

Desert locust situation update for the 2nd dekad of May 2007

Central region

A significant number of locust groups and populations were detected and controlled in the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa while locust numbers continued declining along the western side of the Red Sea coast during the 2nd dekad of May.

Ethiopia

Survey and control operations continued in Shinille District, near Dire Dawa in eastern **Ethiopia** where hoppers and copulating and laying adults were treated by the DLCO-EA and the MoA on close to 940 ha as of May 21 (USAID/OFDA augmented a DLCO-EA aircraft to carry out these operations). Rains that fell in March and mid-April created favorable conditions and lead to breeding and hatchings in eastern Ethiopia. Survey and control operations will likely continue until the locust populations become insignificant.



ground control in Shinille, eastern Ethiopia (photo courtesy MoA/Ethiopia)



copulating and laying adult locusts in eastern Ethiopia (photo courtesy MoA/Ethiopia)

Sudan

Survey operations continued during the second dekad of May in the River Nile and Northern State, Sudan where 1,500 ha were surveyed and 77 ha were infested with groups of immature & mature adult, gregarious and solitary populations with a density ranging from 100-2,500 individual/ha. Vegetation was green and soil was wet in seven of the areas surveyed. These areas received rain on April 29.

In **Eritrea** locust numbers continued declining and ground and aerial control operations were not necessitated during the entire second dekad of May.

No locust were reported in **Northern Somalia** during this period.

Saudi Arabia

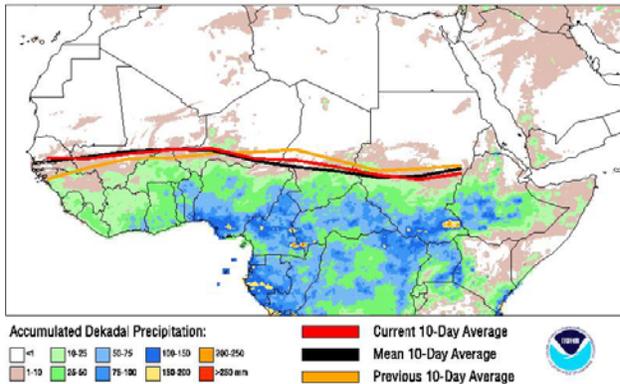
Aerial and ground control operations treated some 13,000 ha against late instar hopper bands and residual groups of mature adults on the Red Sea coast of **Saudi Arabia** and laying swarms in the interior of the country during the first dekad, but no information was received during the second dekad. Hatching is expected to have commenced in the interior of the country and small hopper bands may have begun forming. If left uncontrolled, small swarms could form by mid-June begin moving west and south.

According to IRIN News, the **Yemen** Desert Locust Monitoring and Control Center (DLMCC) reported swarms of locusts on some 150 sq km in the southern provinces of Hadhramaut, Shabwa and al-Mahrah in Yemen over the past several weeks. If left uncontrolled, the locusts could move to the upland agricultural areas and invade millet and sorghum fields. Spray operations were carried out on 3,700 hectares (37 sq km) in Thamoud, a desert area in Hadhramaut where mature locusts invaded some 4,000 hectares of grazing-land in late April. In March, tree locust swarms were controlled on 27 sq km (2,700 ha) of farmland in the western province of al-Hudaidah. Survey, monitoring, and limited control operations are underway in most of these places.

Eastern Region

Ground teams treated gregarizing hoppers, fledglings and a mature swarm west of Jaisalmer, **India** near the **Pakistan** border (FAO/DLIS) during the first dekad and no further updates were received during the second dekad of May.

Current vs Mean Position of the Africa ITCZ
As analyzed by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center
May 2007 Dekad 2



On average the African portion of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) was 0.1 degree higher than the normal position of 13.4N from 15W-35E during the second dekad of May. This compares with its average position of 13.6N last dekad. Meanwhile in the west (10W-10E), the ITCZ retreated south to a near normal position of 14.5N. In the east (20E-35E), the ITCZ was located near 12.1N (see figure in opposite column).

Western region

Calmness continued in the western region outbreak areas during the second dekad of May. Very few isolated individuals may be present in southwestern Algeria, southern Morocco, and northwestern Mauritania. No locusts were seen

elsewhere in the region and significant developments are not expected in the coming dekad.

Note: The central region (along the Red Sea areas and the interior of or Sudan and the Horn) is often referred to as the epicenter for the desert locust outbreak where massive outbreaks originate and invade the other regions. The exacerbation of the 2003-05 upsurge in the western region was considered by many as a new phenomenon or an anomaly. However, a similar situation was witnessed in the central region in late 2003 and early 2004, but was nipped at the bud by the coordinated efforts of national units, the Commission for the Control of the desert locust in the Central Region, the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa and FAO/EMPRES program and averted what could have lead to a major plague. End note.

Locusts in Tajikistan

According to Tajik Ministry of Agriculture and Protection of Nature (MoAPN), Italian locust (*Caliptamus italicus*) and Moroccan locust (*Doclostaurus maroccanus*) invaded Tajikistan in the past several weeks and destroyed crops and cotton plantations over 45,000 hectares (23,350 in the southern Khatlon Oblast area). As of May 15, close to 20,140 ha were treated. The invasions have affected five central districts and parts of the northern Soghd province, Rudaki district and are with in a 15 km radius from Dushanbe, an area which will likely be affected soon. The locusts, which usually concentrate on mountain pastures and forest areas this time of the year, were forced to move to the foothills and lower laying cropping areas due to a prolonged drought over the past couple of years.

The Italian locust and the Moroccan locust invade Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. During the Soviet era, such invasions in these countries were controlled through a system organized by the Central [Soviet] Government. The system ceased to exist after the collapse of the Soviet Union and individual countries were forced to take on the challenge by themselves.

Most if not all of these countries lack sufficient resources and facilities to prevent and/or abates locust invasions and often rely of external assistance. During the 2003-2004 invasion, FAO provided technical support, equipment, pesticides and assisted farms and villagers in Tajikistan to fight the infestations. FAO and MoAPN's Department of Locust Prevention and Control developed a proposal which involves pesticides, fuel and logistical support to carry out control operations from April-June 2007.

Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata*)

Survey and control operations were carried out by IRLCO-CSA in the Lake Chilwa/Lake Chiuta Plains in **Malawi** and Buzi Gorongosa Plains in **Mozambique** from April 25 to May 14th, 2007. In **Mozambique**, 1,000,000 ha were surveyed

and isolated low density individuals and populations were detected. In **Malawi**, Lake Chilwa and Chiuta Plains, close to 15,000 ha were surveyed and control operations were carried out against swarms and scattered populations on 6,000 ha using fenitrothion 96% ULV. Isolated low density scattered populations were reported in the Wembere Plains in **Tanzania** at the end of April 2007. A total of 4,000 Ha had earlier been sprayed in the Lake Rukwa, Iku and parts of Malagarasi basin in Tanzania. Environmental concerns prevented spray operations on some 6,000 ha of red locust populations in Malagarasi Basin and Iku Katavi for which safer alternatives are being sought. The Red Locust situation in the Kafue Flats, Mweru-wa-Ntipa and Lukanga swamps in **Zambia** is currently being evaluated.

East Timor:

Plans for aerial control of the migratory locust in **East Timor** is underway. A spray helicopter and an FAO-sponsored locust expert from the Australian Plague Locust Commission arrived in Dili, ET and will soon start control operations.

It is important that frontline countries in breeding areas stay vigilant, maintain effective survey and exercise preventive control operations as necessary. AELGA will continue monitoring the situation in close collaboration with its partners and issue updates and advise accordingly.

Dekadal updates and monthly reports on ETOP situation can be found at:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance/locust/

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