

SITREP 02.03

A SITUATION REPORT ON EMERGENCY TRANSBOUNDARY OUTBREAK PESTS (ETOPS) FOR FEBRUARY WITH A FORECAST TILL MID-APRIL, 2003

SUMMARY

1. Summary: This report provides an update about recent activities on emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs) in Africa, the Middle-East, Central and South East Asia, and Latin America. The report includes activities that took place in February and a forecast till mid-April, 2003. Key ETOPs, including locusts, grasshoppers, armyworm and grain-eating red-billed Qulea birds are covered by the report. A brief overview of the current status of each of these pests is outlined in the remainder of this summary with detailed accounts provided thereafter.

DESERT LOCUST, *SCHISTOCERCA* *GREGARIA* (FORSKAL)

2. Desert locusts, *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forsk.) Unconfirmed reports indicated that some adult locusts and hoppers were sighted in northern Mali. Due to poor rainfall or absence of rainfall that persisted in most of the winter breeding and recession areas in the western and northwestern Africa, it is expected that locust numbers will remain insignificant in these areas during the forecast period.

3. Based on an FAO Desert Locust report, small-scale breeding occurred in February near the Red Sea coast in northeastern Sudan where

heavy rainfall occurred in November and conditions were somewhat favorable. Isolated hoppers and adults were also sighted in a few wadis (dry riverbeds) in these areas. Locusts were not reported from elsewhere in the winter breeding areas on both sides of the Red Sea coasts. Significant locust activities are not expected during the forecast period.

4. As a result of heavy rains that fell in southern Pakistan, adjacent areas of Iran and Afghanistan and Rajasthan India, it is expected that conditions could improve in the spring-breeding areas of the eastern region. Small-scale breeding could occur in Baluchistan, Pakistan and Rajasthan, India during the forecast period. Regular survey and monitoring are advised.

OTHER LOCUSTS AND GRASSHOPPERS.

5. Red locusts, *Nomadacris septemfasciata* (Surville): Red locust hatchings and some hopper activities were reported in late January in northern Madagascar by the national anti-locust center (CNA). The red locust situation remained relatively calm in the DICO-EA member countries in February. No reports were received from the IRLCO-CSA region. However, small-scale activities might have been going on in the outbreak areas of Tanzania. Due to the dry conditions that persisted in most of the outbreak areas, it is likely that locust numbers will remain low and only very limited activities may be seen in a few places during the forecast period.

6. Madagascar migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria capito* (L.). Mixed instars and adult Madagascar migratory locusts were reported in February in the summer breeding areas in southwestern part of the country within 30km radius of the city of Tulear.

Control operations were launched by the anti-locust unit when infestations were reported by farmers. Favorable breeding conditions continued to exist in these areas and it is likely that further development will be seen during the forecast period. A few hoppers may have also begun appearing in the Horombe Plateau and the surrounding areas. These locusts could further develop and form small gregarious populations and swarmlets during the forecast period if left untreated.

7. *Anacridium melanorhodon* (Walker). Apart from a small (1.5 km sq.) infestation observed in the western lowland of Eritrea, no further reports were received on tree locusts, other locust and grasshopper situations, including the African migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria migratorioides* (L.), brown locust, *Locustana pardalina* (Walker), Moroccan locust, *Dociostaurus maroccanus* (Thunberg), Italian locust, *Calliptamus italicus* (L.), the Senegalese grasshopper, *Oedaleus senegalensis* (Krauss) and the variegated grasshopper, *Zonocerus variegatus* (L.) remained fairly calm.

8. No locust activities were reported from Central Asia and Latin America in February.

9. Armyworm, *Spodoptera exempta* (Walker). Armyworm infestations were reported on maize, millet and pasture on more than 970 ha in Narok and Transmara Districts, Kenya. The infestations were controlled using fenitrothion. No reports were received from the other D LCO-EA member countries in February. A late received report indicated that armyworm infestations were seen and controlled on maize, sorghum, and/or rice in Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia and some infestations were also reported on maize, sorghum, rapoka and pearl millet in Zimbabwe in January (ICOSAMP, 2003).

10. Red-billed quelea, *Quelea quelea* (L.). In Samed District, Kilimanjaro region of Tanzania, a D LCO-EA aircraft sprayed four quelea roosts with an estimated population of over 2.5 million birds and control operation has continued against birds attacking irrigated rice crops (D LCO-EA, 2003). A late received report indicated that quelea roosts were sighted in Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa in January. Control operations were undertaken in South Africa against 4 roosts (2.35 million birds) and 29 colonies (12.3 million birds) with avicides, Quletox and Falcolan, and explosions. Crops threatened were rice, millet and sorghum. End of Summary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION : WEATHER AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

11. Light rains fell in a few places in northern Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, and northern Mali and northwestern Niger where some patches of green vegetation persisted in February and dry conditions persisted elsewhere in the region.

12. Light rainfalls were recorded in the Tokar Delta, Sudan, the Red Sea coastal plains of Yemen, in northern Oman, in Ghinda (1522N/3910E) and Massawa (1540N/3825E), Eritrea, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia (D LCO-EA, 2003). Most of the winter breeding areas remained fairly hot and dry. Patches of green vegetation was seen only on the foothills of mountains and in the wadis. Other countries in the region remained fairly dry during the reporting month.

13. On February 15-18, unusually heavy rains fell in southern Pakistan and adjacent areas of southeastern Iran, southern Afghanistan, and Rajasthan, India (FAO, 2003). Hyderabad, India received a record 106 mm! Good rains

were also reported throughout the spring breeding areas, including Baluchistan, Pakistan. The summer breeding areas along the Indo-Pakistan borders also received a fairly good rain.

14. A cyclone (Japhet) with a gusty wind of more than 65 mph hit southern Mozambique dumping heavy rain in the region during the last week of February. The cyclone later in the week moved further inwards and hit Zimbabwe drenching most of the southeastern part of the country. Other IRLCO-CISA countries did not report any significant meteorological activities. Dry conditions also persisted in the other red locust outbreak areas.

DESERT LOCUST ACTIVITIES

15. Western and northwestern Africa. An unconfirmed report indicated that a few adult locusts and hoppers were seen in Tilemsi Valley and Timetrine, Mali, however, details were not available on the extent and severity of the locusts at the time this report was compiled. Locusts were not reported from Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Algeria, Libya, Chad, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Guinea Conakry in February.

16. Forecast: A few isolated adults may be seen in Inchiri, northwestern Mauritania, Adrar des Iforas, Mali, southern Air, Niger, and Tamarrassat, Algeria. No locusts are expected to appear and persist in the other countries in these regions. The overall locust situation will likely continue to remain calm during the forecast period in these regions.

17. Eastern Africa, northeastern Africa, and the Near East Regions. A few late instar hoppers and immature adults were seen in Wadi Oko, Sudan. Other countries in the

Central region on both sides of the Red Sea coasts remained free of locusts in February.

18. Forecast: A sharp decline in locust numbers is expected on the Red Sea coastal plains and adjacent areas in Sudan. Very few isolated locusts may be seen in a few places, along the Red Sea coasts of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Significant locust activities are not expected in the other countries of the northern Africa, eastern Africa, and the Middle East during the forecast period. Nevertheless, regular survey and monitoring activities are encouraged in the event favorable conditions begin to develop in the traditional spring-breeding areas.

19. Eastern region. No locusts were seen in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India in February.

20. Forecast: Although conditions may improve in the spring-breeding areas that received heavy rains in mid-February, only limited-scale breeding may occur during the forecast period. A few isolated adult locusts may be seen in the coastal regions of Iran and Pakistan as well as in the interior regions in Baluchistan, Pakistan, Bamapur and Saravan, Iran but, locust numbers will likely remain insignificant in the entire eastern region during the forecast period.

OTHER LOCUST AND GRASSHOPPER ACTIVITIES

21. Moroccan/Mediterranean locust, *D. meroocanus* (Thunberg) and the Italian locust, *C. italicus* (L.): No reports were received on the Moroccan/Mediterranean or the Italian locusts in Central Asia at the time this report was compiled.

22. Forecast: Some hatching may begin in

parts of Afghanistan and other countries in the region toward the middle to the end of the forecast period. No significant locust activities are expected during these period and some eggs may remain hibernated, however, close monitoring and surveillance are advised during the forecast period.

23. Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). No reports were received on locusts or grasshoppers in LAC countries in February.

24. Forecast. No significant developments are expected during the forecast period.

25. Red locust, *N. septem fasciata* (Surville). Red locust hatchings and some hopper activities were reported by the national anti-locust center (CNA) in late January in northern Madagascar but, further details were not available at the time this report was compiled. No reports were received on red locust activities in February from the D LCO - EA and the IRLCO - CSA countries. However, limited activities might have been going on in the traditional outbreak areas of Tanzania and elsewhere in the region.

26. Forecast: Overall, locust activities will probably be reduced in most of the outbreak areas during the forecast period due to unseasonably low precipitation. Significant developments are not expected unless meteorological conditions improve during the forecast period. However, some increase in number of locusts may be seen in a few pockets of green vegetation. Vigilant surveillance and monitoring are required.

27. Madagascar migratory locust, *L. migratoria capito* (L.). Early and late instars and adult Madagascar migratory locusts were reported in February in southwestern Madagascar in the vicinity of Tulear. The

locusts were treated by the anti-locust unit as they were reported by villagers. Favorable conditions continued to exist in these areas, and thus, it is likely that further development will be seen during the forecast period. A few hoppers may have also begun appearing in the Horn of Plateau and the surrounding areas, which could further develop and form small gregarious populations and swarm lets during the forecast period left untreated.

28. Brown locust, *L. pardalina* (Walker): No reports were received on brown locust, *L. pardalina* (Walker) in February. Due to the prevailing drought in the brown locust breeding areas, significant locust activities are not expected during the forecast period.

ARMY WORM ACTIVITIES

29. Army worm, *S. exempta* (Walker). Army worm outbreaks that began in December continued well into February. Infestations were reported on more than 970 ha of maize, millet and pasture in Narok and Transmara Districts, Kenya from January 30 through February 10 and control operations were conducted using fenitrothion. A late received report indicated that army worm infestations were seen in January in Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In Malawi, more than 8,800 ha of maize, rice, and sorghum were affected with crop damage ranging from 30% to 95% and the pest was controlled using Dusiban (Chlorpyrifos). In Tanzania, army worm infestations were seen on more than 3,900 ha of maize, rice, and sorghum fields and controlled with Diazinon (ICOSAMP, 2003). Widespread army worm outbreaks were also reported in Zambia in January but, details were not available. No further reports were received for February from the other D LCO - EA or the IRLCO - CSA member countries.

30. Forecast: It is likely that some armyworm infestations will continue to occur in Tanzania and Kenya and perhaps start moving into neighboring countries including Uganda and Ethiopia. Infestations could also occur in Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe, if rain falls during the forecast period.

QUELEA BIRD ACTIVITIES

31. Red-billed quelea, *Q. quelea* (L.). Quelea activities continued well into February. In Samed District, Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania, a DLCO-EA aircraft sprayed four quelea roosts with an estimated population of over 2.5 million birds seen attacking irrigated rice crops (DLCO-EA, 2003). A late received report indicated that quelea roosts were sighted in Botswana, Mozambique and South Africa in January. In Manjangu and Bombofo, Gaza Province, Mozambique, two large roosts with an estimated 5 million birds were seen on 8 ha near rice, millet and sorghum fields. In Free State and Limpopo Provinces, South Africa, control operations were launched against 4 roosts and 29 colonies using avicides, Quletox and Falcolan, and explosion techniques. An estimated 14.65 million birds were treated. Crops under quelea threats in these regions were millet and sorghum (ICOSAMP, 2003).

32. Forecast: Quelea breeding and infestations are likely to continue in Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana, and Zimbabwe and could possibly cause some damage to irrigated crops.

RECOMMENDATIONS

33. During the reporting month, only a few of the ETO P outbreaks warranted substantial control efforts, however, had these been left unaddressed, they could have increased to levels that pose serious threats to crops and

pasture. It is evident that a minimum shift in the balance of subsistence production system, can significantly affect the already precarious food security in most of the ETO P outbreak areas. Therefore, it is important that regular monitoring, surveillance and reporting are maintained and results communicated promptly to the appropriate bodies within the national, regional and international structures.

Note: The end of the current drought and/or dry spell in Southern Africa and other outbreak regions would likely trigger serious ETO P developments in most of these areas and could lead to massive infestations and subsequent crop damage. Therefore, regular survey, monitoring, and reporting are highly recommended to avert any such massive invasions that could possibly follow the end of the drought spell.

ACTION REQUESTED AND CONTACT INFORMATION

34. The Africa Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Assistance (AELGA) project, previously managed by the USAID's Bureau for Africa (AFR), has been transferred to the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) and is being managed by the Office for US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). AELGA continues to work closely with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization's Migratory Pest Unit and other entities, USAID bilateral and regional missions, DLCO-EA, IRLOC-CSA, host country ministries, and research establishments. Information on ETO Ps is regularly collected from these and other entities, including the Information Core for Southern Africa Migratory Pests (ICOSAMP) to continuously monitor and analyze the potential risks for large-scale emergency outbreaks, and compile and disseminate as

[AELGA] SITREPS to all interested parties. Unsolicited reports or information about ETOP situations and activities in your region or country are always warmly welcome and much appreciated.

[http://www.english/newroom/news/2002/5000-en.htm/](http://www.english.newroom/news/2002/5000-en.htm/)

<http://icosamp.ecoport.org/>

35. Missions with programs and portfolio on food security, environment and related activities are solicited to encourage their host country counterparts to send us regular updates on ETOP activities as often as possible. FEWS field personnel are also solicited to send us any information they may secure on ETOP activities in their countries and/or regions of responsibility. Regional organizations with ETOPS mandate and host country partners are kindly requested to forward their reports by the last day of the reporting month or within the first three days of the forecasting months. Please, forward reports, information, questions, and/or requests to Dr. Yene T. Belayneh: ybelayneh@ofda.net
FAX : 202-347-0315 (USA). A cc to Drs. Joe Vorgetts, jvorgetts@usaid.gov and Harry Bottenberg, hbottneberge@afr-sd.org is appreciated.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT AELGA'S ACTIVITIES, VISIT US AT OUR WEBSITE : WWW.AELGA.NET

UPCOMING EVENTS

Interegional Trainer Training Course on Alternative Application Strategies and Tactics (AAST) for acridid control, in 2003. Those interested can contact Dr. Yeneh T. Belayneh, via e-mail: ybelayneh@ofda.net or phone: 202-661-9374 and fax: 202-347-0315 (USA)

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For more information on the weather conditions, you may visit the following web sites:

<http://www.fao.org/WAICENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/economic/english/esahel/sehtoc.htm>

<http://www.fews.net>

For more information on ETOPs activities, you may visit:

<http://www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuholm.htm/>