



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Danger Level = Serious (Central Region)

3 NOVEMBER 2021. SWARM ARRIVES IN NE KENYA & ERITREA

OVERVIEW. In the afternoon of 1 November, a small mature swarm arrived in Mandera county of northeast Kenya near the Ethiopia border west of Rhamu. Since then, the swarm moved about 100 km west towards Moyale. The swarm is thought to have come from northeast Somalia and migrated south along the Ethiopia/Somalia border during three days of unusually strong and persistent northerly winds as suggested by sightings in eastern Ethiopia and central Somalia as well as by a trajectory model. While the swarm is mature, it is not quite ready to lay eggs yet. This may suggest how it was able to migrate a relatively long distance. Elsewhere, a mature swarm from northern Ethiopia arrived on the southern Red Sea coast in Eritrea at the end of October.

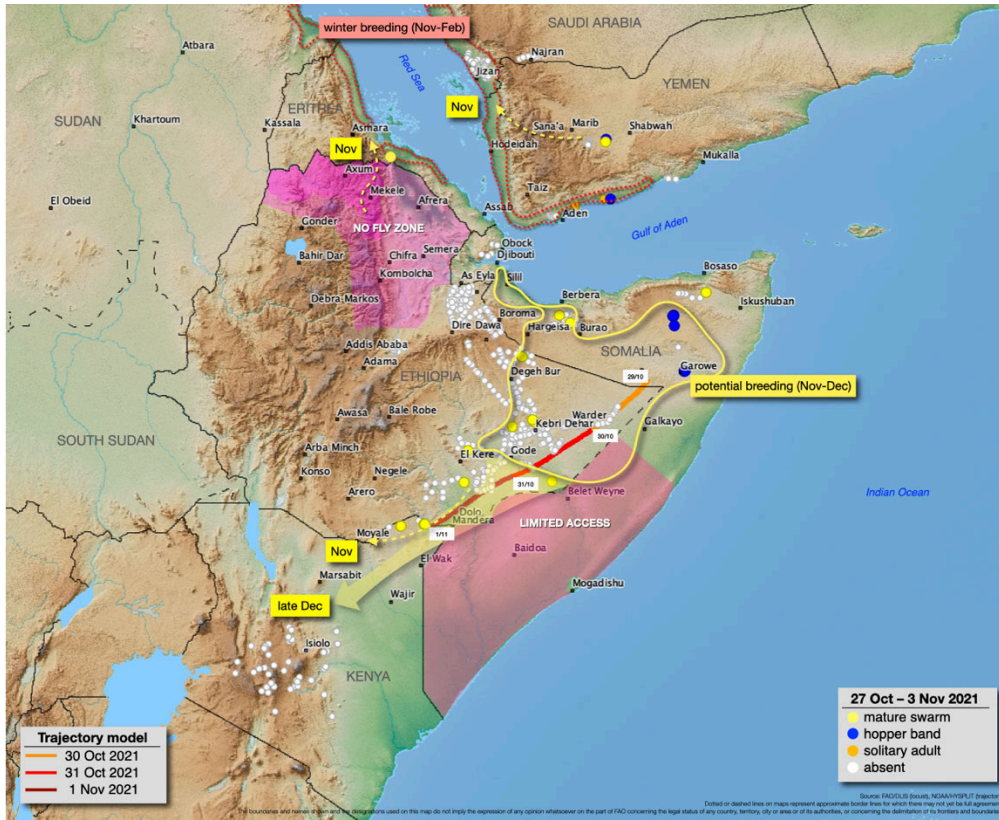
WHY IT MATTERS. The arrival of the swarm in Kenya does not suggest a full-scale invasion of large numerous swarms. Instead, it indicates that a few small swarms are moving south from northeast Somalia where most of the swarms are remaining to lay eggs that are now hatching and forming small hopper bands. Breeding during November is expected to occur mainly on the plateau and northwest coast in northern Somalia and in the Somali region of eastern Ethiopia as far south as the Shabelle River. However, a few of the less mature swarms could continue further south towards Kenya at times in the coming weeks, arriving in the northeast where they are likely to move west along the Ethiopia border. This further confirms the strategic importance of maximizing efforts now to monitor and control the situation in eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia to reduce breeding during November and the anticipated formation of new swarms from about mid-December onwards when the prevailing winds over the Horn of Africa will be from the north. The success of these efforts will determine the potential threat to Kenya at the end of this year. In any case, monitoring and preparedness should be upscaled immediately in northern Kenya, and control operations undertaken whenever possible. The swarm that arrived in Eritrea confirms that some swarms are present in Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions of northern Ethiopia where insecurity prevents field operations. FAO first warned in late August that swarms were likely to migrate to Eritrea in October, and a few more swarms could appear this month and reach the Red Sea coast for winter breeding.

CONTEXT. A new generation of breeding is commencing in eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia.

- **SOMALIA.** Hatching and hopper band formation are underway in the NE and likely in the NW
- **ETHIOPIA.** A few mature swarms in eastern Somali region; breeding expected.
- **ERITREA.** A mature swarm in late October on the Red Sea coast near Mersa Fatma; a few more expected.
- **YEMEN.** A few bands and swarms in the interior; shift to Red Sea coast is expected.
- **SAUDI ARABIA.** No locusts in the southwest.
- **SW ASIA.** No locusts in Iran, Pakistan, and India.
- **WEST AFRICA.** Calm.

TAKEAWAY. Start surveys on the Red Sea coast in Eritrea; increase ground surveys in Ethiopia and Somalia; increase monitoring and preparedness in N Kenya.

- **Central Region (SERIOUS)** – increase ground surveys (Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Yemen)
- **Western Region (CALM)** – no significant activities
- **Eastern Region (CALM)** – no significant activities



CURRENT SITUATION. Breeding is underway in NE Somalia where small hopper bands are forming. Similar breeding is expected in NW Somalia and E Ethiopia. The situation remains unclear in N/NE Ethiopia but at least one mature swarm arrived in Eritrea where winter breeding is expected. A small mature swarm reached NE Kenya.