



DESERT LOCUST ALERT

28 October 2015

UNUSUALLY HEAVY AND WIDESPREAD RAINS

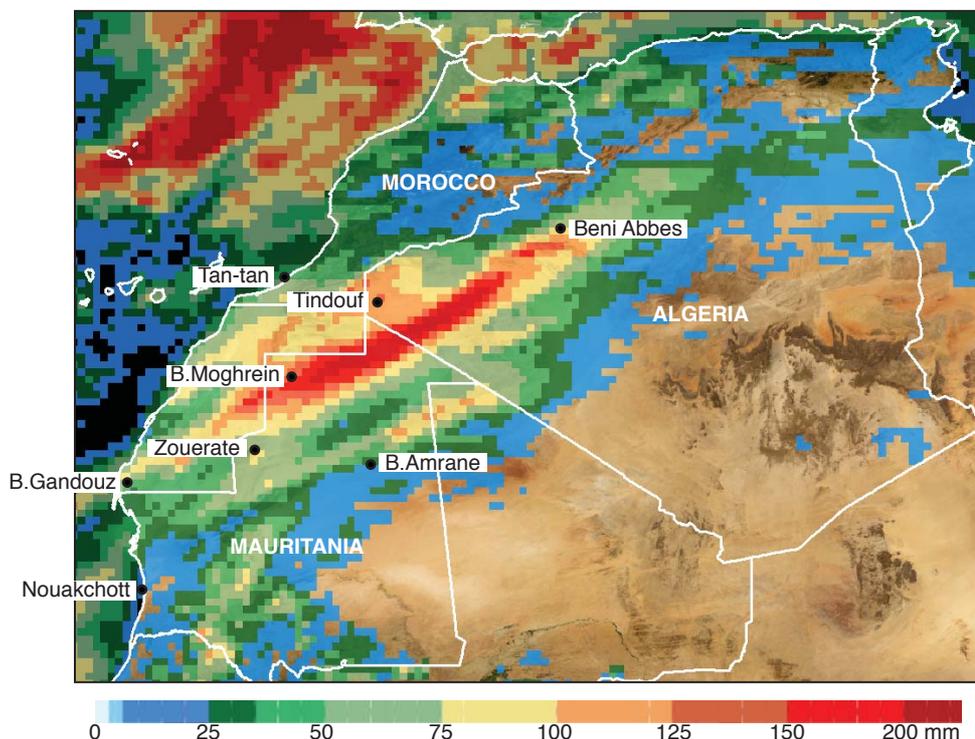
Concerned countries: Mauritania
Algeria
Morocco

Unusually heavy and widespread rains have fallen during several days between 15 and 24 October throughout the Tiris-Zemmour region in northern Mauritania from Zouerate to Bir Moghreïn and Bir Amrane, extending into western Algeria (Tindouf to Beni Abbas) as well as southern Morocco and Western Sahara (Bir Gandouz to Tan-tan). In many places, rains far exceeded the total amount that is normally received for the entire year. For example, Bir Moghreïn reported 120 mm on 21-23 October; whereas, normally only about 45 mm falls for the entire year (the October long-term average is 11 mm). Good rains also fell recently in parts of northwest and western Mauritania.

As a result of these exceptional rains, ecological conditions are likely to remain favourable for Desert Locust breeding and survival for at least the next six

months, even in the absence of further rainfall. Low temperatures will initially delay the appearance of some annual vegetation but, thereafter, it should stay green until temperatures warm up in about April. Thereafter, vegetation is likely to start drying out, especially in the absence of any further rains. Similarly, low temperatures will lengthen egg incubation to at least three weeks and hopper development rates to at least two months. Nevertheless, there is sufficient time for two generations of breeding to occur between November 2015 and May 2016. In this case, a significant increase (some 500-fold) in locust numbers could be expected.

Concerned countries are urged to be vigilant and monitor the situation on a regular basis between November 2015 and May 2016 in order to detect any signs of increasing locusts.



Unusually good rains fell over a large portion of northern Mauritania and Western Sahara, including portions of Morocco and western Algeria, 16-24 October 2015 (source: IRI rainfall estimate)

The FAO Desert Locust Bulletin is issued every month by the Desert Locust Information Service, AGP Division (Rome, Italy). It is supplemented by Alerts and Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity. All products are distributed by e-mail and are available on the Internet.

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