



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(20 September 2005)



General Situation up to 20 September 2005

So far this month, scattered solitary locusts have been reported in Mauritania, Niger and Chad. Locust numbers increased slightly in northwest Mauritania and Niger where small-scale breeding is in progress. Very little rain has fallen in the past week in the Sahel and vegetation is starting to dry up in some places. Intensive ground and helicopter surveys should continue in the Sahel for several more weeks in order to detect the first signs that locust numbers might be increasing. Locusts will become easier to see as they concentrate in the remaining patches of green vegetation. Limited control operations are in progress in western Sudan and on the Red Sea coast in Eritrea. Locusts increased slightly on the Red Sea coast of Yemen and in the interior where good rains continue to fall. Consequently, intensive vigilance and survey operations are needed in the coming weeks in Yemen.

Low numbers of solitary mature adults started to appear in northwest Mauritania between Tidjikja and Akjoujt in late August. Small-scale breeding is underway in this area and, by mid September, isolated first and second instar hoppers were seen in a few places. Elsewhere, individual adults were reported in the southeast near Nema and at one site along the Senegal River Valley. No locusts were seen in adjacent areas of northern Senegal. Vegetation is starting to dry out in northern Mali and no locusts have been seen during helicopter and ground surveys carried out so far this month. In Niger, small-scale breeding is in progress in Tamesna and the western

Air Mountains where scattered adults are present as well as some hoppers. During intensive ground and aerial surveys in Chad, only a few individual mature adults were seen in Kanem.

In late August, small adult infestations were seen in southwest Libya near Ghat. Since then, no further locusts have been reported there or in Morocco and Algeria.

During the first half of September, control operations in Sudan treated 159 ha of low to medium density very small fifth instar hopper bands near El Fasher in Northern Darfur. Individual adults were seen on the western side of the Red Sea Hills. In Eritrea, ground control operations treated less than 100 ha during the first half of September on the northern coastal plains of the Red Sea where small-scale breeding is in progress and second to fifth instar hoppers and solitary adults are present. A few adults were seen copulating in this area as well as further south near the Danakil depression. No locusts were seen in the western lowlands in Eritrea, in Ethiopia and in northern Somalia. Isolated adults were maturing in Yemen along the central and northern Red Sea coastal plains and small-scale breeding is underway in the interior near Shabwah where patches of hoppers at densities of 15-50 hoppers/m² were seen.

In South-West Asia, control operations treated 355 ha of scattered hoppers and adults near Jaisalmer in the summer breeding areas in Rajasthan, India during the second week of September.

Ground and aerial control operations have treated 12.9 million ha since the beginning of the current upsurge in October 2003.

The most up-to-date information on the situation is available on the new FAO locust web site (www.fao.org/ag/locusts).

The FAO Desert Bulletin is issued monthly, supplemented by Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity, and is distributed by e-mail, FAO pouch and airmail by the Locusts and Other Migratory Pests Group, AGP Division, FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy. It is also available on the Internet.

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