

Dear Editor

I am pleased to send you the revised manuscript with the editorial changes as have been recommended. I have made all the changes, apart from one which I will explain to you.

It was recommended that we change 'below-average rainfall' to 'below-mean rainfall'. I do not wish to change this because our version is the much more widely used version. I have consulted several leading international journals to see which version they use and the following journals use our version of 'average' in this context more widely than they use 'mean':

Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society
Earth and Planetary Science Letters
International Journal of Climatology
Journal of Climate
Theoretical and Applied Climatology
Meteorology and Atmospheric Physics
Monthly Weather review
Hydrology and Earth System Sciences
Global Change Biology
Journal of Arid Environments

You will see that I tried to trim down the point 3 of the conclusion as best I could. It is still a bit longer than points 1 and 2 but think this is not too big a difference to cause concern. Then I added a small paragraph at the end as you can see - i think this provides for an improved ending to the paper.

I agree with you that Table 1 in the manuscript is impossible to read. I attach a high resolution version in pdf format for you to view (you can enlarge it without it becoming fuzzy). May we ask the type setters what they think about this version and if it is possible to include it so that it may be clearly readable? Of course I am open to any recommendations the typesetters may provide us. If they are worried about this then I can consider other possible options with this Table - maybe even to make a Figure instead.

Please advise what your views are about all this.

Many thanks and kind regards,
Stefan