SWEX: 5hPa Resolution Radiosonde Composite

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1.0 Data Set Description

Interpolated 5hPa vertical resolution radiosonde data from research and operational sources during the SWEX campaign converted into a common format (EOL Sounding Composite format which is a columnar ASCII format). The composite includes data from radiosondes and dropsondes from locations around the southwestern United States. The radiosondes were released by NCAR/EOL (two sites), University of California, Santa Barbara (2 sites), San Jose State University (1 site), and the National Weather Service (three sites). Additionally, dropsondes released by NCAR/EOL from the NPS CIRPAS Twin Otter are included.

Data Version: 1.0

Data Status: Final

Time Period: 30 January to 16 March 2022

Physical Location: 40.865 to 46.349N and 70.257 to 78.725W

Data Frequency: Varies by location

Vertical Resolution: 5 hPa

Data Source: NCAR/EOL, UCSB, SJSU, and NOAA/NWS

Data Restrictions: Limited to SWEX investigators through 16 July 2023. Open access thereafter.

1.1 SWEX Description

Downslope windstorms at the lee of the Santa Ynez Mountains (SYM) in Santa Barbara County are one of the most significant fire weather hazards affecting populated areas. These gusty "Sundowner" winds peak from early evening to mid-morning. The main goal of SWEX was to improve the understanding of the dynamics and predictability of downslope windstorms in coastal Santa Barbara County. An extensive array of weather stations, flux towers, and profiling instrumentation was deployed over the region for SWEX operations. Additionally, the CIRPAS Twin Otter conducted flights over the region instrumented with Ramen, cloud, and wind lidars. Information on SWEX operations and Intensive Observation Periods (IOPs) can be found in the

SWEX Field Catalog (https://catalog.eol.ucar.edu/swex) and additional background information can be found at the SWEX website (https://www.eol.ucar.edu/field_projects/swex).

2.0 Instrument Description

2.1 Instrumentation

NCAR/EOL ISS used Vaisala RS41-SGP radiosondes which were received and processed by the Vaisala MW41 sounding system using software version 2.17.0.

UCSB used GRAW DFM-09 radiosondes which were received and processed by the GRAWMET software version 5.16.4.13

SJSU used GRAW DFM-09 radiosondes which were received and processed by the GRAWMET software version 5.15.01.04

NWS KNKX (San Diego, California) and KOAK (Oakland, California) used Vaisala RS41/AUTOSONDE radiosondes (DigiCORA MW41) with a Humicap capacitance humidity sensor with active de-icing method.

NWS KVEF (Las Vegas, Nevada) used GRAW DFM-17 radiosondes with a capacitance humidity sensor

NCAR/EOL Dropsondes were NCAR Research Dropsonde model NRD41 dropsondes.

2.2 Station Locations

Site ID	Source	Site Name	State	Latitude	Longitude	Elev (m)
ISS2	EOL	Rancho Allegre	CA	34.562	-119.951	285
ISS3	EOL	Sedgwick	CA	34.688	-120.038	327
MFDS2	UCSB	Montecito Fire Dept Station 2	CA	34.440	-119.659	59
SBFDHQ	UCSB	Santa Barbara Fire Dept HQ	CA	34.451	-119.770	95
SBFS38	UCSB	Santa Barbara Fire Dept Station 38	CA	34.477	-120.214	60
KNKX	NWS	San Diego	CA	32.845	-117.124	135
KOAK	NWS	Oakland	CA	37.745	-122.224	4
KVEF	NWS	Las Vegas	NV	36.047	-115.185	698

	EOL	Dropsondes		Mobile	Mobile	

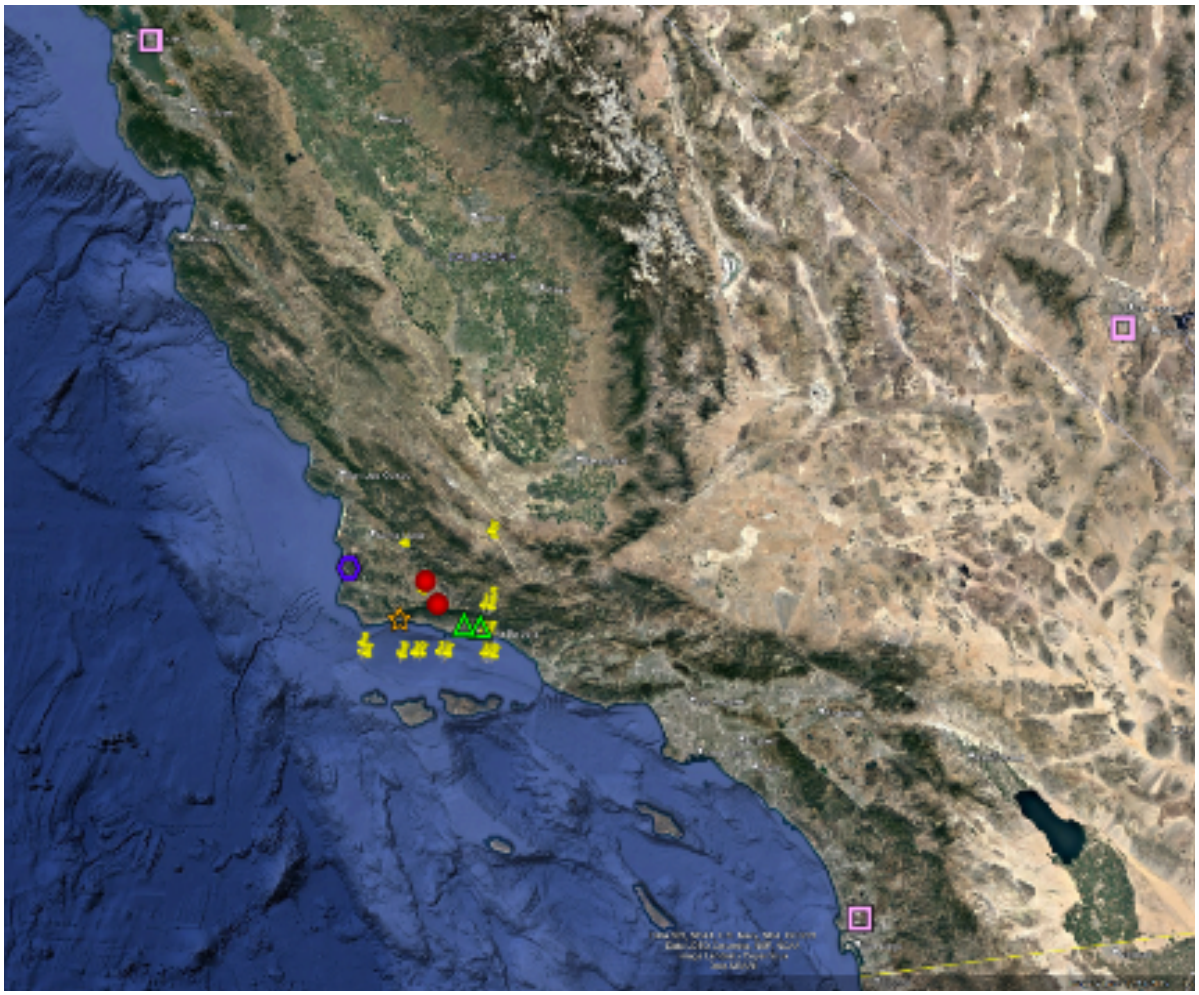

Figure 1. Map of SWEX radiosonde composite locations. Red circles are EOL ISS sites, the orange star is a SJSU site, the green triangles are UCSB sites, the purple hexagon is the USAF site (not included in the 5hPa composite), the pink squares are the NWS sites, and the yellow pins are the dropsonde locations.

The NCAR ISS sites operated only during SWEX IOP/EOP operations. Soundings were typically at 1.5 or 3 hourly intervals. A total of 187 soundings are included in the dataset with 99 from Rancho Allegre and 88 from Sedgwick.

The NCAR/EOL dropsondes were released only during SWEX IOP/EOP operations with drops released at standard locations along the Twin Otter flight path. A total of 159 soundings are included in the dataset.

The SBFDHQ site operated only during SWEX IOP/EOP operations through 11 May 2022. Soundings were typically released at three hourly intervals. A total of 91 soundings are included in the dataset.

The MFDS2 site operated only during SWEX IOP10 on 12-13 May 2022. Soundings were released at three hourly intervals. A total of five soundings are included in the dataset.

The SBFS38 site operated only during SWEX IOP/EOL operations. Soundings were typically released at three hourly intervals. A total of 91 soundings are included in the dataset.

The NWS stations typically released two radiosondes per day at 00 and 12 UTC. A total of 293 NWS soundings are included in the dataset, with 97 from KNKX, 99 from KOAK, and 97 from KVEF.

3.0 Data Collection and Processing

This dataset takes the data from the SWEX High Resolution Radiosonde Composite and interpolates the data to a consistent 5hPa vertical resolution. A total of 826 soundings are included in this dataset.

Complete information on the collection procedures at each site can be found in the documentation at their respective dataset pages in the NCAR/EOL Field Data Archive:

NCAR/EOL ISS Rancho Alegre Site: https://doi.org/10.26023/J6P8-7SYD-XP0M

NCAR/EOL ISS Sedgwick Site: https://doi.org/10.26023/H5TV-Y54J-R010

NCAR/EOL Dropsondes: https://doi.org/10.26023/AGME-MF19-NJ0A

UCSB Sites: https://data.eol.ucar.edu/dataset/600.025

UCSJ Site: https://data.eol.ucar.edu/dataset/600.027 These data were collected using a GRAW ground station.

NWS: https://doi.org/10.26023/H82Q-C6R8-WX0V

The procedures used to develop the High Resolution Radiosonde Composite upon which these data are based can be found in the documentation at its dataset page in the NCAR/EOL Field Data Archive:

High Resolution Composite: https://doi.org/10.26023/TN83-Q6BW-AB0D

3.1 5hPa Interpolation Procedures

The surface data point was kept as the initial level in each sounding. The first interpolated data point was at the next lowest pressure evenly divisible by 5 and then every 5 hPa pressure level beyond that point to either 50 hPa or the lowest pressure level reached by the radiosonde,

whichever came first. The first 15 lines of each file (the header information) were kept without change.

For the interpolation, the software searched for two data points around the desired pressure level. The search was conducted by looking for two valid (i.e. non-missing) data points around the desired pressure level, while also paying attention to the time difference between the two data points as well as their quality control flags. There was a search for the two best possible data points to use in the interpolation. If the desired pressure level was within the original dataset, that data point was used without interpolation.

There was first a search for values flagged as good within some time range (50 sec for temperature, humidity, and wind and 100 sec for pressure; hereafter termed the ARANGE) and the interpolated data point was flagged as good. Failing that, it searched for values flagged as estimated within the same time range and the interpolated data point was flagged as estimated. Then the search went for good values within a wider time range (100 sec for temperature, humidity, and wind and 200 sec for pressure; hereafter termed the BRANGE) the flag for the interpolated data point here was then degraded (even though two `good' data points were used there was a significant time difference between them) to questionable. Then, in turn, estimated values within the BRANGE were used (flag set to questionable), questionable values within the BRANGE (flag set to bad), good values greater than the BRANGE apart (flag set to bad), estimated values greater than BRANGE apart (flag set to bad), questionable values greater than BRANGE apart (flag set to bad), finally any bad values (flag set to bad). This search was conducted separately for each interpolated variable (pressure, temperature, relative humidity, and the u and v wind components.

Thus for each interpolated data point, the quality control flag was set to the worst case among the data points used in the interpolation, except, for each time range apart, the quality control flag was degraded one level (i.e. good to questionable, etc).

The quality control flags should be carefully heeded in these files. While some of the data may look good, it may have been interpolated over large pressure intervals, and thus be suspect.

For each interpolated data point the dew point was calculated from the temperature and relative humidity (Bolton 1980) and the total wind speed and direction were calculated from the interpolated u and v component values. Also, the altitude and time were interpolated using the same data points used for the pressure interpolation. The ascension rate was recalculated based on the time and altitude values from the two data points used to interpolate the 5 hPa data point. Thus the ascension rate values do not reflect the values based on the interpolated data. The latitude and longitude values were interpolated using the same data points used in the wind component interpolation.

4.0 Data Format

The data are in files by day and include radiosonde data from all sites for the day concatenated into a single file. The file naming convention is: SWEX_2022_5MB_yyyymmdd.cls where yyyymmdd is the UTC year, month, and day of month.

The final dataset is in the EOL Sounding Composite (ESC) format. ESC is a columnar ASCII format that consists of 15 header records for each sounding with the remaining records containing the radiosonde data and their associated data quality flags.

4.1 Header Records

The header records (15 total records) contain a variety of metadata about the sounding (i.e. location, time, radiosonde type, etc). The first five header lines contain information identifying the sounding, and have a rigidly defined form. The following 7 header lines are used for auxiliary information and comments about the sounding, and may vary from dataset to dataset. The last 3 header records contain header information for the data columns. Line 13 holds the field names, line 14 the field units, and line 15 contains dashes ('-' characters) delineating the extent of the field.

The file standard header lines are as follows:

Line	Label	Contents
1	Data Type:	Description of the type and resolution of data
2	Project ID:	Short name for the field campaign
3	Release Site Type/Site ID:	Description of the release site
4	Release Location (lon,lat,alt):	Location of the release site
5	UTC Release Time (y,m,d,h,m,s):	Time of release

The release location is given as: lon (deg min), lat (deg min), lon (dec. deg), lat (dec. deg), alt (m)

Longitude in deg min is in the format: ddd mm.mm'W where ddd is the number of degrees (with leading zeros if necessary), mm.mm is the decimal number of minutes, and W represents W or E for west or east longitude, respectively. Latitude has the same format as longitude, except there are only two digits for degrees and N or S for north/south latitude. The time of release is given as: yyyy, mm, dd, hh:nn:ss. Where yyyy is the year, mm is the month, dd is the day of month, and hh:nn:ss are the UTC hour, minute, and second respectively.

The seven non-standard header lines may contain any label and contents. They typically include things such as radiosonde type, radiosonde serial number, sensor information, balloon information, and/or ground station software.

4.2 Data Records

The data records each contain time from release, pressure, temperature, dew point, relative humidity, U and V wind components, wind speed and direction, ascent rate, balloon position data, altitude, and quality control flags (see the QC code description). Each data line contains 21 fields, separated by spaces, with a total width of 130 characters. The data are right-justified within the fields. All fields have one decimal place of precision, with the exception of latitude and longitude, which have three decimal places of precision. The contents and sizes of the 21 fields that appear in each data record are as follows:

Field	Width	Format	Parameter	Units	Missing Value
1	6	6.1	Time since release	Seconds	9999.0
2	6	6.1	Pressure	hPa	9999.0
3	5	5.1	Temperature	°C	999.0
4	5	5.1	Dew Point Temperature	°C	999.0
5	5	5.1	Relative Humidity	Percent	999.0
6	6	6.1	U Wind Component	m/s	9999.0
7	6	6.1	V Wind Component	m/s	9999.0
8	5	5.1	Wind Speed	m/s	999.0
9	5	5.1	Wind Direction	Degrees	999.0
10	5	5.1	Ascent Rate	m/s	999.0
11	8	8.3	Longitude	Degrees	9999.0
12	7	7.3	Latitude	Degrees	999.0
13	5	5.1	Elevation Angle	Degrees	999.0
14	5	5.1	Azimuth Angle	Degrees	999.0
15	7	7.1	Geopotential Altitude	Meters	99999.0

16	4	4.1	QC code for Pressure	Code	99.0
17	4	4.1	QC Code for Temperature	Code	99.0
18	4	4.1	QC Code for Humidity	Code	99.0
19	4	4.1	QC Code for U Wind	Code	99.0
20	4	4.1	QC Code for V Wind	Code	99.0
21	4	4.1	QC Code for Ascent Rate	Code	99.0

Fields 16 through 21 contain the data quality flags from the NCAR/Earth Observing Laboratory (EOL) sounding quality control procedures. The data quality flags are defined as follows:

Code	Description
1.0	Checked, datum seems physically reasonable. (“GOOD”)
2.0	Checked, datum seems questionable on a physical basis. (“QUESTIONABLE”)
3.0	Checked, datum seems to be in error. (“BAD”)
4.0	Checked, datum is interpolated. (“ESTIMATED”)
9.0	Checked, datum is missing. (“MISSING”)
99.0	Unchecked (QC information is “missing”.) (“UNCHECKED”)

5.0 Data Remarks

See the respective FDA dataset pages linked in Section 3.1 for any details on data quality issues.

6.0 References

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