

Africa Weather Hazards Benefits Assessment

for

August 3 - 9, 2006

Weekly Introduction:

ITCZ Update:

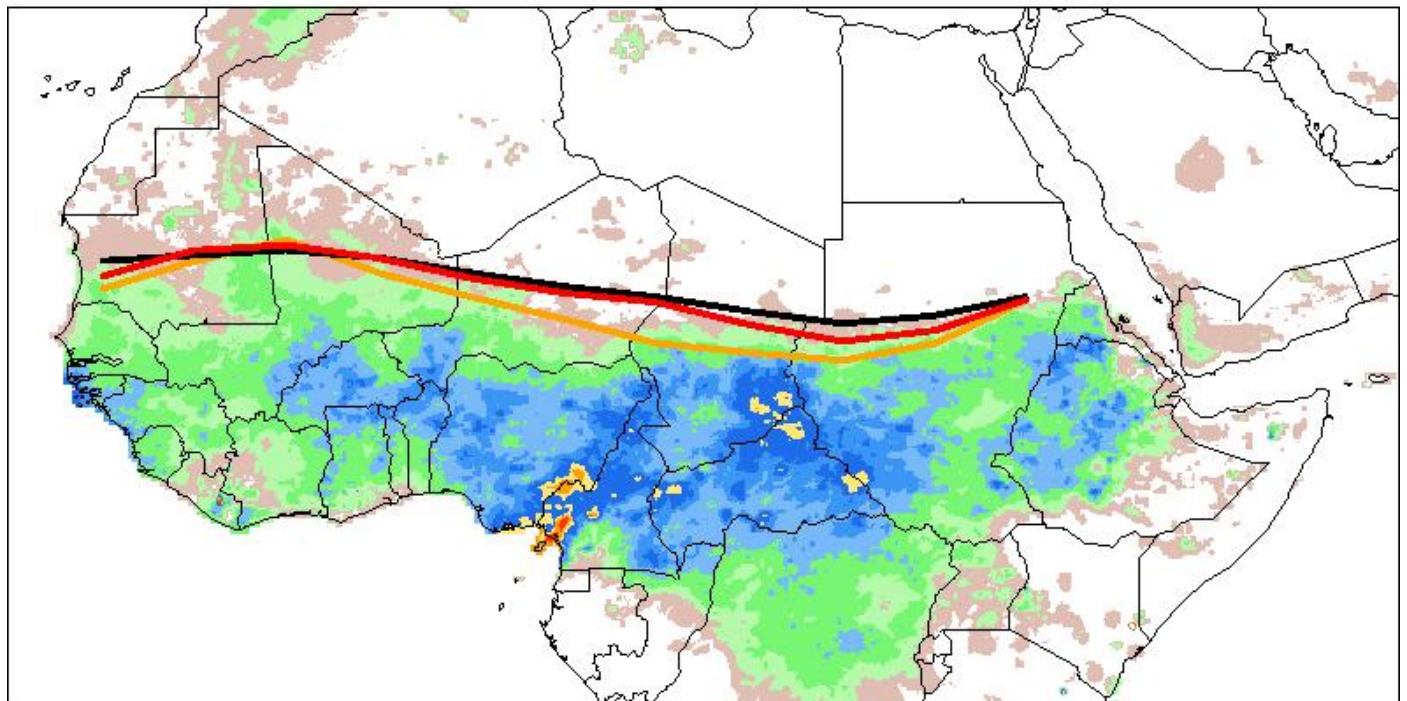
From July 11-20 2006, the African portion of the Intertropical Convergence Zone was located near 17.2 degrees north latitude, compared to the 1988-2005 climatological mean of 17.6 degrees north, and a position last year of 18.2N. This location is 0.8 degrees north from the previous dekad indicating a rapid northward movement. In the west (10W-10E), the ITCZ was located near 18.6N, compared with a normal position of 18.7N and a position last year of 19.4N. In the east (20-35E), the ITCZ was located near 15.5N, about 0.5 degrees south of its normal location near 16.1N. Last year, at this time it was considerably farther north at 17.2N.

Additional information can be found at the web site: <http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/fews/ITCZ/itcz.shtml>.

Current vs Mean Position of the Africa ITCZ

As analyzed by the NOAA Climate Prediction Center

July 2006 Dekad 2



Accumulated Dekadal Precipitation:



Current 10-Day Average

Mean 10-Day Average

Previous 10-Day Average



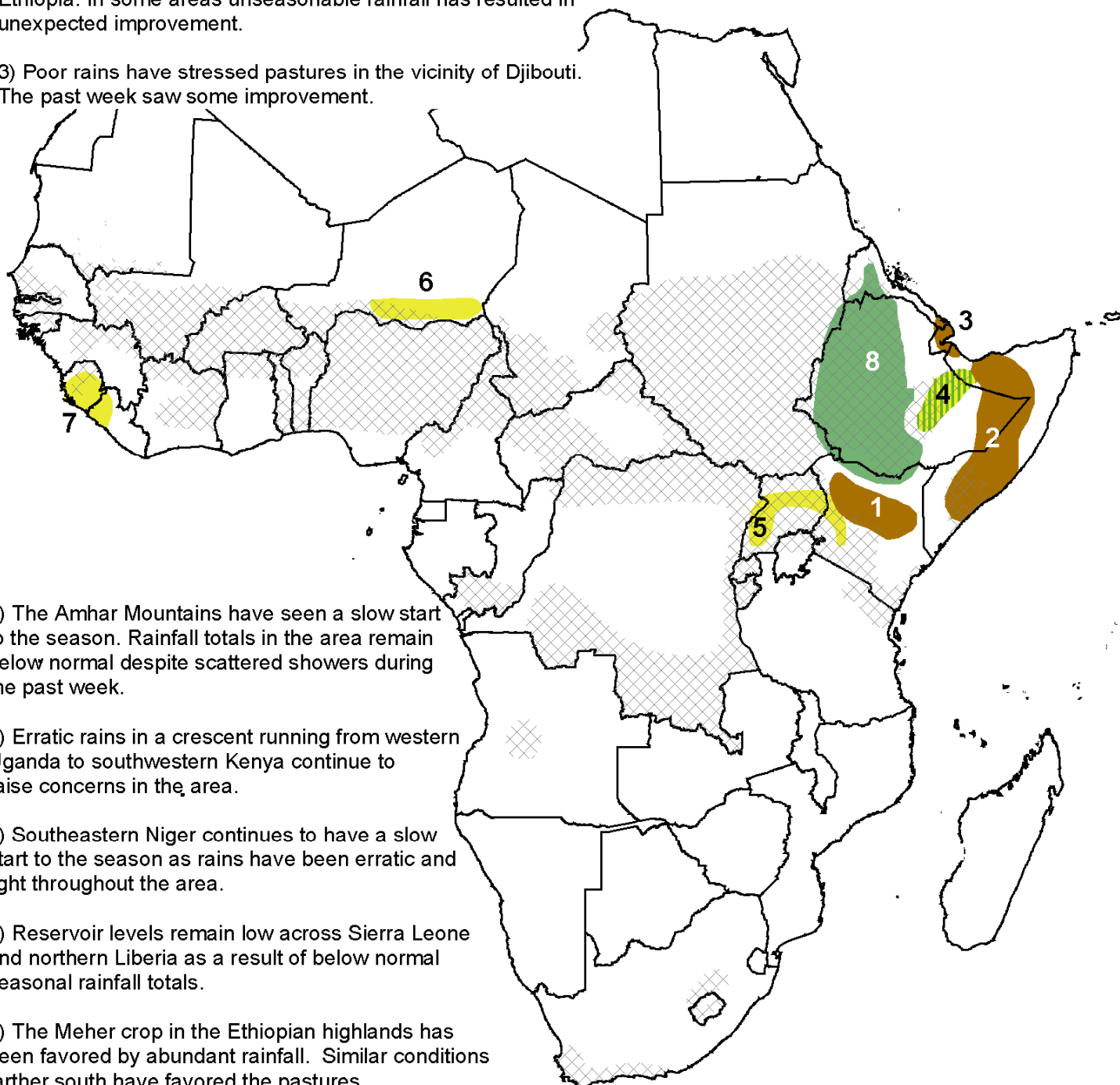
Africa Weather Hazards/Benefits Assessment

1) Agriculture, pasture, and drinking water availability in north and central Kenya has suffered as a result of multiple poor wet seasons. The next chance for improvement will be in October.

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)

2) June-September 2005 season was only slightly improved by the February-May 2006 rains in much of Somalia and eastern Ethiopia. In some areas unseasonable rainfall has resulted in unexpected improvement.

3) Poor rains have stressed pastures in the vicinity of Djibouti. The past week saw some improvement.



4) The Amhar Mountains have seen a slow start to the season. Rainfall totals in the area remain below normal despite scattered showers during the past week.

5) Erratic rains in a crescent running from western Uganda to southwestern Kenya continue to raise concerns in the area.

6) Southeastern Niger continues to have a slow start to the season as rains have been erratic and light throughout the area.

7) Reservoir levels remain low across Sierra Leone and northern Liberia as a result of below normal seasonal rainfall totals.

8) The Meher crop in the Ethiopian highlands has been favored by abundant rainfall. Similar conditions farther south have favored the pastures.

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. Conditions in central Kenya are terrible as a result of the failure of the 2005 short rainy season, and the horrible October 2005 – May 2006 rains that followed. Almost no rainfall during the 2005 short rains and there was less than 50 percent of normal precipitation during the March to May rains. The one exception is the month of April when widespread heavy rains caused localized flooding. The next hope for improvement will arrive in October with the start of the short rainy season.
2. Poor March – May rains occurred in central Somalia and eastern Ethiopia following, in some areas, a poor long rainy season in 2005. From March to May most of the area received about half its normal rainfall, but the bulk of that rain fell in April. The strong rains during April produced normal conditions, but March and May each saw as little as 10 percent of normal precipitation. Water available for drinking, pastures and crops all suffered as a result of these light and erratic rains. During the past week, some thunderstorms have brought relief to isolated areas. Similar conditions are likely next week, but these will not improve overall poor conditions.
3. The 20 mm of rainfall that fell in Djibouti have eased the dry conditions, however moisture deficits remain. This is the first significant amount of precipitation to fall in the region this season. Additional rain will need to fall to provide substantial relief to the area that has seen less than half of normal precipitation during the current season. Light showers, similar to the previous period are possible during the coming week.
4. After a slow start to the season, rainfall in the Amhar Mountains has picked up significantly during the past week. The 20 mm of precipitation that has fallen during the past week has started to increase soil moisture. Similar conditions next week are expected and may return parts of the region to normal rainfall totals.
5. Conditions are slowly improving in a crescent shaped area in Uganda and Kenya. After good rains during the March-May wet season, rainfall has become erratic. Since June deficits have climbed to over 100 mm, or just below half of normal rainfall in some areas. The dry conditions have stressed pastures and reduced available drinking water. The dry conditions have also begun to have an impact on the maize and sorghum crops that are not yet mature. The previous period saw a significant increase in moisture, especially in some of the areas that need the most improvement. The coming week will likely bring more scattered rainfall to the region.
6. In southern Niger's central and eastern areas, poorly distributed and erratic rainfall has begun to have an impact on the 2006 cropping season. Rainfall totals, in some isolated areas, have been less than half of normal. This, however, is not widespread. More common are deficits that range from 50 to 80 percent of normal, or 50 to 100 mm rainfall deficits. The areas of most concern are in Maradi, Zinder and Diffa. Conditions are better in Tahoua. Rainfall during the past week has only significantly improve areas to the west, while the eastern areas saw 15 mm or less, which have allow deficits to continue to rise. Some improvement is possible during the coming week.
7. Reservoirs are below normal in Sierra Leone and adjacent portions of Liberia and Guinea. The low water levels can be attributed to below normal rainfall. While this is not expected to impact agriculture, it may impact drinking water availability. Normal rainfall over Sierra Leone during the past week likely improved conditions. The coming period will likely see continued improvement.
8. Good cropping conditions dominate most of Ethiopia's Meher producing regions. Across Tigray, Ahmara, Beneshangul Gumuz, SSNPR, Gambella, and western areas of Oromiya above normal precipitation has created conditions favorable for crop growth. The conditions extend northward into the highland areas of northern Eritria, benefiting pastures and crops in those areas. It should be noted that while the overall picture is good, the rainfall has been heavy at times, and caused localized flash flooding as well as hail which has damaged crops on a locally. Seasonal rains were excessive in some areas during the past week with isolated locations receiving as much as 200 mm of rainfall. Precipitation is expected to be somewhat closer to normal during the coming week.

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