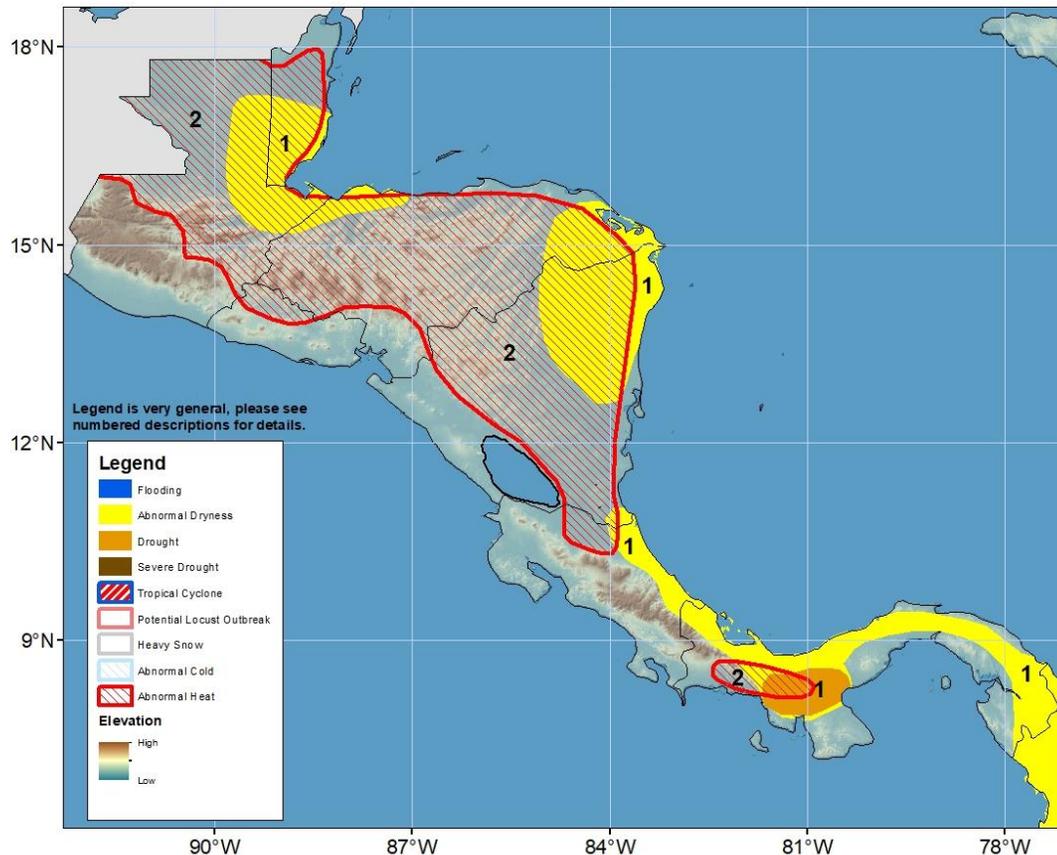


Climate Prediction Center's Central America Hazards Outlook For USAID / FEWS-NET 21 March – 27 March 2024

Much-above average temperatures and dry conditions likely to continue over much 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 mean maximum temperatures are likely to be warmer than average by 4-10 degrees across much of Guatemala, Honduras, Belize, northwestern El Salvador, Nicaragua, northern Costa Rica, and western Panama.

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, jverdin@usaid.gov

Relatively dry conditions remained in place during the past week.

During the past week, Central America observed little rain. Some light rains occurred along the northern coast of Honduras and central Guatemala, while moderate to locally heavy rain occurred in Costa Rica and some coastal portions of Panama. This pattern yielded 10-25 mm negative anomalies across parts of Guatemala, and northwestern Honduras. Over the past 30 days, near-average to below-average conditions dominated the region. Dryness, with rainfall deficits between 25-100 mm, was present in parts of northern and central Guatemala, southern Belize, northwestern and eastern Honduras, northeastern Nicaragua, and small portions of Costa Rica and Panama. Over the past 90 days, areas such as north-central Nicaragua and central Guatemala continued to register total rainfall below 25% of the average. Abnormal dryness is posted over the dry portions of Central America, where insufficient rainfall has affected conditions on the ground. Low stream flows across many areas, including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua may adversely affect irrigation upon the start of the next growing season. This is also adversely affecting energy production and Guatemala issued a declaration of emergency valid through June. Meanwhile, abnormally hot temperatures have continued over parts of the region.

During the next week, moderate rainfall greater than 25 mm is forecast for eastern and southern parts of Panama. Scattered light rainfall is anticipated across the remainder of the region. This will yield some small negative anomalies for many Caribbean-facing regions. Meanwhile, well-above average mean maximum temperatures are forecast across the region. The hot temperatures in many cases will be warmer than 35°C and reach 4 – 10°C above average. In Guatemala, farmers are burning dry vegetation in preparation to the upcoming rainfall season, according to reports. These burning activities especially, combined with strong winds, above-average temperatures, and dry conditions increase the risks for forest fires over many local areas in the country.

