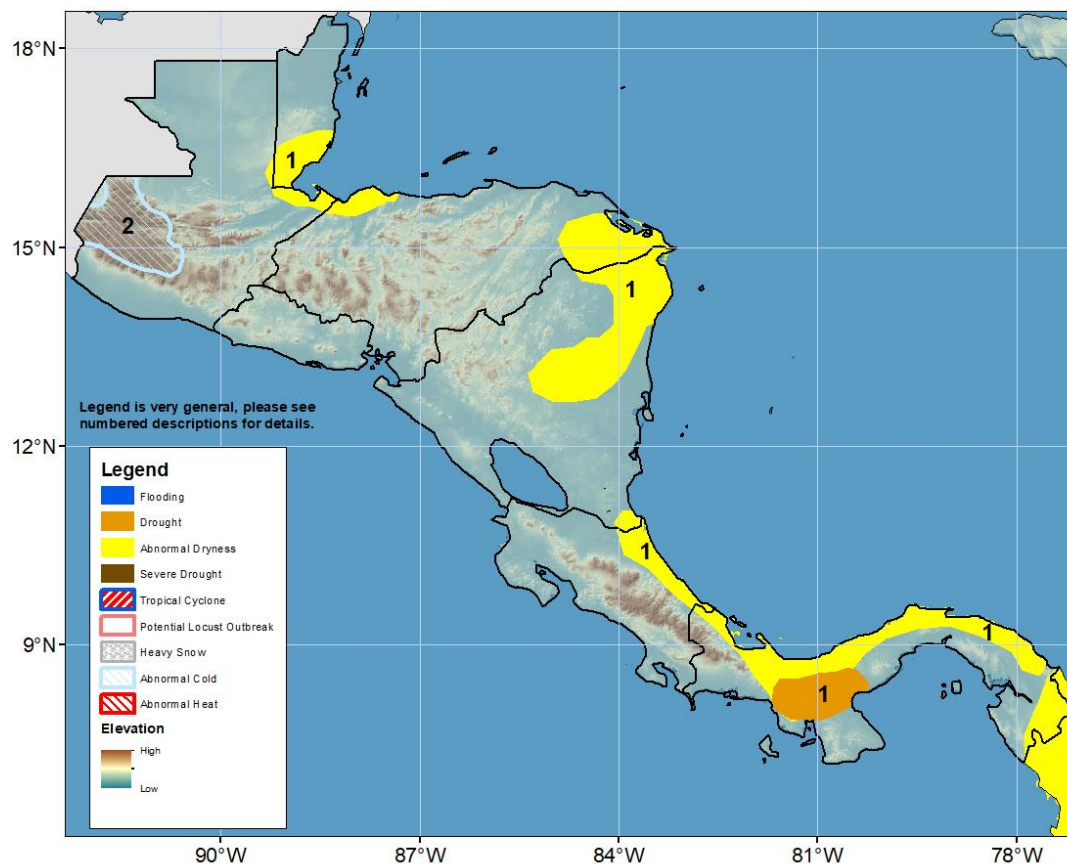


Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 29 February – 6 March 2024

Near-freezing nighttime temperatures and dry conditions likely to continue over portions of Central America



- 1) In the past seven days, light to locally moderate rainfall was observed in western Guatemala, central Belize, northern and southern Honduras, parts in Costa Rica and Panama. However, the lack of rainfall in the past 30 and 90 days has resulted in prolonged dryness in southern Belize, northern and southern parts of Honduras, central/northeastern Nicaragua, and the Caribbean Tiers of Costa Rica and Panama. The observed rainfall deficits and above-average temperatures continue to affect the shipping industry in the Panama Canal.
- 2) Temperature forecasts suggest that near-freezing to below-freezing temperatures might occur in western areas in Guatemala, including the Huehuetenango, San Marcos, Quetzaltenango, Totonicapán, Sololá, Quiché, Chimaltenango Departments and surrounding areas. We also note that there is a large thermal amplitude during the day, meaning that low temperatures are taking place during nighttime and early morning, while high and above-average mean temperatures are registered during the day.

Note: The Hazards outlook map is based on current weather/climate information, short and medium-range weather forecasts (up to 1 week), sub-seasonal forecasts up to 4 weeks, and assesses the potential impact of extreme events on crop and pasture conditions. Shaded polygons are added in areas where anomalous conditions have been observed and predicted to continue during the outlook period. The boundaries of these polygons are only approximate at the spatial scale of the map. This product takes into account long-range seasonal climate forecasts but does not reflect current or projected food security conditions. FEWS NET is a USAID-funded activity whose purpose is to provide objective information about food security conditions. Its views are not necessarily reflective of those of USAID or the U.S. Government. The FEWS NET weather hazards outlook process and products include participation by FEWS NET field and home offices, NOAA-CPC, USGS, USDA, NASA, and a number of other national and regional organizations in the countries concerned.

Questions or comments about the hazards outlooks may be directed to Dr. Wassila Thiaw, Head, International Desks/NOAA, wassila.thiaw@noaa.gov. Questions about the USAID FEWS NET activity may be directed to Dr. James Verdin, Program Manager, FEWS NET/USAID, jverdina@usaid.gov

Drier conditions forecast over Central America during the next week

During the past week, while the interior of Central America experienced dry but seasonable conditions, moderate rainfall was received locally in western Guatemala, pocket areas in central Belize, northern coastal areas in Honduras, and parts of central Costa Rica and northern Panama. Over the past 30 days, near-average conditions dominated the region. However, dryness, with rainfall deficits between 10-50 mm were present in parts of northern, south-central, and eastern Guatemala, the Gulf of Honduras, western and eastern Honduras, eastern Nicaragua, and portions of Costa Rica and Panama. Over the past 90 days, areas such as north-central Nicaragua and central and eastern Panama continued to register total rainfall below 25% of the average. Abnormal dryness and drought are posted over the dry portions of Central America, where insufficient rainfall has already impacted conditions on the ground. Meanwhile, below-freezing temperatures were observed over many areas in Guatemala, including Los Altos and Labor Ovalle, Quetzaltenango, Suiza Contenta, Sacatepéquez, Potrero Carillo, Jalapa, and Nebaj, Quiché during the past week.

During the next week, drier conditions, with little to light (< 25 mm) rainfall are forecast over the Atlantic Tier of Central America. Little rainfall is also expected in western Guatemala. The forecast reduced rainfall amounts will likely maintain or even increase 30-day rainfall deficits over many local areas in the region. Meanwhile, although above-average mean temperatures are forecast across the region, the passage of cold fronts could bring cold air mass, with near-freezing or below-freezing minimum temperatures during nighttime and or early morning. These cold weather conditions could lead to hypothermia and frost to local residents and crops, respectively, in the elevated terrains of Guatemala. In Guatemala, farmers are burning dry vegetation in preparation to the upcoming rainfall season, according to reports. However these burning activities, combined with strong winds, large diurnal temperature range, and dry conditions increase the risks for forest fires over many local areas in the country.

