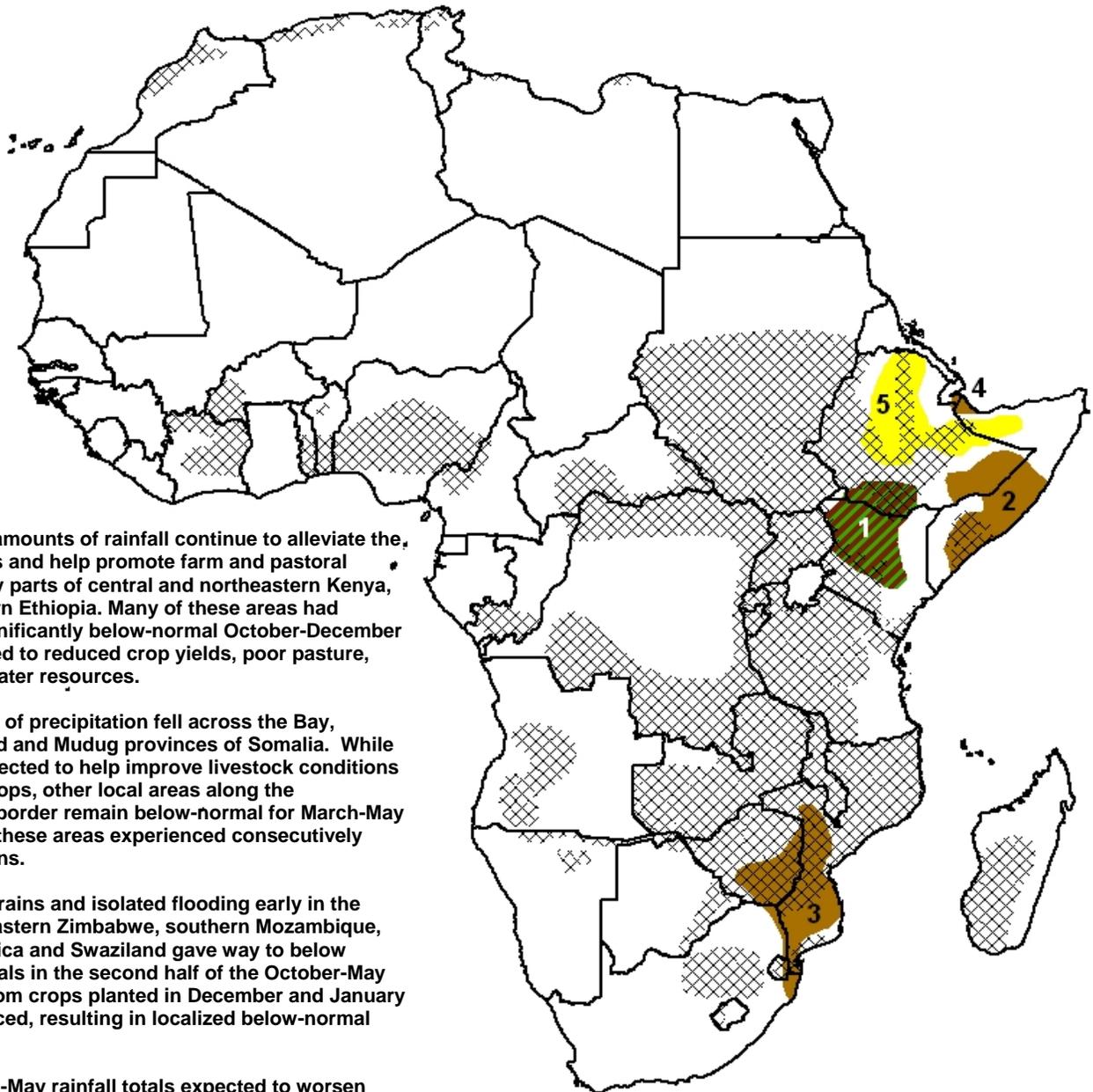


- Low precipitation totals over the last week have worsened short-term dryness for many parts of central and northern Ethiopia. The continued absence of March-May rains may lead to a reduction of maize and sorghum in the “long-cycle” cropping regions of Ethiopia, as well as exacerbate pastoral conditions for parts of northern Somalia.
- Excessive amounts of rainfall were observed across many regions of central Kenya and southern Somalia to help improve long-term drought conditions. While some of these areas remain slightly below-normal for March-May rainfall totals, increased water availability should help improve cropping activities, as well as livestock and pasture conditions.



1) Above-normal amounts of rainfall continue to alleviate the long-term dryness and help promote farm and pastoral activities for many parts of central and northeastern Kenya, as well as southern Ethiopia. Many of these areas had experienced a significantly below-normal October-December rains which had led to reduced crop yields, poor pasture, and insufficient water resources.

2) Heavy amounts of precipitation fell across the Bay, Hiraan, Galguduud and Mudug provinces of Somalia. While this rainfall is expected to help improve livestock conditions and regenerate crops, other local areas along the Ethiopia/Somalia border remain below-normal for March-May season. Many of these areas experienced consecutively failed rains seasons.

3) Above-normal rains and isolated flooding early in the season in southeastern Zimbabwe, southern Mozambique, eastern South Africa and Swaziland gave way to below normal rainfall totals in the second half of the October-May season. Yields from crops planted in December and January will likely be reduced, resulting in localized below-normal production.

4) Reduced March-May rainfall totals expected to worsen dryness over Djibouti and northern Somalia. In local areas, little to no rainfall accumulation since January should worsen soil conditions and pastures along the Djibouti/Somalia border.

5) Below-normal rainfall during the current March-May season has prolonged dryness across parts of the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia and into parts of northern Somalia. This dryness may lead to poor soil conditions for the growth of maize and sorghum across Ethiopia, and the degradation of pastures for parts of Somaliland.

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.



Short-term dryness worsens for “Long-cycle” crops in Ethiopia. Excessive rains for Somalia and parts of Kenya.

In central Ethiopia, little to no observed rainfall in the last week has strengthened the seasonal rainfall anomalies across much of the Ogaden region of Ethiopia and into parts of Eritrea, Djibouti and Somalia (Figure 1). For many local areas near Nazret and DireDawa Ethiopia, precipitation deficits exceeding 100 mm are beginning to pose a threat to “long cycle” crops. A continued absence of the April-May rains in these areas may lead to significant reduction of maize, sorghum and cereal yields for the fall harvests.

Further north, the lack of rainfall over the last week is also expected to worsen soils and pastures particularly the Sool and Togdheer provinces of northern Somalia. In western Ethiopia, fair amounts of observed rainfall (>25 mm) continue to help benefit maize and sorghum crops extending from the Gambela province northward along the Sudan border to Lake T'ana.

In parts of Somalia and along the Kenya/Ethiopia border, heavy amounts of precipitation (> 75 mm) continue to relieve many areas that have observed little amounts of precipitation since the beginning of March. Over the last week, isolated totals exceeding 100 mm fell across the Garissa and Wajir districts of northeastern Kenya, as well as the Hiraan and Galguduud provinces of Somalia. The extent of this rainfall is expected to improve degraded pastures and soil conditions resulting from the long-term drought throughout much of northeastern Kenya and Somalia. WRSI analyses indicate a considerable recovery in rangeland conditions across parts of northeastern Kenya and southern Somalia (Figure 2). Despite these improvements, this past week's excessive rainfall may have potentially resulted in flooding for some local areas. USGS water runoff analyses illustrate that flooding may pose a threat for many local areas near the Dawa River along the Kenya/Ethiopia border, as well as the Shabelle and Jubba rivers in southern Somalia (Figure 3).

There have been no new reports of locusts swarms in southern Ethiopia. However, additional rainfall may encourage the hatching of eggs and subsequent hopper band formation according to the FAO. This may damage maize and sorghum crops particularly for areas southeast of KibreMengi in the Oromia province.

Precipitation forecasts do not show much change from this past week's rainfall distribution. Moderate to heavy amounts of rainfall are expected for many parts of central and northeastern Kenya, extending eastward into southern Somalia. Further north, more rains are anticipated along northern Uganda and western Ethiopia, with decreasing probabilities for sufficient rainfall to mitigate the drier parts of central Ethiopia, Djibouti and northern Somalia.

Elsewhere in Africa, some parts of southern Mozambique and southeastern Zimbabwe continue to remain below-normal for seasonal rainfall totals. With some areas experiencing little to no rainfall accumulation since February, this will potentially limit the production of maize and sorghum crops. In Gulf of Guinea countries of western Africa, precipitation analyses indicate a below-normal distribution for rainfall in April. As of this past week, areas that include the coastal southwestern Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Ivory Coast have experienced less than 80% of their normal rainfall over the last 30 days. Precipitation forecasts show some relief for parts of Nigeria and the Ivory Coast with widespread rainfall totals (> 35 mm) projected over the next seven days.

**Satellite-Derived Precipitation Anomaly
February 1st - April 19th 2008**

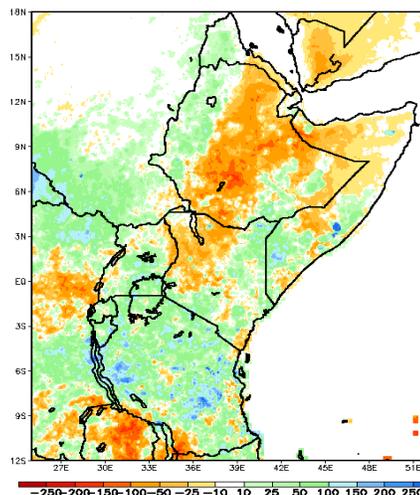


Figure 1:

Source: NOAA

**Rangeland WRSI in East Africa
2nd Dekad of April, 2008**

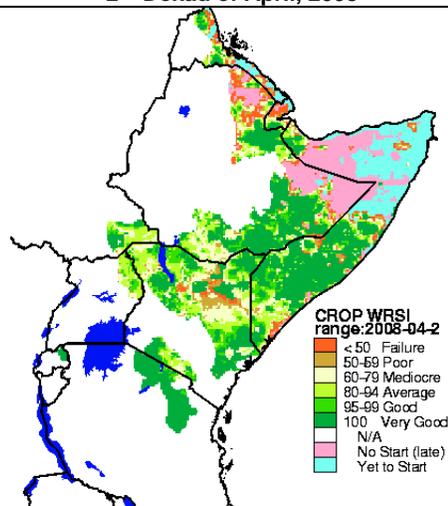


Figure 2:

Source: USGS

**Daily Runoff Anomaly for East Africa
As of April 16th, 2008**

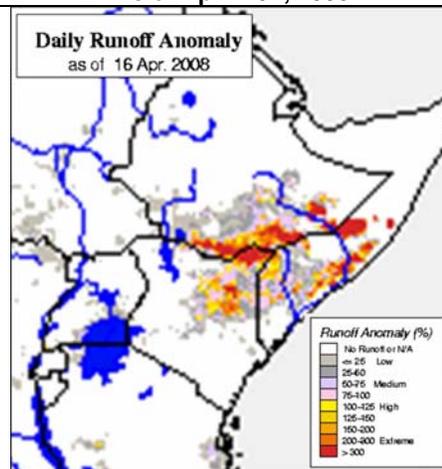


Figure 3.

Source: USGS