

SITREP.02.04**SITUATION REPORT ON EMERGENCY
TRANSBOUNDARY OUTBREAK PESTS
(ETOPS) FOR FEBRUARY WITH A
FORECAST TILL MID-APRIL 2004****SUMMARY**

1. **Summary:** This report provides an update on the situation of emergency transboundary outbreak pests (ETOPs) in February with a forecast till mid-April 2004 in the various outbreak and invasion areas in Africa, the Middle-East, and Central and Southwest Asia. The report covers locusts, grasshoppers, armyworm and grain-eating *Quelea* birds. A brief overview on the status of each of these pests for the month is outlined in the remainder of this summary and detailed accounts with a six-week forecast are provided thereafter.

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

2. **The desert locust, *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forsk.)**, situation continued to deteriorate in Mauritania and Morocco in February where more than 150,000 ha were reported treated. Swarms that were invading large areas in northern and northwestern Mauritania have been moving north into southern and southwestern Morocco, where an aerial spraying of 30,000 ha (70,000 acres) on a single day, March 5th, was reported. Although, well-equipped and well-organized, Morocco may still need external assistance to stand up to the challenge it could soon be facing given the continued influx of locusts from its

neighboring Mauritania, which was unable to ward off the locusts itself. The major threat in Morocco is the locusts entering the Sousse valley, the country's agricultural life line. If invaded, the valley could incur substantial crop damage and a considerable economic loss. In light of this, FAO has fielded its senior staff members to organize a donor meeting, assess the situation and develop a strategy and tactic to avert any serious loss from the locust invasion.

Active locust operations have also been reported in Algeria, Niger, Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in February where substantial control operations were carried... Most of the other central region invasion and outbreak counties remained relatively calm.

3. **Forecast:** More locusts are likely to be seen in Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, Mali, and Niger. Considerable breeding will likely commence with the locusts arriving in the spring breeding areas in northwestern Africa and the interior of the Arabian Peninsula. Some locusts will likely be seen in the spring breeding areas in the Eastern region outbreak areas during the forecast period.

**OTHER LOCUSTS AND
GRASSHOPPERS.**

4. **Red locust, *Nomadacris septemfasciata* (Serville):** Red Locust (*Nomadacris septemfasciata* Serville) concentrations that were sighted at Mhama/Itumba in Wembere plains, Tanzania in mid January 2004 may have begun breeding. No reports were received from the other outbreak countries, however, there is a likelihood of hoppers appearing and concentrating in some of these areas in Tanzania and elsewhere, but significant development is no likely during the forecast period.

5. An outbreak of tree locust, *Anacridium melanorhodon* (Walker), that was seen defoliating acacia trees in Turkana district, Kenya, the main source of food for livestock in semi-arid areas, and controlled with the help of DLCO-EA did not recur in February and no further reports were received on tree locust.

6. **Madagascar migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria capito* (L.).** No report was received on the Madagascar migratory locust in February. It is likely that some locust activities could have been seen in the southwestern part of the country where rainfall occurred as the result of the recent cycle.

7. ***Zonocerus variegatus* (L),** the variegated grasshopper is expected to have begun hatching and hopper numbers increasing during the forecast period. ***Oedaleus senegalensis* (Krauss) (OES),** the Senegalese grasshopper was in recession in February. No reports were received on brown locust, ***Locustana pardalina* (Walker).** .

8. The Italian locust, ***Calliptamus italicus* (L),** Moroccan locust, ***Dociostaurus maroccanus*** or migratory locust, ***Locusta migratoria migratoria*** activities in Central Asia are still in recession. Limited activities may commence sometime in spring. AELGA will continue monitoring the situation in collaboration with its partners at the FAO's Migratory Pest Unit (MPU).

9. **Armyworm, *Spodoptera exempta* (Walker).** Armyworm outbreaks continued to cause havoc in a number of places in Tanzania in February.

10. **Red-billed quelea, *Quelea quelea* (L.).** Five Quelea roosts were controlled on 144 ha from 21-26 February in Mara Region, Tanzania with the help of the DLCO-EA

aircraft. Quelea will continue appearing in Tanzania and other outbreak areas during the forecast period. End of Summary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION: WEATHER AND ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

11. Significant precipitation was not reported in the western and northwestern outbreak areas in February, but conditions remained favorable in parts of southern Morocco, Mauritania, Niger and Algeria. Vegetation was drying in other places in the region.

12. Light shower was recorded in southern Yemen and a few places, but dry conditions persisted on the western Red Sea coasts where vegetation was drying up. Breeding conditions remained favorable in northwestern coasts of Saudi Arabia.

13. The Eastern region spring outbreak areas received light to medium rains fell in Baluchistan, western Pakistan, but unfavorable conditions persisted in February.

14. Most of Zambia, northern Zimbabwe and Mozambique received relatively heavy rain, up to 150 mm, during the second dekad of February. Other countries in the region also received low to moderate rain during the same period. Significant rain was not reported in Tanzania during this period.

DESERT LOCUST ACTIVITIES

15. **Western and Northwestern Africa Outbreak Region: The desert locust, *Schistocerca gregaria* (Forsk.)**, situation continued to deteriorate in Morocco and Mauritania in February where more than 150,000 ha were treated. Swarms that were seen invading extensive areas in northern

and northwestern Mauritania have been moving north into southern and southwestern Morocco, where an aerial spraying was reported on more than 30,000 ha (70,000 acres) in just one day, on March 5th. Although, well-equipped and well-organized, Morocco may still require external assistance to stand up to the challenge it will soon be facing given the continued influx of locusts from its neighboring Mauritania, which was unable to ward off the locusts itself. **The major threat in Morocco is the locusts entering the Sousse valley, the country's agricultural life line. If invaded, the valley could incur substantial crop damage and a considerable economic loss. In light of this, FAO has fielded its senior staff members to organize a donor meeting, assess the situation and develop a strategy and tactic to avert any serious consequences.** Active locust operations have also been reported in Algeria, Niger in February where some control actions were taken during the reporting month. The situation was relatively calm in the other western region outbreak areas.

16. Forecast: Locust numbers will increase and give rise to more swarms and groups in the coming months in the spring breeding areas and the situation could become more serious unless timely and effective control operations are launched.

17. Eastern Africa, Northeastern Africa, and the Near East Outbreak Region: Substantial locust operations were also reported in Sudan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia in February where some control actions were taken. Most of the other Central and Eastern region outbreak areas in Africa and the Middle-East remained relatively calm during the month.

18. Forecast: Locusts will likely continue to breed and the numbers increase in northwestern coasts and the spring breeding areas in Saudi Arabia. Scattered adults may be seen in southern Yemen where small-scale breeding may occur in a few places along its coastal plains. Northeastern Somalia may see a few scattered adults. Other countries in the region will likely remain relatively calm.

19. No locusts were reported in February in the Eastern outbreak region along the Indo-Pakistan borders or Iran.

20. Forecast: No significant activity is expected during the forecast period.

OTHER LOCUST AND GRASSHOPPER ACTIVITIES

21. **Red locust, *Nomadacris septemfasciata* (Surville):** No reports were received on red locust in February. Concentrations of adult locust that were seen in Mhama/Itumba in Wembere plains, Tanzania in mid January may have begun laying. The situation in the other outbreak areas in the region remained relatively calm.

22. **Forecast:** More hatching and hopper developments are expected in Iku-Katavi and Wembere plains during the forecast period. Limited activities may also be seen in the other outbreak areas.

23. *The outbreak of tree locust (*Anacridium melanorhodon* (Walker) that occurred in mid January in Turkana, the Rift Valley Province, Kenya has subsided in February. No further activity is expected in this region during the forecast period.*

24. No report was received on the African migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria migratorioides*, in February.

25. *Oedaleus senegalensis* (Krauss) (OES), the Senegalese grasshopper was in recession and *Zonocerus variegatus* (L), the variegated grasshopper is expected to have begun hatching and further activities are likely during the forecast period.

26. The locust season in Central Asia remained in recession in February and no locusts were reported during the month..

27. Forecast: The Italian locust, *Calliptamus italicus* (L), Moroccan locust, *Dociostaurus maroccanus* or migratory locust, *Locusta migratoria migratoria* situation will remain calm during the forecast period and large-scale hatching is not expected during the forecast period although a few hoppers may be seen. AELGA will continue monitoring the situation as it evolves.

28. Note: Shortage of technical skills, resources and infrastructure will continue to impede the capacity of the Afghan national crop protection unit to conduct regular survey and monitoring as well as organize and launch control operations without external support. Thus, locust control in this country will continue to rely largely on external assistance for some time.

29. **Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).** No report was received on ETOPs from LAC countries in February. No forecast is being made due to a lack of sufficient information.

30. **Madagascar migratory locust, *L. migratoria capito* (L.).** No report was

received on the Madagascar migratory locust in February. It is likely that some locust activities could be seen in the southwestern part of the country where rainfall occurred as the result of the recent cycle.

31. **Brown locust, *L. pardalina* (Walker):** No reports were received in February and no major activities are expected during the forecast period.

ARMYWORM ACTIVITIES

32. **Armyworm, *S. exempta* (Walker).** Armyworm infestations were reported in February in several districts in Tanzania attacking paddy rice, maize, sorghum and pasture. Minimal losses to complete devastation requiring replanting of the fields were recorded in many of the invaded districts. No reports were received from the other outbreak countries during the month.

33. Forecast: Fresh armyworm outbreaks are expected in Arumeru, Babati, Hanang, Arusha, and Rombo districts, Tanzania. Other outbreak countries may also experience some armyworm infestations.

QUELEA BIRD ACTIVITIES

34. **Red-billed quelea, *Quelea quelea* (L.).** Five Quelea roosts were controlled on 144 ha from 21-26 February in Mara Region, Tanzania. Control operation was carried out with the help of the DLCO-EA aircraft.

35. Forecast: Quelea breeding is likely to take place in February/March in Mozambique, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The resulting populations are likely to cause damage to small grain cereals in these countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

36. Favorable ecological conditions over large areas in Mauritania, Morocco, Mali, Niger and the migration of swarms across the Red Sea continued to exacerbate the locust activities in these countries and armyworm in Tanzania. Control interventions have been going on against the locust invasions for a couple of months. **There exists the high possibility for the locusts to continue increasing and dispersing to spring and summer breeding areas in neighboring countries where they could further result in serious losses of crops and pasture.** Given the fragility of the ETOP ecosystems, a slight shift in the externalities, such as end of drought, could trigger pest proliferation and significantly offset the already precarious food security in most of the ETOP-prone countries. **Hence, regular survey, monitoring, reporting and intensive control interventions must be implemented to avert any unexpected disaster.**

37. **The Assistance for Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Abatement project (AELGA), formerly known as Africa Emergency Locust/Grasshopper Assistance under the USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA), Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), continue monitoring ETOP situations in close collaboration with its partners, including the UN/FAO-MPU and EMPRES Regional Programs, DLCO-EA, IRLCO-CSA, host-country counterparts, etc. and provides assistance and updates.**

ACTION REQUESTED AND CONTACT INFORMATION

38. USAID field Missions with portfolios on food security, agriculture, environment, and

conflict are solicited to encourage host country counterparts to send us regular ETOP updates. FEWS field personnel are solicited to share with us information they may obtain on ETOP activities. Regional organizations with ETOP mandates and host country partners are kindly requested to send us their updates by the last day of the reporting month or within the first three days of the forecasting months.

Unsolicited reports and/or information on ETOP situations and activities in your region or country are always warmly welcome and much appreciated.

Please, forward reports, updates, questions, and/or requests to:

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39. USEFUL LINKS

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

<http://www.fews.net/http://www.fao.org/WAI/CENT/faoinfo/economic/giews/economic/english/esahel/sehtoc.htm>

<http://www.fews.net>

For more information on ETOP activities, you may visit:

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

<http://www.english/newsroom/news/2002/5000-en.htm/>

<http://www.web.agr.ac.uk/directory/NRI/pcs/>

<http://www-web.gre.ac.uk/directory/NRI/quel/>

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

<http://www.dmc.co.zm>

40. TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR ACTIVITIES, PLEASE, VISIT US AT OUR WEB SITE: WWW.AELGA.NET

41. UPCOMING EVENTS

 **Pesticide Stewardship Networking Workshop**

 **Trainer Training Course on Alternative Application Strategies and Tactics (AAST) for acridid control.**

If interested, please contact: Dr. Yene T. Belayneh

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