

ETOP update during the first dekad of March 2007

Desert Locust

Central Region:

The **desert locust** (DL), *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forsk.) situation developed further during the first dekad of March in the southern coastal areas of **Sudan** bordering northern **Eritrea**. A similar situation may exist in the northern coastal areas of Eritrea where considerable numbers of swarms and hopper bands were detected and controlled in December and January.

The Plant Protection Department in Khartoum reported that intensive survey operations were carried out on more than 2,200 ha along the southern Red Sea coasts, near the Eritrean border during the reporting period. More than 800 ha were infested with low to medium density solitary and isolated individuals, immature and copulating adult swarms as well as 1st - 3rd instar hopper. Aerial and ground controls operations sprayed more than 400 ha using.

The presence of favorable breeding conditions allowed locusts to persist in these areas. If more rain falls in the coming weeks, breeding will likely continue and threaten the region at large. The situation is becoming increasingly worrisome in the northern coastal areas of **Eritrea** and **Somalia** where information has not been available for quite a while.

At the moment, it is difficult to determine the extent of threat this could pose on the region at large, however, we expect to be in a better position to assess the situation once we obtain information from the FAO teams that have been dispatched to the sub-region recently.

Local breeding that commenced last month on the Red Sea coasts of **Saudi Arabia** and **Yemen** was expected to progress during the reporting period. Other countries in the Central Region remained calm during this period.

Western Region:

The DL situation remained calm throughout the Western Region outbreak areas, including the Sahel and northwestern Africa during this period. Only isolated solitary immature and mature adults were reported in a few places in Mauritania and Morocco. A similar situation may be present in southern Algeria, northern Mali and Niger. Significant activities are not expected in these countries in the coming weeks.

Eastern Region:

The situation in the Eastern Region outbreak areas remained calm and a few isolated solitary adults may have persisted in areas of moist soil and green vegetation. The situation would likely remain the same in the coming weeks.

Other ETOPs

Red locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville), activities were not reported in the outbreak areas in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, or Zambia. The flooding in some of these areas might have hampered breeding. The International Red Locust Control Organisation for Central and Southern Africa (IRLCO-CSA) is planning on carrying out extensive aerial survey in these areas soon.

Tree Locust (*Anacridium spp.*) infestations were reported on 4,200 ha in Lokitang, Kaaleng and Lapur divisions of the Turkana District, **Kenya**. The locusts were seen defoliating *Acacia* trees, the main source of food for the livestock in the semi-arid area. Kenya Plant Protection Services of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and the Desert Locust Control Organization for Eastern Africa (DLCO-EA) were coordinating control interventions at the time this information was received.

Red billed *Quelea*, (*Quelea quelea* L.) outbreaks were reported in Kisumu and Nyando Districts, Kenya. The birds were reported threatening irrigated rice. MoA staff was monitoring the situation at the time this information was received. No reports of *Quelea* damage was received from Tanzania, but these birds are usually a problem to small grain cereal crops in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe at this time of the year.

Forecast:

Red Locust hoppers are likely to fledge into immature adult in March and April in all of the outbreak areas.

The armyworm outbreak season has ended in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe, but the season continues in Kenya and Tanzania. Hence, armyworm attacks could occur in these countries March through May.

Quelea breeding has commenced in Kenya, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The parental stock and fledglings are likely to cause damage to rain-fed and irrigated cereals.