

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

It is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.

AD-A230 124

1. Report Date.
19903. Report Type and Dates Covered.
Abstract

A Numerical Simulation of the Bay of Bengal Western Boundary Current

5. Funding Numbers.

Program Element No 601153N

Project No 3103

Task No 030

Accession No DN259010

6. Author(s).

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7. Performing Organization Name(s) and Address(es).

Naval Oceanographic and Atmospheric Research Laboratory
Ocean Sciences Directorate
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-5004

8. Performing Organization Report Number.

AB 90:323:119

9. Sponsoring/Monitoring Agency Name(s) and Address(es).

Naval Oceanographic and Atmospheric Research Laboratory
Ocean Sciences Directorate
Stennis Space Center, MS 39529-5004

10. Sponsoring/Monitoring Agency Report Number.

AB 90:323:119

11. Supplementary Notes.

EOS

12a. Distribution/Availability Statement.

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

12b. Distribution Code.

13. Abstract (Maximum 200 words).

The seasonal and interannual variability of the Bay of Bengal Western Boundary Current are examined using a one-active layer, primitive equation, reduced-gravity model of the entire Indian Ocean north of 30° South. The model is forced by the Hellerman and Rosenstein wind stress climatology as well as mean monthly wind stress values derived from the National Meteorological Center 1000 mb forecast winds for the period 1981-1987. The numerical simulations yield a seasonally reversing western boundary current in the Bay of Bengal with maximum northward transport in February and southward transport from June to October. The simulation forced by the NMC winds from 1981 to 1987 yields a maximum wintertime transport in February, 1985 which coincides with the only period for which Legeckis (1987) was able to observe the current from NOAA satellite IR imagery. The numerical results show that the Bay of Bengal Western Boundary Current is primarily forced by the wind stress curl. The relationship between the flow off the east coast of Sri Lanka and the western boundary current to the north is also examined.

Availability Codes
Avail and/or
Special

A-1 21

14. Subject Terms.

(U) Air-Sea Interaction; (U) Ocean Modeling; (U) Atmospheric-Modeling

15. Number of Pages.

1

16. Price Code.

17. Security Classification of Report.

Unclassified

18. Security Classification of This Page.

Unclassified

19. Security Classification of Abstract.

Unclassified

20. Limitation of Abstract.

SAR