



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations

## DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

*DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION SERVICE*

*Danger Level = Serious (Central Region)*

### 23 DECEMBER 2021. SMALL SWARMS FORM IN NE SOMALIA

**OVERVIEW.** As late instar hopper bands continue to fledge, more new small immature swarms are forming in northeast Somalia where aerial and ground control operations are in progress north of Garowe. Limited aerial control operations continue against a few small immature and mature swarms that persist in the Rift Valley of SNNP near the Kenya border. Low numbers of solitary locusts are present in winter breeding areas along both sides of the Red Sea and on the Gulf of Aden coast of northwest Somalia, and limited breeding has started in a few places.

**WHY IT MATTERS.** The current success of control operations in northeast Somalia is limiting the number and size of immature swarms that will form in the next two weeks. By the end of this month, nearly all hopper bands will have fledged. Consequently, a few more small swarms will form. So far, the new swarms have not moved much from the breeding areas; however, this will change as they become stronger and vegetation dries out, giving rise to a southwards migration that passes over central Somalia and eastern Ethiopia to reach southeast Ethiopia, northeast Kenya, and southern Somalia at any time in the coming week. Upon arrival, the swarms should continue further west in Wajir, Marsabit, Samburu, and Turkana counties of Kenya and southern parts of Oromia and SNNP regions in Ethiopia. The threat of swarm arrival in these areas should subside by mid-January. It will take at least one month for the swarms to mature and be ready to lay eggs. By that time, however, conditions in southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya are unlikely to be favourable since it will be the dry season. Consequently, the swarms may remain immature until the long rains arrive in April/May, which would allow maturation and egg-laying. Given this scenario, field teams are expected to have the necessary resources, experience, and time to control the swarms before April and bring the current upsurge to an end.

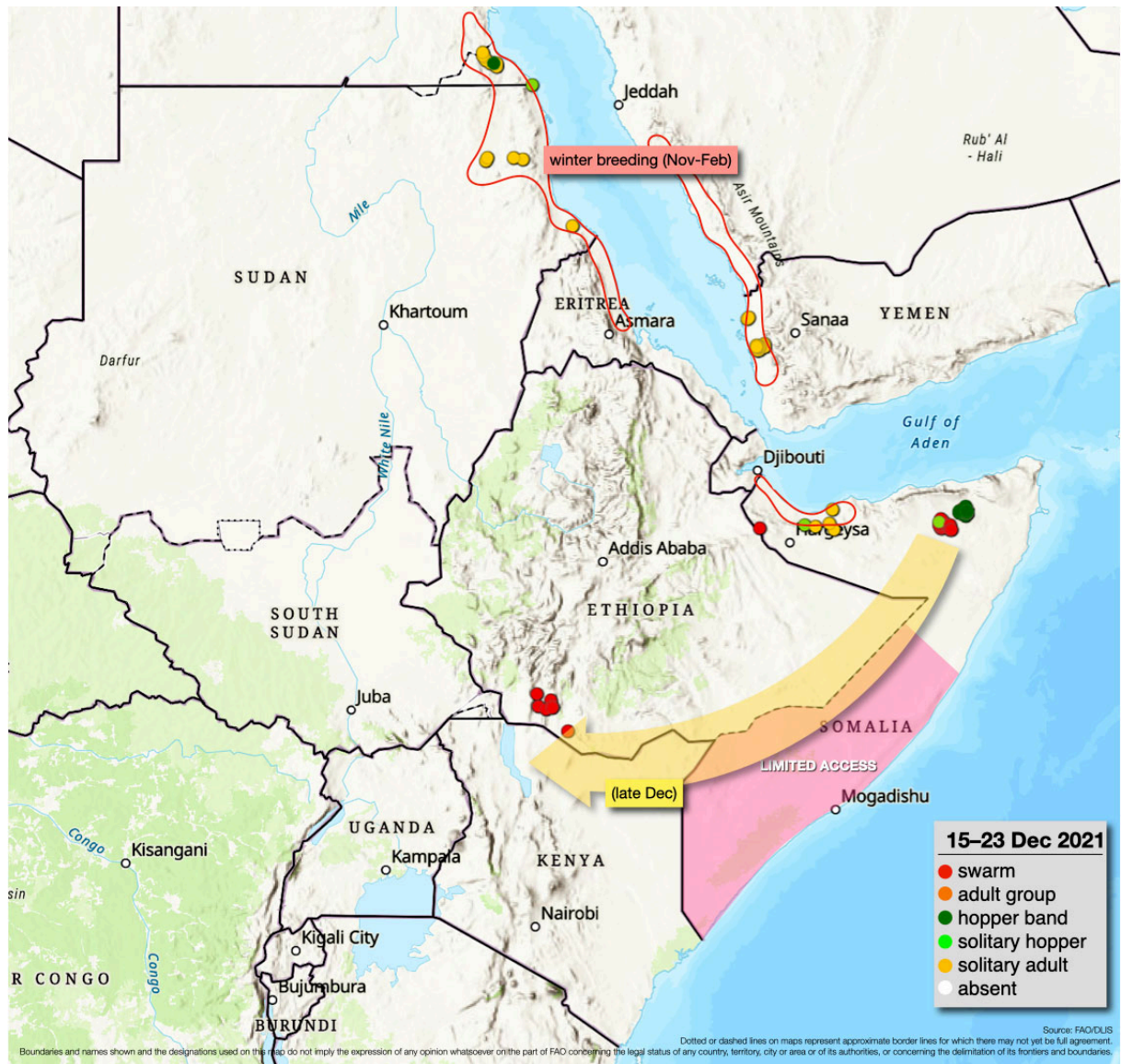
**CONTEXT.** New swarms form in northeast Somalia but have yet to start migrating southwards.

- **SOMALIA.** Control operations continue against small late instar hopper bands and newly formed immature swarms in the NE; scattered adults in the northwest with limited breeding.
- **ETHIOPIA.** Control continues against a few small swarms that persist in the Rift Valley of southern SNNP near the Kenya border.
- **KENYA.** No locusts seen, but limited breeding could be underway along the northern border.
- **RED SEA.** Scattered adults on the coast of Yemen, Sudan, and SE Egypt while limited breeding started in Egypt and Yemen; no locusts on the coast of Saudi Arabia and Eritrea.

**TAKEAWAY.** Maintain current efforts to reduce swarm formation in the Horn of Africa.

- **Central Region (SERIOUS)** – maintain operations (Ethiopia, Somalia); increase vigilance (N. Kenya)
- **Western Region (CALM)** – no significant activities
- **Eastern Region (CALM)** – no significant activities

[www.fao.org/ag/locusts](http://www.fao.org/ag/locusts)



**CURRENT SITUATION.** Control operations continue against small late instar hopper bands and new swarms in NE Somalia, and against a few small mature swarms remaining in S Ethiopia. Low numbers of adults are present in winter breeding areas along both sides of the Red Sea where breeding has started in some places.