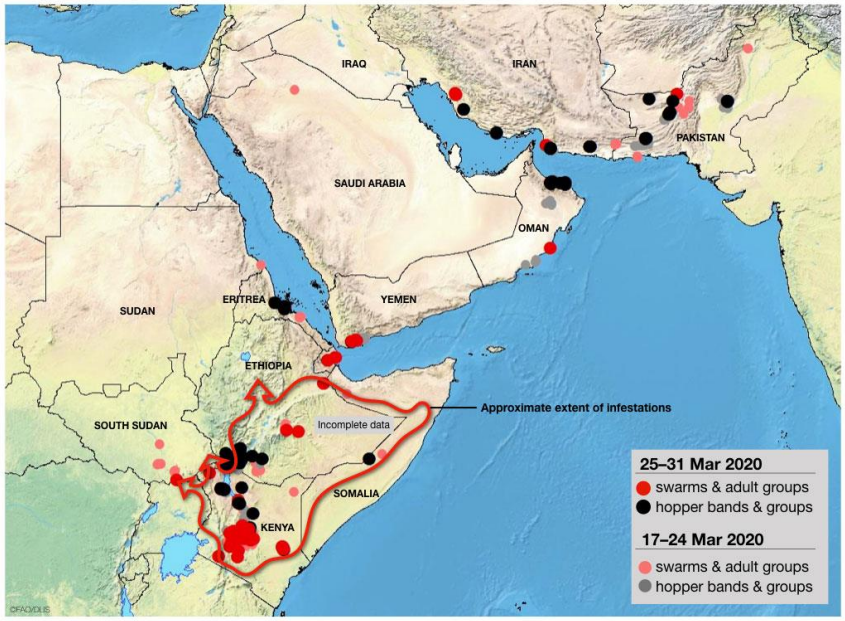
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Desert Locust Emergency in Somalia

UPDATE 03 | 15 April 2020

An adult desert locust in Salal Region of Somaliland, during control operation, March 2020. . ©FAO/Isak Amin

Current situation



Regional resources & updates

Locust Hub (new):
https://locust-hub-hqfao.hub.arcgis.com

Desert Locust Situation Update, 8 April:
http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts

FAO Desert Locust Crisis page:
http://www.fao.org/locusts

The Desert Locust situation in Somalia remains critical, with second-generation adults laying a new batch of eggs that will hatch and cause numerous hopper bands to form throughout the country. In Ethiopia and Kenya, numerous immature swarms are maturing and will be laying eggs soon. The swarms and subsequent breeding coincide with the onset of the rainy season and crops that are already in the ground are under immediate risk. Intensive monitoring and control operations need to continue in all areas to reduce the impact of Desert Locust on crops and pastures in Somalia.

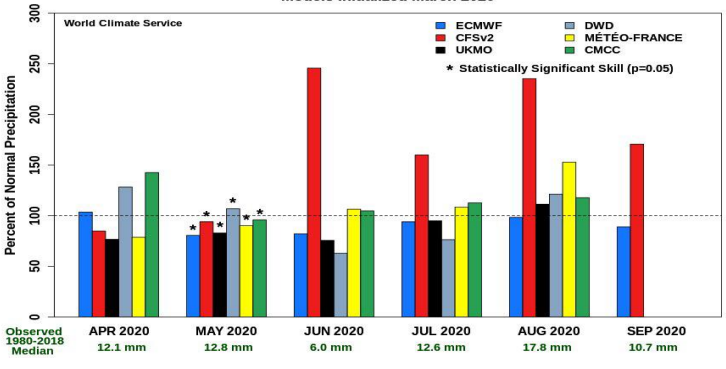
Field surveys in Somaliland, Puntland and Galmudug conducted in the second half of March detected breeding and egg laying. No reports have been received from the southern grain basket. Egg hatching and hopper band formation are expected to occur during April, calling for intensive surveys to track the developing nymphs that should be controlled from late April onwards. Gu rains have begun in all breeding areas and this will ensure the availability of suitable vegetation to sustain the development of this third generation of Desert Locust in Somalia.

Forecast

Higher than normal precipitation is forecast for the Horn of Africa from April to June 2020. This would create ideal conditions for the development of a third generation of Desert Locust infestations in Somalia. As conditions remain favourable for Desert Locust breeding, there is a likelihood of new swarms developing in June and July 2020. Surveillance and control operations, therefore, remain a priority in northern Somalia to target this new generation.

Precipitation Forecast – Winter Breeding Region

Source: Desert Locust Information Services and World Climate Services, 16 March



Impact on food security in Somalia

Currently, new swarms are developing and increasing across all affected countries. These are unlike the December 2019 swarms, which coincided with the tail end of the Deyr agricultural season and caused limited damage. The current swarms are building up at the onset of the Gu planting season and risk destroying farmers' newly planted crop in Burao, Gebiley, Borama, Belet Weyne, Luuq, Baardheere, Garbahaarey, Belet Xaawo, Doolow, Ceel Barde, Xudur, Waajid, Rab Dhuure, Buur Hakaba and Qansax Dheere. FAO is working with NGO partners to closely monitor early crop development and support affected farmers to replant invaded fields where possible.

Crop losses will likely be locally significant but limited on a national scale as most of Somalia's high production areas lie outside of the potential spread area. 2020 Gu/Karan season likely production loss due to desert locust is estimated at 19 000 tonnes, likely to coincide with flood-induced crop losses in riverine areas estimated at 11 000 tonnes. Below-average Gu/Karan production is likely due to a highly localized forecast of below-average Gu rainfall in Northwestern Agropastoral. Gu rainfall is expected to mitigate pasture losses by locusts in high risk areas through June, but faster-than-normal pasture deterioration is likely in the Xagaa dry season (July-September). Livestock migration is likely to begin early and intensify through September.

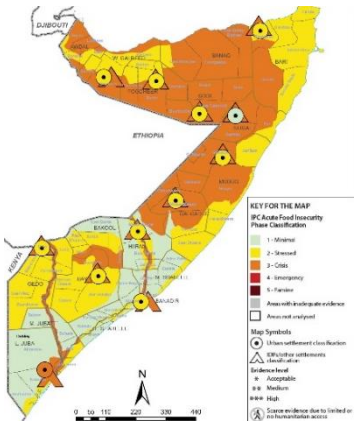
Most likely food security outcomes, February to September 2020

Timeframe	Stressed (IPC2)	Crisis (IPC 3)	Emergency (IPC 4)	Crisis & Emergency (IPC 3-4)	Stressed, Crisis & Emergency (IPC 2-4)
Current (Feb)	2 855 000	961 000	190 000	1 151 000	**4 006 000**
Projection (Feb-May)	2 889 000	1 256 000	250 000	1 506 000	**4 395 000**
Projection (Jun-Sep)	2 910 000	1 353 000	257 000	1 610 000	**4 520 000**

Through September, the population in IPC 3 and 4 is expected to rise 40% to 1.61 million people in both desert locust affected and non-affected areas. In percentage terms, the deterioration is greater in the geographic areas affected by desert locust (141%, from approx. 201 000 to 484 000 people) compared to areas not affected by locusts (19%, from approx. 950 000 to 1 127 000 people).

Projection (Jun-Sep)

Source: FSNAU-FEWS NET



Ongoing control efforts

As of 31 March, Government with the direct support of FAO have sprayed a total of 1 467 hectares. Despite these efforts, a good number of hoppers managed to develop into adults and lay eggs. Currently, there are hardly any nymphal stages that warrant immediate control intervention. Focus is on the developing third generation expected to hatch in early April and develop into swarms in June and July 2020.

Vehicle mounted spray operation, Geeresa, Somaliland, March 2020.

By mid-April, over 2 tonnes of bio-pesticide reached Somalia (out of 4 tonnes procured), and a further 8 tonnes are being processed. Capacity for ground control has been strengthened with the purchase of 18 Landcruisers (17 en-route to Hargeysa, Dhusamareb and Garowe; 1 delivered to Berbera), complementing the 15 vehicles on hire for survey and control in north and central Somalia. So far, 12 vehicle-mounted sprayers and 10 backpack sprayers were delivered in Hargeysa and Mogadishu, in addition to 10-vehicle mounted sprayers triangulated from Morocco (6 delivered) and Mali (4) to support the control effort in Somalia. Due to the vastness of the areas that need to be sprayed, three helicopters are being mobilized to Somalia to carry out aerial control operations.

Additional support required for Somalia

In April, FAO and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation updated their joint Desert Locust Crisis – Somalia Action Plan to include locust control and livelihood interventions required through December 2020. The revised Plan seeks USD 56.9 million, up from a requirement of USD 32 million initially covering through July. These updated targets and requirements will be reflected in the upcoming revision of FAO's wider regional desert locust appeal, in early May.

Planned activities in the second of 2020 include a second round of control in northern and central breeding areas, and the control of adult swarms further south where needed. Livelihood activities will provide integrated livelihood and cash assistance to farming, agropastoral and pastoral households severely impacted by locust damage during the Gu season.