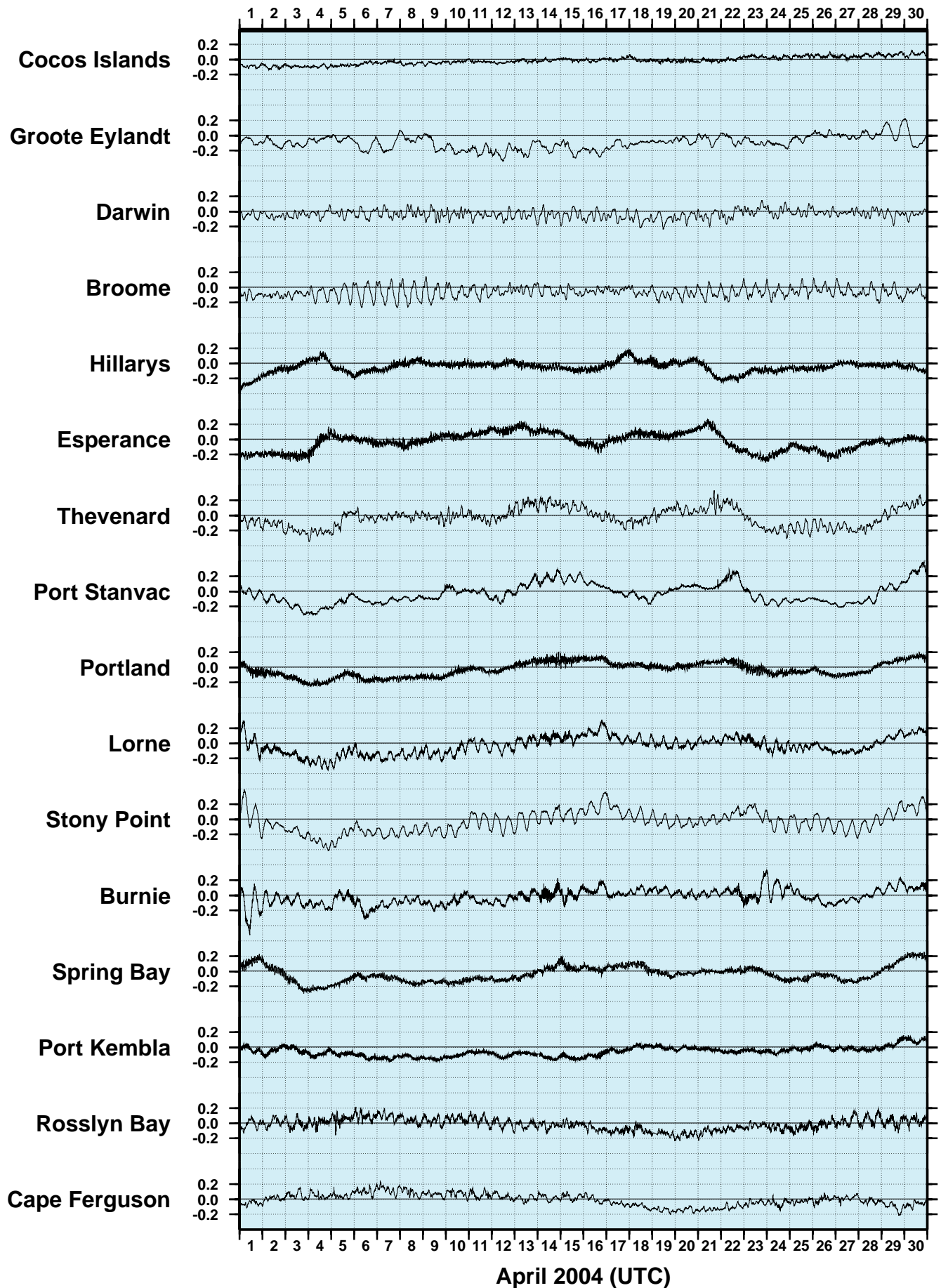


Figure 3
APRIL 2004
SIX MINUTE RESIDUALS
ADJUSTED FOR ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE (m)

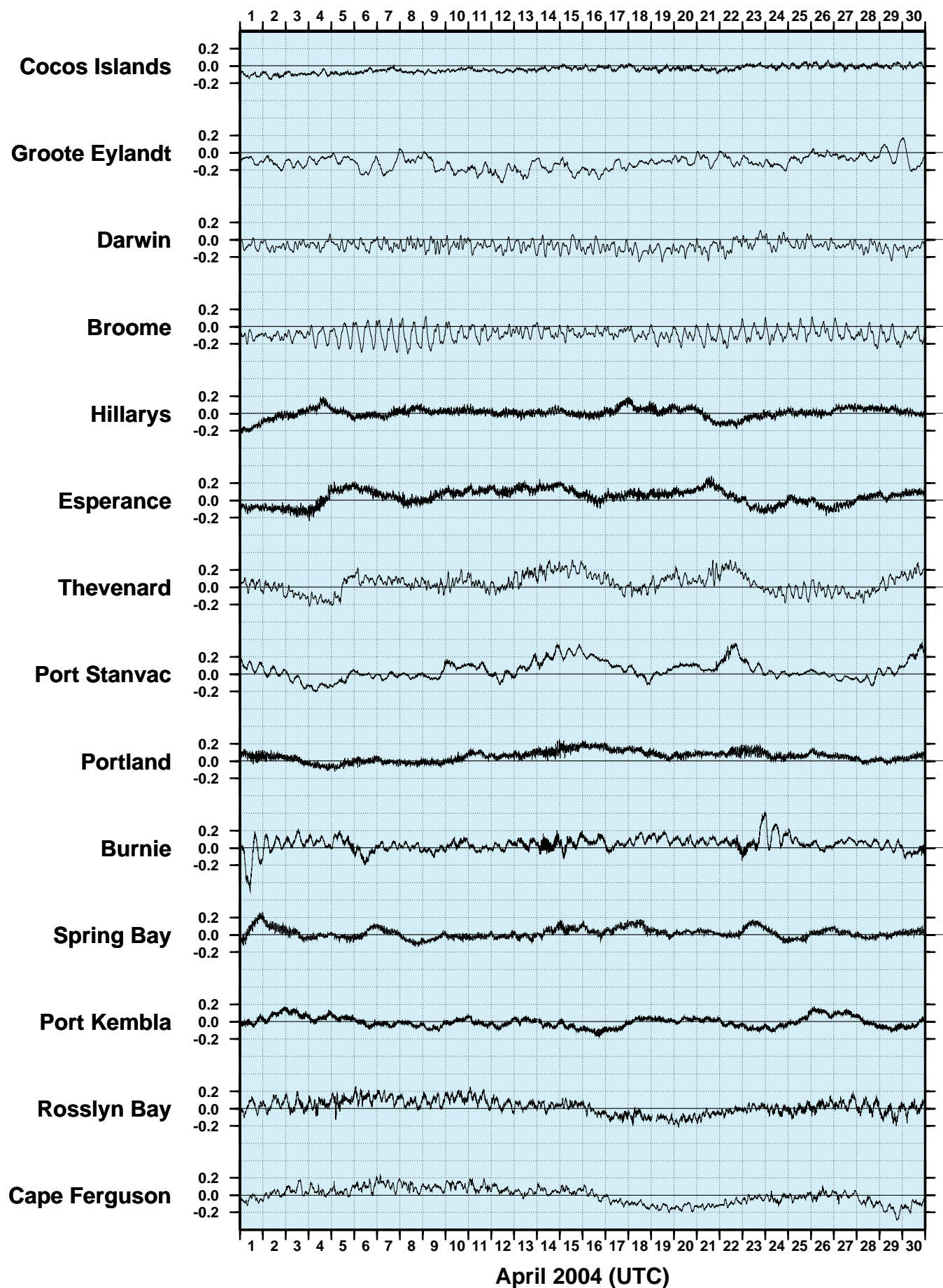


Figure 4

APRIL 2004
HOURLY WIND SPEEDS (m/s)

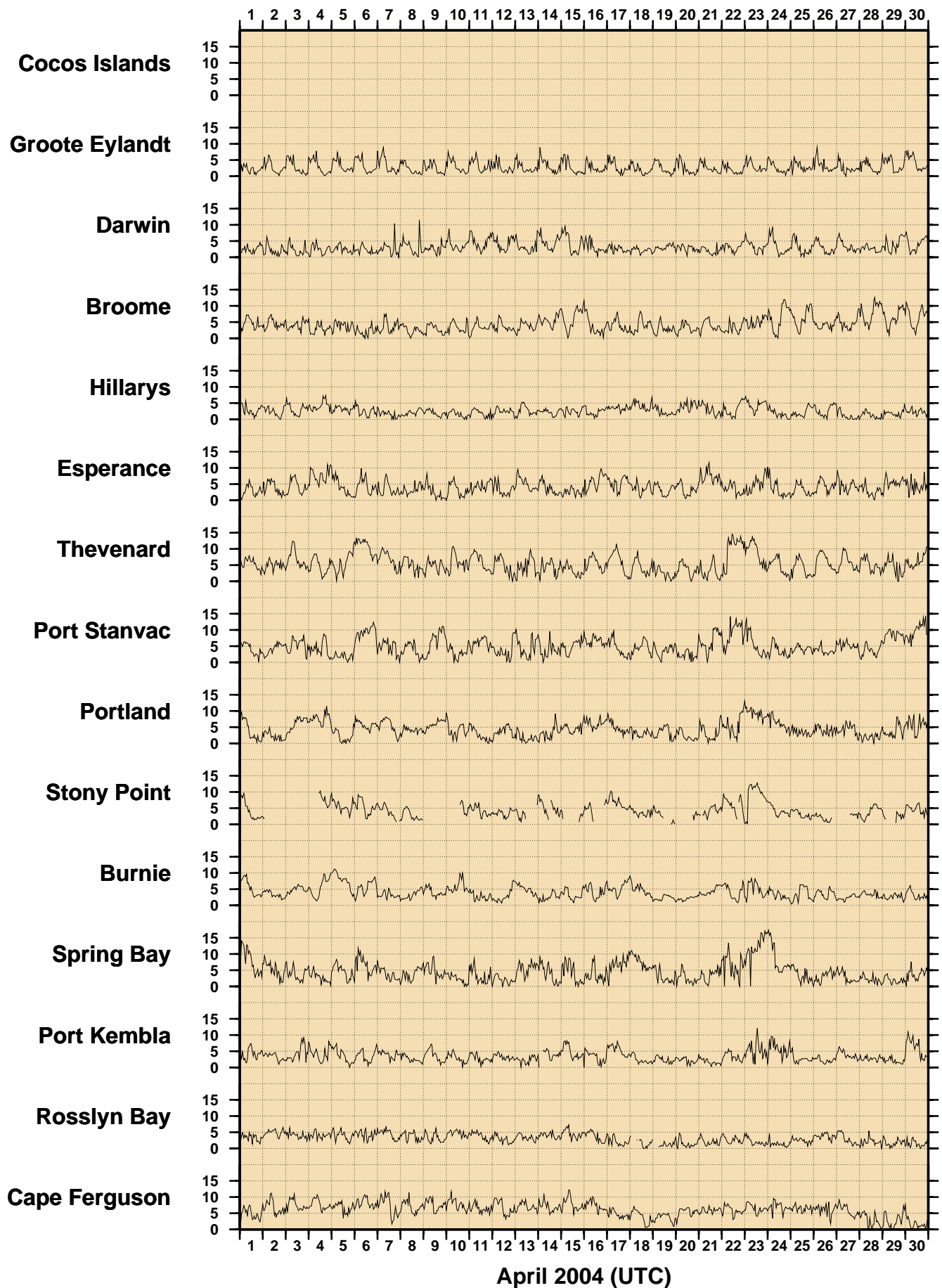


Figure 5

APRIL 2004
HOURLY INCIDENT WINDS (m/s, deg True)

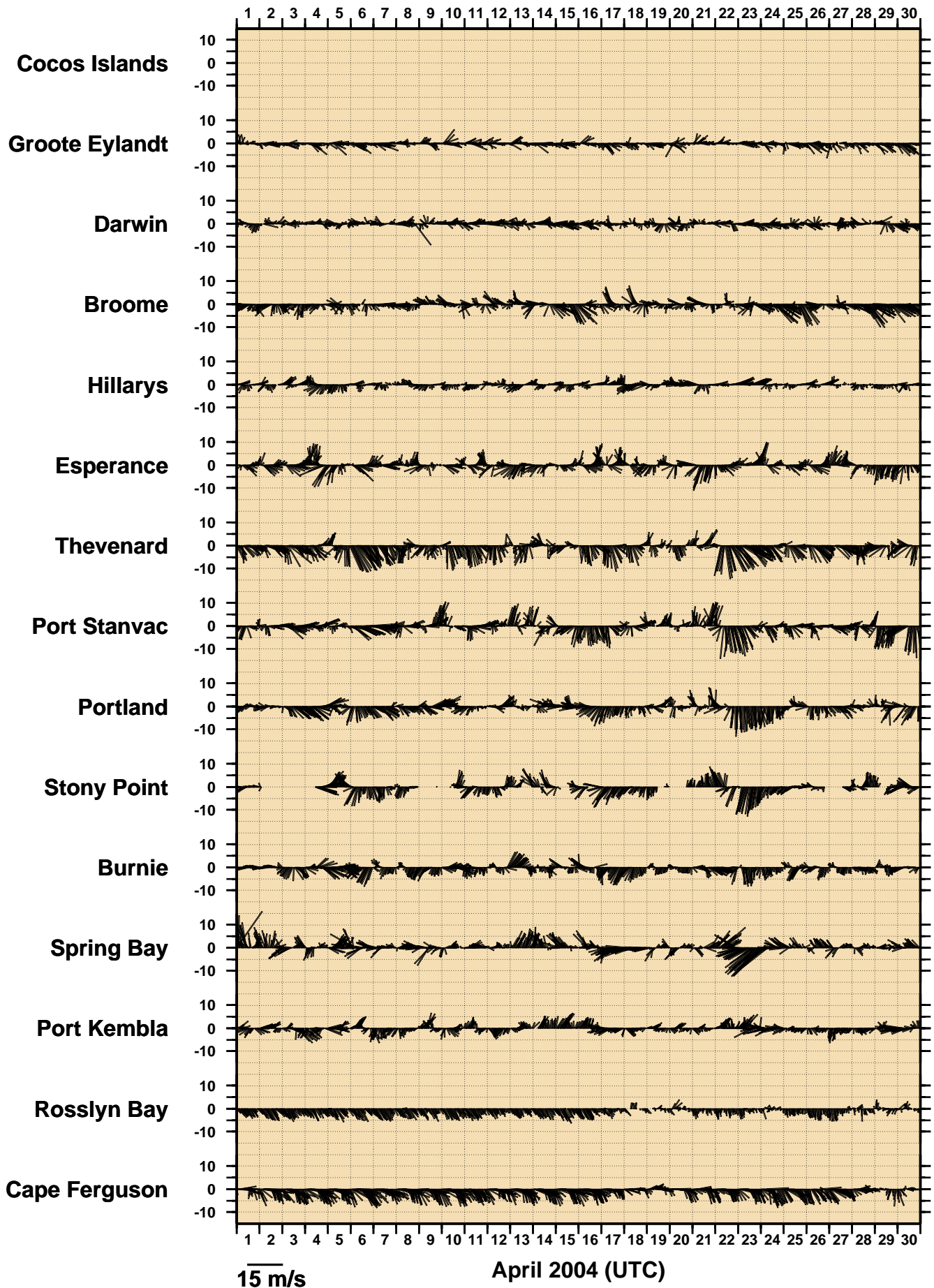


Figure 6

APRIL 2004
HOURLY MAXIMUM WIND GUSTS (m/s)

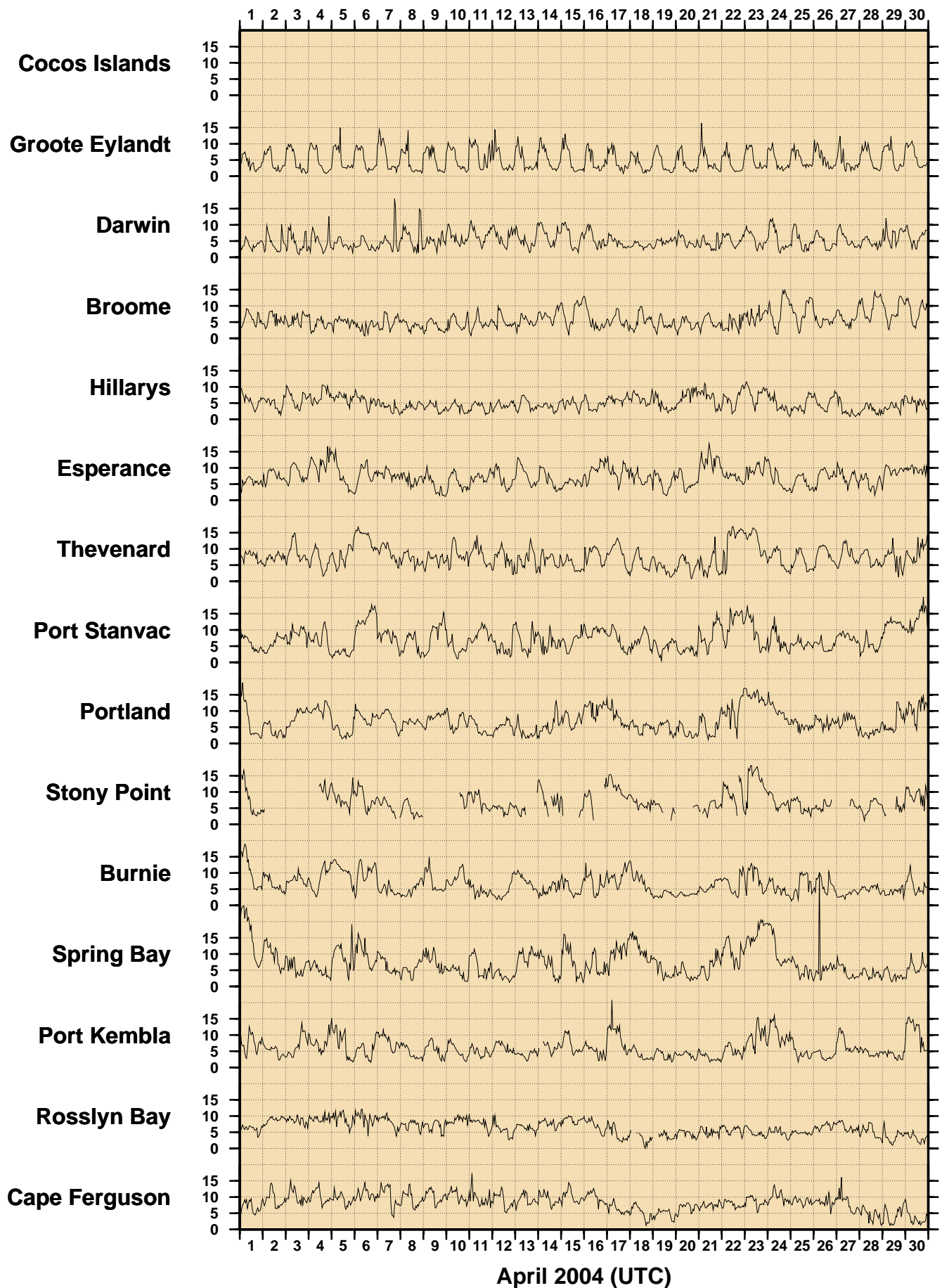


Figure 7

APRIL 2004
HOURLY AIR TEMPERATURES (°C)

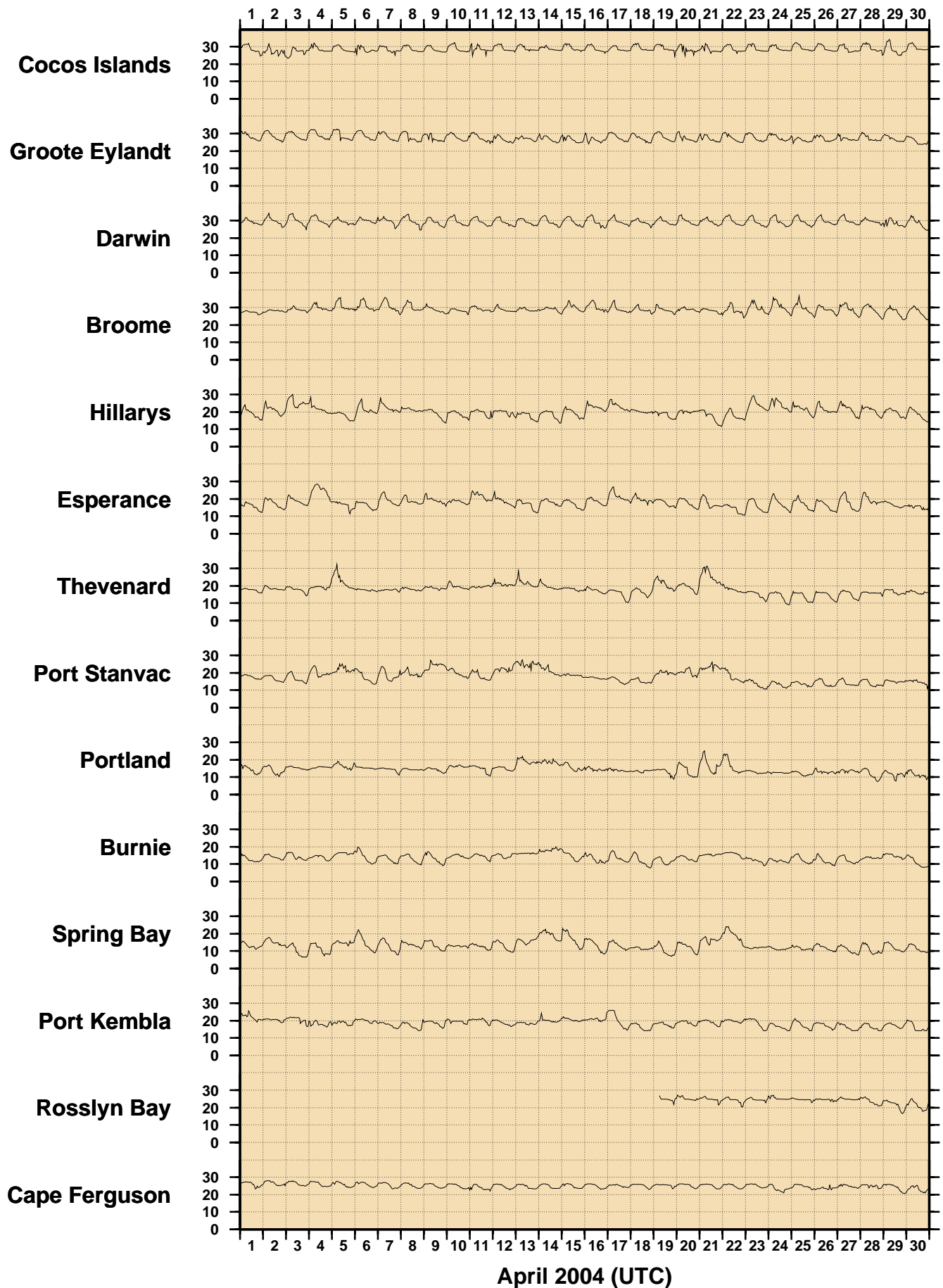


Figure 8

APRIL 2004

HOURLY WATER TEMPERATURES (°C)

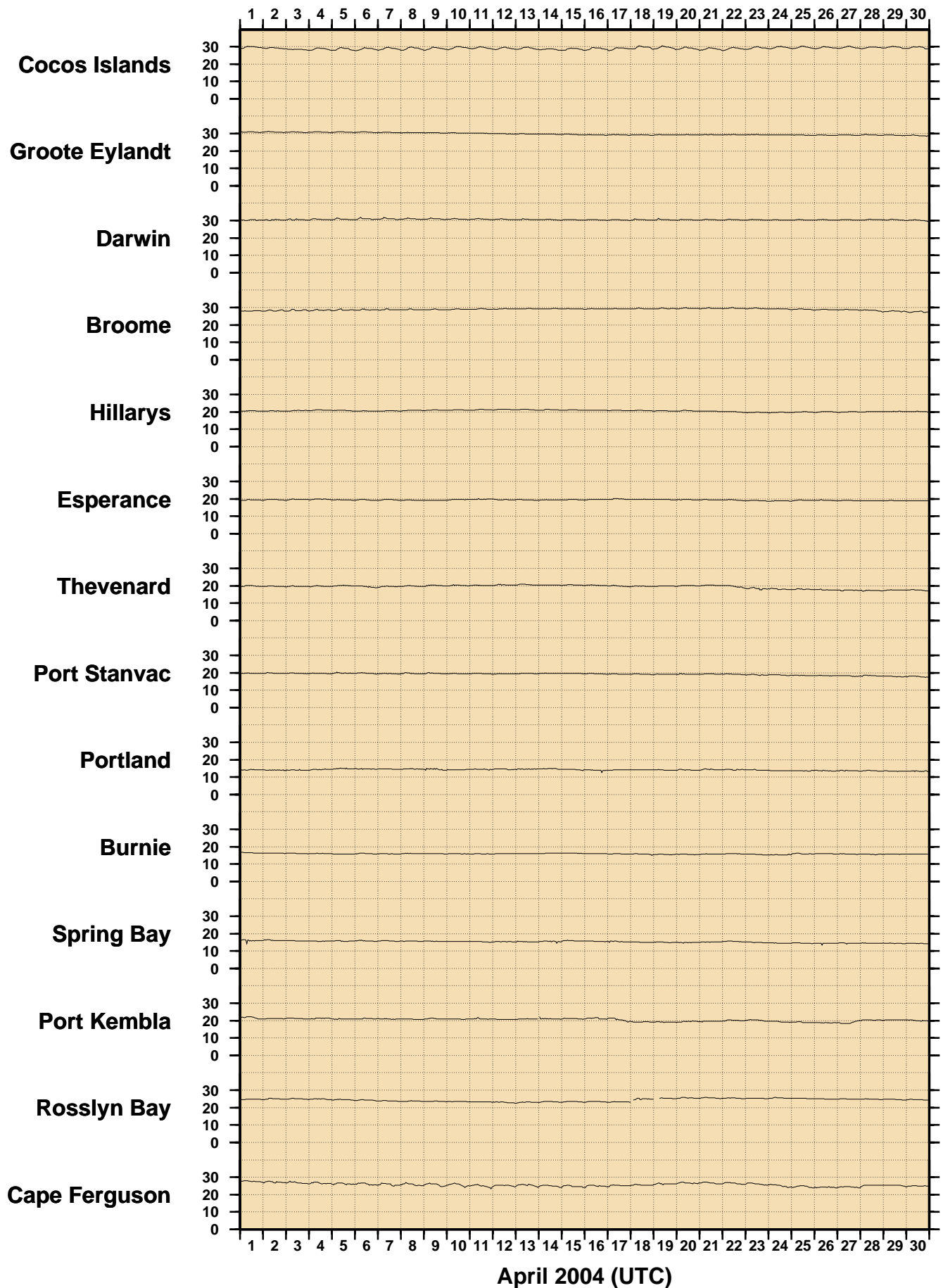


Figure 9

APRIL 2004
HOURLY ATMOSPHERIC PRESSURE (hPa)

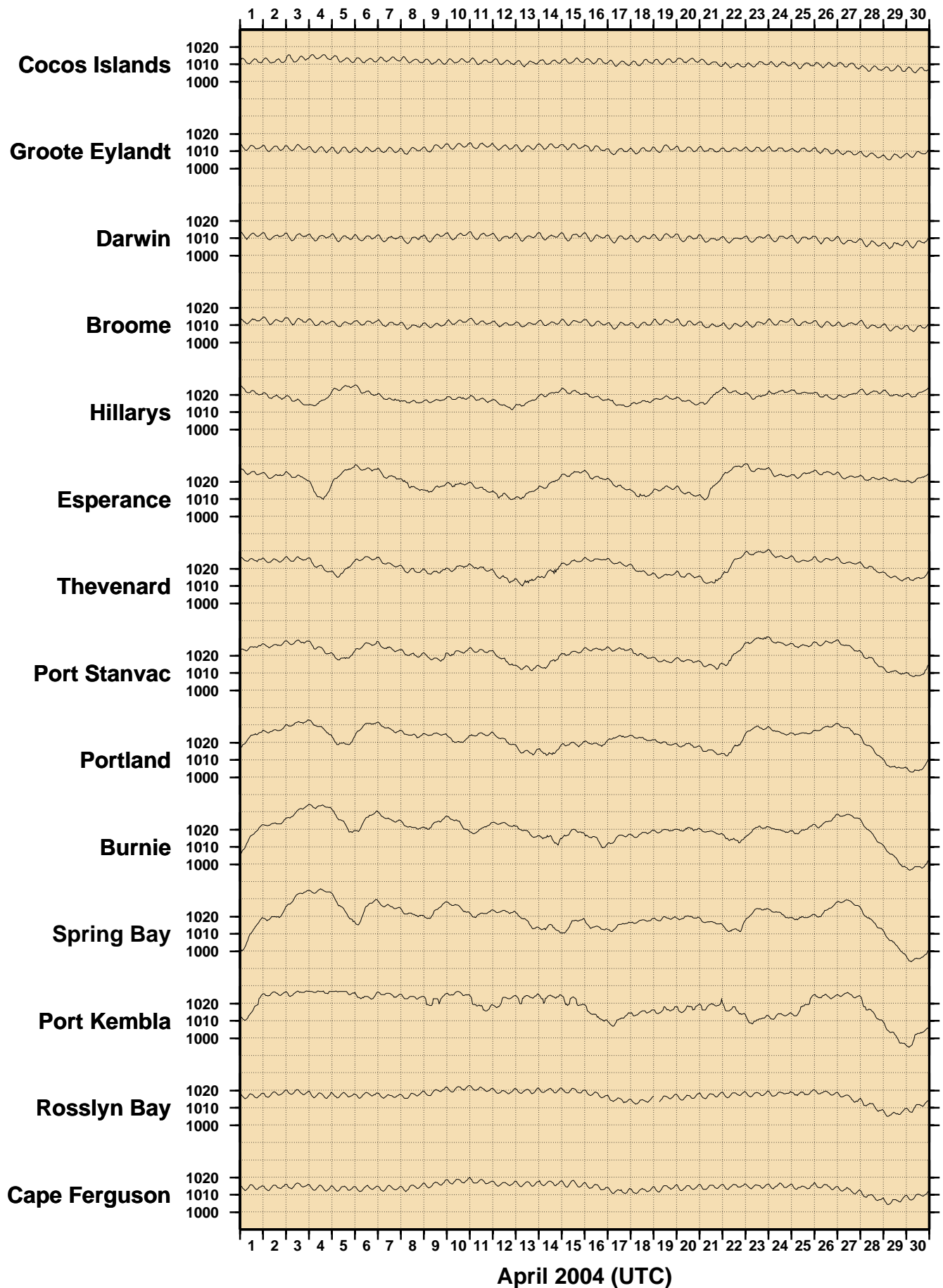


Figure 10
SEA LEVEL ANOMALIES THROUGH APRIL 2004 (m)

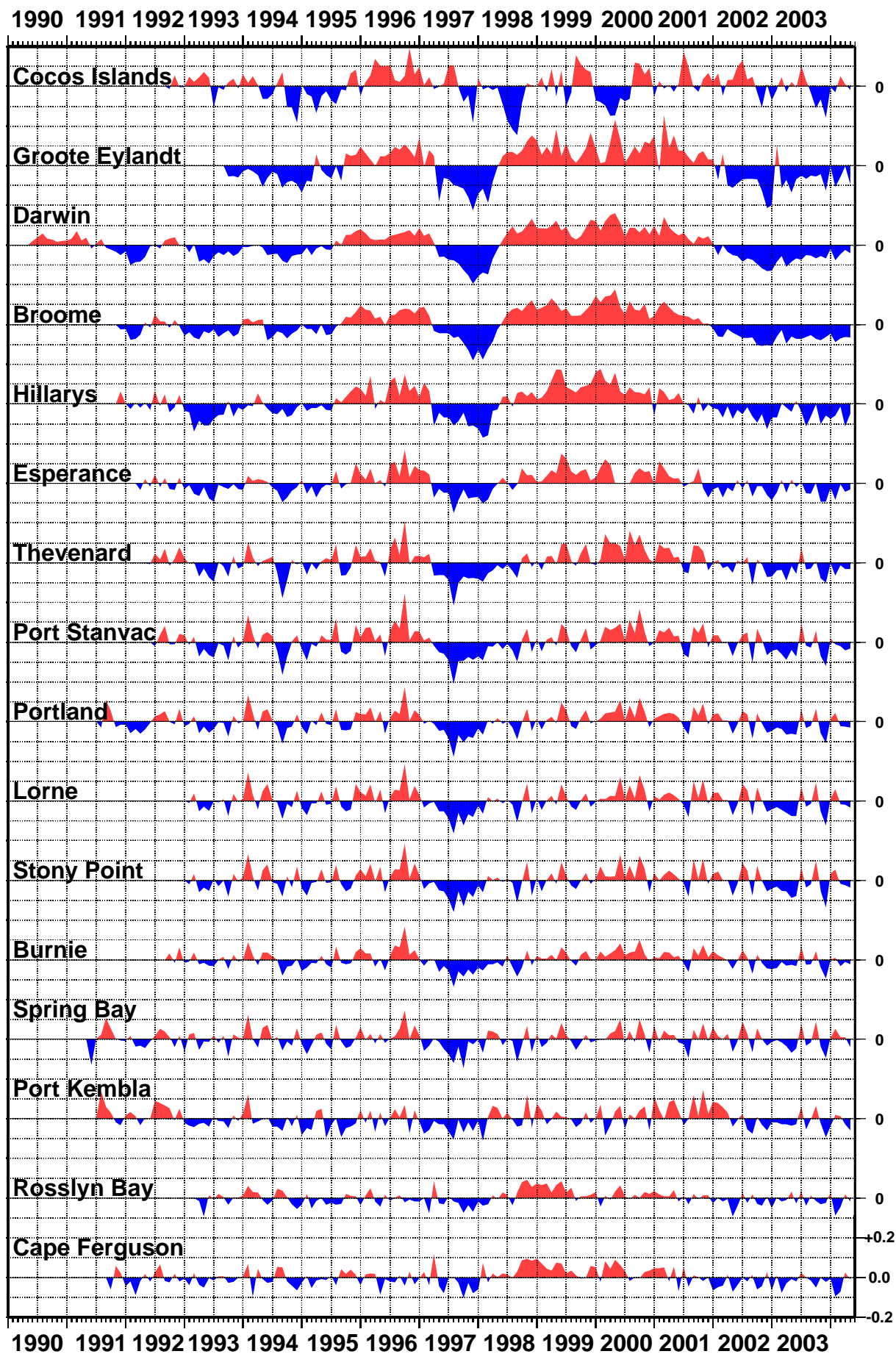


Figure 11

BAROMETRIC PRESSURE ANOMALIES THROUGH APRIL 2004 (hPa)

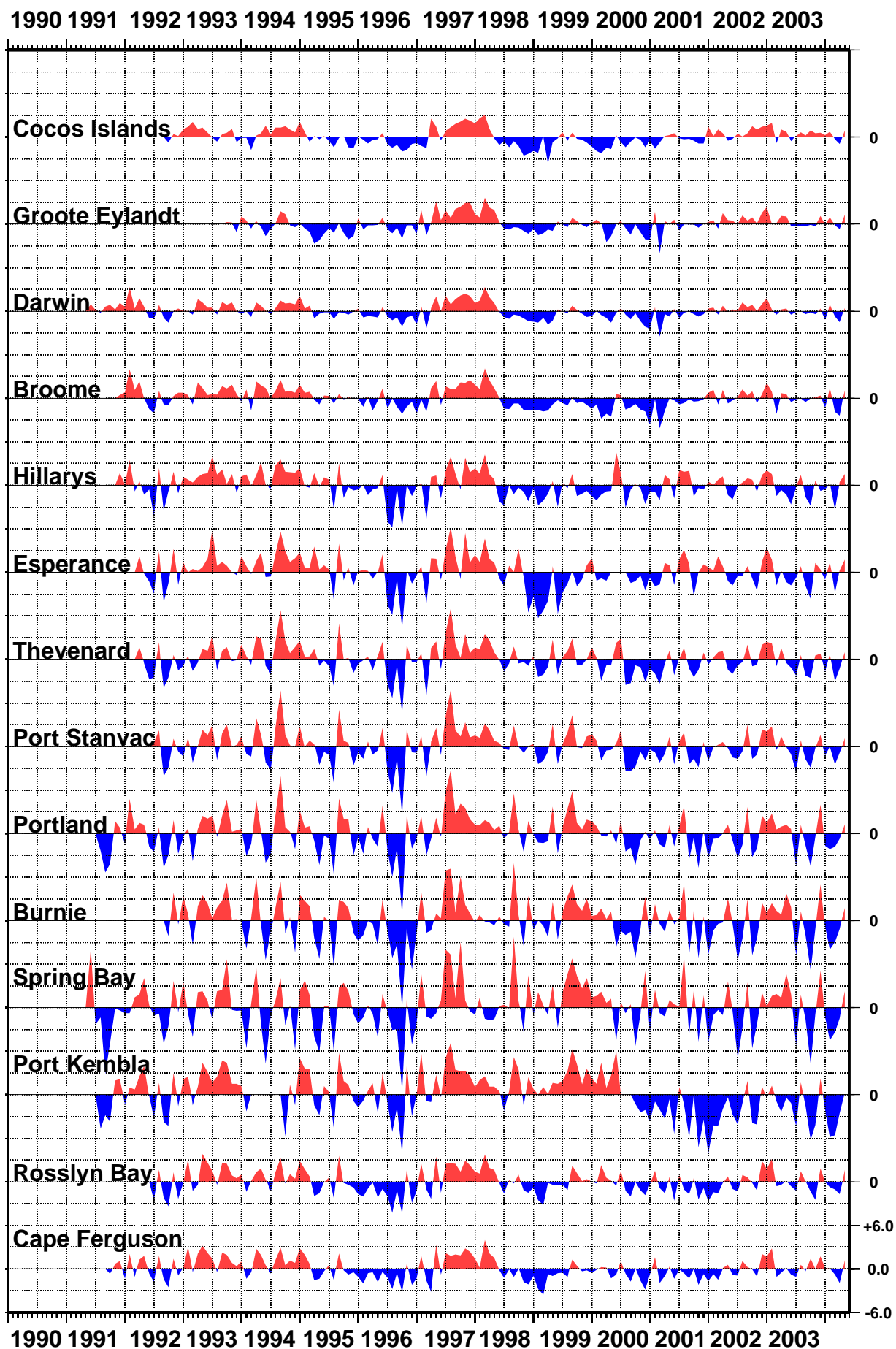


Figure 12

WATER TEMPERATURE ANOMALIES THROUGH APRIL 2004 (°C)

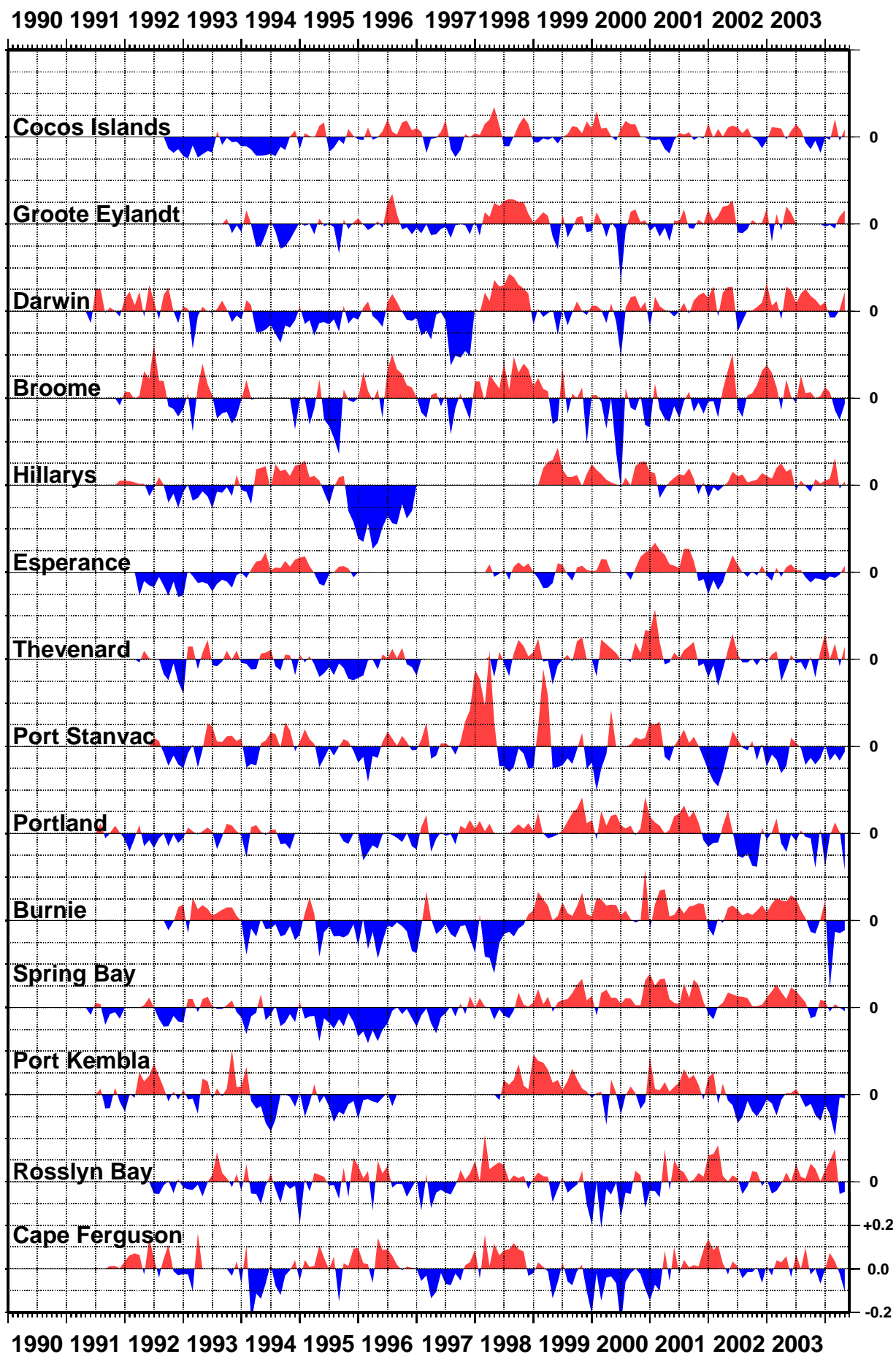


Figure 13
AIR TEMPERATURE ANOMALIES
THROUGH APRIL 2004 (°C)

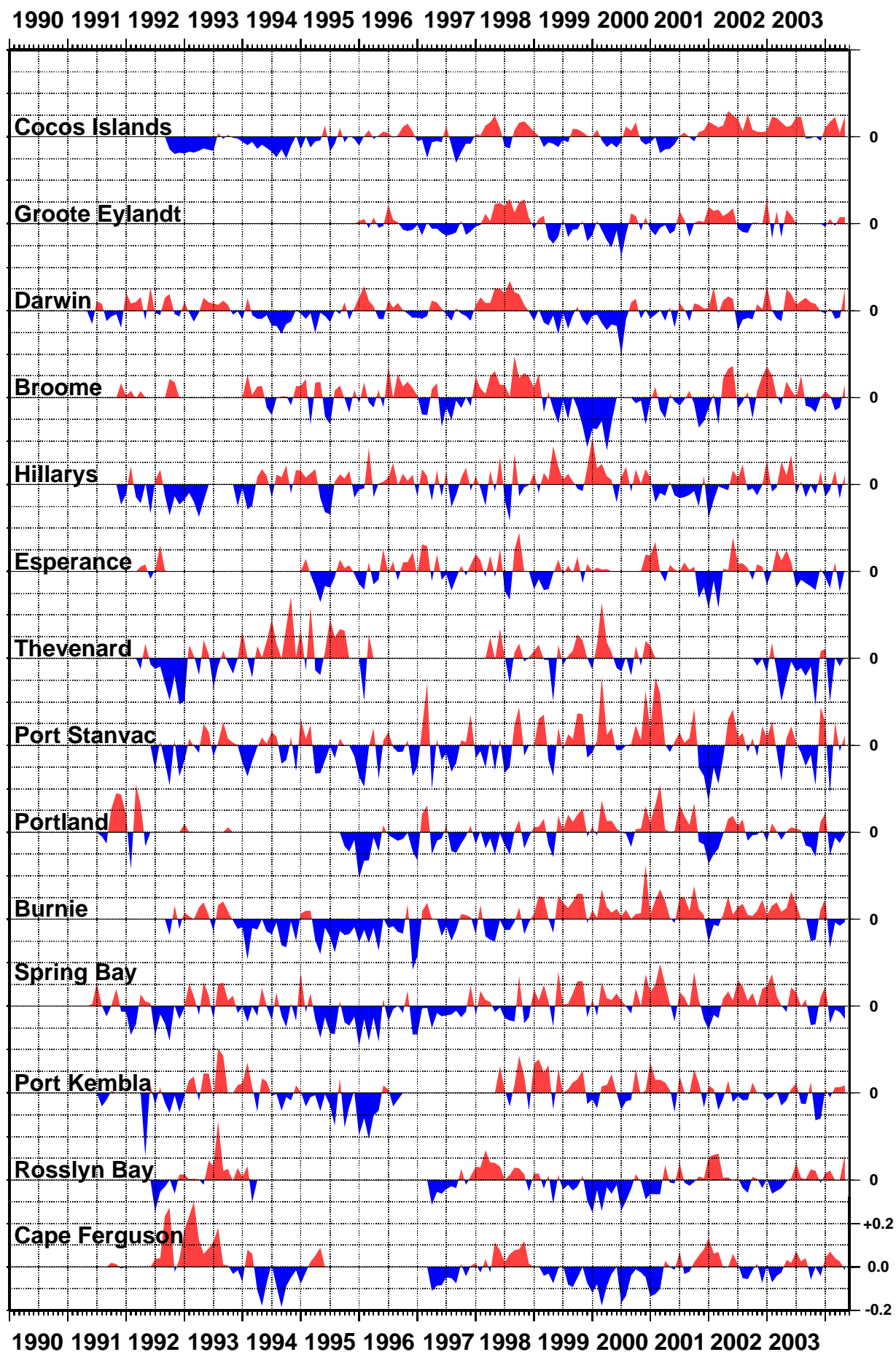
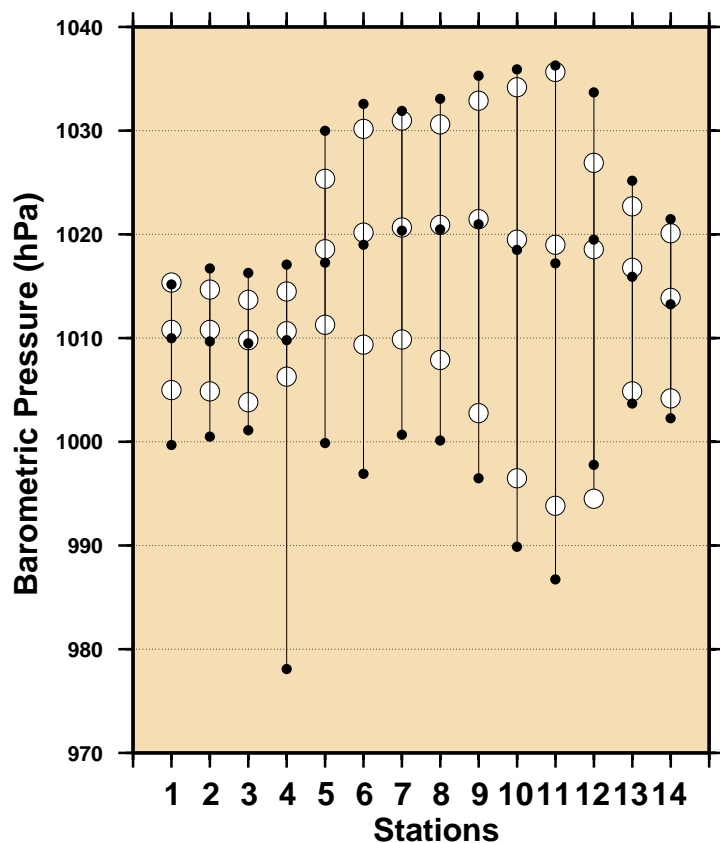
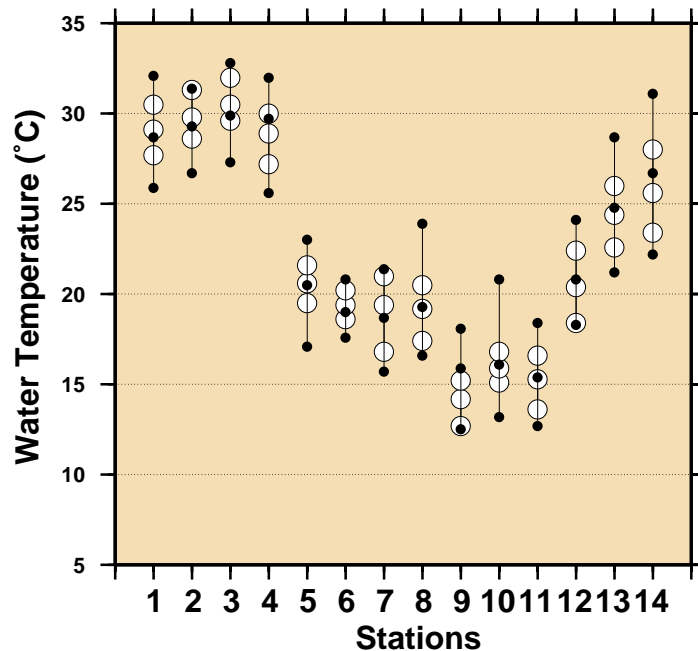
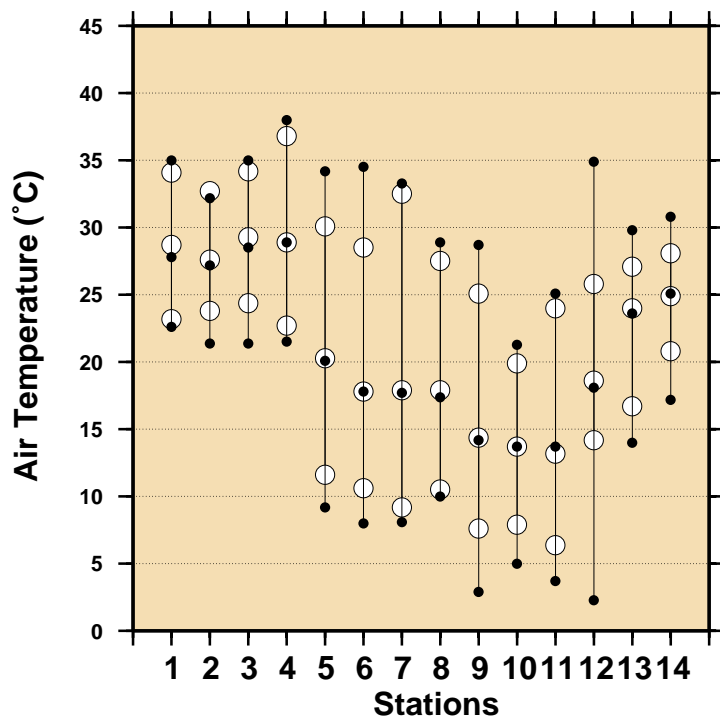


Figure 14
Comparison of April 2004 Max, Min & Mean with
Long Term April Values.



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

- April 2004 Maximum
- April 2004 Mean
- April 2004 Minimum
- Long Term April Maximum
- Long Term April Mean
- Long Term April Minimum

Figure 15 SEA LEVEL DATA RETURN

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

* Patchy record

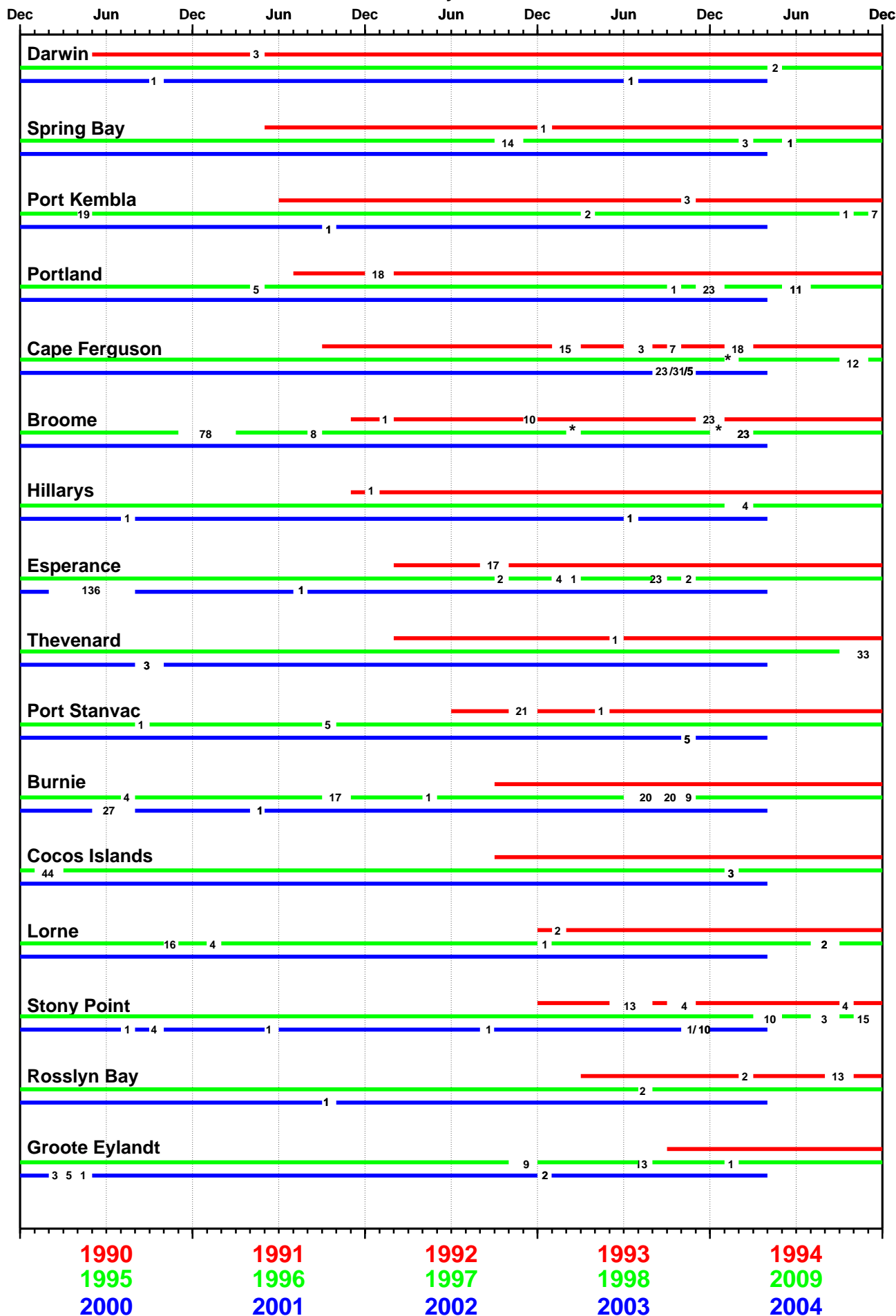


Figure 16

MONTHLY MEAN SEA LEVELS TO APRIL 2004 (m)

The zero line represents an arbitrary fixed offset from the zero of the tide gauge.

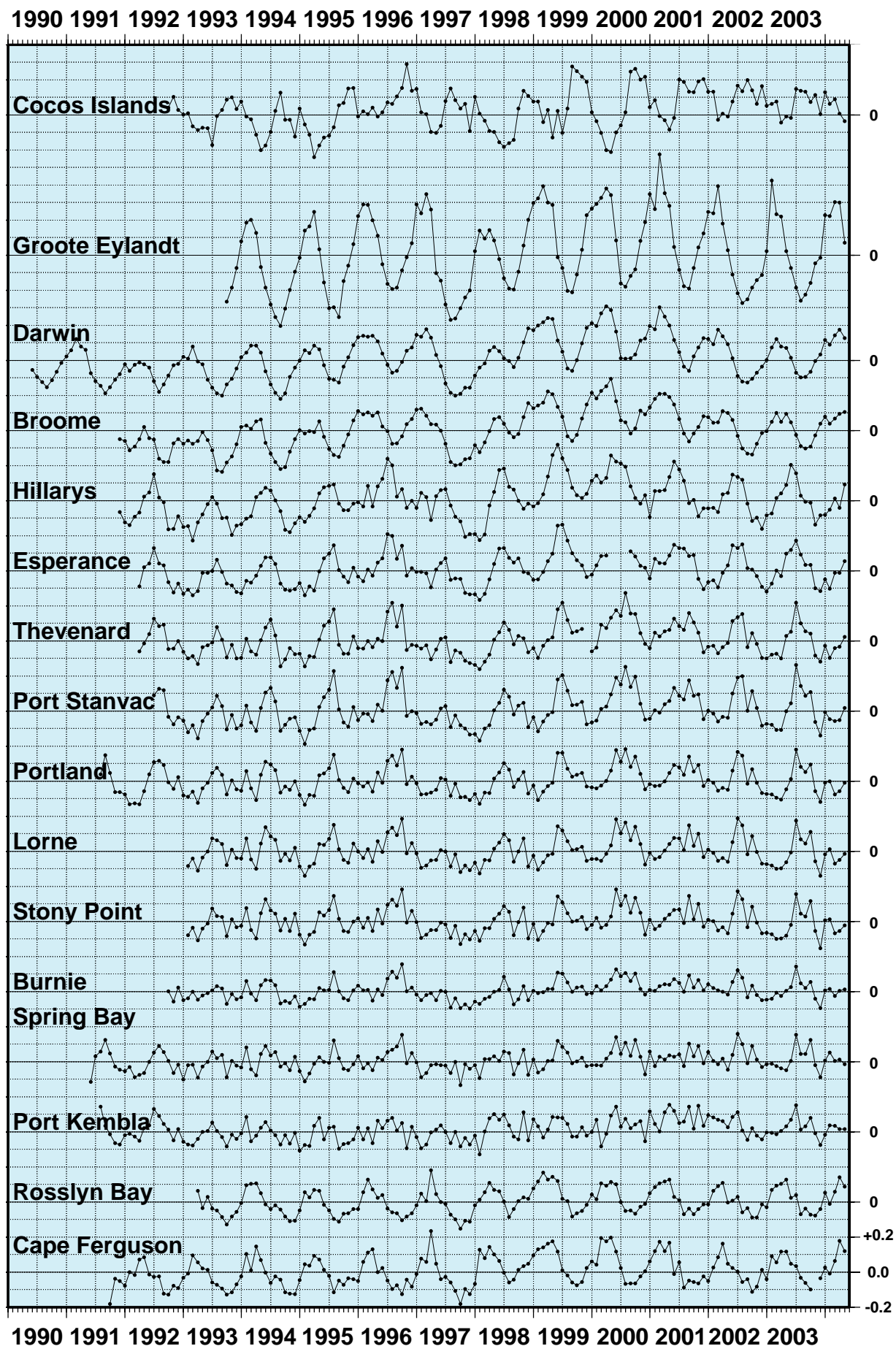


Figure 17

SEA LEVEL TRENDS THROUGH APRIL 2004 (mm/year)

