



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

*DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION SERVICE*

### 17 MAY 2021. HATCHING AND BAND FORMATION BEGIN IN HORN OF AFRICA

**OVERVIEW.** As anticipated, hatching has been detected in eastern Ethiopia and northwest Somalia where swarms have been laying eggs since late April. The hatchlings are forming small hopper bands that so far have been seen in a few places. More hatching and band formation are expected throughout eastern Ethiopia and northern Somalia during the remainder of this month. New groups of immature adults are forming in Saudi Arabia that could move south to Yemen for breeding in the interior.

**WHY IT MATTERS.** A new round of breeding signifies the potential for a further increase in locust numbers in the Horn of Africa. If hopper band infestations are not adequately detected and treated, new swarms could form from mid-June onwards and move west to the Afar region in northeast Ethiopia for summer breeding. Locust numbers could build up in the interior of Yemen that may eventually threaten the Horn of Africa.

**CONTEXT.** Locusts are currently active in the Horn of Africa and Saudi Arabia.

- In Ethiopia, mature swarms are laying eggs south of Djibouti near Aysha. Hatching and band formation are in progress in Nogob zone, western Somali region.
- In Somalia, hatching and band formation have started in the northwest (Somaliland) where mature swarms continue to lay eggs; mature swarms are present in the northeast (Puntland).
- In Djibouti, a mature swarm was seen south of Arta.
- In Saudi Arabia, control operations continue against early instar hopper bands in the north near Al Jawf, late instar hopper bands in the east between Gassim and Jubail, and new groups of immature adults that are forming further south.
- In Sudan, locusts declined on the Red Sea coast where only scattered adults remain near Tokar.
- In Iran, control operations are underway against a few hopper groups on the southwest coast near Bushehr.
- In Israel, hatching occurred on one farm in the Araba Valley near Yahel where migrating birds controlled the first instar hopper groups.
- No new reports from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

**TAKEAWAY.** Increased vigilance must be maintained in Ethiopia and Somalia where a hopper band campaign should be mounted to reduce eventual swarm formation but only after hatching has completely finished, avoiding repeated treatments of the same area.

- Central Region (SERIOUS) – increase survey and control (Ethiopia, Somalia, Saudi Arabia), increase preparedness and surveys (Yemen interior)
- Eastern Region (CALM) – maintain control (Iran) and survey (Pakistan)
- Western Region (CALM) – no activities

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