



The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

October 13 - 19, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of El Nino:

ENSO-neutral conditions are expected during the next 3-6 months.

By the end of September, equatorial SST anomalies greater than $+0.5^{\circ}\text{C}$ were found between 160°E and 170°E , while negative anomalies less than -0.5°C were observed at most locations between 130°W and the South American coast. The SST departures in the Niño 3, and Niño 1+2 regions were negative, while weak positive departures were observed in the Niño 4 and Niño 3.4 regions. During the last three months surface and subsurface temperature anomalies decreased, especially in the eastern equatorial Pacific, while atmospheric conditions (low-level winds, convection and sea level pressure) remained near average over most of the tropical Pacific.

The large spread of the most recent statistical and coupled model forecasts (weak La Niña to weak El Niño) indicates considerable uncertainty. However, current conditions and recent observed trends support a continuation of ENSO-neutral conditions for the next 3-6 months.

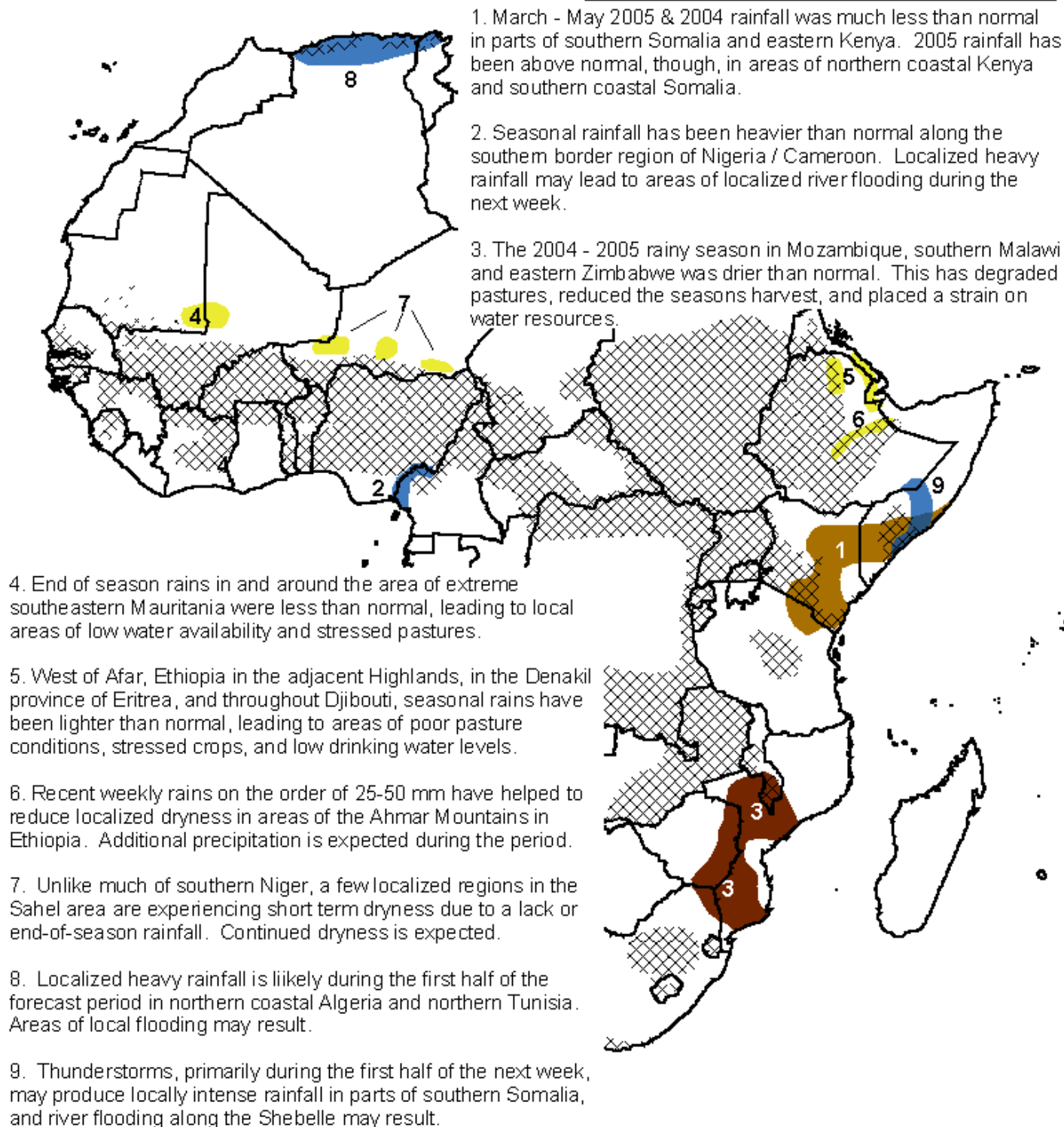
This discussion is a consolidated effort of NOAA and its funded institutions.

Locust Update:

The FAO (<http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html>) on September 30 indicated that the locust situation is generally calm in the summer breeding areas in the Sahel in West Africa. Nevertheless, locust numbers are increasing slightly as a result of small-scale breeding that is in progress in northwest **Mauritania** and in the western Air Mountains in **Niger**. However, the FAO states that hopper and adult numbers remain below threatening levels in both countries. Surveys will continue in order to detect any signs of increasing locust numbers.

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NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



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Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. March through May 2005 precipitation in parts of southern Somalia, eastern Kenya, and extreme northeastern Tanzania was far below normal, and thus drought conditions exist in these areas. May through September rainfall along southern coastal Kenya continued to be lighter than normal, while moisture increased to the north toward the Somalia border. The end result is low drinking water levels, poor pasture conditions, and poor crop performance.
2. Locally intense rainfall may occur along the southern portion of the Nigeria / Cameroon border region during the next week, with the probable result of river flooding and a few mudslides in the area. Weekly precipitation totals may exceed 200 mm locally in the area.
3. Long term hydrological drought continues to affect much of southern Malawi, central and southern Mozambique, eastern Zimbabwe, and northeastern South Africa due to the past two seasons of poor performing rains. The primary negative factor at the moment that is affecting livelihoods in the region is lower than normal well water levels and generally poor water availability. Seasonal rains should normally begin in earnest in November.
4. Rainfall in parts of extreme southeastern Mauritania ended earlier than normal in September, leading to areas of low water availability and poor pasture conditions. A few light showers are possible during the next couple weeks, though any substantial precipitation is not likely, and conditions should remain poor throughout the dry season.
5. Recent seasonal rains in parts of north central Ethiopia, eastern Eritrea, and Djibouti have been lighter than normal, leading to areas of short term dryness, poor pasture conditions, and stressed agriculture. Though much of the Afar region is also experiencing this lack of moisture, effects on livelihoods are not as noticeable due to the recent evacuation of many of its inhabitants.
6. Though September rainfall in parts of the Ahmar Mountains in Ethiopia was less than normal, recent precipitation is helping to increase moisture throughout the area. Short term dryness is thus diminishing in the region.
7. Pockets of dryness due to erratic and slightly lighter than normal seasonal rainfall are evident in portions of southern Niger. Major implications at the moment are pastoral dryness, and little change is foreseen given the proximity to the end of the monsoon.
8. A strong frontal system is currently passing through northern Africa and will affect portions of northern Algeria and northern Tunisia during the initial part of the forecast period. Heavy rain and locally severe weather may result from the most intense storms.
9. Early seasonal rains are beginning to fall over parts of Somalia, and the focus will likely be toward the Shebelle River Basin during the next week, as heavy rainfall may lead to localized areas of flooding in the region. Weekly rainfall may exceed 100 mm locally.

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