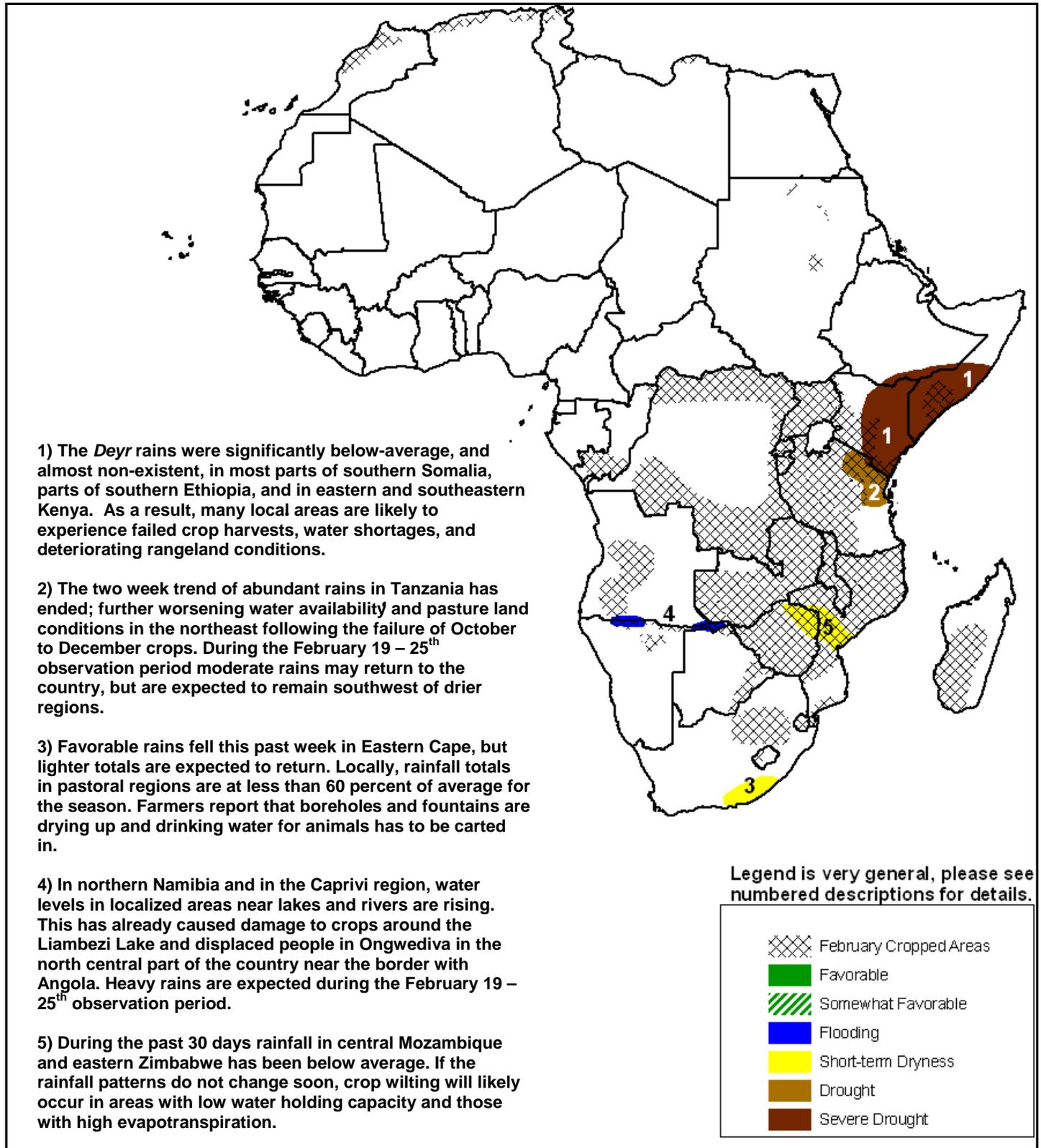


- Light-to-moderate rains fell in Tanzania during the last observation period, worsening pasture conditions in the northeast.
- Localized flooding has damaged crops and displaced households in northern Namibia.
- Below-average rainfall totals return to eastern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique.



Dryness returns to central Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe

During November 2008, central Mozambique and eastern Zimbabwe were suffering from dryness as a result of the late start of seasonal rains. Since then, rainfall had improved significantly, leading to flooding along the Zambezi River. In recent weeks, a reversal has occurred and the region is once again experiencing below normal rainfall (**Figure 1**). Ground reports state that if additional rainfall does not occur within the next ten days, permanent wilting may occur in areas with low water holding capacity and high evapotranspiration rates. Other reports state that the rainy season needs to extend through March to compensate for the late start of rains.

Eastern Cape dryness

Although a favorable round of rains made their way through South Africa during the February 12th – 18th observation period, rainfall totals in Eastern Cape, South Africa have been below-average for the southern Africa rainy season. In the Aberdeen district, local gauge reports displayed December 2008 totals that were less than 20 percent of totals observed in December of 2006, which was a below-average rainy season. This deficit has carried over through February. Despite this week's increase in rains, Eastern Cape pastures are at less than 60 percent of average rainfall for the season (**Figure 2**). Farmers report that boreholes and fountains are drying up and drinking water for animals has to be carted in.

Dryness Continues in parts of Eastern Tanzania.

The two week trend of abundant rains throughout Tanzania came to an end this past week being replaced with light-to-moderate rains throughout the country. This has further worsened poor pasture conditions and water availability in the northeastern part of the country where October – December crops failed. For much of the rainy season rainfall anomalies were more than 100 mm below-average, less than 50 percent of seasonal precipitation totals according to both local gauge observations and satellite estimates. This resulted in insufficient soil moisture conditions, and poor crop development throughout many of the bimodal regions (**Figure 3**).

