

Africa Weather Hazards Assessment

for

April 21 – April 27, 2005

Weekly Introduction:

Update of Seasonal Outlooks at One-Month Lead: May-July 2005 Forecasts

Gulf of Guinea Region

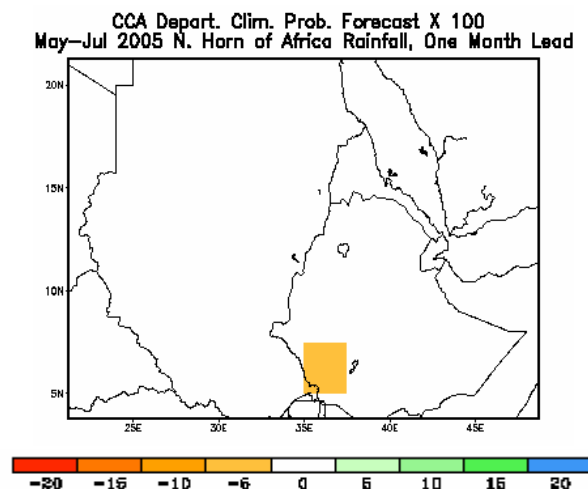
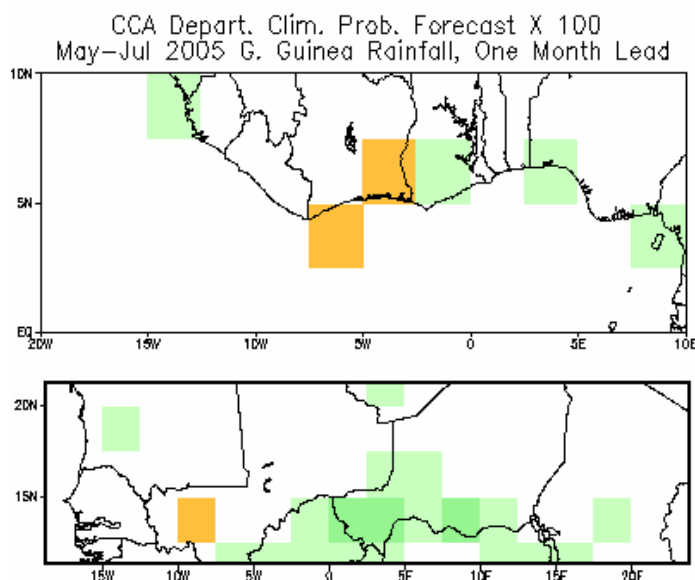
The outlook for May-Jul 2005 Gulf of Guinea rainfall at one month lead shows a slight tilt in the odds favoring above average rainfall locally over southern Ghana and southwestern Nigeria. There is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall locally over southeastern Cote d'Ivoire.

Sahel

There is a low to moderate tilt in the odds favoring above normal across central Sahel in the areas including Burkina Faso, southern and western Niger, and locally over southwestern Mauritania and central Chad. There is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall locally over western Mali.

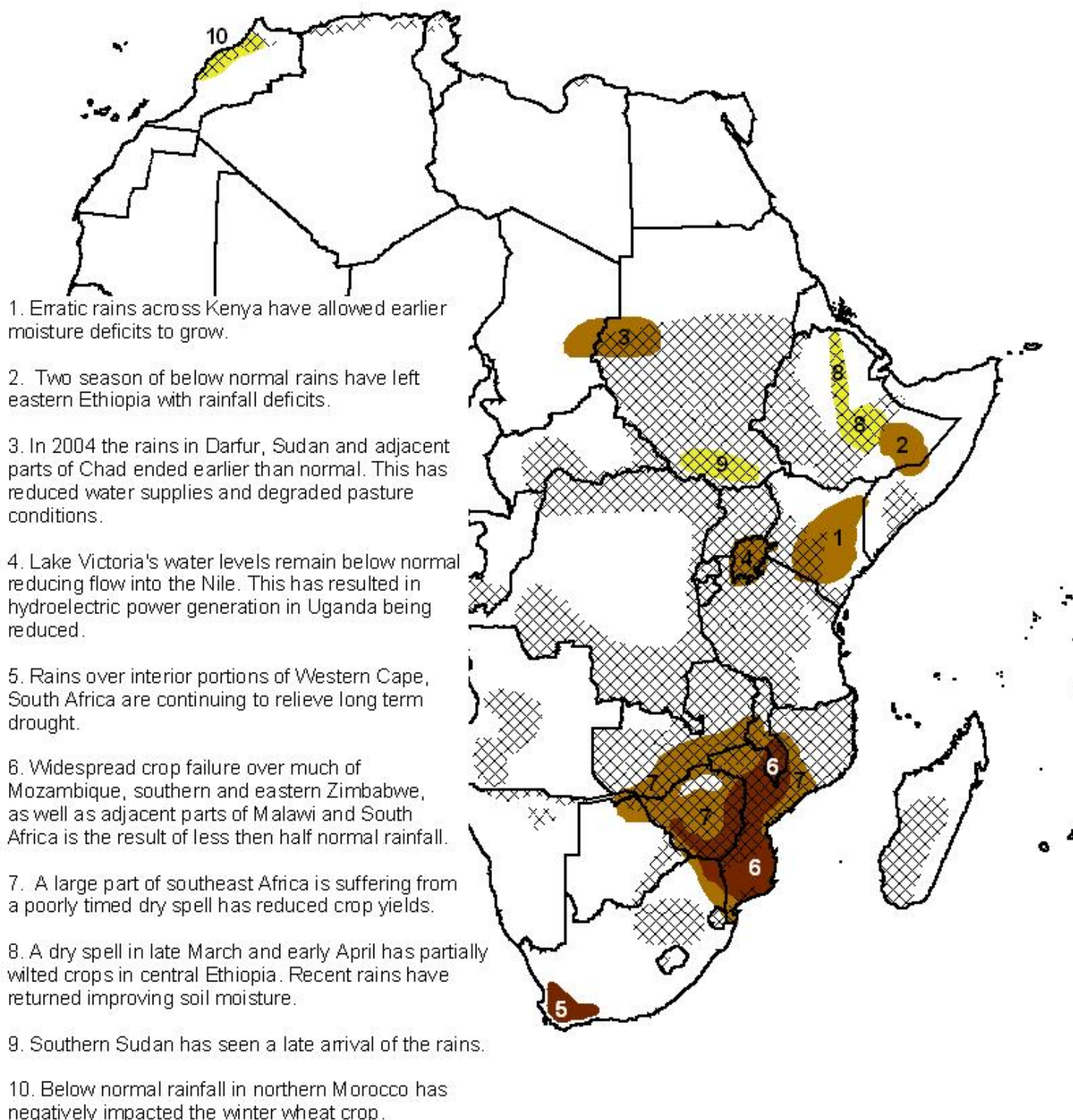
Northern Horn of Africa

Climatology is expected across the region, except locally over southeastern Ethiopia, where there is a slight tilt in the odds favoring below normal rainfall.



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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)



Valid: April 21 - April 27, 2005

Weather Hazards Text Explanation:

1. In southern, central, and eastern Kenya, the long and short rainy seasons of 2004 produced less rainfall than normal and thus far in 2005 the rains have not been consistent. Recent rainfall has been erratic with some weeks receiving normal rain totals in the south, and some where only light showers fall. This unsteady rain has slowly degraded pastures and reduced soil moisture, negatively impacting the pastoral and bi-modal areas. This past week was a poor one where a few widely scattered thunderstorms relieved conditions in isolated spots, mainly in central Kenya, while the rest of the area saw little or no rain. The coming period will likely bring similar conditions to the area.
2. The rains have begun in Ethiopia's Somali region where in 2004 between 50 and 70 percent of normal precipitation fell. Northern and western parts of the drought area picked up as much as 30 mm of rain during the past week. These rains, if they continue will begin to ease last year's drought. The coming period will likely see the rains spread to the rest of the region.
3. Central Darfur, Sudan and Biltine and Ouaddai, Chad continue to experience poor soil moisture, degraded pastures and reduced water supplies. This is the result of a 2004 wet season that began late, ended early and was erratic. These conditions have not helped ease the on going humanitarian crisis in the region. The next opportunity for significant relief in the area will occur with the onset of the wet season in July.
4. Lake Victoria's surface level remains at 10 year lows. The lowered levels have reduced flow into the Nile River in Uganda. As a result hydroelectric power generated along the Nile has been below normal. As of April 13th, Lake Victoria's surface was 0.73 meters below normal. Up to and exceeding 75 mm of rain fell on the lake this past week with lower amounts falling in the rest of Lake Victoria's basin. Abundant and steady rains are needed to bring Lake Victoria back up to normal levels. The coming week will see a slowing of the rains in the region.
5. 25 to 60 percent of normal precipitation fell across interior Western Cape, South Africa from April to September 2004, which is generally the wettest time of year. While interior portions continue to suffer under a drought, conditions, areas closer to the coast have continued to experience normal conditions. All five of the regions major reservoirs are reporting being at or near record lows. Recent heavy rains have eased the conditions in reservoirs, however soil moisture deficits continue to plague the region. The coming week will bring light rains to Western Cape.
6. Deficits of 150 mm to 400 mm, or 60 to 25 percent and worse have devastated a wide area of southeast Africa. Southern and central Mozambique, southern Malawi, southern and eastern Zimbabwe and adjacent parts of northeastern South Africa continue to experience significantly reduced soil moisture, stressed pastures, and lowered river levels causing water shortages. The worst affected areas are Gaza and Inhamitanga, Mozambique as well as Manicaland and Masvingo, Zimbabwe. Seasonably dry conditions have moved into the area, and only some light showers are expected over the area during the coming week.
7. A poorly timed dry spell over much of Zimbabwe, central Mozambique, southern Zambia, central Malawi and northeastern Namibia occurred from February into mid-March. The crops were at a critical period of development when the rains came to a halt for 3 to 5 weeks. Small pockets in Midlands and Mashonaland, Zimbabwe have escaped the dryness as rains did fall in orographically favored locations during the dry spell. The negatively affected regions, which far outnumber those spared, have received only 25 to 75 percent of normal rain during February and March. Seasonably drier conditions have prevailed during the past week and will continue into next week with only light scattered showers expected.
8. The Tigray, Afar, Amhara, and Oromiya regions of Ethiopia saw an early start to the Belg season. The early start came to an abrupt halt in late March and only started up again during the past week. There are reports of partially wilted crops in the area, but it is possible to still have a reasonable harvest if the rains continue. Much needed rain is expected during the coming week across the region.
9. Southern parts of Sudan have finally seen the rains begin to arrive. The rains were as much as three decades late in some areas. The rains dumped totals of up to and exceeding 50 mm on the area. The coming will bring lighter totals to the area.
10. In northern Morocco a dry spell since mid March combined with above normal temperatures has negatively impacted the winter wheat crop in the region. No rain fell in the area last week and only some light showers are expected during the coming week.

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