The USAID FEWS-NET

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

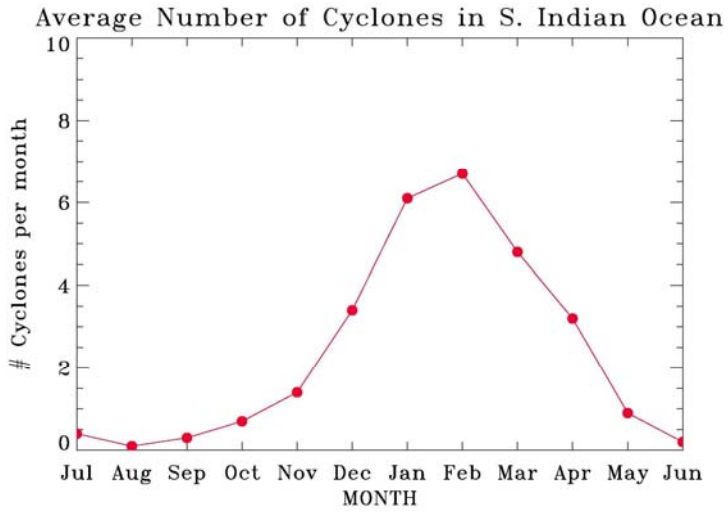
for

November 3 - 9, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Tropical Cyclone Climatology:

As we enter the tropical cyclone season for the South Indian Ocean, it is appropriate that we present the historical climatology for the number of cyclones in the area. The average number of cyclones per month is presented in the accompanying figure and we see that November represents the general start of the season with the peak in January-February. According to the Joint Typhoon Warning Center, the minimum number of tropical cyclones over the historical period of 1981-2003 is 21 and the maximum number is 38.



Locust Update:

The FAO (http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html) on October 21 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**, northern **Mali**, northern **Niger**, and southern **Algeria**. The FAO states that hopper and adult numbers remain below threatening levels in these countries, though adults are increasing in portions of northeast **Chad**. Surveys will continue in order to detect any signs of increasing locust numbers.

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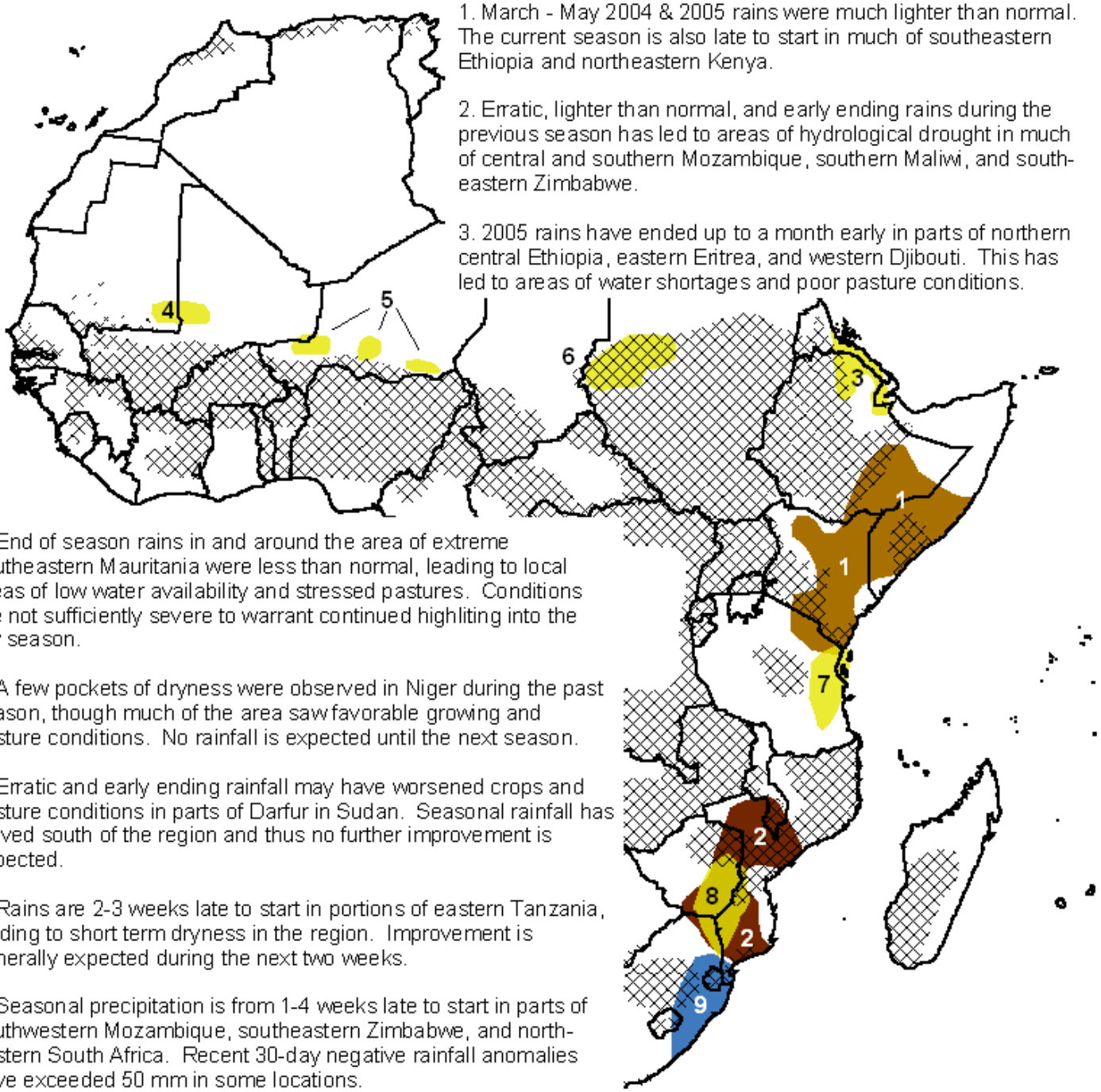
NOTE: Black hatched regions depict combined wheat, maize, sorghum, and millet crop zones which are active (sowing to harvest) during the current month. (from FAO)



1. March - May 2004 & 2005 rains were much lighter than normal. The current season is also late to start in much of southeastern Ethiopia and northeastern Kenya.

2. Erratic, lighter than normal, and early ending rains during the previous season has led to areas of hydrological drought in much of central and southern Mozambique, southern Maliwi, and south-eastern Zimbabwe.

3. 2005 rains have ended up to a month early in parts of northern central Ethiopia, eastern Eritrea, and western Djibouti. This has led to areas of water shortages and poor pasture conditions.

4. End of season rains in and around the area of extreme southeastern Mauritania were less than normal, leading to local areas of low water availability and stressed pastures. Conditions are not sufficiently severe to warrant continued highliting into the dry season.

5. A few pockets of dryness were observed in Niger during the past season, though much of the area saw favorable growing and pasture conditions. No rainfall is expected until the next season.

6. Erratic and early ending rainfall may have worsened crops and pasture conditions in parts of Darfur in Sudan. Seasonal rainfall has moved south of the region and thus no further improvement is expected.

7. Rains are 2-3 weeks late to start in portions of eastern Tanzania, leading to short term dryness in the region. Improvement is generally expected during the next two weeks.

8. Seasonal precipitation is from 1-4 weeks late to start in parts of southwestern Mozambique, southeastern Zimbabwe, and north-eastern South Africa. Recent 30-day negative rainfall anomalies have exceeded 50 mm in some locations.

9. A strong cold front will pass through the area beginning Friday, and the potential for 7-day rainfall accumulations exceeding 100 to 150 mm is possible. Localized flooding may result.

Valid: November 3 - 9, 2005

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 therefore 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 during the past season. For the current season, rainfall has been slightly late to start or erratic in much of the region, including parts of southeastern Ethiopia, central Somalia, and northeastern Kenya. Though moisture is increasing in the area, overall, conditions are abnormally dry for the current season.

2. 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 during mid-November in much of the area.

3. 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. Seasonal rainfall has likely ended in the region and therefore no additional increase of water supplies is expected until next year.

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. Abnormally heavy rainfall during October has led to increased moisture in the region, somewhat reducing the effects of the poor rainy season in the region. The season is now complete, and no further significant rainfall is expected until the next year. Therefore, due to the fact that the effects on food security in the region are not extreme, the hazard area will not be maintained.

5. 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 end of the monsoon status. The hazard region will not be carried into the dry season due to the fact that the observed dryness should not be detrimental on a widespread basis to livelihoods in the region.

6. In portions of West Darfur and Kurdofan in central Sudan, adequate early and mid-season rainfall gave way to erratic and early ending late seasonal precipitation. This may have been detrimental to agriculture in late-season crop stages, has reduced water supplies, and has degraded pastoral conditions in the region. The 2005 monsoonal season is now complete, and no additional precipitation is expected until the ITCZ accompanies rainfall into the region next year.

7. Rains in portions of eastern Tanzania are late to start for the current season, with a current delay from 2-3 weeks in most areas of the highlighted region. Meteorological forecast models are indicating increased moisture approaching the area, and current conditions generally support this. Rainfall should begin to increase from northeast to southwest during the next weeks, though any further delay may lead to agricultural problems in the future.

8. Seasonal rainfall is late to begin in areas of southwestern Mozambique, southeastern Zimbabwe, and northeastern South Africa, due to an abnormally intense high pressure zone located over the region and leading to frontal precipitation forced south of the area. October rainfall in much of the area should have been on the order of 25-50 mm, though only light showers were observed. Moderate showers are possible during the later half of the week, and if the current forecasts verify, up to 50 mm of rainfall is possible in a few locations.

9. A strong cold front will pass through areas of eastern South Africa, Swaziland, and extreme southern Mozambique during the next week. The region will likely feel the effects of heavy rains beginning November 4th and lasting up to four days. Weekly rainfall accumulations exceeding 100-150 mm are possible, and localized flooding may result.

AUTHOR: Timothy B Love

Questions or comments about this product may be directed to Alvin.Miller@noaa.gov or 1-301-763-8000 x7552