
EARLY WARNING BULLETIN FOR FOOD SECURITY

No. 2019/01

IN THE GAMBIA

Period: May 1-10, 2019



Government of The Gambia

Produced and Published by The Gambia National
Multidisciplinary Working Group

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1. SYNOPTIC SITUATION

The average surface position of the ITD oscillated between Northern Guinea Bissau, and Southern Senegal, western Mali, northern Burkina Faso, and South-western Niger.

Places to the North of the ITD were dry and stable with dust haze reported over Algeria, Niamey and Chad.

To the South of the ITD, rain and thunderstorms characterized the weather over the southern positions of Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria.

2. OUTLOOK FOR THE NEXT DEKAD (11-20 MAY 2019)

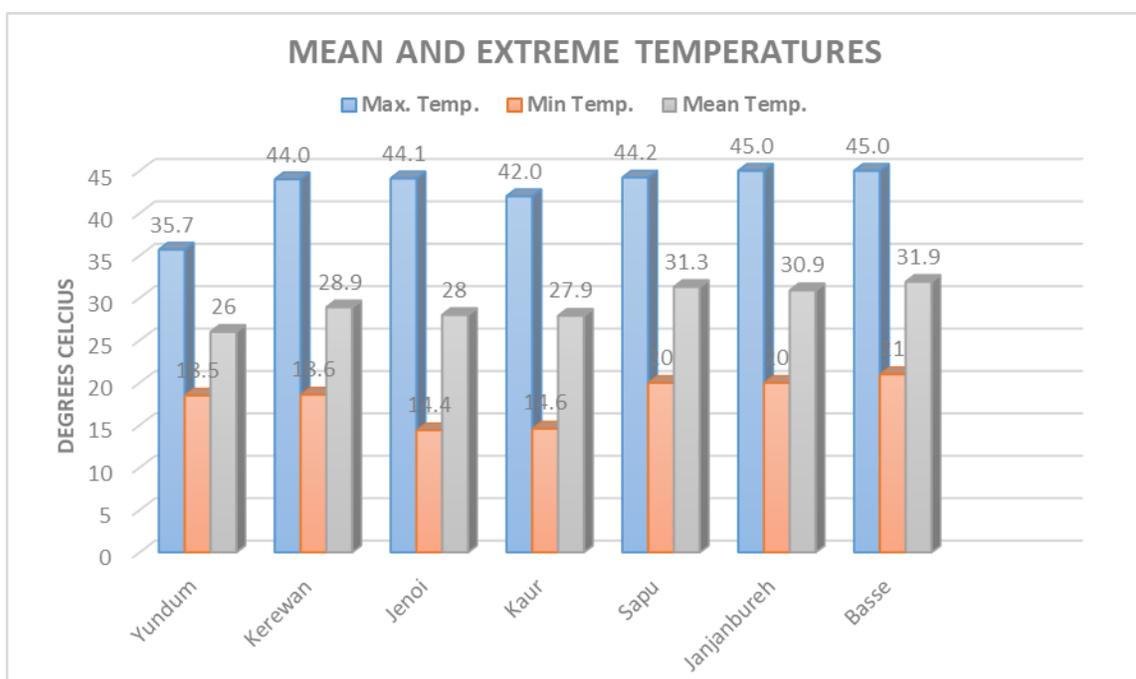
Cool and variably cloudy conditions will prevail in the morning especially over the Coastal region, becoming warm and sunny in the afternoon, particularly over the eastern sector during the period.

3. RAINFALL SITUATION

There was no rainfall recorded throughout the country, depicting the same situation as that of last year (2018) of the same period.

4. AGROMETEOROLOGICAL SITUATION

The mean temperatures recorded during the dekad across the country ranged from 26 °C over Yundum in the Western Third to 31.9°C over Basse in the Eastern Third of the country. However, extreme temperatures recorded were a minimum of 14.4°C over Jenoi in the Middle Third and a maximum of 45°C over Janjanbureh and Basse in the Middle and Eastern Thirds respectively of the country as shown in the figure below.



Winds were generally light to moderate in speed.

Average relative Humidity (RH) recorded during the dekad were 50% to 70% over the Western Third and 40% to 50% in the Middle and Eastern Thirds of the country.

5. AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Agricultural activities that some farmers are currently engage in the country include clearing of fields, seeds acquisition and processing, repairment of farming implements, Vegetable gardening and dry season rice cultivation.

6. Hydrological Situation on the river Gambia

The Hydrology Division continuous to monitor the salinity evolution from Balingho, Kaur and Kuntaur hydrological stations. The saline front evolution is always fluctuating, during the wet season, it moves in the upstream downstream direction (i.e. moving from the current upper limit at Kuntaur towards the river mouth at Banjul). Similarly, by the end of the rainy season in October each year, it begins the downstream upstream movement (i.e. from the mouth to towards Kuntaur).

In view of the above, the immediate post wet season salinity situation at Balingho is presented from 2015 to date. This station is located about 130 km from the river mouth

in Banjul and has an uninterrupted data since 2015. Below is the salinity detection (i.e. date of arrival from downstream) analysis at Balingho hydrological station.

Table 1.0: post wet season salinity detection analysis at Balingho Hydrological station

Station	Wet Season	Date of Salinity Detection	Salinity amount (PSU)
Balingho	2015	4 th January, 2016	2.72
	2016	19 th January, 2017	2.01
	2017	12 th December, 2017	2.13
	2018	24 th December, 2018	2.27

From the table above, it shows that the last two years (2017, 2018), the salinity arrives earlier than the previous two years (2015, 2016). At this juncture, it will be premature to attribute this shift to a particular factor. Nonetheless, the other stations upstream of Balingho (i.e. Kaur and Kuntaur, all lying within the seasonal saline fluctuation zone) also detected it earlier than the previous years. Overall, as the dry season progresses, the salinity level continuous to increase at Balingho, Kaur and would ultimately reach Kuntaur (250 km from the river mouth) by mid-June to mid-July, which is the current upper limit of the saline front.

Consequently with increased fresh water withdrawals from river couple with reduced rainfall will no doubt result to the saline front continuing moving upstream.

Furthermore, the current inflow of freshwater from upstream of the river Gambia is insignificant, therefore present mean daily water level is declining and water level fluctuation is strongly influenced by tidal effect from the sea causing higher amplitude across all the stations. Meanwhile, the division will continue to monitor the situation as it evolves and would contribute to the subsequent bulletins as the season progresses.

7. LIVESTOCK SITUATION:

Farmers have begun clearing agricultural fields in preparation of farming activities in the forth coming rainy season, thus imposing difficulties on livestock feed which may cause low milk production as well as weaknesses to livestock.

Banjul, May 15, 2019

National MWG of The Gambia

Composition of MWG:

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Planning Services - Department of Agriculture (DOA)
Department of Livestock Services
Plant Protection Services - DOA
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