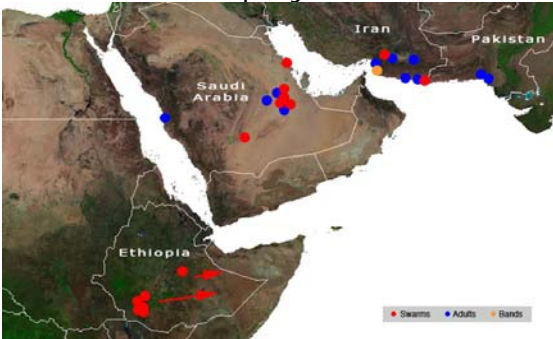


Emergency Transboundary Outbreak Pest (ETOP) situation update for March 2008

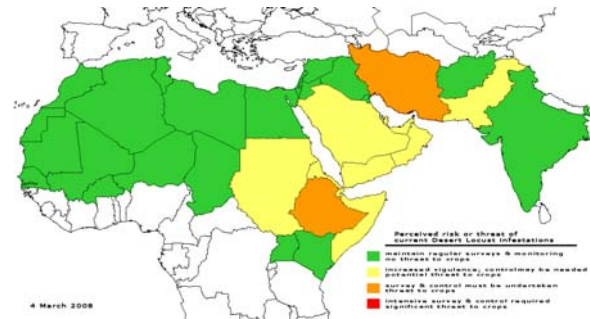
Summary:

The desert locust situation remained serious in southern **Ethiopia** where highly mobile swarms were controlled in 355 ha in March. Some swarms escaped into valleys and rugged terrains and were inaccessible by air or land. Several swarms were detected in crop fields in eastern **Saudi Arabia** where more than 6,550 ha were sprayed.



Swarms (red) persisted in Ethiopia and breeding is in progress in Iran (blue and orange) (FAO/DLIS, 04/08)

Scattered adults were controlled in the Sahara region of **Algeria** and northwest **Mauritania**. Insignificant numbers of adults were reported in southeast **Libya**. Surveys were not conducted in **Mali** and **Niger** due to security reason but scattered adult locusts may be present. No locusts were reported in **Sudan**, **Eritrea** or other outbreak countries and significant developments are not expected in the coming month (FAO/DLIS, DLCO-EA, PPD/Ethiopia, PPD/Sudan, CLAA/Mauritania, DDLC/Libya). Egg laying and hatching have occurred in the coastal and interior areas of southeast **Iran** where small groups and hopper bands have formed and control operations treated some 1,700 ha from 25 February to March.



The current risk level (FAO/DLIS, 03/08)

A 30-day joint survey operations have begun in the spring breeding areas in Baluchistan along the **Iran-Pakistan** borders.

Active survey, monitoring and preventive interventions are recommended.

Rat infestations

Rat infestations have affected large numbers of farmers and residents in the remote hilly **Chittagong** region in southeast **Bangladesh**. The pest attacked the hilly plantation areas undermining food security in the region. A similar infestation has been reported in neighboring State of **Mizoram**, northeastern **India**, where the pest has already caused severe crop damage in tens of thousands of ha and impacted thousands of families. Food assistance, income generating activities and agricultural input, including seeds and fertilizers for families affected by the pest are being sought by the State Gov and FAO/WFP has provided 20,000 metric tons of food to assist affected families and households.

USAID/OFDA is deploying a rodent expert to participate in a needs assessment mission that will take place in Bangladesh from 8-12 April, 2008.



Gregarious flowering and fruiting of bamboo plants attracts large numbers of rodents (photo: telegrapg.co.uk)

Other ETOPs

Hopper bands and/or fledglings of **red locust** were detected in Iku Katavi, Rukwa and parts of Wembere plains and Bahi valley in **Tanzania**. Swarms of the African migratory locust that escaped control operations in Gambella, western Ethiopia have spread to adjacent areas in western Oromiya where the regional agricultural bureau and PPD/Addis are coordinating control operations.

Armyworm outbreaks were reported in paddy rice, maize fields and pasture in **Tanzania** and **Quelea** outbreaks were reported in **Kenya** and **Tanzania**.

This and previous Sitreps can be accessed and downloaded on our website:

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

Climatological factors:

March remained fairly dry and ecological conditions were unfavorable in most of the outbreak and invasion areas. Light to moderate rains fell during the second dekad of March in Konso, Gamu Gofa and south Omo, in southern Ethiopia where immature swarms persisted over the past months. Rains continued in Tanzania, Uganda, south-central and southern

Africa in and around red locust, **Quelea** and armyworm outbreak/invasion zones (FAO/DLIS, PPD/Ethiopia, DLCO-EA, PPD/Sudan, CNLAA, CLAA, DLAPCC/Libya, IRLCO-CSA).

ETOP Situation and Activities:

Central Region

The desert locust situation remained serious in southern **Ethiopia** where highly mobile immature swarms were controlled in 355 ha in March. Some swarms escaped into valleys and rugged terrain inaccessible by air or ground means. Several swarms were reported attacking crop fields in eastern **Saudi Arabia** where more than 6,550 ha were sprayed in late and March.

Although significant developments are not expected in the coming weeks, vigilant survey and preventive control interventions are recommended in **Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia** and **Iran** where locust swarms were detected from in late February on. No locusts were observed during surveys carried out in Tokar Delta in the Red Sea State in **Sudan** despite the relatively favorable ecological conditions that persisted in this area. No locusts were reported in northeastern **Kenya** and only a few scattered adults were observed in Hiranle areas in northwestern **Somalia** during surveys carries out in late March (FAO/DLIS, PPD/Ethiopia, DLCO-EA).

Western Region:

Scattered adults were controlled in 25 ha and 3 ha in the Sahara region of **Algeria** and northwest **Mauritania**, respectively. Scattered adult locusts were reported in southeast **Libya** but control was not necessary. The ongoing security problem hindered survey operations in the primary

outbreak areas in **Mali** and **Niger** where scattered adult locusts may be present. (FAO/DLIS, PPD/Ethiopia, PPD/Sudan, DLCO-EA, CLAA/Mauritania, DDLC/Libya, INPV/Algeria).

Eastern region:

Control operations treated some 1,700 ha in the southeastern coast of **Iran** during the last week of February and in March. Swarms from **Oman** reached coastal and interior areas of southeast **Iran** and laid eggs. Hatching small groups and bands of hoppers are forming. Hatching and small groups of hoppers are forming. This is expected to continue in the coming weeks. Active surveys and preventive control interventions are recommended. **Iran** and **Pakistan** have begun a 30-day joint survey operations in the spring breeding areas along their common borders in Baluchistan (FAO/DLIS).

West Timor and South Pacific

No reports were received from **Timor**, at the time this update was compiled, but it is likely that the **Migratory locust** may have continued developing in **West Timor** where control operations needed to be implemented. Locust operations are expected to increase in 2008 in areas where unusually good rains fell after a prolonged drought in **Australia**.

Red Locust:

The IRLCO-CSA carried out surveys in all RL outbreak areas in **Tanzania** in March and detected hopper bands and concentrations of fledglings on some 4,000 ha in **Iku** plains and groups of fledglings (8 to 30 locusts/m²) on some 4,000 ha in the **South Rukwa** plains and 500 ha (5 to 20 locusts/m²) in **North Rukwa** plains. The **Wembere** plains and **Bahi valley** were mostly flooded while

the **Malagarasi Basin** was partially submerged and here only scattered populations were observed. Plans are underway to carry out surveys in **Malawi, Mozambique** and **Zambia** where fledglings may be present. No locusts were reported in **Kenya** or **Zimbabwe**. Hoppers are expected to fledge and likely form swarms in most of the outbreak areas in **Malawi, Mozambique** and **Tanzania** in the coming month (IRLCO-CSA).

African migratory locust

Escapee swarms of the African migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria migratorioides*) in Gambella region of western Ethiopia spread into adjacent areas in Oromiya where the regional agricultural bureau and PPD/Addis are coordinating interventions.

Tree locusts

No information was received on the tree locust (*Anacridium spp.*) at the time this report was compiled.

Armyworm:

Armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta*) outbreaks occurred in Kisarawe district (Coast Region), Korogwe district (Tanga region) and Arusha Seed Farm (Arusha region) in **Tanzania**. Most of the infestations occurred on paddy rice, maize and pastures. **Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia** and **Zimbabwe** remained free of AW in March. However, infestations will likely continue in **Tanzania** and follow a northerly migration with the AW reaching southern **Kenya** and the coastal region and greeted by the ITCZ and the summer rains (IRLCO-CSA, DLCO-EA).

Quelea birds

Flocks of Quelled birds (*Quelea quelea* L) were reported in Bahi (Dodoma Region), Singida and Kondoia regions in **Tanzania**. Quelea infestations were also reported in irrigated rice fields in Siaya district (Nyanza Province) in **Kenya**. Aerial control operations were in progress at the time this report was compiled. This pest will likely continue being a problem to small grain cereal crop farmers in **Kenya, Tanzania** and **Zimbabwe** in the coming months (IRLCO-CSA, DLCO-EA).

Rodents

Farmers and residents in the remote hilly **Chittagong** region of southeast **Bangladesh** are hit by large infestations of rats that destroyed their crops. Tens of thousands of residents of the region are reported to have been severely affected in at least three districts in the region and pre-disposed to food insecurity. The GoB has sent food and other assistance to the affected people.

In **India**, a similar situation was manifested in the northeastern mountainous **State of Mizoram** where crop damage was reported large numbers of families have been impacted. The State solicited food assistance, income generating activities and agricultural input, including seeds and fertilizers for families affected by the pest.

USAID/OFDA is deploying a rodent expert to participate in a needs assessment mission that will take place in Bangladesh from 8-12 April, 2008.

Note: *The gregarious or simultaneous flowering of bamboo is a phenomenon that occurs once every 3 to 4 decades or*

even 5 decades and is followed by a rapid increase in rat populations due to the diet of protein-rich bamboo flowers that boost estrogen (a sex hormone) secretion, causing early puberty and elevated sexual activity (this phenomenon last occurred in 1959 sending a shock wave throughout the affected regions and leading to a prolonged period of food insecurity which triggered unrest among affected communities in Mizoram). A healthy rat, feasting on bamboo blossoms can breed up to eight times a year, far more than normal. Some species of rats are also notorious vectors of deadly diseases, such as bubonic plague, Hemorrhagic fever, Lassa Fever, Salmonella, Tularemia, etc, but so far no report has been received from Bangladesh or India that suggests that this has occurred. End note.

Recommendations on ETOPs:

Front-line countries must remain vigilant and exercise prevention and mitigation to minimize unexpected risks from ETOPs. Those in invasion areas should stay alert and implement preventive intervention strategies. Countries in the outbreak zones should collect information on ETOP regularly and share it with all stakeholders as often as possible.

AELGA (Assistance for Emergency Locust and Grasshopper Abatement) will continue monitoring the situation and issue updates and advise.

Pesticide Stocks

Pesticide inventories changed in March in Ethiopia, Oman and Saudi Arabia where control operations were carried out during this period.

Country	Quantities in l/kg
Eritrea	44,800
Ethiopia	47,730
Mali	222,524
Mauritania	545,186
Morocco	3,998,365
Niger	184,084
Senegal	532,960
Sudan	735,676
Algeria, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Yemen	Data not available at the time this report was compiled

Note: Many countries continue benefiting from obsolete pesticide management activities co-sponsored through OFDA Coop Agreement with the UN FAO. **End note**

Point of Contact:

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