



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Danger Level = Serious (Central Region)

8 SEPTEMBER 2021. LOCUSTS IN NORTHERN ETHIOPIA

OVERVIEW. New reports indicate that hoppers bands are forming in eastern Amhara region of northern **Ethiopia** and swarms were seen in Tigray southwest of Mekele. Hopper bands are almost certainly forming in the Afar region but breeding areas cannot be accessed due to conflict. A few immature swarms persist in the hills of northeast **Somalia** where access is difficult. Hopper bands and new immature swarms are forming in the interior of **Yemen** where ground control operations are limited due to the presence of beekeepers. Elsewhere, the situation remains calm in the summer breeding areas from Mauritania to Eritrea and along both sides of the Indo-Pakistan border.

WHY IT MATTERS. The reports of hopper bands in Amhara and swarms in Tigray confirm earlier suspicions that breeding has extended beyond Afar into the highlands of northern Ethiopia. The swarms in Tigray are most likely mature and probably found suitable areas for breeding. As the current situation does not allow survey and control operations, new swarms are expected to form in northern and northeast Ethiopia in October that would threaten Eritrea (moving through the highlands to reach the Red Sea coastal plains), eastern Ethiopia (Somali region) and northern Somalia (northwest coast and plateau) where rains generally start in about October or November. This would allow the summer-bred swarms to mature and lay eggs, giving rise to another generation of hopper bands before the end of the year. While the scale of current breeding is less than a year ago, the inability to undertake field operations in northern and northeast Ethiopia is of grave concern. In Yemen, it was expected that new swarms would form in the interior this month, but it is worrisome that control operations against current hopper bands to reduce the number of new swarms may be compromised by beekeepers. If so, this could lead to an increased risk of a few swarms invading northern Somalia in October or November.

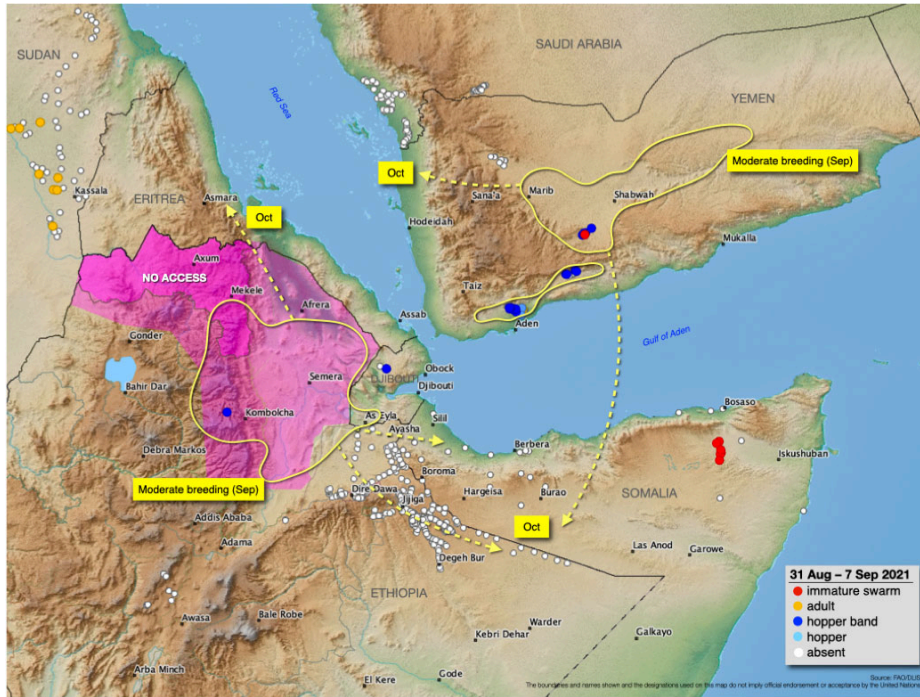
CONTEXT. Continued insecurity is prolonging the current upsurge in the Horn of Africa.

- **SOMALIA.** A few swarms in the northeast (Puntland); no locusts in the northwest (Somaliland).
- **ETHIOPIA.** Hopper band formation likely in Afar, Amhara and Tigray; only limited operations possible in Amhara due to insecurity; no locusts in Somali region.
- **DJIBOUTI.** Late instar hopper band in interior of Tadjourah region.
- **YEMEN.** Hopper bands and new swarms forming in the interior; limited control underway.
- **SUDAN.** Calm with low numbers of adults and small-scale breeding in the interior.
- **SAUDI ARABIA.** No locusts in the southwest; no invasions are expected.
- **W AFRICA.** Calm with low numbers of adults and small-scale breeding in Chad.
- **SW ASIA.** No locusts in Iran, Pakistan, and India.

TAKEAWAY. Current field operations in northern Somalia and eastern Ethiopia should be maintained while upscaling of surveys is needed in northern Ethiopia and southern Djibouti.

- **Central Region (SERIOUS)** – increase operations in Djibouti and, if possible, northern Ethiopia
- **Eastern Region (CALM)** – continue summer surveys (Indo-Pakistan)
- **Western Region (CALM)** – continue summer surveys (northern Sahel)

www.fao.org/ag/locusts



CURRENT SITUATION. As anticipated, breeding is underway extended in northern regions of Ethiopia (Amhara, Tigray) in addition to the northeast (Afar). Summer-bred swarms are forming in the Yemen interior.