Worldwide Thunderstorm Occurrences

Carl Luetzelschwab K9LA April 2015 Bonus

One of the biggest challenges to low band DXing (especially on 160-Meters) is QRN. QRN comes in two flavors: man-made noise and atmospheric noise.

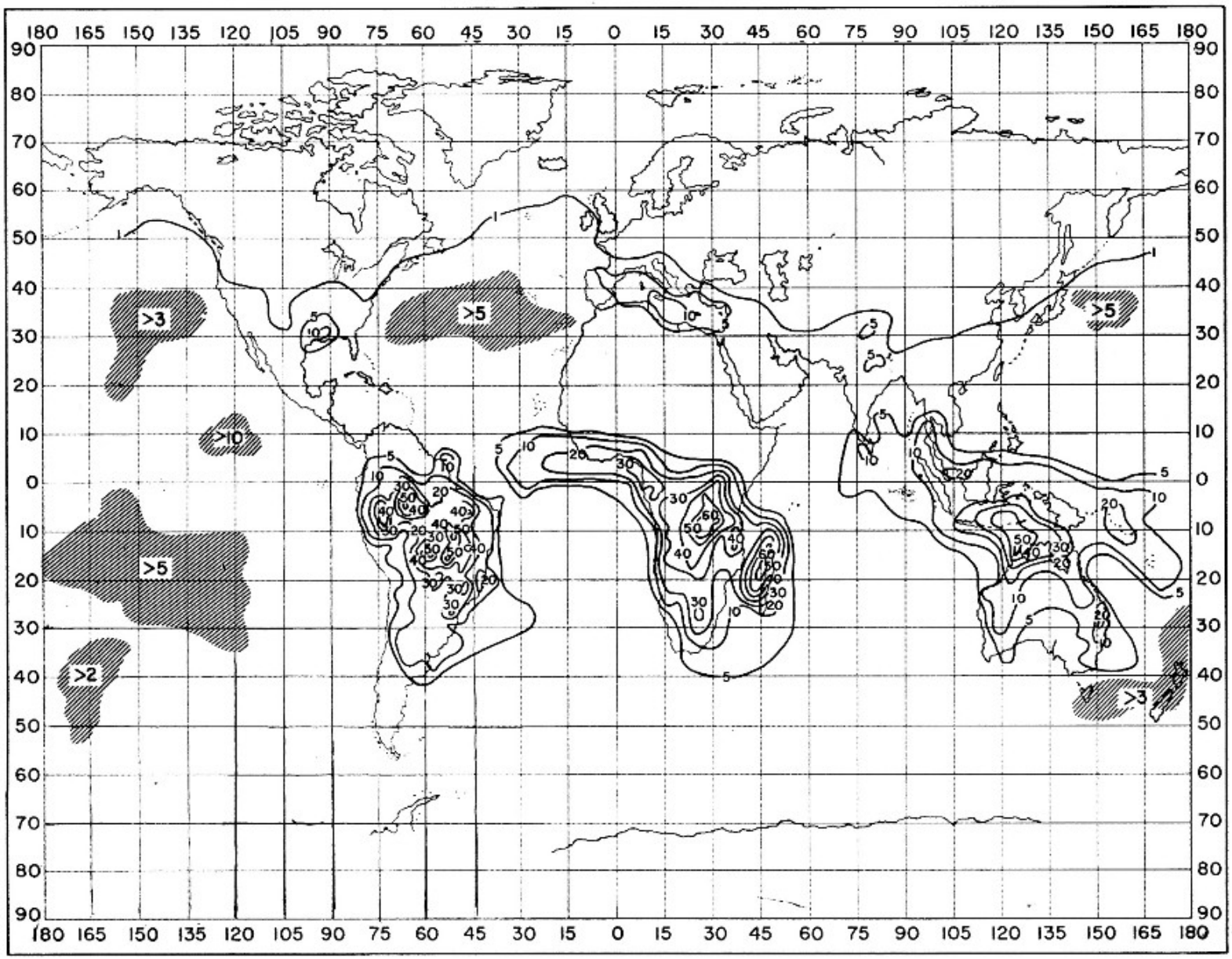
Man-made noise comes from many sources, and in general is getting worse as more and more electronic devices are used in our world. If you work with your local power company and with neighbors (and don't forget your own house!), you might be able to reduce your exposure to man-made noise.

Atmospheric noise comes from lightning discharges in thunderstorms. At any given time, there are about 2000 thunderstorms occurring worldwide. All those lightning discharges in these thunderstorms result in a drizzle of noise that propagates into your QTH as do desired signals.

The following maps show where thunderstorms occur and on how many days during the four seasons: winter, spring, summer and fall. These maps will tell you where the major atmospheric noise sources originate, and coupled with a worldwide map showing day and night (for example, the mapping feature in W6ELProp), you'll be able to identify which areas will be a problem. These maps come from the Handbook of Geophysics (USAF, 1960).

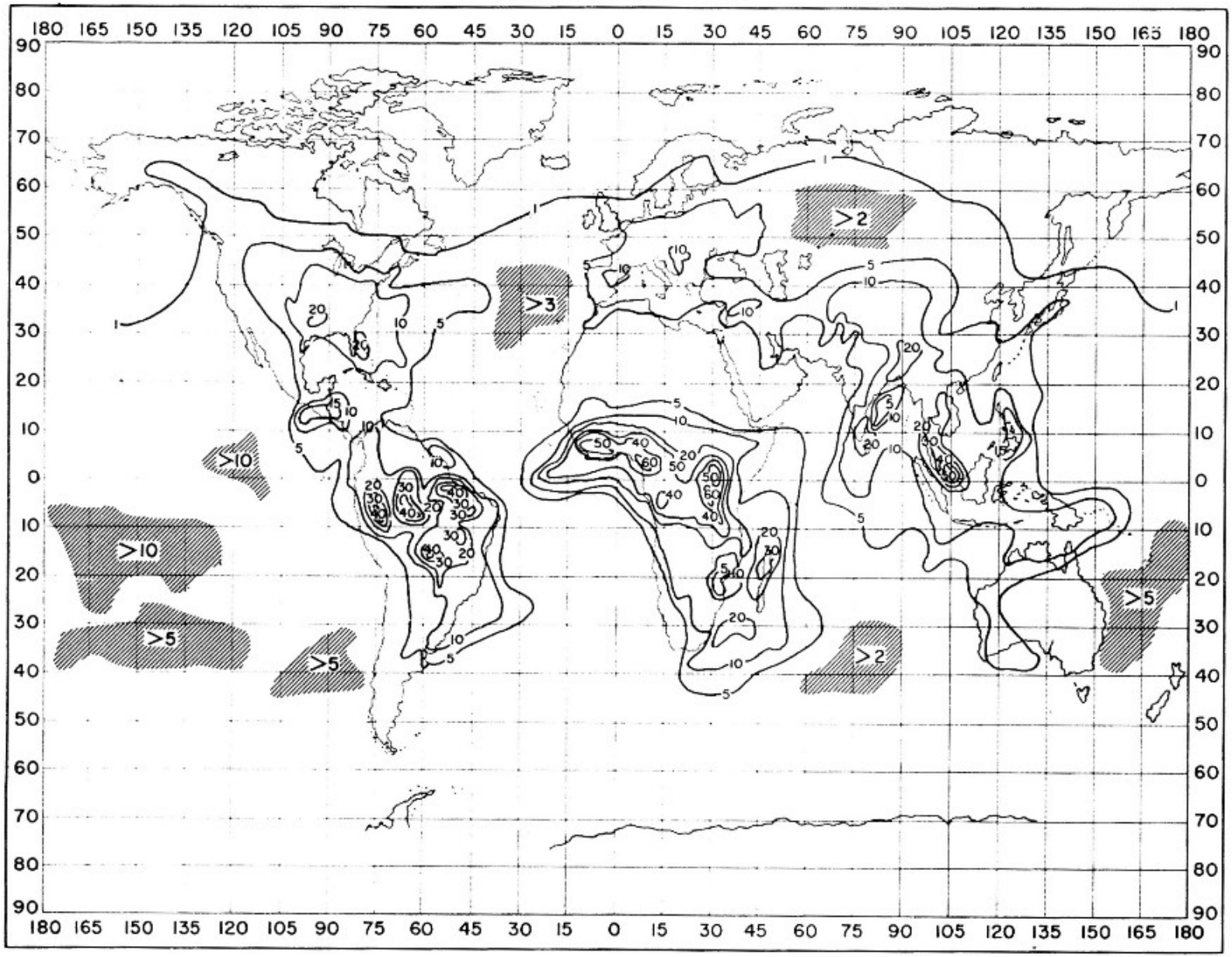
You can also complement these maps with real-time lightning strike data on the web (google "lightning strike maps real-time").

THUNDERSTORM DAYS



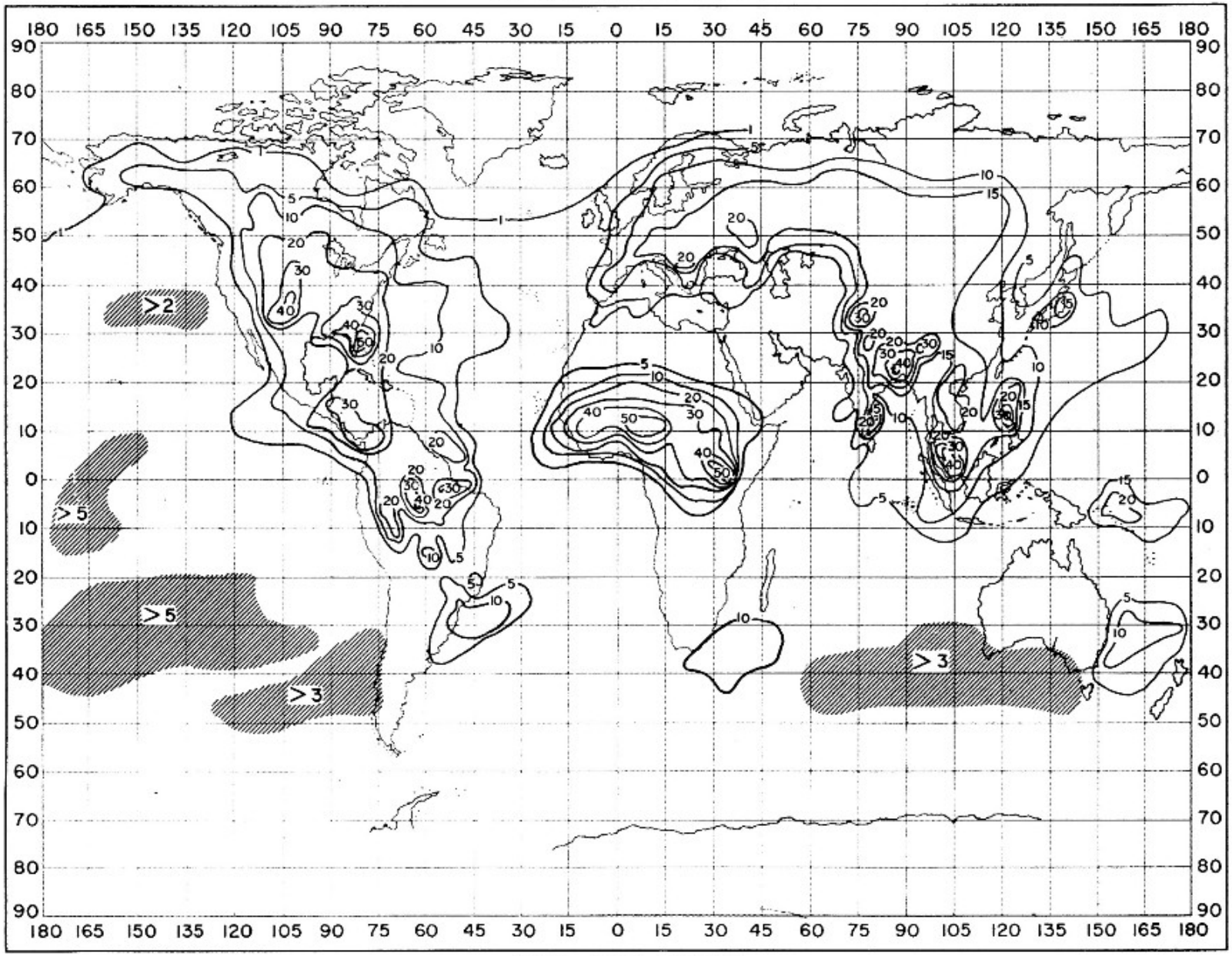
DECEMBER - JANUARY- FEBRUARY

THUNDERSTORM DAYS



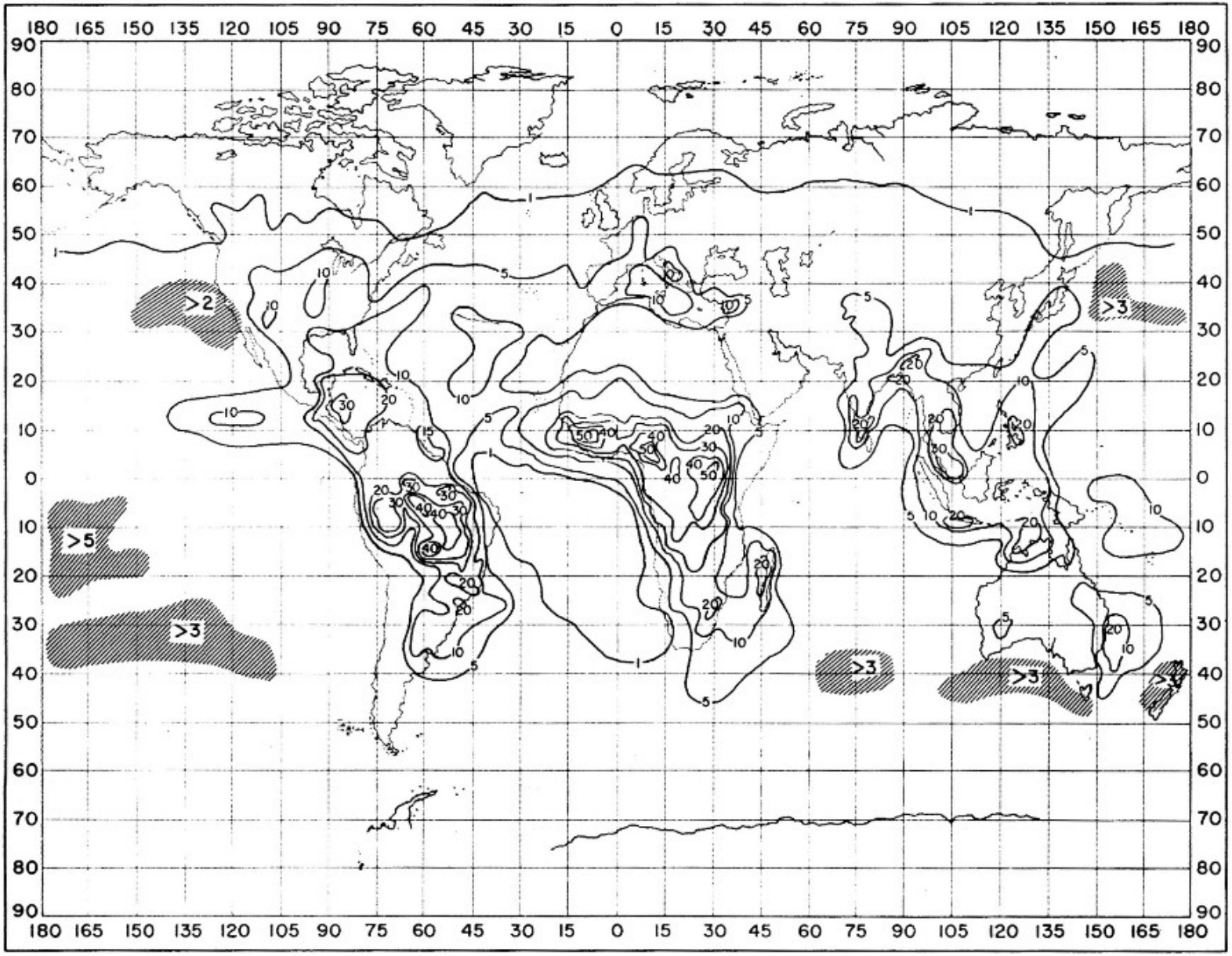
MARCH-APRIL-MAY

THUNDERSTORM DAYS



JUNE - JULY - AUGUST

THUNDERSTORM DAYS



SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER – NOVEMBER