

Streamflow Synthesis for Ungaged Rivers

October 1967

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ABSTRACT

STREAMFLOW SYNTHESIS FOR UNGAGED RIVERS

by

Leo R. Beard

The Hydrologic Engineering Center of the Corps of Engineers has developed a mathematical model for simulating monthly streamflow. This model has been tested extensively to assure that all characteristics of monthly average streamflow pertinent to water resources development are adequately described in the model.

Model coefficients consist of frequency and correlation coefficients for each of the 12 calendar months and number 48 for a single location. These are far more numerous where more than one location must be considered simultaneously. For the purpose of deriving a monthly streamflow model for ungaged locations, these coefficients must be combined into a small number of generalized coefficients, which can feasibly be related to drainage basin characteristics.

Generalized coefficients for simulating monthly streamflows have been developed with the requirement that important characteristics of flows generated using the generalized coefficients compare reasonably with those characteristics of recorded data at long-record stations throughout the United States.

Means of establishing generalized model coefficients and generating hypothetical streamflows for ungaged locations are described. Such streamflows would form the basis for water resources studies in regions of little or no streamflow data.

STREAMFLOW SYNTHESIS FOR UNGAGED RIVERS(1)

by

Leo R. Beard⁽²⁾

INTRODUCTION

It is usual practice in designing water resources projects for water supply and other conservation purposes to base the design on assumed repetition of recorded historical streamflows, modified for changes in the stream system that have taken place and that are expected to take place during the life of the proposed project. Inasmuch as historical streamflows will not be repeated exactly in the future, and since they are not exactly representative of future expectation, this practice leads to considerable uncertainty in design. Much effort has been expended in recent years to develop procedures by which hypothetical streamflows can be generated, which can just as likely occur in the future as can repetition of historical streamflows. This would permit the consideration in design of many sequences of simulated streamflows, thus giving a more dependable design as well as some indication of the potential variation or uncertainty in project performance. Some success has attended these efforts. (1)(2)(3)

⁽¹⁾ For presentation at the XIV General Assembly of the International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics, Bern, Switzerland, September - October 1967.

⁽²⁾ Chief, Hydrologic Engineering Center, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento, California.

This paper describes results of initial studies made in the Hydrologic Engineering Center of the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, to devise procedures for generating monthly streamflows for ungaged rivers, based on data from other rivers. These initial studies consist of reducing the very large set of parameters required for simulation to a manageable set of generalized parameters that will adequately describe the pertinent characteristics of monthly streamflows. These generalized parameters can be used in regional studies to generate streamflows for ungaged areas.

MONTHLY STREAMFLOW GENERATION MODEL

The general equation used for generation of a flow for month i at station j of n interrelated stations is as follows:

$$K_{i,j} = \beta_{1}K_{i,1} + \beta_{2}K_{i,2} + \cdots + \beta_{j-1}K_{i,j-1} + \beta_{j}K_{i-1,j} + \beta_{j+1}K_{i-1,j+1} + \cdots + \beta_{n}K_{n-1,n} + \sqrt{1-R_{i,j}^{2}} Z_{i,j}$$
(1)

in which:

K = Monthly flow logarithm, expressed as a normal standard deviate

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- β = Beta coefficient
- i = Month number
- j = Station number
- n = Number of interrelated stations
- R = Multiple correlation coefficient
- Z = Random number from normal standard population

For the case of a single station, this resolves to:

$$K_{i} = R_{i}K_{i-1} + \sqrt{1-R_{i}^{2}} Z_{i}$$
 (2)

The normal standard deviate K in Equations 1 and 2 is related to streamflow as follows:

$$X_{i,m} = \log \left(Q_{i,m} + q_{i} \right)$$
(3)

$$\overline{\overline{x}}_{i} = \sum_{m=1}^{N} x_{i,m} / N$$
(4)

$$S_{i} = \sqrt{\sum_{m=1}^{N} (X_{i,m} - \overline{X}_{i})^{2} / (N-1)}$$
 (5)

$$g_{i} = N \sum_{m=1}^{N} (X_{i,m} - \overline{X}_{i})^{3} / ((N-1)(N-2)S_{i}^{3})$$
(6)

$$t_{i,m} = (X_{i,m} - \bar{X}_i) / S_i$$
 (7)

$$K_{i,m} = 6/g_i \left[\left(\left(g_i t_{i,m}/2 \right) + 1 \right)^{1/3} - 1 \right] + g_i/6$$
(8)

in which:

- X = Logarithm of incremented monthly flow
- Q = Monthly recorded streamflow
- q = Small increment of flow used to prevent infinite logarithms for months of zero flow
- \overline{X} = Mean logarithm of incremented monthly flows
- N = Total years of record
- S = Unbiased estimate of population standard deviation
- g = Unbiased estimate of population skew coefficient
- t = Pearson Type III standard deviate
- i = Month number
- m = Year number

In order to generate flows at a single station where records exist, it is necessary to compute values of \overline{X} , S and g for each of the 12 calendar months from recorded data using Equations 3 to 8. The unbiased estimate of the serial correlation coefficient R, also required for each month, is obtained from recorded streamflow data as follows:

$$R_{i} = \left\{1 - \left[1 - \left(\sum_{m=1}^{N} X_{i,m} X_{i-1,m}\right)^{2} / \left(\sum_{m=1}^{N} X_{i,m}^{2} \sum_{m=1}^{N} X_{i-1,m}^{2}\right)\right] \\ (N-1)/(N-2)\right\}^{\frac{1}{2}}$$
(9)

These values are then used to generate normal standard deviates by means of Equation 2. In order to obtain flows Q from the deviates K' the transformation process of Equations 3 to 7 is reversed as follows:

$$t_{i,m} = \left\{ \left[(g_i/6)(K_{i,m} - g_i/6) + 1 \right]^3 - 1 \right\} 2/g_i$$
 (10)

$$X_{i,m} = \overline{X}_{i} + t_{i,m}S_{i}$$
(11)

$$Q_{i,m} = Antilog X_{i,m} - q_i$$

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imposing the constraint:

$$Q_{i,m} \ge 0$$

(13)

(12)

The procedure for generating flows for a number of stream locations simultaneously is similar, but involves the computation of a multiple regression equation from the inter-station and serial correlation coefficients. Flows are generated for each station in turn for one month before proceeding with generation for the subsequent month. In order to preserve pertinent gross and partial correlation when generating a flow for a station, it is necessary to consider flows already generated for that month at other stations and flows generated for the preceding month at the remaining stations. Where records are available, the correlation coefficients relating all pertinent pairs of variables are computed at the same time that frequency statistics (from Equations 4 to 6) are computed. These are then derived by standard multiple regression techniques and then used in Equation 1.

COORDINATION STUDIES OF MONTHLY STATISTICS

Frequency and correlation coefficients for each of the 42 longrecord unregulated streams throughout the United States were published in 1964.⁽²⁾ These consist of 48 statistics for each station. Devising such a set of interrelated statistics for an ungaged stream would be a complicated and arduous task, unless the set could be coordinated and expressed adequately in terms of a few generalized coefficients. Accordingly, much effort has been expended in devising means of coordinating the monthly statistics.

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It appears that there is no simple model for accurately expressing all of the statistics for a single station in terms of a few generalized statistics. Yet a simple model is necessary for transposition to ungaged streams. Hence, the problem is to devise a model that sacrifices accuracy the least.

Expression of seasonal variation in terms of a sine function has not been practical for several reasons. Many regions have two distinct wet seasons. Dry seasons are generally not separated from wet seasons by 6months (symmetrically); in fact the lag between wet and dry seasons varies greatly and is of great importance in water resources studies. Neither in the wet or dry season are average runoff quantities symmetrical in relation to time.

In view of these findings, it is considered that a generalized model for a single station must include consideration of the following:

- a. Season of maximum runoff
- b. Lag to season of minimum runoff
- c. Average runoff
- d. Variation between maximum and minimum runoff
- e. Standard deviation of flows
- f. Serial correlation of flows

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In studying variations in the above quantities and their interrelationships, using data for stations listed in Table 1, the following significant negative indications were obtained:

a. Variation of flows from month to month within each season is not related to the difference between wet-season and dry-season flows.

b. Variation of flows from month to month occurring between wet and dry seasons is not related to the difference between wet-season and dry-season flows.

c. There is no consistent correlation between standard deviation of flows and the difference between wet-season and dry-season flows.

d. There is no consistent relation from month to month between standard deviation and average flow for the corresponding calendar month.

e. There is no consistent relation between serial correlation coefficient and difference between wet-season and dry-season flows or rate of change of flow.

f. There is no consistent relation between serial correlation coefficient and average standard deviation.

The following significant positive indications were found:

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a. The carry-over effect from one year to the next is trivial, even where extensive lake areas prevail (This is obviously not true in the special case of St. Lawrence River draining from the Great Lakes, where high persistence exists from year to year).

b. Serial correlation is higher during the low-flow season than during the high-flow season.

c. Patterns of logarithmic means, serial correlation, and standard deviations are irregularly and characteristically different for different streams, but it is believed that generalized approximations are possible that permit adequate reconstitutions of critical streamflow features.

d. Patterns of skew coefficient are also significantly different for different streams, and the national average coefficient is zero. It is believed, however, that use of zero skew for the logarithms of all months at all streams would not greatly affect generated flows, since the influence of skew on generated flows is secondary.

Summaries of pertinent variation of means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients are given in Tables 2 to 4 for stations used in this analysis.

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THE GENERALIZED MODEL

On the basis of the above observations and data shown in Tables 2 to 4, the following generalized model was devised:

Selection of seasons

From recorded data in the region or general knowledge of climate, determine the 3 consecutive months that best constitute the wet season and the 3 that best constitute the dry season.

Selection of mean logarithms

<u>Two generalized statistics</u> are required for each station and must be obtained from correlation studies relating these to drainage basin characteristics. These are the average values of \overline{X} (mean logarithm) for the wet-season and for the dry-season. Mean logarithms for each month are obtained directly from these as follows:

a. Add .2 to the wet-season average to obtain \overline{X} for the middle month and subtract .1 from the wet-season average to obtain \overline{X} values for the other 2 months.

b. Use the average dry-season mean for each of the 3 dry-season months.

c. Interpolate linearly to obtain means for the 6 remaining months.

Selection of standard deviations

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One generalized statistic is required for each station and must be obtained from correlation studies relating these to drainage basin

characteristics. This is the average value of S (standard deviation) for all 12 months. This value is used for each of the 12 months. Selection of skew coefficients

No generalized statistic is required. A value of zero is used for each of the 12 months.

Serial correlation coefficients

One generalized statistic is required for each station and must be obtained from correlation studies. This is the average value of R for all 12 months. Add .15 to this value for each of the 3 dry-season months and subtract .15 for each of the 3 wet-season months. The average value is applied to each of the remaining 6 months.

Inter-station correlation

<u>One generalized statistic</u> is required <u>for each pair</u> of stations for which flows are interrelated. This is the average value of correlation coefficient for simultaneous flows during each of the 12 months at a given pair of stations. These must be obtained for all pairs of stations from regional correlation studies. The average value is applied to each of the 12 months. Correlation coefficients relating flows for one month at one station to flows for the preceding month at another station are specified as zero, but are raised in the computer to minimum values consistent with other correlation coefficients.

Table 5 illustrates the relation of generalized statistics to recorded statistics and of model statistics to the generalized statistics.

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TEST OF THE MODEL

In developing a generalized model for streamflow generation for ungaged rivers, it is recognized that uncertainties involved in calibrating the model to a particular river will be large. It certainly is not expected that generated flows for ungaged rivers will be as reliable as those for gaged rivers. Nevertheless, it is desirable that errors in generalizing the model are minimal at least small in comparison with calibration errors. Table 6, which shows results of a test based on data for several stations, demonstrates that errors incurred in generalizing are relatively small.

This test is based on the consideration that the primary influence of generated flows on design is a function of the maximum or minimum quantities for specified durations. Consequently, comparison of the maximum and minimum quantities for specified durations occurring within a given length of record with corresponding quantities occurring in an equal length of generated values should be a good test. In order to provide a measure of expected differences in random samples, corresponding quantities for each half of the record are also shown in Table 6. Differences between recorded and generated quantities are considered to be generally within acceptable limits.

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CALIBRATION OF THE MODEL

While very little work has been done in calibrating a streamflow generation model to ungaged rivers, it is expected that best results will be obtained through multiple correlation of each of the generalized statistics with pertinent drainage basin characteristics. Some work of this nature was done for single stations by Garcia⁽⁴⁾ while temporarily working with the Hydrologic Engineering Center. In that study concerned with ungaged rivers in Guatemala, mean logarithms were related to drainage basin size and normal precipitation. However, very little improvement of estimates occurred when considering other basin characteristics. Division of large regions into a few principal zones did help, and some relatively satisfactory results were obtained. Standard deviations and correlation coefficients were only generally related to mean logarithms.

When multi-station generation is required, inter-station correlation coefficients must be correlated with factors such as distance between rivers, ratio of drainage basin sizes, etc.

The degree of success obtainable in application of the model will depend on the nature of stream flows. In humid regions where flows are rather stable, results should be good. In arid regions where flows are erratic, it will be extremely difficult to obtain highly representative generated streamflow patterns.

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CONCLUSIONS

The generalized model described herein for generating monthly streamflows requires only 4 statistics for use at a single station. These are indexes of wet-season average flow, dry-season average flow, flow variation from year to year, and flow persistence from month to month. The statistics represent the important characteristics of streamflow and are designed so that any amount and type of information can be used in their estimation. When generating simultaneous flows at interrelated stations; an intercorrelation index between each pair of stations is also required.

Streamflows generated using these generalized statistics compare reasonably with recorded streamflows where these are available.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The generalized model described herein and computer programs required for its use were developed in the Hydrologic Engineering Center of the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, Sacramento, California, USA. Principal contributors include Harold Keith, Denver Mills and Edward Jones.

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STREAMGAGING STATION DATA

Station Number	Name	Drainage Area sq. mi.	Years of Record
Number 102 105 113 121 301 311 323 335 404 501 523 534 806 901 1002 1108 1111 1119 1124 1303	Mattawamkeag R. at Mattawamkeag, Maine Pemigewasset R. at Plymouth, N.H. E. Br. Delaware R. nr. Fish's Eddy, N.Y. Rappahannock R. at Fredericksburg, Va. Allegheny R. at Red House, N.Y. Hocking R. at Athens, Ohio Embarrass R. at Ste. Marie, Ill. Tuckasegee R. at Bryson City, N.C. Wolf R. at New London, Wis. Red R. of the North at Grand Forks, N. Dak. Sugar R. at Brodhead, Wis. Big Muddy R. at Plumfield, Ill. Brazos R. at Waco, Texas Blue R. at Dillon, Colo. Weber R. at Oakley, Utah Kern R. at Bakersfield, Calif. Kings R. at Piedra, Calif. Mdl. Fk. Feather R. at Bidwell Bar, Calif. San Antonio Cr. & Canals nr. Claremont, Calif. Boise R. at Twin Springs, Ida.	1,400 622 783 1,599 1,690 944 1,540 655 2,240 30,100 529 753 23,260 129 163 2,420 1,690 1,353 17 830	58 57 41 56 44 56 44 56 45 64 75 55 66 68 48 54 54 56 76 84 54 85 84 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85 85
1404	Willamette R. at Albany, Ore.	4,840	64

Station Number	3-month Range(1)	6-month Departure(2)	Season Lag(3)	Maximum(4) 1-month	Minimum(5) 1-month(5)
102	.83	13	1	.25	.09
105	.65	06	0	.25	.06
113	.65	04	1	.12	.06
121	.50	0	1 3 2 3 2 4	.04	.07
301	.88	.03	2	.09	.09
311	.89	.03	3	.09	.09
323	.88	.09	2	.44	.07
335	.74	01	4	.05	.02
404	.46	07	5	.13	.07
501	.83	13	5 5 2	.18	.07
523	.26	08	2	.15	.01
534	1.07	.02	3	.07	.13
806	•59	14	34	.18	.04
901	1.06	20	5	.18	.03
1002	.94	29	Ĺ.	.20	.03
1108	.82	09	2	.08	.03
1111	1.19	12	2	.13	.03
1119	1.14	.03		.07	.07
1124	.48	04	2 3	.01	.02
1303	.40	.27	2	.13	.05
1404	.77	09	2 4	.04	.05
Avg	.787	048	2.8	.138	.056

SEASONAL VARIATION OF MEAN LOGARITHMS

- (1) Difference between average mean logarithms for maximum and minimum 3 consecutive months of flow.
- (2) Difference between average mean logarithms for remaining 6 months and 6 months of note 1.
- (3) Number of months between maximum and following minimum 3 months of flow.

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(4) Difference between mean logarithm for maximum month and average for maximum 3 months of flow.

(5) Difference between average mean logarithms for minimum 3 months and minimum month of flow.

SEASONAL VARIATION OF STANDARD DEVIATIONS

Station	12-month	Max 3-mo(1)	Min 3-ma(2)	Remaining
Number	Average	Average	Average	6-mo avg
102 105 113 121 301 311 323 335 404 501 523 534 806 901 1002 108 1111 1119 1124 1303	.29	.19	.38	.30
	.25	.18	.26	.28
	.29	.20	.35	.31
	.32	.22	.46	.30
	.30	.22	.35	.31
	.35	.29	.35	.39
	.51	.43	.46	.57
	.18	.16	.20	.17
	.17	.17	.16	.18
	.40	.37	.38	.43
	.20	.24	.18	.18
	.65	.53	.66	.71
	.54	.50	.58	.55
	.13	.17	.11	.12
	.15	.23	.08	.14
	.24	.27	.19	.26
	.27	.21	.24	.32
	.26	.27	.13	.34
	.27	.35	.17	.28
	.14	.18	.10	.15
1404	.18	.20	.14	.20
Avg	.30	.266	.288	.310

Average standard deviation for 3 consecutive months of maximum flow.
 Average standard deviation for 3 consecutive months of minimum flow.

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SEASONAL VARIATION OF SERIAL CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Station Number	12-month Average	Max 3-mo Average(1)	Min 3-mo ₍₂₎ Average	Remaining 6-mo avg
102	.48	.14	.81	.58
105	.36	.25	.34	.43
113	.36	.05	•57	.42
121	.50	.36	.56	•54
301	•35	.03	•57	•39
311	.49	.41	•57	.49
323	.63	.54	.54	.72
335	.55	. 44	.69	.54
404	.61	.36	•79	.65
501	.84	.62	.98	.87
523	.46	.29	.50	•53
534	.47	•55	.26	•54
806	.55	.43	.70	.54
901	.69	.50	.85	.70
1002	.72	.44	.84	.78
1108	.81	.88	.81	.78
1111	.70	.71	.67	.72
1119	.70	.70	.74	.68
1124	.85	.86	.94	.80
1303	.70	.61	.77	.72
1404	.54	.26	.72	•59
Avg	•59	.45	.68	.62

(1) Average correlation coefficient for 3 consecutive months of maximum flow.

(2) Average correlation coefficient for consecutive 3 months of minimum flow.

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	ME	AN	STANDARD	DEVIATION	SK	EW	SERIAL CO	RELATION	INTERCOR	RELATION
MONTH	REC.	GEN.	REC.	GEN.	REC.	GEN.	REC.	GEN.	REC.	GEN.
STATI	ON 110	8								
10	1.189	1.20	.192	.25	. 434	0	.910	.98	.867	.92
11	1.239	1.20	.180	.25	1.172	0	. 656	.98	.814	.92
12	1.329	1.34	.204	.25	1.009	0	. 604	.83	.887	.92
1	1.431	1.48	.262	.25	.971	0	. 698	.83	.917	. 92
2	1.514	1.62	.242	. 25	.528	0	.740	.83	.920	. 92
3	1.704	1.77	.262	.25	. 647	0.	.861	.83	.935	.92
4	1.917	1.92	.256	.25	.250	0	.879	. 68	.920	. 92
5	2.106	2.22	.262	.25	.185	0	.896	. 68	. 935	.92
6	2.048	1.92	.288	.25	532	0	.866	. 68	.965	.92
7	1.715	1.68	.330	.25	038	0	.954	.83	.982	. 92
8	1.358	1.44	.289	.25	.145	0	.950	.83	.959	. 92
. 9	1.158	1.20	.217	.25	.311	0	.955	.98	.920	.92
STATI	ON 111	0								
10	.560	. 58	. 292	. 31	.828	0	.731	.90	.867	.92
11	.733	.77	.301	.31	1.305	0	.465	.75	.814	.92
12	.970	.96	.386	. 31	1.052	0	.498	.75	.887	.92
1	1.143	1.16	.386	.31	. 645	0	. 605	.75	.917	.92
2	1.320	1.36	.320	.31	.186	0	. 691	.75	.920	.92
3	1.541	1.56	.266	. 31	.276	0	. 784	.75	.935	.92
4	1.782	1.76	.186	.31	232	0	.810	. 60	.920	.92
5	1.980	2.06	.204	.31	549	.0	. 790	. 60	. 935	.92
6	1.812	1.76	.326	.31	761	0	.836	.60	.965	.92
7	1.257	1.17	.411	. 31	092	0	.961	.75	. 982	.92
8	.711	.58	.331	. 31	.329	0	.961	.90	.959	.92
9	.467	.58	. 258	. 31	025	0	.920	.90	.920	.92

ILLUSTRATION OF GENERALIZED MODEL COEFFICIENTS

GENERALIZED STATISTICS STATION 1108 STATION 1110

WET-SEASON MEAN	2.02	1.86
DRY-SEASON MEAN	1.20	.58
STANDARD DEVIATION	.25	.31
SERIAL CORRELATION	.83	. 75
INTERCORRELATION	.92	.92

COMPARISON OF RECORDED AND GENERATED STREAMFLOWS

Percentage of Recorded Mean Annual Volume

	MAX I MUM ANNUAL	MINIMUM	MEAN	MAX1MUM 6-MONTH	MINIMUM 6-MONTH	MAX IMUM 54-Month	MINIMUM 54-Month
STATION 102							
RECORDED	149	50	100	114	5	612	344
1st HALF	149	50	101	114	7	612	344
2nd HALF GENERATED	144 217	56 59	98 110	112 197	5 9	583 683	349 290
STATION 113							
RECORDED	162	65	100	97	9	515	356
1st HALF	162	71	100	97	9 10	515 509	378 356
2nd HALF GENERATED	127 218	65 43	99 99	93 190	9	677	295
STATION 301							
RECORDED	150	64	100	120	5	547	316
1st HALF	150	64	101	120	5 6	543 547	336 336
2nd HALF GENERATED	148 203	67 39	99 95	109 186	5	602	300
STATION 323							
RECORDED	221	3 15	100	170	1	721	160
1st HALF	221	15	101 100	170 168	2	721 663	284 160
2nd HALF GENERATED	216 182	3 14	89	171	i	623	151
STATION 404							
RECORDED	167	51	100	105	16	600	291
1st HALF	167	60	104 96	105 102	18 16	596 600	334 291
2nd HALF GENERATED	165 164	51 68	100	118	15	572	329
STATION 523							
RECORDED	156	52	100	112	19	581	291
1st HALF	156	52	96 94	112 98	21 21	581 553	365 320
2nd HALF GENERATED	151 164	54 60	102	121	16	555	392
STATION 806							
RECORDED	302	23	100	198	1	810	131
1st HALF	302	23 23	107	185	. 1	810 780	147 131
2nd HALF GENERATED	270 415	23 19	95 116	198 407	2	868	247
STATION 1002 RECORDED	187	35	100	171	9	675	292
1st HALF	187	35 48	112	171	10	675 539	359 302
2nd HALF GENERATED	135 199	35 64	122 108	120 178	10	649	371
STATION 1111							
RECORDED	239	24	100	219	4	735	205
1st HALF	239	24	106 94	219 175	5 4	735 654	277 270
2nd HALF GENERATED	200 224	29 51	109	207	3	837	256
STATION 1124				4.	`>		
RECORDED	314	20	100	252	8	791 717	146 224
1st HALF	314	32 20	106 94	252 228	12	791	146
2nd HALF GENERATED	258 228	33	82	170	8	782	237
STATIONS 1107, 110	8, 1109 AND	1110 TOTAL	SIMULTAN			·	
RECORDED	260	24	100	231	6	809 809	186 240
1st HALF	260 209	24 34	98 102	231 180	5 6 3	733	254
2nd HALF GENERATED	343	30	110	311	3	1164	245
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