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DESERT LOCUST SITUATION SUMMARY AND FORECAST

No. 55 MARCH - EARLY APRIL 1983

SUMMARY

Swarms of yellow locusts were reported by a ship off the coast of Western Sahara on 15 March. If they were Desert Locusts it is probable that there has been substantial unreported breeding in Western Sahara or northern Mauritania recently and considerable numbers of adults may still be present. Control operations were undertaken against hoppers on the Tihama of the Yemen Arab Republic, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and in coastal areas of Baluchistan in Pakistan. Small scale breeding was also reported from the southern Tihama of Saudi Arabia. Small numbers of adults were reported from Saudi Arabia, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and India. There were no fresh reports from Sudan or Ethiopia.

DESERT LOCUST SITUATION, MARCH - EARLY APRIL 1983

WEST AFRICA

Meteorology

The Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) continued its progressive seasonal northward displacement from the Gulf of Guinea. Several waves occurred and there were some periods of slowing down. Atlantic disturbances (associated with strong high altitude winds) temporarily affected coastal Western Sahara after 15 March reversing the normal circulation which then had a maritime origin. In the Sahel close to the ITCZ, the harmattan predominated. On 2 and 6 March there were isolated thunderstorms in north-east Mali in the vicinity of Gao. On 30-31 March, as a result of the joint efforts of a weakening cold front of Mediterranean origin and a wave in the ITCZ, there was again unstable weather in Niger around Maradi and Zinder, where thundery rain was recorded. Maximum temperatures were in the region of 25°C on the Atlantic coast but reached 30-40° in the interior.

Breeding Conditions

No NOAA/AVHRR vegetation index imagery is available for the current period. The OCLALAV bulletin for January-February stated that ecological conditions were very unfavourable.

Locusts

No information has been received for the current period. The OCLALAV bulletin for January-February stated that there was nothing to report and that locust populations remained very low.

NORTH WEST AFRICA

Meteorology

Disturbances coming from the Atlantic affected the Maghreb countries very differently, depending on whether they had a northern origin (in the north-west sector) or a tropical or sub-tropical origin (in the south-west sector). Meteosat imagery received from the Centre d'Etudes Météorologiques Spatiales (CEMS) at Lannion, France, via the FAO Remote Sensing Centre illustrate these differences very well. The immediate effect of the dual origins is reflected in the distribution of rainfall, with moderate rains in Tunisia and Libya and temporarily in Algeria on 2-4 March, a rainy spell from 18-22 March and two further rainy spells on 28 and 31 March, with respectively a maximum of 29 mm in Algiers and 17 mm in Gabes in 24 hours.

By contrast, in the west of the Maghreb and in particular in Morocco, rains of variable intensity came from the Canary Islands giving a maximum of around 10 mm in the period from 19-31 March. In the Ahaggar 5 mm fell on 3 March. Several sandstorms were recorded in the Libyan desert. There were marked contrasts in maximum temperatures which were around 15°C during rain spells and 25°C during sunny periods.

Breeding Conditions

No NOAA/AVHRR vegetation index imagery is available. According to the February report from Libya breeding conditions were favourable at Sirir and Khufra. Ground and aerial surveys in Algeria in January and February revealed the presence of suitable survival and breeding conditions around Illizi and Djanet. In Morocco favourable breeding conditions developed in the south following good rains. There were also favourable breeding conditions in southern Tunisia.

Locusts

ATLANTIC OCEAN

On 15 March a ship reported being invaded by swarms of yellow locusts at position 2445N/1527E. The surface wind was ENE 5 knots. No specimens have been forwarded but it is considered probable that they were Desert Locusts and that therefore there have been considerable numbers of unreported adults in Western Sahara and/or northern Mauritania in recent months.

ALGERIA

Between 16-22 February small numbers of adults were observed in wadis Illizi and Tadjeradger at points 2635N/0820E and 2630N/0820E.

No locusts were reported from LIBYA, MOROCCO and TUNISIA during January or February and no other reports have been received for March.

EASTERN AFRICA

Meteorology

In Ethiopia the rift line of instability (the rift front) began to appear on 10 March with the development of localised thunderstorms in the interior. Towards the end of the month there was heavy rain; Direedawa recorded 73 mm on 27 March. In northern Somalia moderate to heavy rain fell in the first week of March, while later in the month satellite imagery indicated thunderstorms in coastal areas. Maximum temperatures were generally about 25°C in coastal areas and up to 35° in low-lying plains in the interior.

The Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) was situated at the latitude of Lake Victoria and gave rise to convective rains over Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Breeding Conditions

No NOAA/AVHRR vegetation index imagery is available but breeding conditions will have become favourable locally along the northern coast of Somalia following the rains of March.

Locusts

SUDAN

According to a telex from DLCO-EA for the period 1-10 March pockets of solitarious hoppers and adults were present on the southern sector of the Red Sea coast.

Aerial survey and control was planned in the second half of March over the northern Ethiopian coastal plains and ground surveys of the northern coastal plains of Somalia were due to commence on 9 March.

There were no other reports of locusts.

NEAR EAST

Meteorology

Cold fronts and troughs coming from the Mediterranean simultaneously affected the Red Sea Convergence Zone. They resulted in rain spreading from west to east across the Arabian peninsula, extending to the United Arab Emirates from 9 March. This instability weakened from time to time but did not totally disappear.

The intensity of the showers was very variable, in Bahrein, for example, ranging from a trace on 9 March to 25 mm on 12 March and to 28 mm on 15 March and spreading to the Yemens, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. According to GTS data Thumrait, north of Salalah, received 103 mm on 1 April but this could not be confirmed although it is considered likely in view of thundery showers in the region. Reports from FAO Locust Officers in Jeddah and Hodeidah confirm the variability of the rainfall associated with this instable situation. Maximum temperatures were frequently in the range 20-25°C during the passage of showers but generally exceeded 30°C during clear periods.

Breeding Conditions

No NOAA/AVHRR vegetation index imagery is available but according to ground reports conditions were favourable for breeding over much of Saudi Arabia, the Tihama of Yemen Arab Republic, in wadi beds in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and over much of the United Arab Emirates.

Locusts

YEMEN ARAB REPUBLIC

Due to the control operations undertaken in February only small numbers of adults were present in the northern Tihama. On 1 March there was renewed hatching over 30 sq km in the Bajil area. 150 litres of 20% dieldrin were applied by Exhaust Nozzle Sprayers.

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Small numbers of adults and third to fifth instar hoppers, some transi-ticolor, were present around Mudhailif, 1933N/4803E, north of Qunfidah.

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

In the course of extensive ground surveys small numbers of solitarious adults were seen at Am Riga (1301N/4435E) and in wadi Fajrah (1259N/4418E) on 4 March and in wadis Bidish (1502N/5030E) and Shakhawi (1503N/5038E) on 16-17 March. On 30 March solitarious second to fifth instar hoppers at 2-5 per bush were reported over an area of one sq km at Khabt al Yemani (1259N/4440E). Control by dusting was in progress.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Small numbers of adults were found at four localities in the course of ground surveys during March.

IRAQ was reported clear in February.

There were no other reports from the Region.

SOUTH-WEST ASIA

Meteorology

During the first half of March the continental anti-cyclone prolonged by a ridge which extended to the Arabian Sea resulted in relatively dry weather, apart from a few showers due to temporary instability, associated with the passage of some troughs from northern to southern India.

During the second half of March a large depression developed over India and more active stormy troughs slightly affected Pakistan during their passage from north to south.

Rainfall data from the Desert Locust area obtained through the GTS were not numerous; the scanty data ranged from a few mm to 6 mm reaching 15 mm at Quetta. On the other hand GTS data recorded falls of about 10 mm rather frequently in western India. In Rajasthan and Gujarat maximum temperatures frequently exceeded 30°C.

Breeding Conditions

No NOAA/AVHRR vegetation index imagery is available but according to locust reports breeding conditions were generally favourable in Baluchistan.

Locusts

PAKISTAN

In the first half of March scattered adults were reported from 19 localities in Turbat, Pasni and Panjgur districts and from two localities in Uthal district, the maximum density being 1200 per sq km at Gorani (2521N/6329E) on 3 March. Small numbers of isolated solitaricolor first and second instar hoppers were found in five localities around Pasni.

In the second half of March small numbers of adults and hoppers of all instars were found in low-lying areas of Pasni. The populations were cleared by strip spraying using Exhaust Nozzle Sprayers using 182 litres of dieldrin.

INDIA

In the first half of March a few adults were recorded at Mandao (2717N/7108E) on 2 March, the density being 60 per sq km.

There were no other reports of locusts from the Region.

FORECAST FOR MAY-JUNE 1983

The period is characteristically one of major movements as adults depart from winter-spring breeding areas and move to summer breeding areas.

In North-West Africa most adults produced in the spring breeding area will move south towards the Sahel but some may persist in oases or other areas where green vegetation survives.

In West Africa there may have been substantial breeding in northern Mauritania if the ship's report of 15 March refers to the Desert Locust. Adults produced by this breeding will move south and it is possible they may start to breed in southern Mauritania during the forecast period if there are early monsoon rains. Only very small numbers of adults are likely to have over-wintered in Mauritania, Mali and Niger but these may start to breed if there are early monsoon rains.

In Eastern Africa breeding on the Red Sea coasts of Sudan and Ethiopia will have terminated and the resulting adults will move into the interior. Breeding initially on a small scale will probably occur in the coastal plains of northern Somalia and possibly in adjacent areas of Djibouti. There is a possibility that substantial numbers of adults may reach the Region from Arabia towards the end of the Forecast period (see over) possibly including some small swarms.

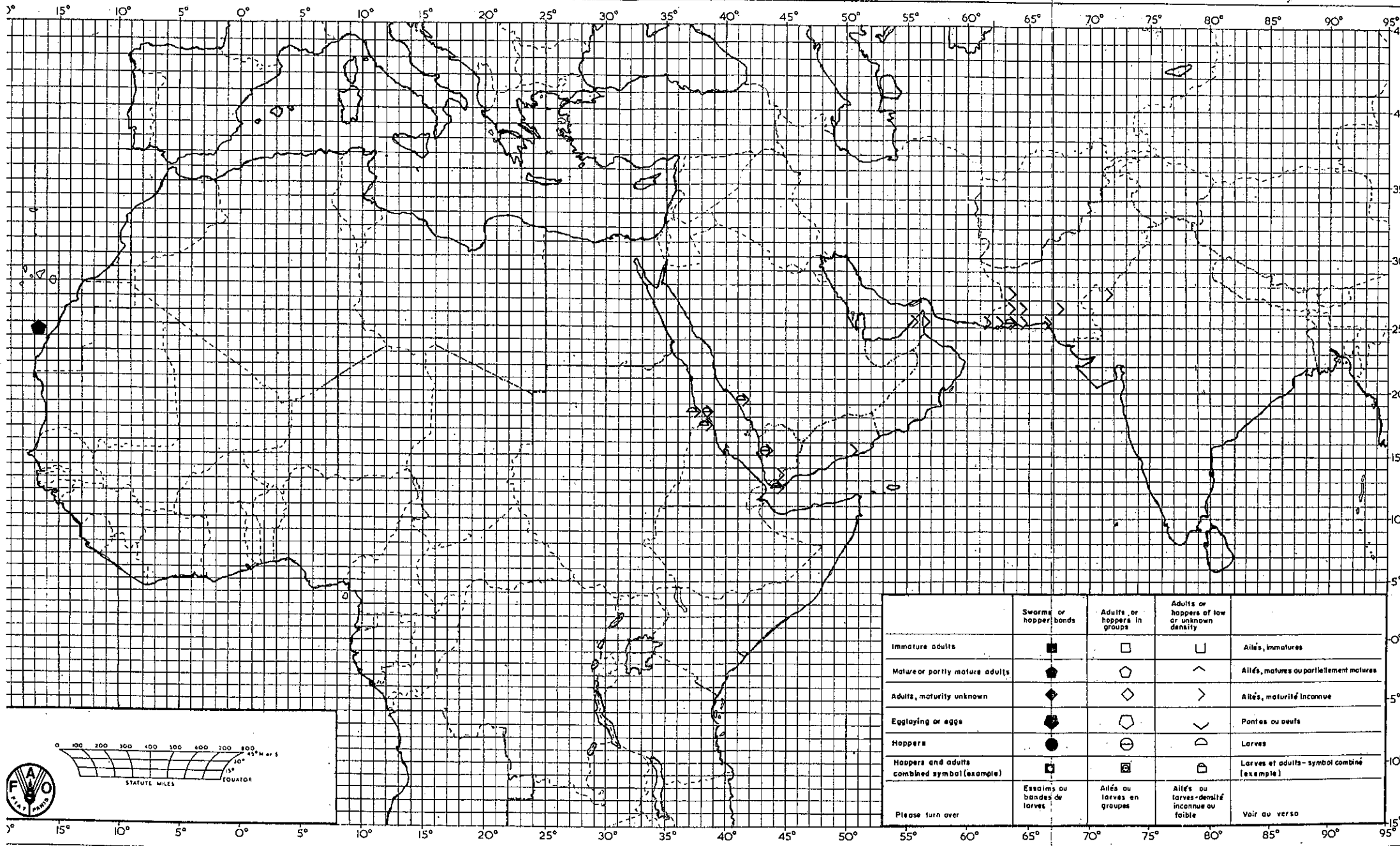
In the Near East breeding is likely to terminate on the Tihamas of Saudi Arabia and the Yemen Arab Republic and the resulting adults are likely to move into the interior. Small scale breeding is likely to continue in coastal and some interior areas of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and may also occur in the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

The possibility of widespread dispersed breeding in central Saudi Arabia still cannot be ruled out. If it does occur, considerable numbers of adults, possibly including some small swarms, may be produced and these are most likely to move south and may reach Somalia and Ethiopia towards the end of the forecast period. It is just possible that some may migrate eastwards to the South-West Asia region.

In South-West Asia spring breeding in Baluchistan and south-east Iran is likely to terminate and the resulting adults will migrate eastwards into the summer breeding areas of Rajasthan in India and the adjacent deserts of Pakistan. There is a small possibility that if there is widespread breeding in central Saudi Arabia the resulting adults, which could include some small swarms, may reach the summer breeding area.

Rome
15 April 1983

Desert Locust Situation Summary No. 55 MARCH - EARLY APRIL / MARS - DEBUT D'AVRIL 1983



	Swarms or hoppers bands	Adults or hoppers in groups	Adults or hoppers of low or unknown density	
Immature adults	■	□	┌	Ailés, immatures
Mature or partly mature adults	●	◊	∨	Ailés, matures ou partiellement matures
Adults, maturity unknown	◆	◇	>	Ailés, maturité inconnue
Egglaying or eggs	◼	◊	<	Pontes ou oeufs
Hoppers	●	⊖	∩	Larves
Hoppers and adults combined symbol (example)	◼	⊖	⊖	Larves et adultes - symbol combiné (exemple)
Please turn over	Essaims ou bandes de larves	Ailés ou larves en groupes	Ailés ou larves - densité inconnue ou faible	Voir au verso