

Response to Reviewer 2

We thank Dr Wahl for the positive comments on the paper and his suggestions, which we fully taken into account in the revised version of the paper. We modified the manuscript following the reviewers suggestions and highlighted the modified parts in bold in the revised manuscript.

One aspect I believe should be discussed a bit more is the issue of significance, i.e. how large can AF (or alpha) get by chance? This is important to be able to interpret the results. There is for example a paper by Serinaldi and Kilsby (2013; <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.physa.2012.11.015>) where this is addressed.

We discussed the nature of the processes described by the Allan Factor (AF) using the same approach described in Serinaldi and Kilsby (2013), according to which the AF pattern of a time series is compared to the AF distribution of a population of point processes that share the same cyclic characteristics and intensity. In order to do so, we followed a series of steps. First we analysed the time series to find the dominant cyclic components; this led to identify 5 dominant components corresponding to the yearly cycles and, with much smaller amplitudes to cycles with periods of six, three, one months and one week. With the amplitudes and periods of these cycles we simulated a cyclic, hence non-homogeneous Poisson point process. Subsequently, we compared the distribution of the AF of 1000 realisations of this process to the AF found in the time series under study. This analysis showed that the AF corresponding to time scales longer than 50 days is associated to the cyclic components, hence the underlying point process is non-homogeneous Poissonian. At time scales shorter than 50 days there is a significant departure from a Poissonian AF pattern. The presence of a clear trend also gives us confidence in regarding this as a non-poissonian process.

We think that this analysis clarifies the significance of alpha and AF. Following the approach indicated by Dr Wahl we clarified that $\alpha=1.15$ in the time scales longer than 50 days is consistent with the alpha showed in the cyclic Poissonian population, while $\alpha=0.15-0.3$ at shorter time scales is consistent with a departure from a cyclic Poisson process. As for the significance of alpha, we noticed that although departure from Poissonian is seen at very low values of alpha, it is not possible to distinguish.

We modified the text in multiple locations in the paper to reflect these findings and we added a new subsection that describes the tests. You can find the text of the section below and the rest of the modifications in the revised manuscript.

“4.2 Comparison with a simulated non-homogeneous point-process

The AF pattern found from data and hindcast time series is compared with that of a simulated non-homogeneous Poisson process. This is generated using the IF technique employed in Serinaldi and Kilsby (2013). The rate function of the simulated non-homogeneous Poisson process is generated as a sum of sinusoidal components with amplitudes, 5 periods and phases obtained from the Fourier analysis of the reference signal. A Monte Carlo simulation of 1000 time series is then carried out and the simulated population of AF is compared with the reference one. Hindcast points A, G and O (see figure 2) are chosen for this analysis because they show different AF patterns in the time scales $\tau < 50$ days. This analysis reveals that, as expected, the dominant cyclic component for all the considered time series is the one with 1-year period. This was also noted for the RON data in Briganti and Beltrami (2008), where the amplitude of the annual cycle component

was estimated to be around 0.25 m in Alghero, which is consistent with what found in the present work. Together with the annual cycle also the components with periods of six, three, one months and one week have been considered to simulate the non-homogeneous Poisson processes. The results of the comparison are shown in figure 8. For all three points it is clear that the simulated cyclic Poisson process well explains the pattern of the AF at $\tau > 50$ days in all cases. As expected, this is the signature of the annual cycle, which strongly influences the occurrence of above-threshold events. The AF departs from the Poisson distribution at $\tau < 50$ days, above all in points A and G. Note that these results show also that the α for $\tau > 50$ days is always above 1 and shows very little variability among points. For scales in which a departure from a Poissonian behaviour is seen, it has to be noted that this occurs at very low values of α , as for example in point O. However, data often show oscillations, above all for $\alpha < 0.1$, and it is not possible to make conclusions about the existence of a clustering regime.”

Below is a list of more specific comments:

P1, I. 3. ‘spanning the period’

Amended as requested

P1, I. 9. ‘longer scales’

Amended as requested

P1, I. 12. ‘the occurrence’

Amended as requested

P1, I. 17. Another paper has recently been published where storm surge clusters are investigated in much more detail around the UK:

<http://www.nature.com/articles/sdata2016107>

We added the reference to the suggested paper.

P2, I. 8. The selection of example references is heavily biased toward one author, if AF is such a prominent method there should be other examples where it has been used.

We included more references as suggested by the referee These are:

Cavers, M. and Vasudevan, K.: Brief Communication: Earthquake sequencing: analysis of time series constructed from the Markov chain model, Nonlinear Processes in Geophysics, 22, 589, 2015.

García-Marín, A., Jiménez-Hornero, F., and Ayuso, J.: Applying multifractality and the self-organized criticality theory to describe the temporal rainfall regimes in Andalusia (southern Spain), Hydrological processes, 22, 295–308, 2008.

and of course:

Serinaldi, F. and Kilsby, C. G.: On the sampling distribution of Allan factor estimator for a homogeneous Poisson process and its use to test inhomogeneities at multiple scales, Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications, 392, 1080–1089, 2013.

P. 3, I. 3. Close bracket after ‘heights’

Amended as requested.

P. 3, I. 10. The way I know AF the denominator should be multiplied by two. If it is just a typo it is an easy fix, but if the analysis has been performed this way everything needs to be repeated.

The typo was corrected as indicated. Computations were carried out with the correct formula.

P. 3, I. 12. 'depends on'

Amended as requested.

P. 5, I. 30 to P. 6, I. 7. Somewhere here the authors should refer to Fig. 2 where the locations of the wave buoys are displayed.

We added the reference to the figure on Page 5 Line 29.

"The locations of the buoys are indicated in Fig. 2."

P. 6, I. 7-10. I don't think this is necessary; it has been said already that only the original stations are used so no need to go into detail what the other station time series look like.

We removed the lines as suggested since only the original stations were used.

P. 6, I. 13ff. What about the "wobbles" that exist at all example sites for the 99.5% threshold in the model data at ~5 and ~25 days, it seems to be something systematic.

We also noticed these oscillations in the AF patterns, however we did not find an obvious explanation of these in comparing our AF pattern to cyclic Poisson Processes. Following the suggestions from Serinaldi we looked at the effect of cycles of period shorter than one week, but they do not influence the AF significantly. In other words we cannot associate the wobbles to any cyclic pattern. Therefore, at the moment, we cannot explain the nature of these oscillations.

P. 6, I. 17. Delete 'and Mazara', it is not included in Fig. 5.

Deleted as indicated.

P. 6, I. 19. 'sometimes'

Amended as requested

P. 6, I. 21. How can I see from the figures that alpha is between 0.2-0.3 or 1.1-1.2? There is no reference as can be found in the other figures.

We amended all the figures and consistently added a trend line for α in all the figures

P. 6, I. 22. 'on average'

Amended as requested

P. 11-14. Why exactly are the alpha values of 0.25 and 1.15 shown as reference? This is related to my comment above on significance of the results. The same applies to Fig. 12, is it possible to highlight grid points where the results (in this case the slope) is significantly different from zero (or the Poisson assumption)?

The slopes in the figures are selected as they are representative of the slopes found in the AF curves, hence they are only indicated as reference. We specified this better in the text. We selected $\alpha=0.2$ as representative of the slope for time scales and $\alpha=1.15$ for longer time scales. As for the significance of α , as we discussed this previously, it is difficult to identify a well defined regime when $\alpha < 0.1$. We clarified this also in the discussion:

“The results presented highlighted the presence of two distinct scaling regimes for the arrival of above threshold wave storms: one for time scales shorter than $\tau < 1200$ hours (50 days) that is associated to a departure from the Poisson distribution. This regime is characterised by $\alpha = 0.15-0.3$ and is more evident in the North-West of the Mediterranean Sea. In the rest of the basin α is closer to zero and the AF pattern is characterised by oscillations, without a well defined regime.”

We also concluded that it is not possible to say that the magnitude of the departure from a Poisson process is large or small as, at the moment, there is no comparison with other Seas. We added this consideration in the Discussion and Conclusions section:

“The values of α found in the present study do not allow to draw conclusions on whether this deviation from a Poisson distribution is large or small for the phenomenon at hand, as there is no comparison with other basins. Because of this, it is important to analyse further basins. “

P. 15, I. 1. Delete ‘the’ before Southern Spain

Deleted as requested

P. 16, I. 5-7. I didn’t understand the last part of this sentence.

This part has been rewritten, following the analysis by Serinaldi and Kilsby (2013).

P. 16, I. 17. ‘to exacerbate’

Amended as requested.