



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(20 December 2005)



General Situation up to 20 December 2005

The Desert Locust situation continues to remain relatively calm in Africa and along both sides of the Red Sea. Breeding is in progress in western Mauritania and, to a lesser extent, in southern Algeria. Limited control operations were undertaken in early December in both countries. Small-scale breeding is also underway in the Tokar Delta on the Red Sea coast in Sudan where ecological conditions are favourable. Elsewhere, scattered locusts are probably present in a few places on the Tamesna Plains in Niger and perhaps in northern Mali. Although ground control operations have declined against hopper bands and immature swarms that formed along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border, there is a risk that some adults and a perhaps a few small swarms could eventually appear in Baluchistan, western Pakistan.

Small-scale breeding continues in western Mauritania where solitary and a few *transiens* hoppers, mainly fourth instar stage, mixed with scattered fledglings and immature adults are present in three areas between Aftout Fay (1834N/1424W) and Tidjikja (1833N/1126W). So far, eight small hopper bands have formed, each less than 120 m² in size with a density of up to 7 hoppers/m². Ground control operations were carried out in one area and treated 452 ha from 4 to 10 December. Scattered mature solitary adults are present in northwest Inchiri and in Tiris Zemmour near Bir Moghreïn and Zouerate. A few solitary hoppers have also been seen near Zouerate. In southern Algeria, ground control teams treated 125 ha of solitary hoppers that were

present southeast of Tamanrasset at densities of 10-20 hoppers/bush and mixed with solitary immature adults.

Elsewhere in the region, the situation remains calm. In late November, scattered adults were present near Arlit, Niger and small-scale breeding was in progress in a few places in Tamesna. Although surveys have not been carried out in December, small infestations are likely to be present and could persist in some of the above areas. No locusts were reported in northern Mali during the first half of December.

Small-scale breeding is in progress in the winter breeding areas on the Red Sea coastal plains in the Tokar Delta, Sudan. Isolated third to fifth instar hoppers and scattered immature and mature adults are present at about 30 places in the delta at densities of up to 300 adults/ha.

In Southwest Asia, control operations have declined along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border where small hopper bands and swarms had formed in areas of previous breeding in November. On 1 December, control teams in India treated a low-density immature swarm on 150 ha near Jaisalmer. Control operations were in progress during the first week of December in adjacent areas of Pakistan against about 100 ha of small immature adult groups. Any adults that escape control will form a few more small groups or swarmlets and move out of the area because vegetation has become dry. Most of these adults are likely to move towards the spring breeding areas in Baluchistan, western Pakistan while a few adults could move further east or south in Rajasthan. So far, a few solitary mature adults appeared at mid-month in coastal areas near Shooli and Las Bela. Surveys should be intensified in all affected areas.

The most up-to-date information on the situation is available on the 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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