



DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

FAO Emergency Centre for Locust Operations



(15 April 2005)



General Situation as of 15 April 2005

Only very limited breeding has occurred so far this month in Northwest Africa, mainly in northeast Algeria. Unless good rains fall and substantial hatching occurs in the coming weeks, swarms are not expected to form in Northwest Africa this spring nor threaten the Sahel this summer. Currently in the Sahel, at least one small swarm has moved from Guinea towards northern Mali and a few more could follow. The situation improved near the Red Sea along the Egyptian/Sudanese border where infestations declined and a few adults have moved towards the Nile Valley in northern Sudan.

In Algeria, small-scale breeding is in progress in a very limited area in the northeastern Sahara between Biskra and El Oued where 25 ha of first and second instar hopper patches were treated from 4 to 12 April. Similar infestations may be present in adjacent areas of southern Tunisia. No locusts were seen elsewhere in the spring breeding areas in the north nor in the central or southern Sahara. In Morocco, egg-beds were present in the northeast near Oujda and the Algerian border where laying was reported last month but hatching has not yet commenced. Elsewhere in the spring breeding areas, no locusts were seen during surveys carried out along the southern side of the Atlas Mountains. Although more hatching is expected to occur during the remainder of the month and perhaps in early May in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, the low numbers of locusts currently present in the region and the lack of significant rainfall so

far suggests that breeding will be limited this year. Consequently, the likelihood of a new generation of swarms forming and invading the Sahel at the beginning of the summer is very low.

Immature swarms that have persisted in the central highlands of Guinea during the past few months have started to move towards central Mali. So far, one swarm has reached the Sikasso region in southwest Mali. A few more small swarms are likely to appear in southwest Mali and perhaps western Burkina Faso as the move along the Southern Circuit towards northern Mali during April and May. In northern Mali, scattered adults are present in the Timetrine and Adrar des Aforas. Similar populations are thought to be present in the Air Mountains, Niger. No locusts were reported in Senegal or Mauritania.

In the Central Region, infestations declined in early April near the Red Sea coast in northeast Sudan and in southeast Egypt because of control operations and the migration of adults towards the interior. On 8-10 April, small groups of immature adults appeared in the Nile Valley near Atbara and Abu Hamad in northern Sudan. Some locusts may have also crossed the Red Sea to the coastal plains in Saudi Arabia where adult groups were seen north of Jeddah. No locusts are present along the coastal plains in Sudan but small infestations of late instar hoppers and immature gregarious adults persist in a few places near the coast in southeast Egypt where control operations treated 317 ha on 1-12 April. There were unconfirmed reports of locust hoppers and adults on the northern coast of Somalia near Las Koreh in early April. More details are awaited although these may not be Desert Locust.

The FAO Desert Bulletin is issued monthly, supplemented by Updates during periods of increased Desert Locust activity, and is distributed by fax, 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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In the Eastern Region, a joint Iran/Pakistan survey is underway in the spring breeding areas in Baluchistan, western **Pakistan** and southeastern **Iran**.

The most up-to-date information on the situation and photos are available on the Internet (www.fao.org/news/global/locusts/locuhome.htm) as well as maps of the latest infestations (193.43.36.11/mapper).



5 April 2005

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page **2** of 2