



**INSTITUTE
FOR SOIL,
CLIMATE
AND WATER**

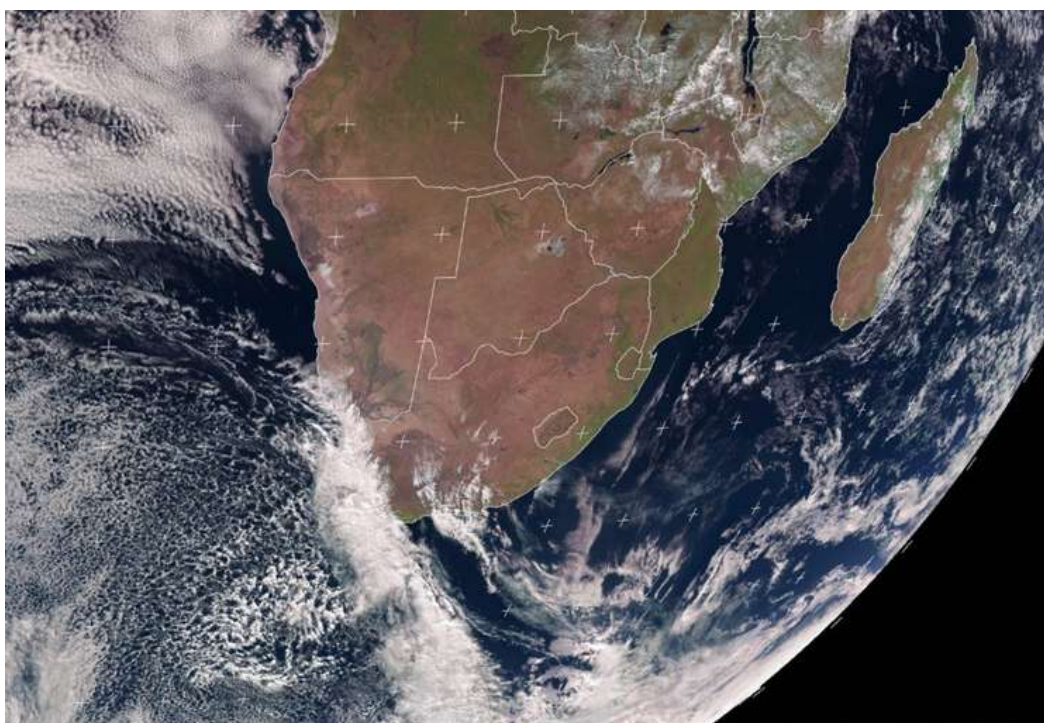
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Image of the Month

Wintry weather grips parts of the country

A strong cold front made landfall over the Western Cape on 12 July 2021 (as visible on the Meteosat 0-degree natural colour enhanced image for 12:00 SAST below) and resulted in widespread rain with strong winds over the winter rainfall region, snow over the mountain ranges and a cold spell over the interior of the country. Widespread precipitation occurred over the aforementioned region, with stations in and around Ceres recording rainfall totals of >100 mm (since 1 July). The rainy conditions resulted in localized flooding and disruption to infrastructure over vulnerable areas. Disruptive snowfalls occurred over the mountainous regions of the Cape provinces, with minimum temperatures dropping as low as -8°C. Moreover, colder night and morning conditions started to occur on the 13th as temperatures over the interior dropped due to the invasion of cold dry air from the west, resulting in severe frost over the central interior. Areas that experienced sub-zero minimum temperatures since 12 July include parts of the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, North West and Northern Cape. Farmers are advised to monitor TV and local radio stations for information regarding severe storms/flash floods, strong winds and extreme temperatures in their regions. Moreover, it is advisable to stay well informed about livestock in their possession and to do an inventory after every frontal passage.



EUMETSAT

Meteosat 0deg Natural Colour, 2021-07-12 10:00:00 UTC



205th Edition

Overview:

Rainfall totals continue to decrease over the summer rainfall region with winter weather patterns now in full swing. However, the eastern parts of the country experienced above-normal rainfall during the month of June 2021. Similar to the same period last year, although Mpumalanga received rainfall totals of <50 mm, this is above normal relative to the long-term mean for the area. North West and northern parts of the Northern Cape followed a similar pattern, with thick bands of clouds bringing in showers and recording above-normal rainfall totals of up to 26 mm. Other provinces in the summer rainfall region that experienced similar but more intense conditions were KwaZulu-Natal and the adjacent northern regions of the Eastern Cape. In KZN, areas that recorded >150 mm for the month include Margate, Pennington and Port Edward. Along the Wild Coast in the Eastern Cape, Coffee Bay recorded a total of 140 mm.

As climatologically expected, most significant rainfall activity produced by a series of cold fronts was experienced over the winter rainfall region. Much of this activity occurred during the latter half of the month, particularly following a cold front that made landfall on 22 June. These rainy conditions were accompanied by strong winds over the central and little Karoo as well as the central parts of the Northern Cape. Areas over the winter rainfall region that recorded >200 mm for the month include Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden and Ceres, with 278 and 252 mm respectively. Totals were somewhat lower along the Garden Route. However, in general, near-to above-normal rainfall conditions were experienced over this particular region, with the all-year rainfall region experiencing below-normal rainfall.

1. Rainfall

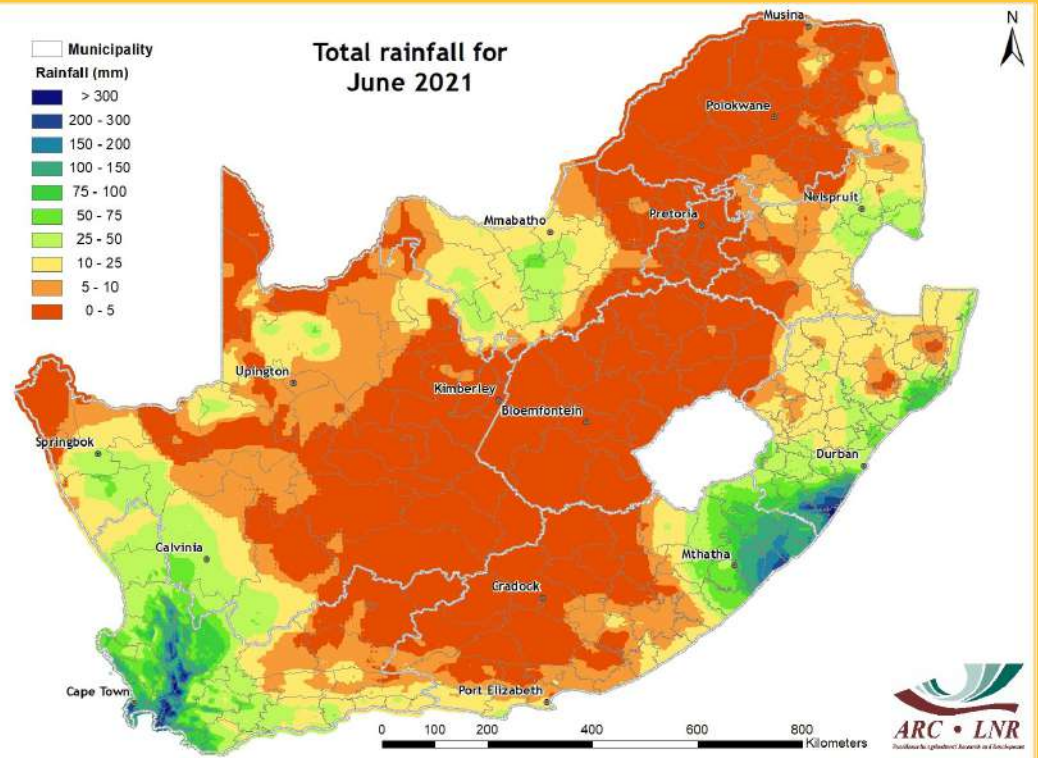


Figure 1

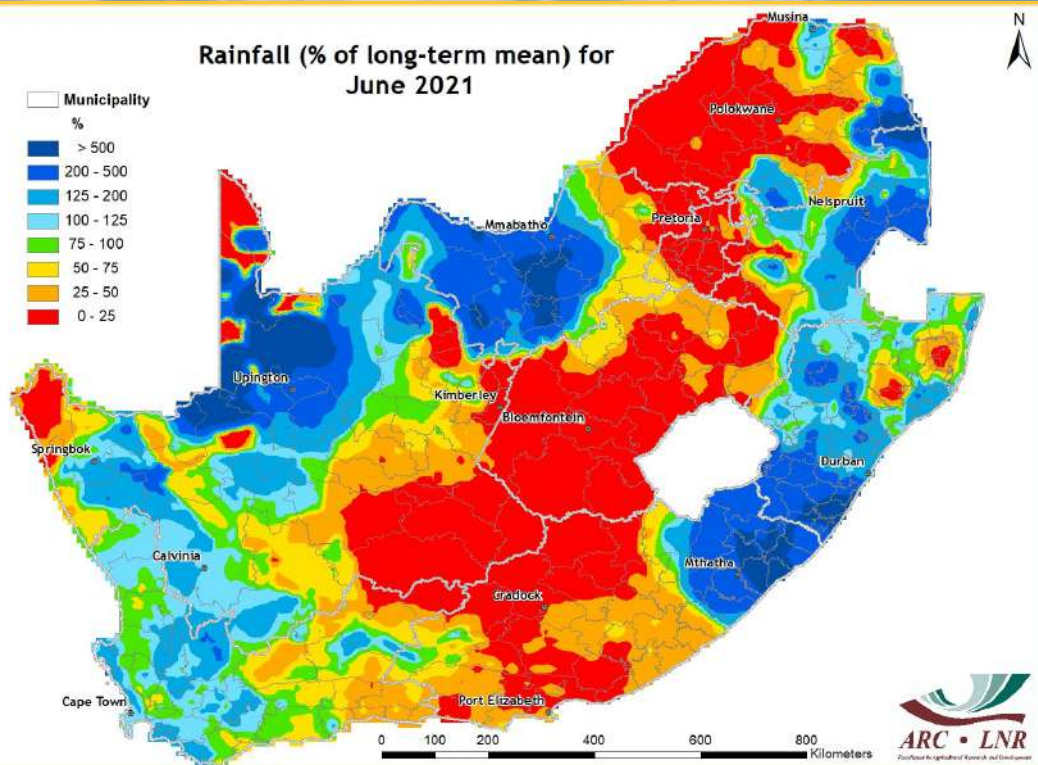


Figure 2

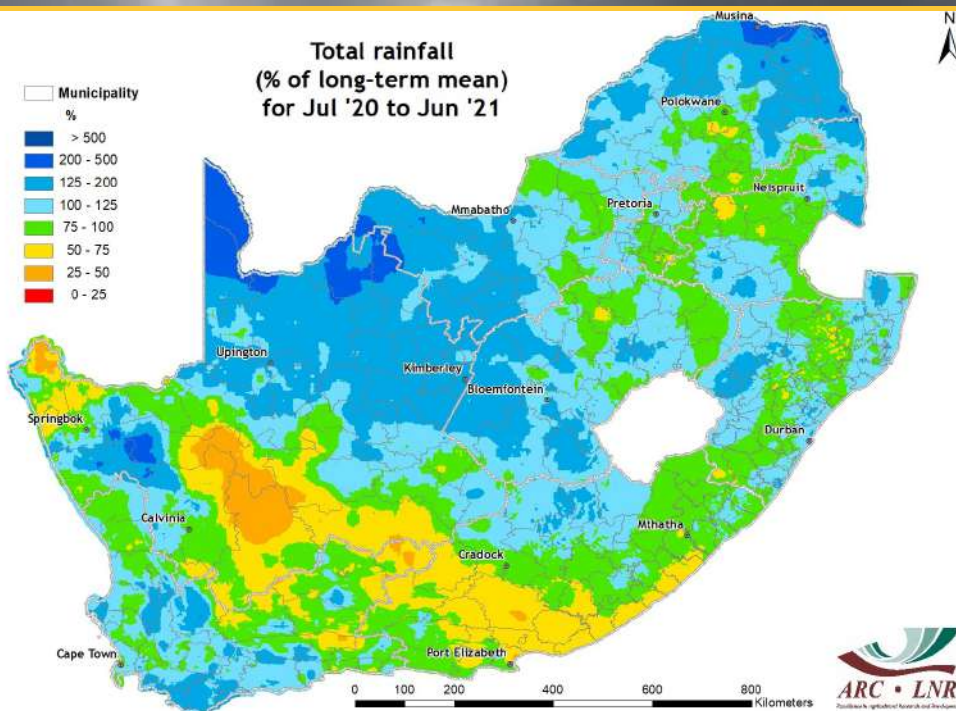


Figure 3

Figure 1:

Rainfall totals in June over the summer rainfall region remained below 50 mm for the most part, except for the coastal areas of KZN and northern Eastern Cape which received in excess of 100 mm for the month. Most of the winter rainfall region received good rainfall with some areas exceeding 200 mm.

Figure 2:

Below-normal rainfall was experienced over parts of the all-year and summer rainfall regions. The latter include areas such as Limpopo, Gauteng, extending towards the Free State, and eastern parts of the Northern and Eastern Cape. Near- to above-normal conditions were notable over the eastern (Mpumalanga, KZN and Eastern Cape) and northwestern parts (North West and Northern Cape) of the country, as well as the winter rainfall region.

Figure 3:

Rainfall totals for the period between July 2020 and June 2021 indicate that near- to above-normal conditions were prevalent over greater parts of the country. Below-normal conditions were only experienced over the Karoo and the Eastern Midlands.

Figure 4:

When comparing rainfall during April to June 2021 with that of the previous year, it can be seen that areas that received more rain of >100 mm were the southwestern parts of the country, particularly the Winelands and Overberg District Municipalities. Moreover, areas along the Wild Coast received in excess of 150 mm. Meanwhile, the Highveld, southern parts of the Free State and northern KZN recorded a difference of -100 mm. The rest of the country received relatively the same amount of rainfall as last year.

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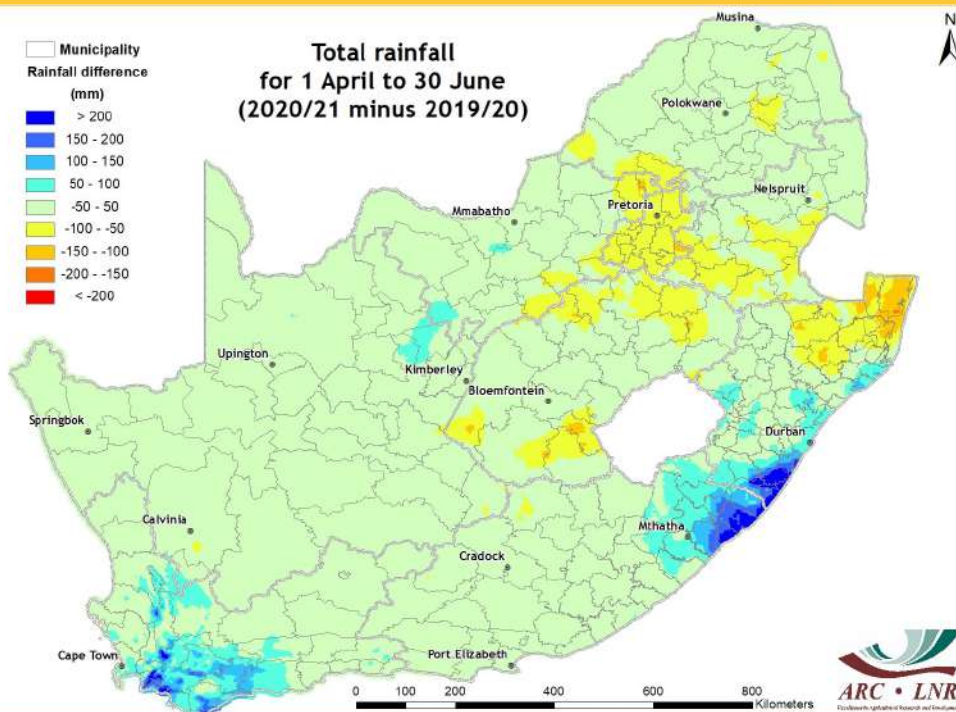


Figure 4

Standardized Precipitation Index

The Standardized Precipitation Index (SPI - McKee *et al.*, 1993) was developed to monitor the occurrence of droughts from rainfall data. The index quantifies precipitation deficits on different time scales and therefore also drought severity. It provides an indication of rainfall conditions per quaternary catchment (in this case) based on the historical distribution of rainfall.

REFERENCE:

McKee TB, Doesken NJ and Kliest J (1993) The relationship of drought frequency and duration to time scales. In: Proceedings of the 8th Conference on Applied Climatology, 17-22 January, Anaheim, CA. American Meteorological Society: Boston, MA; 179-184.

The SPI maps revealing short-term (6-month SPI), medium-term (12-month SPI) and long-term (24-month and 36-month SPI) drought conditions are shown in Figures 5-8. SPI ending in June 2021 showed short-term wet conditions over much of the summer rainfall region, with areas in central and southern Limpopo, extending towards the eastern parts of the Highveld, reflecting mild drought conditions. The 12-month SPI showed prevailing moderate to severely wet conditions over the northern interior as well as the Lowveld of Limpopo. The 12-month SPI showed prevailing moderate to severely wet conditions over the northern interior and parts of the Lowveld experienced mild to severely wet conditions, while moderate to severe drought was visible over western regions of the country, parts of the Eastern Cape, KZN and the interior of Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

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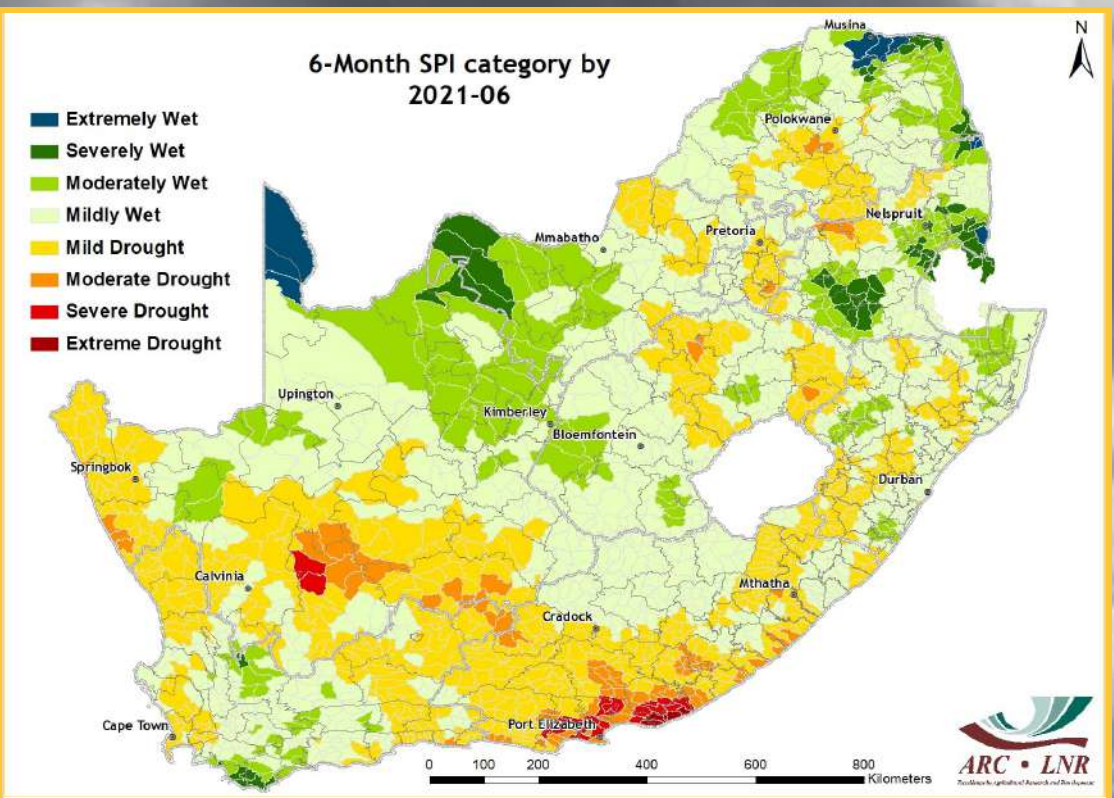


Figure 5

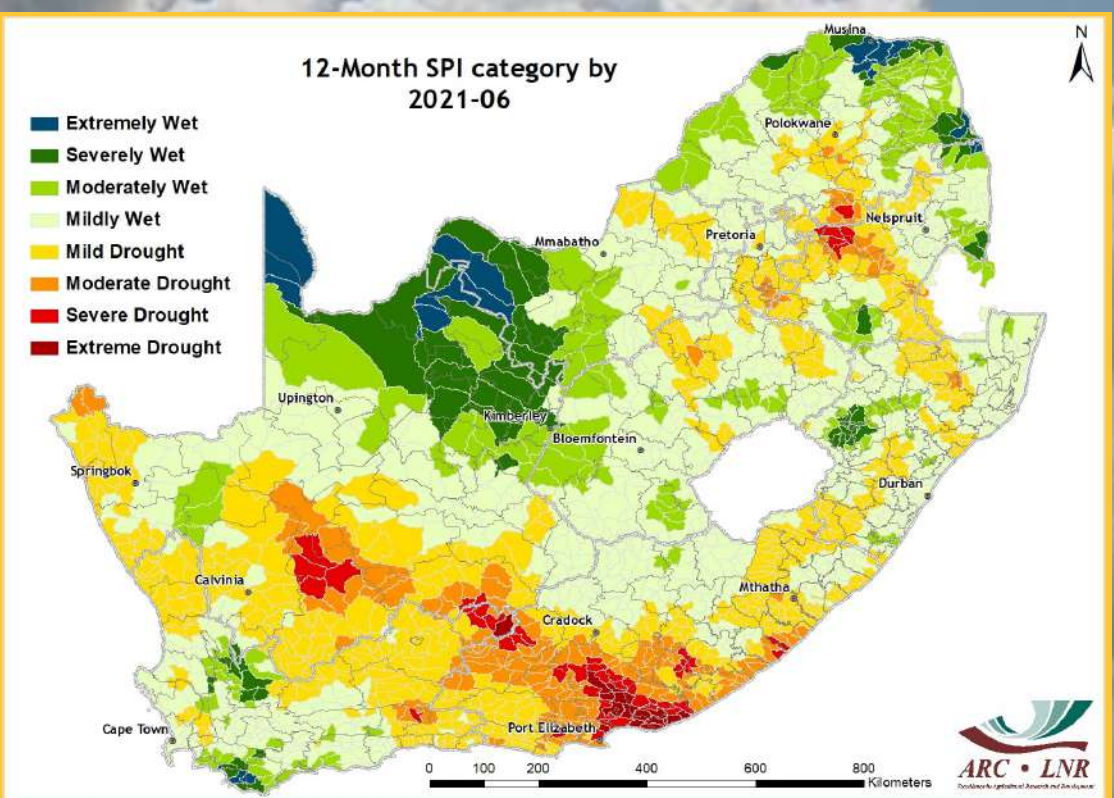


Figure 6

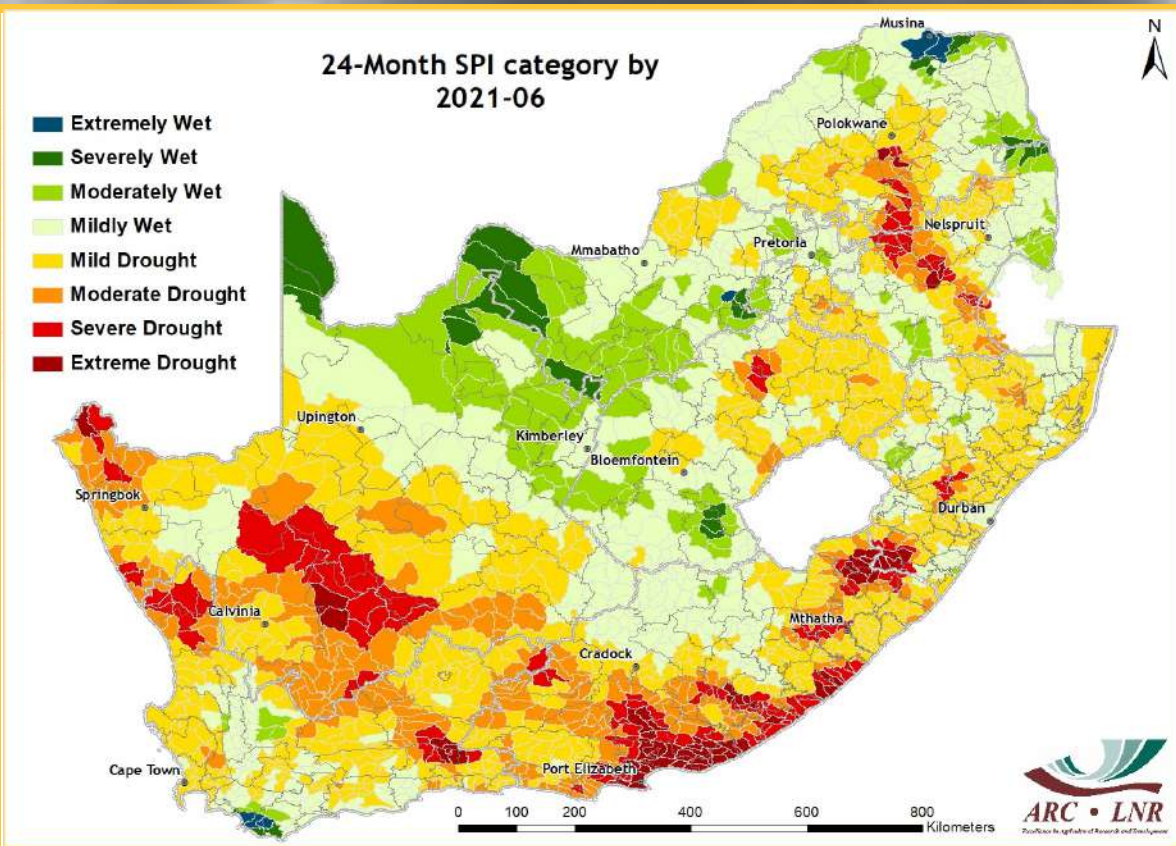


Figure 7

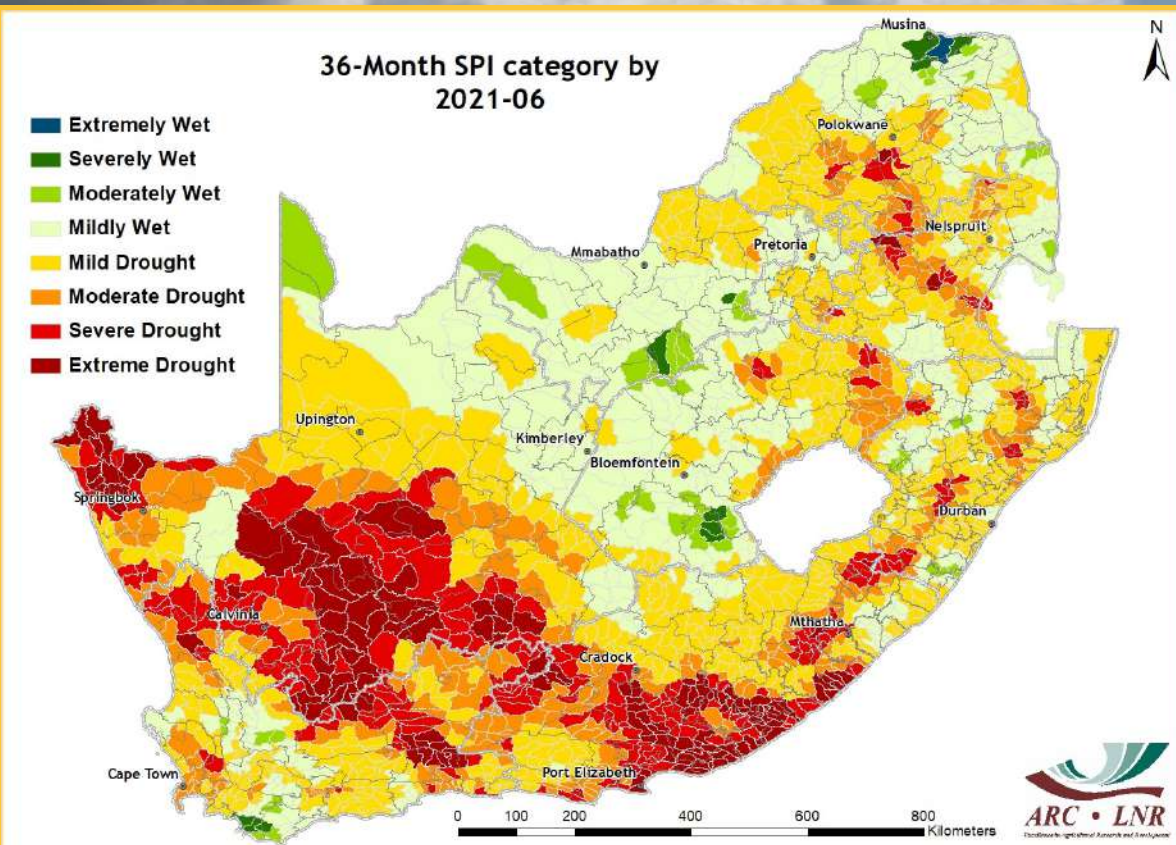


Figure 8

Deciles are used to express the ranking of rainfall for a specific period in terms of the historical time series. In the map, a value of 5 represents the median value for the time series. A value of 1 refers to the rainfall being as low or lower than experienced in the driest 10% of a particular month historically (even possibly the lowest on record for some areas), while a value of 10 represents rainfall as high as the value recorded only in the wettest 10% of the same period in the past (or even the highest on record). It therefore adds a measure of significance to the rainfall deviation.

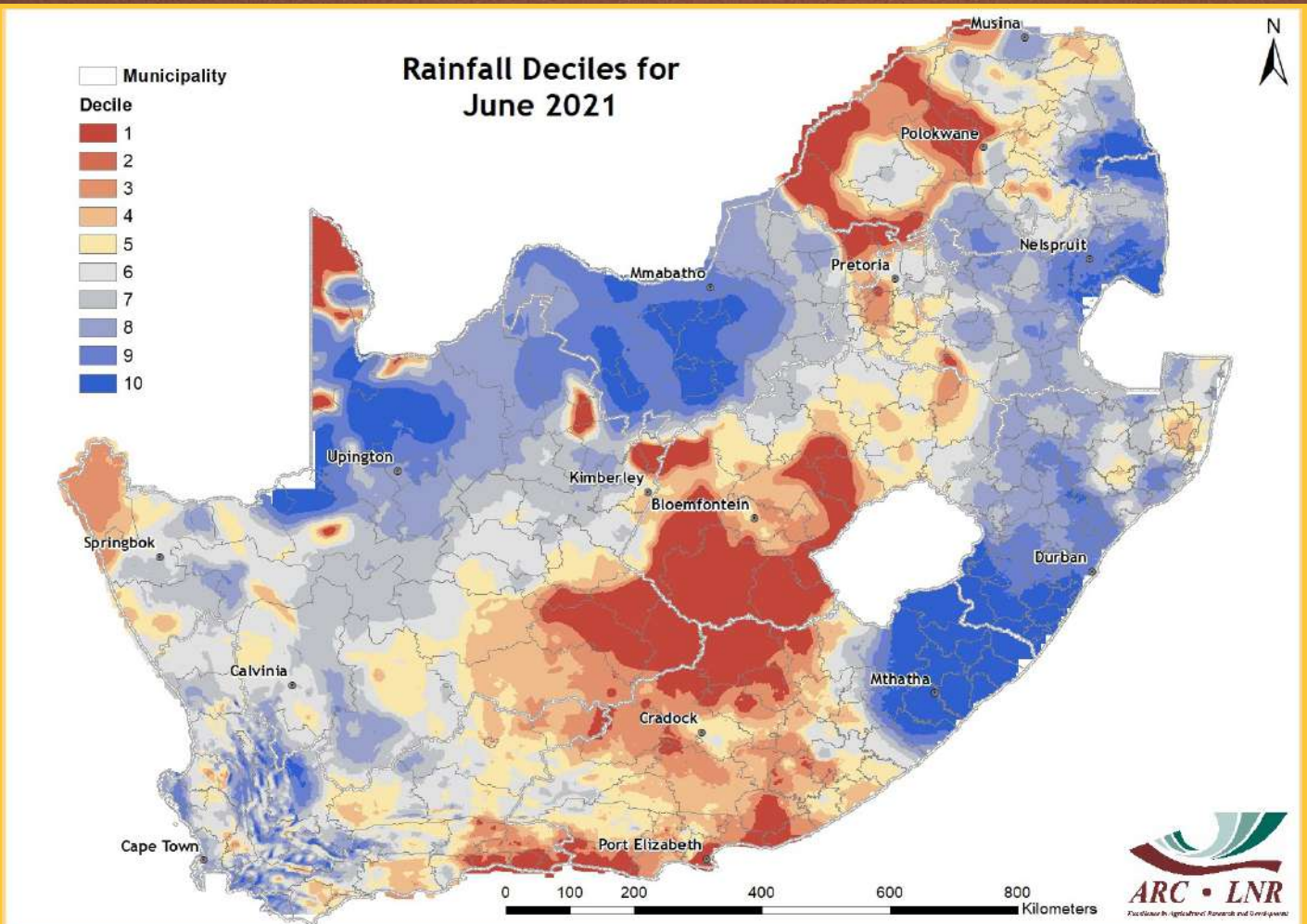


Figure 9

Figure 9:

Northern parts of the country, extending to the central and southern interior as well as areas along the all-year rainfall region, experienced rainfall totals that compare well with historically drier June months. The rest of the country experienced rainfall totals that compare well with historically wetter June months.

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Vegetation Mapping

The Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI) is computed from the equation:

$$NDVI = \frac{IR - R}{IR + R}$$

where:

IR = Infrared reflectance &
R = Red band

NDVI images describe the vegetation activity. A decadal NDVI image shows the highest possible "greenness" values that have been measured during a 10-day period.

Vegetated areas will generally yield high values because of their relatively high near infrared reflectance and low visible reflectance. For better interpretation and understanding of the NDVI images, a temporal image difference approach for change detection is used.

The Standardized Difference Vegetation Index (SDVI) is the standardized anomaly (according to the specific time of the year) of the NDVI.

4. Vegetation Conditions

Standardized Difference Vegetation Index (SDVI) for 1 - 30 June 2021 compared to the long-term (22 years) mean

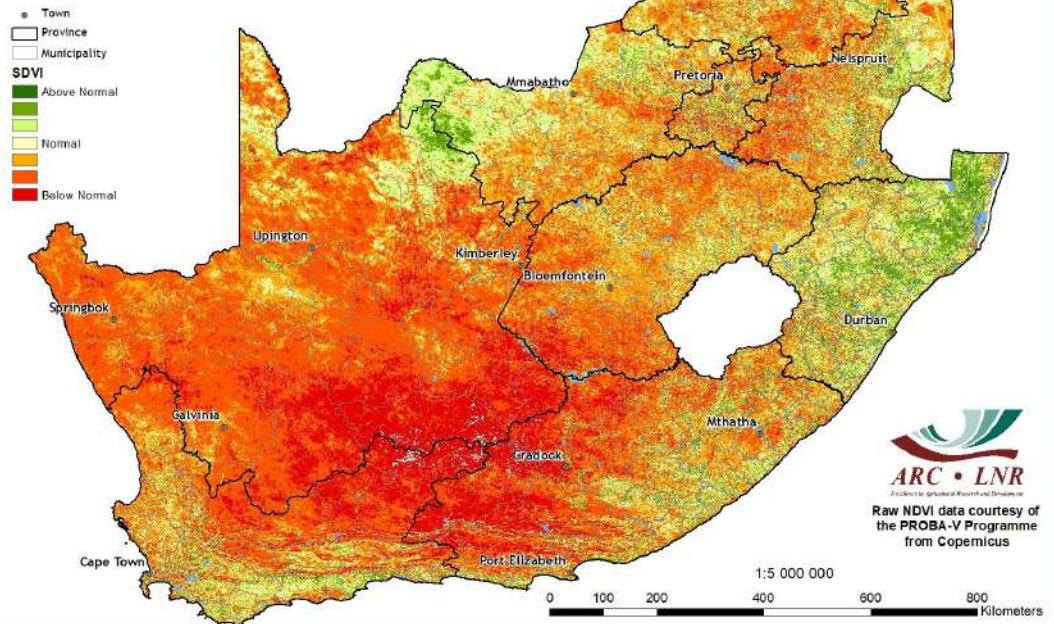


Figure 10

Figure 10:

Compared to the historical averaged vegetation conditions, the SDVI map for June 2021 shows that large parts of the country experienced below-normal vegetation activity.

Figure 11:

When comparing the NDVI difference map for June 2021 to the same month last year, it can be observed that the central interior and eastern parts of the country experienced below-normal vegetation activity, with pockets of above-normal activity in the western and far eastern parts of the country.

NDVI difference map for 1 - 30 June 2021 compared to 1 - 30 June 2020

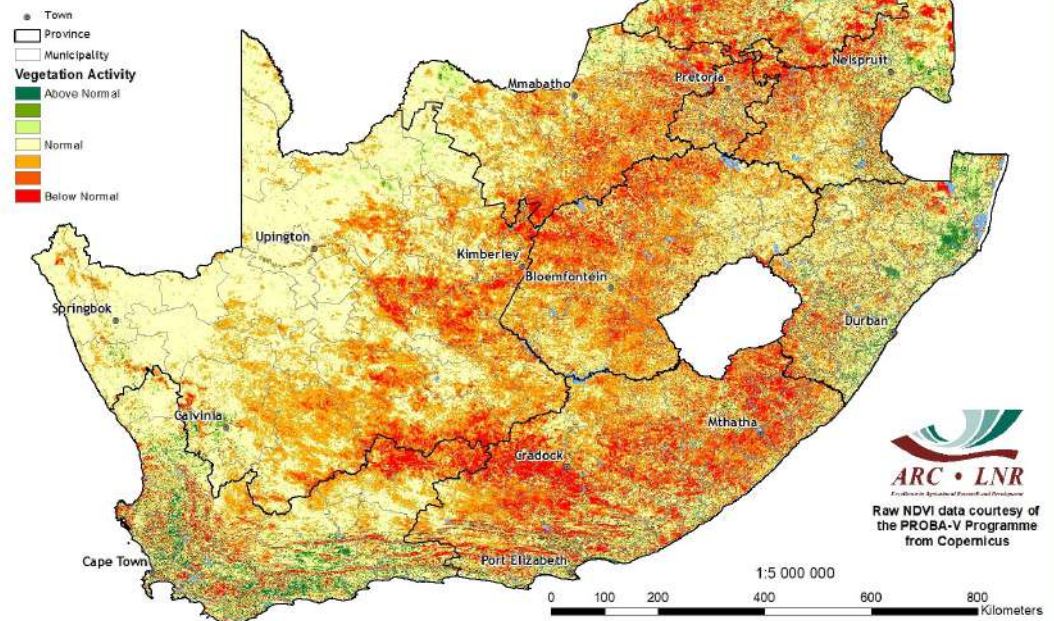
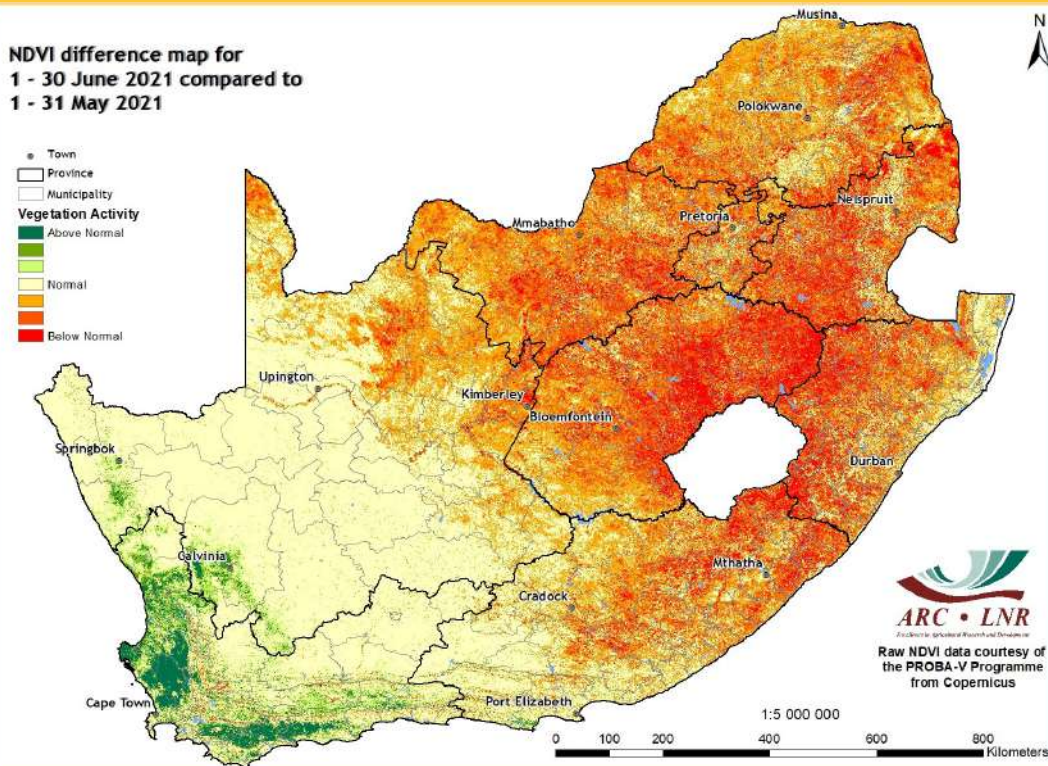


Figure 11



Vegetation Mapping
(continued from p. 7)

Interpretation of map legend

NDVI-based values range between 0 and 1. These values are incorporated in the legend of the difference maps, ranging from -1 (lower vegetation activity) to 1 (higher vegetation activity) with 0 indicating normal/the same vegetation activity or no significant difference between the images.

Cumulative NDVI maps:

Two cumulative NDVI datasets have been created for drought monitoring purposes:

Winter: January to December
Summer: July to June

Figure 12

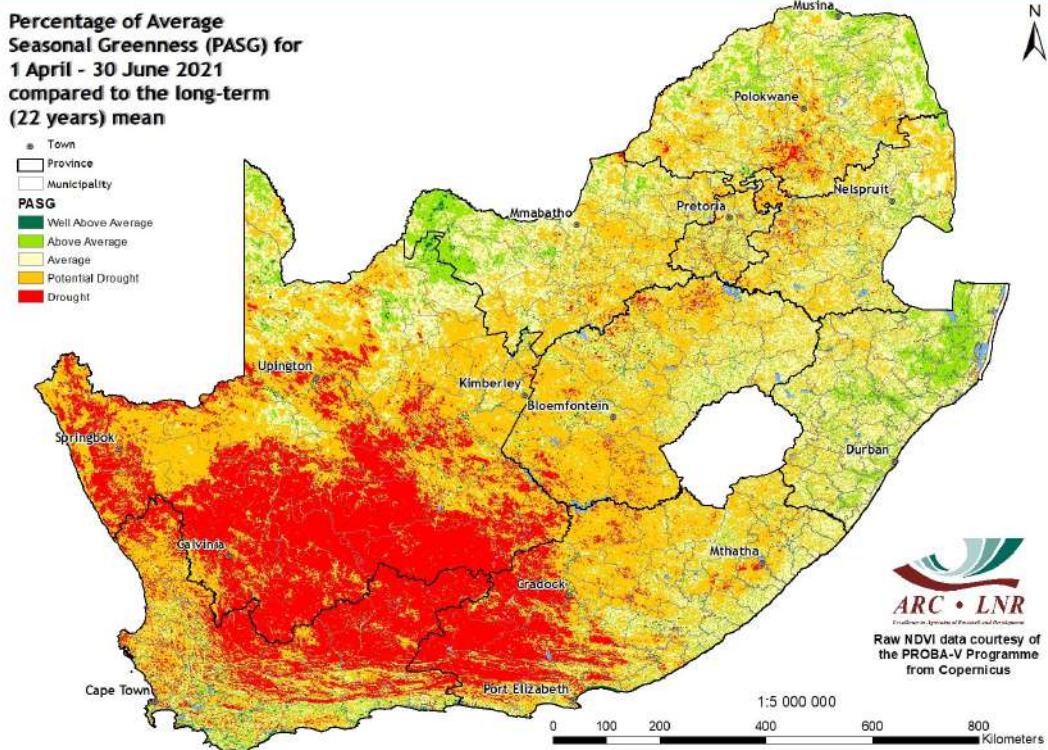


Figure 12: Compared to the previous month, the NDVI difference map for June shows that the eastern half of the country experienced below-normal vegetation activity while the western half experienced normal and above-normal vegetation activity.

Figure 13: Cumulative vegetation conditions over a 3-month period compared to the long-term mean show that high levels of seasonal vegetation greenness remain dominant in the northern parts of the country. However, the central parts of the country are experiencing potential drought, while the western parts continue to experience low levels of seasonal greenness.

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Figure 13

Vegetation Condition Index (VCI)

The VCI is an indicator of the vigour of the vegetation cover as a function of the NDVI minimum and maximum encountered for a specific pixel and for a specific period, calculated over many years.

The VCI normalizes the NDVI according to its changeability over many years and results in a consistent index for various land cover types. It is an effort to split the short-term weather-related signal from the long-term climatological signal as reflected by the vegetation. The VCI is a better indicator of water stress than the NDVI.

Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) for 1 - 30 June 2021 compared to the long-term (22 years) mean

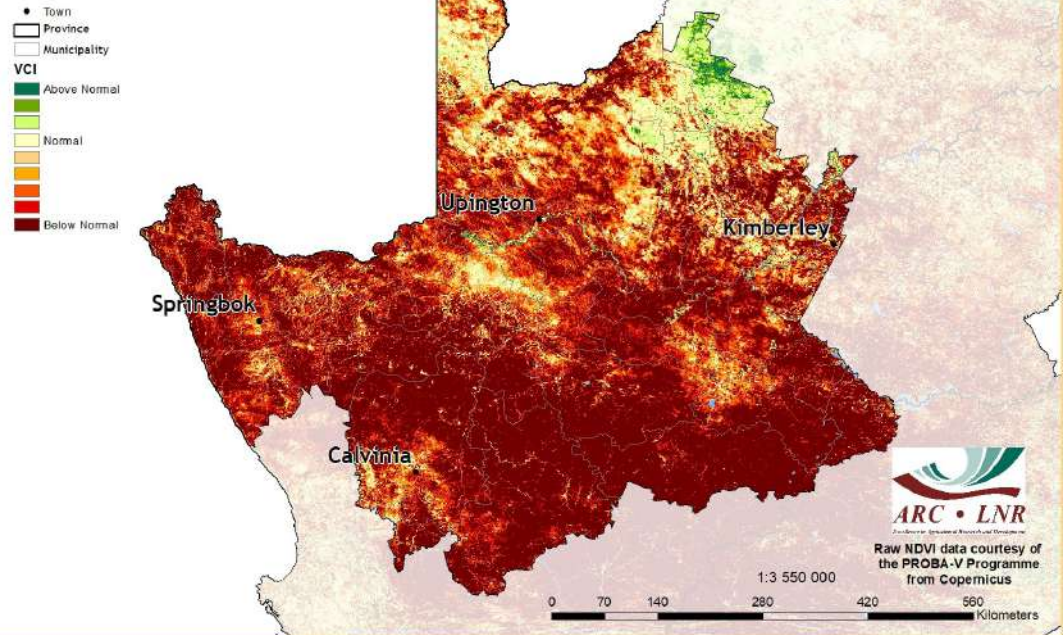


Figure 14

Figure 14:

The VCI map for June indicates that the far northeastern parts of the Northern Cape continue to experience improved vegetation conditions while the remaining areas are still severely affected by drought.

Figure 15:

The VCI map for June indicates that vegetation conditions in almost the entire Western Cape remain poor with only pockets of good vegetation conditions in isolated areas of the southern parts.

Vegetation Condition Index (VCI) for 1 - 30 June 2021 compared to the long-term (22 years) mean

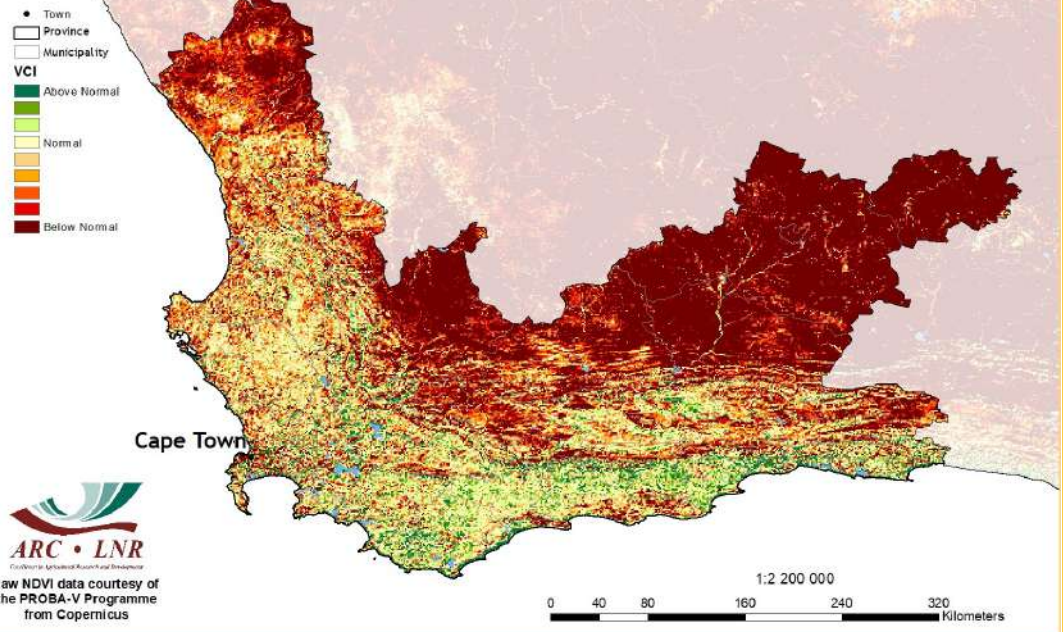


Figure 15

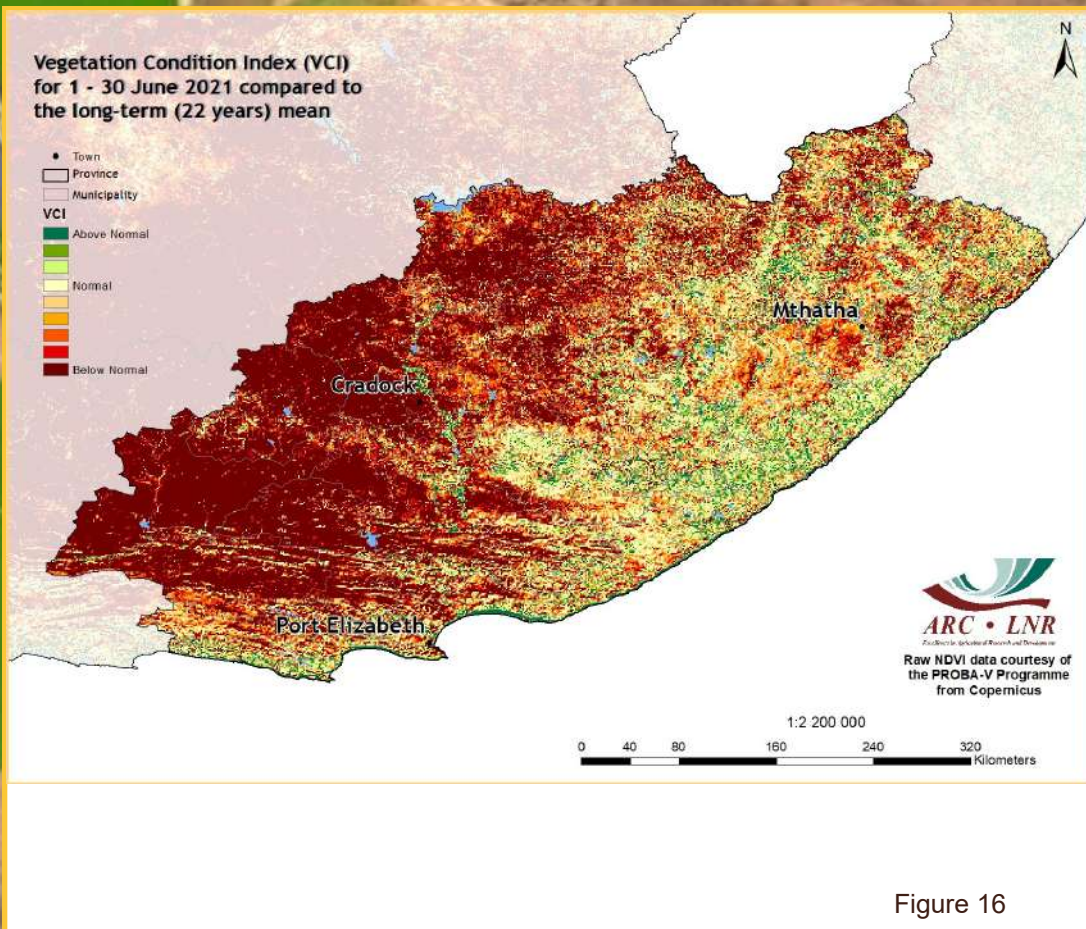


Figure 16

Figure 16:
 The VCI map for June indicates that almost the entire Eastern Cape continues to experience poor vegetation conditions with pockets of good vegetation conditions in the eastern parts of the province.

Figure 17:
 The VCI map for June indicates that poor vegetation conditions continue to spread across the Free State province.

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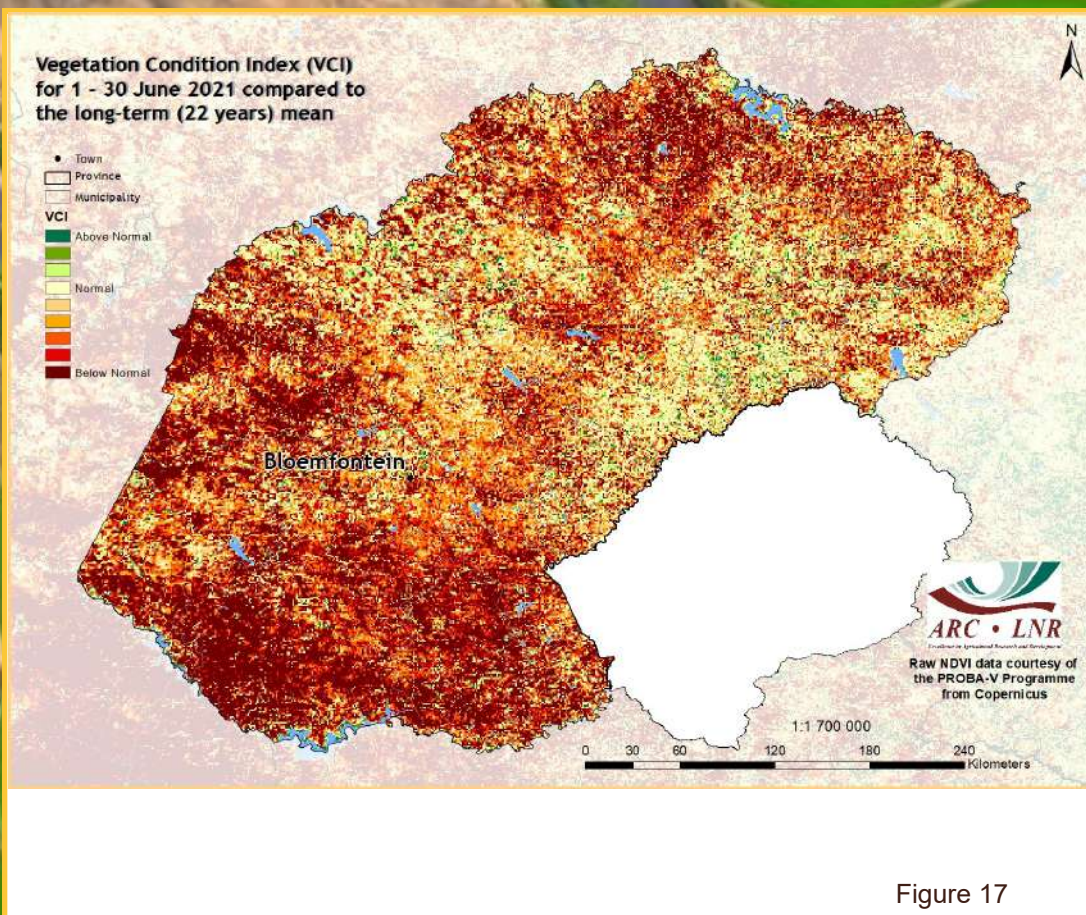


Figure 17

6. Vegetation Conditions & Rainfall

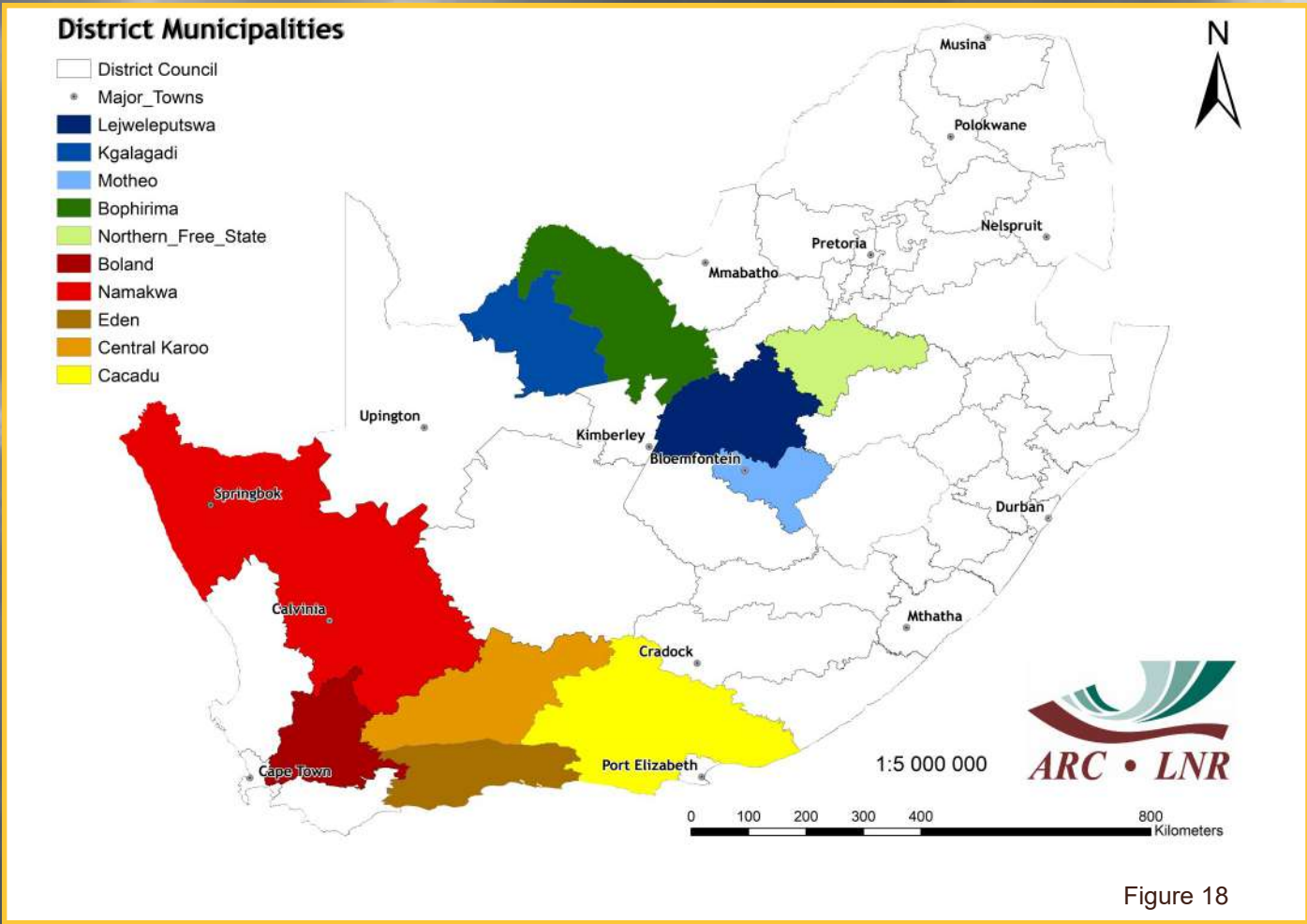


Figure 18

Rainfall and NDVI Graphs

Figure 18: Orientation map showing the areas of interest for June 2021. The district colour matches the border of the corresponding graph.

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Figures 19-23: Indicate areas with higher cumulative vegetation activity for the last year.

Figures 24-28: Indicate areas with lower cumulative vegetation activity for the last year.

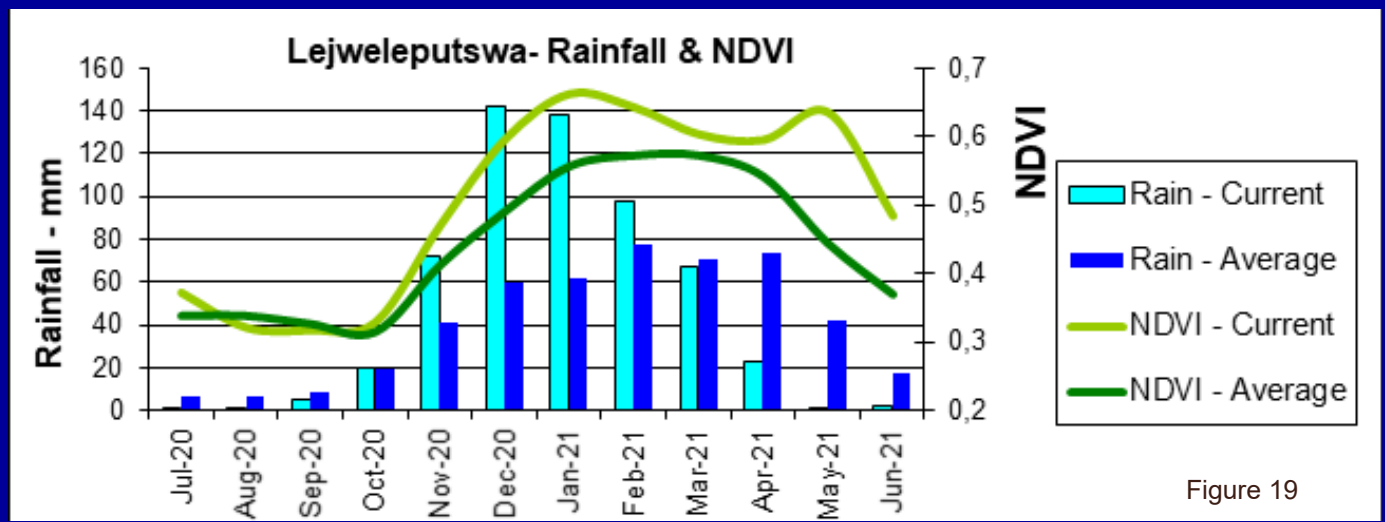
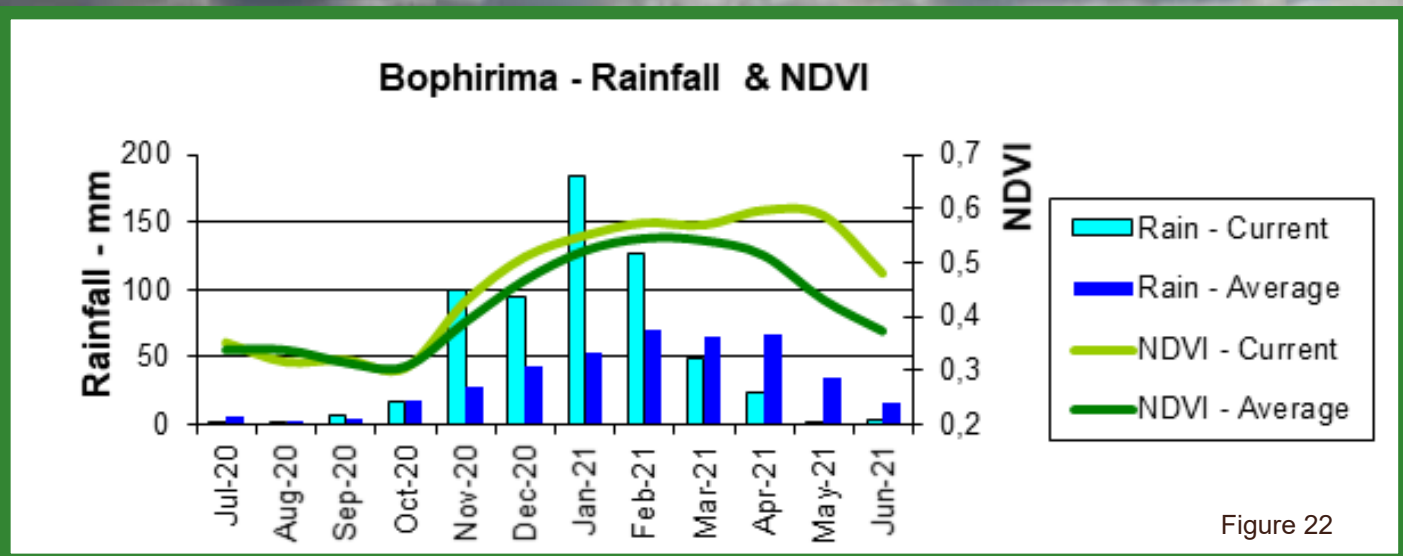
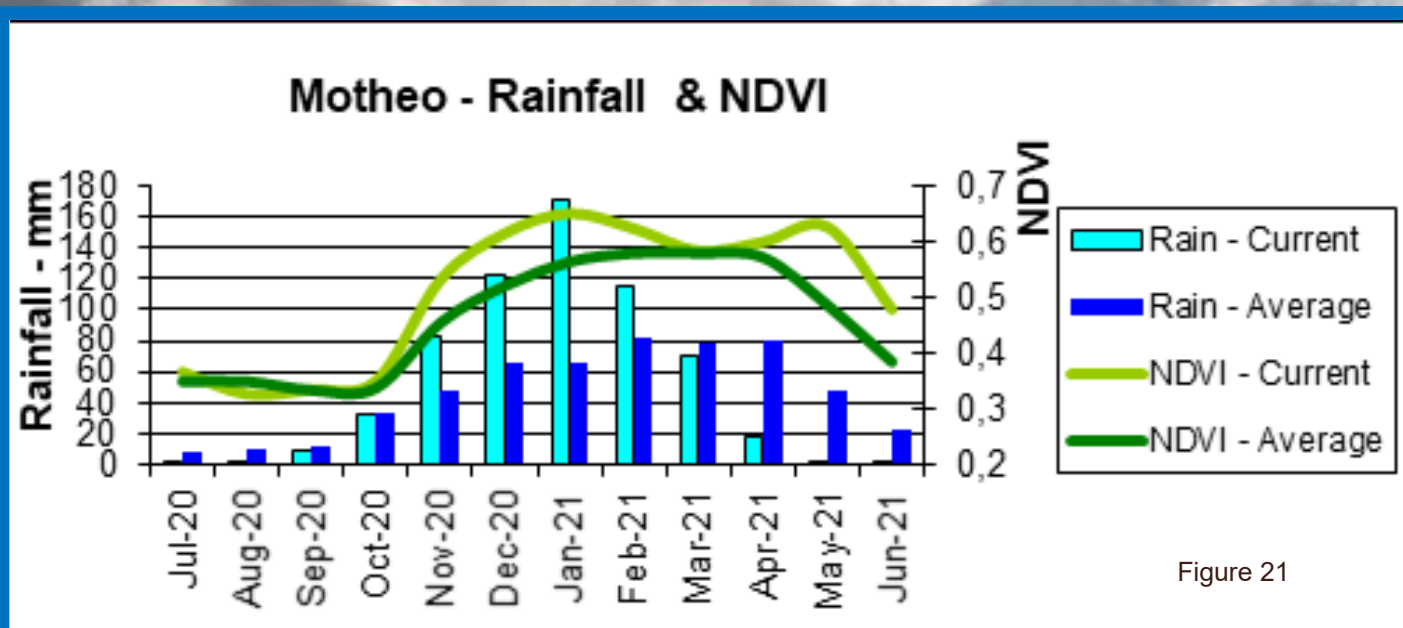
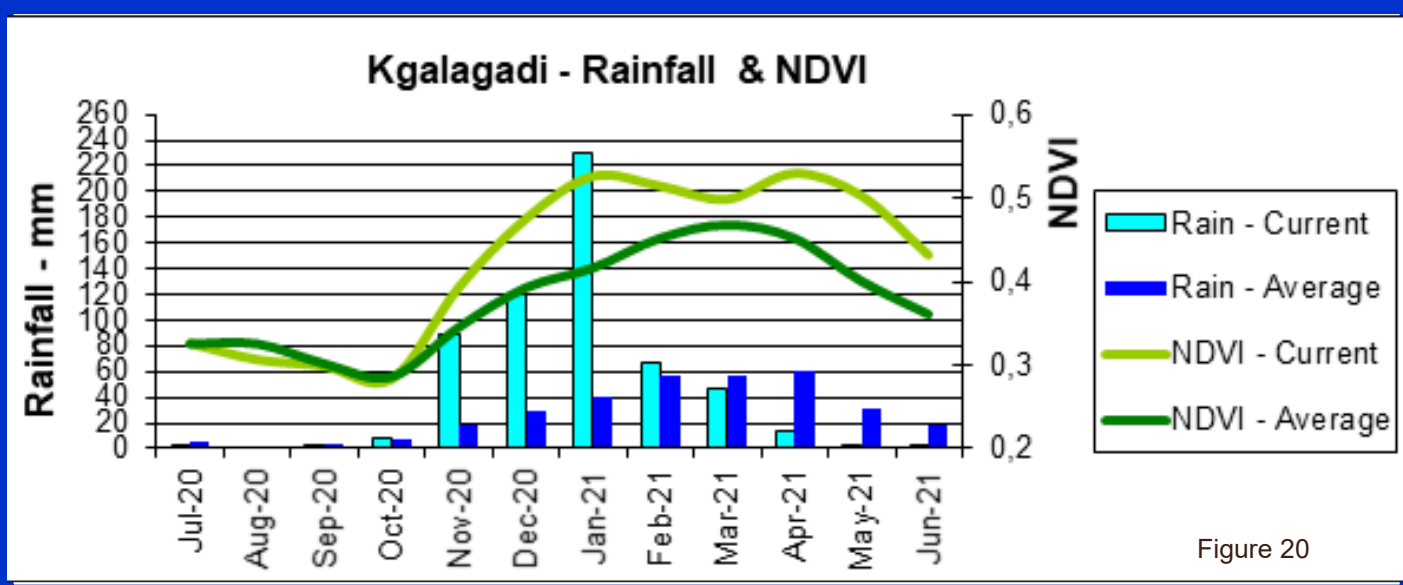


Figure 19



Northern Free State - Rainfall & NDVI

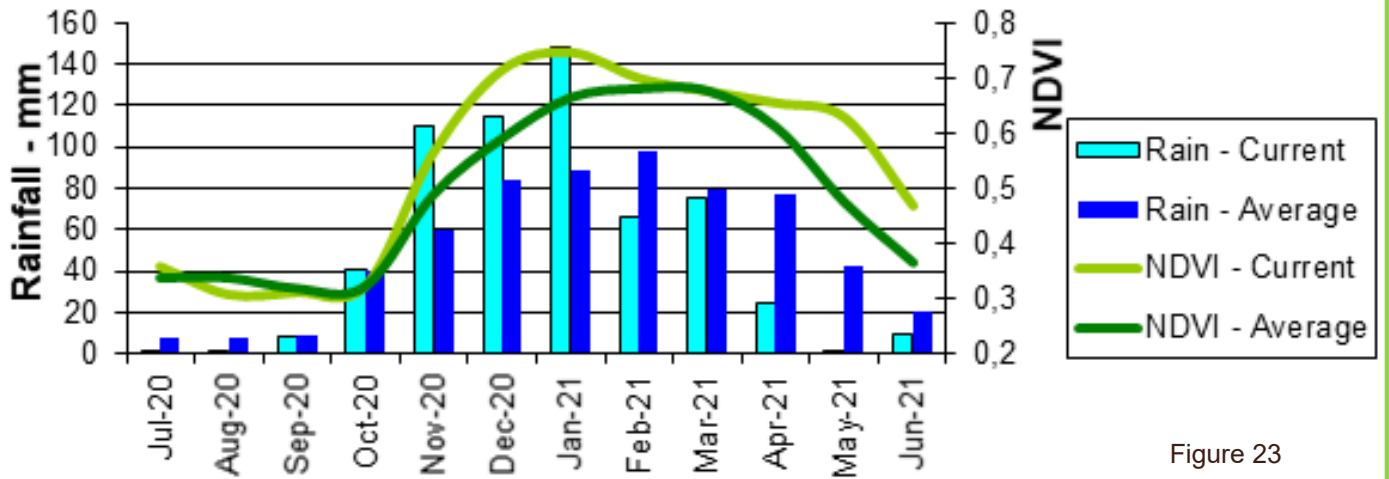


Figure 23

Boland - Rainfall & NDVI

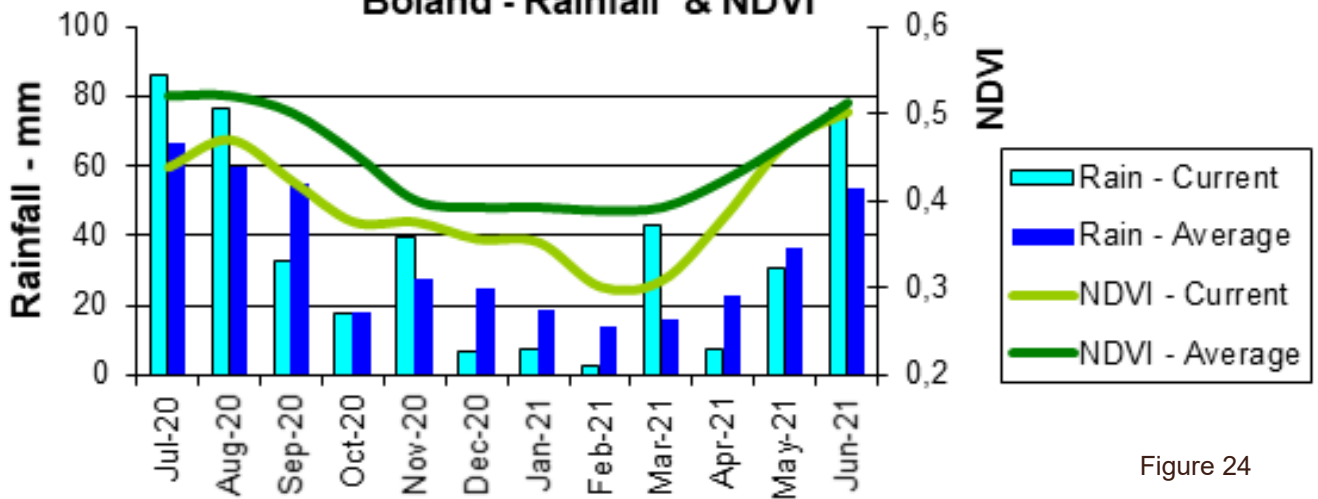


Figure 24

Namakwa - Rainfall & NDVI

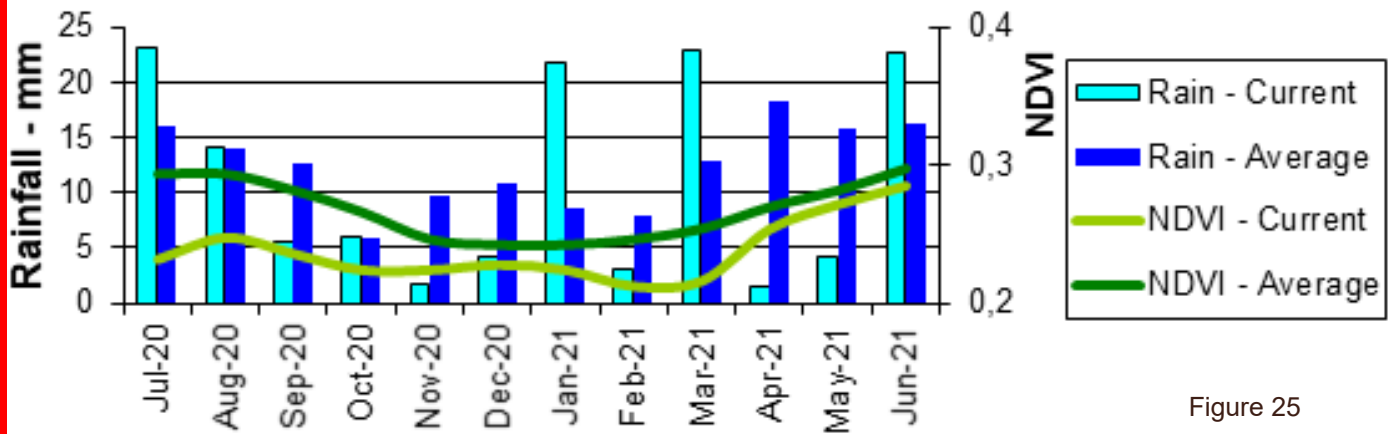


Figure 25

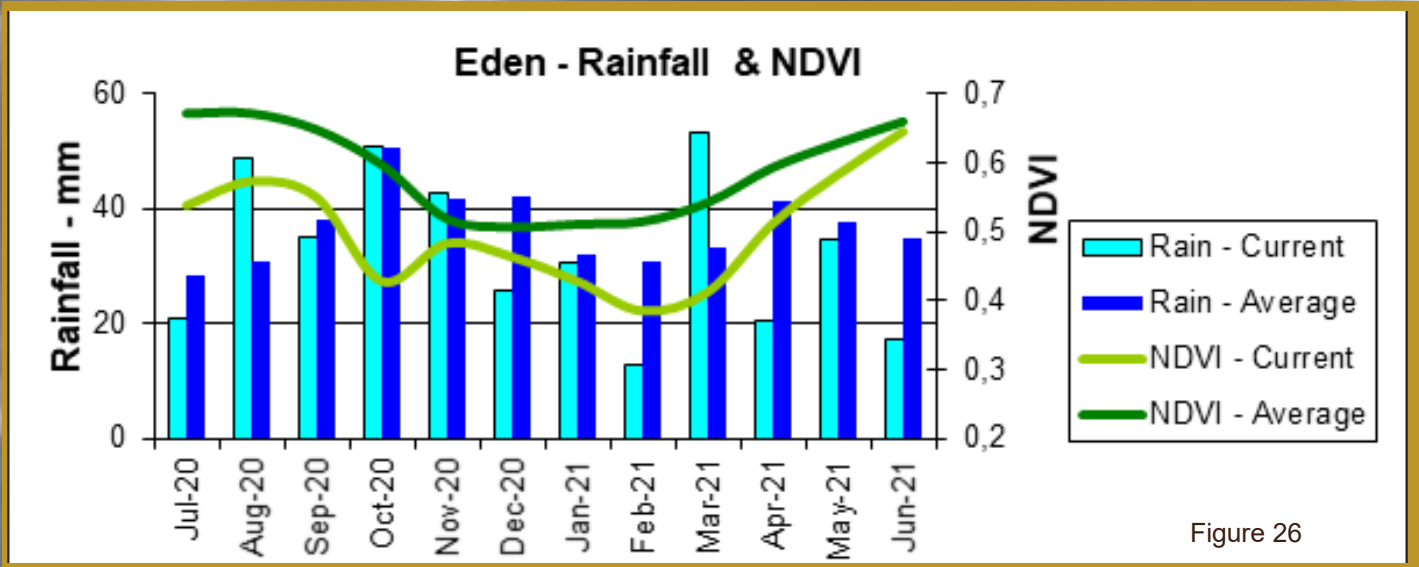


Figure 26

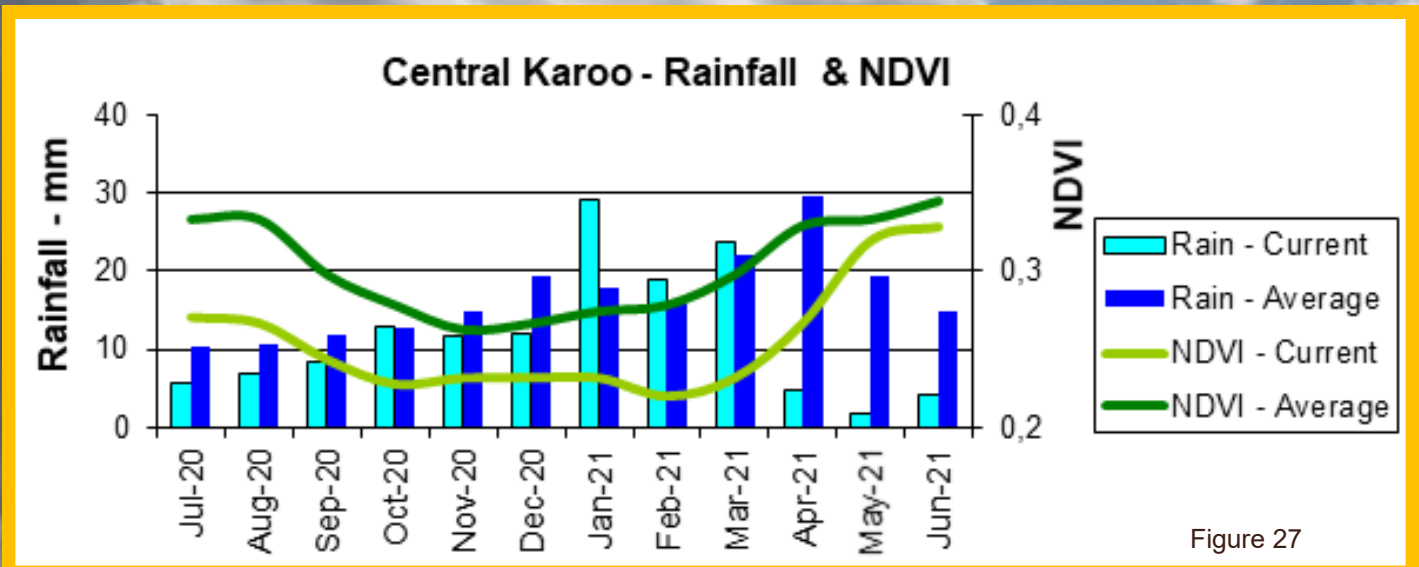


Figure 27

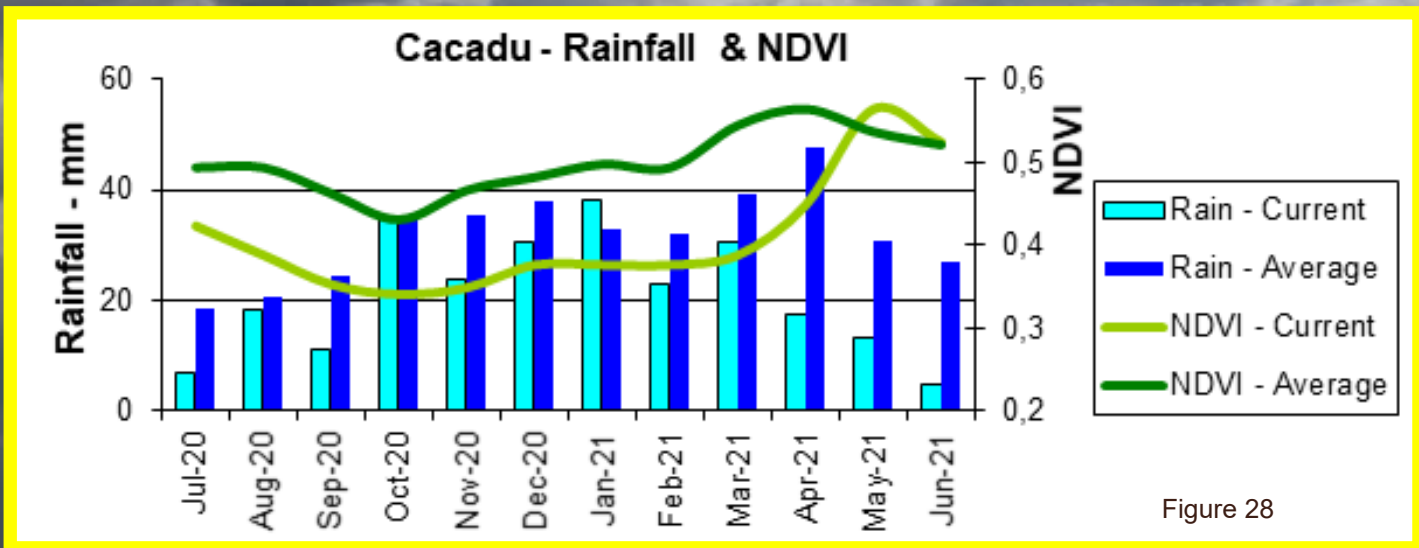


Figure 28

Active Fires (Provided when data is available)

Forest and vegetation fires have temperatures in the range of 500 K (Kelvin) to 1000 K. According to Wien's Displacement Law, the peak emission of radiance for blackbody surfaces of such temperatures is at around 4 μm . For an ambient temperature of 290 K, the peak of radiance emission is located at approximately 11 μm . Active fire detection algorithms from remote sensing use this behaviour to detect "hot spot" fires.

Figure 29:

The graph shows the total number of active fires detected between 1-30 June 2021 per province. Fire activity was higher in the Free State, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape compared to the long-term average.

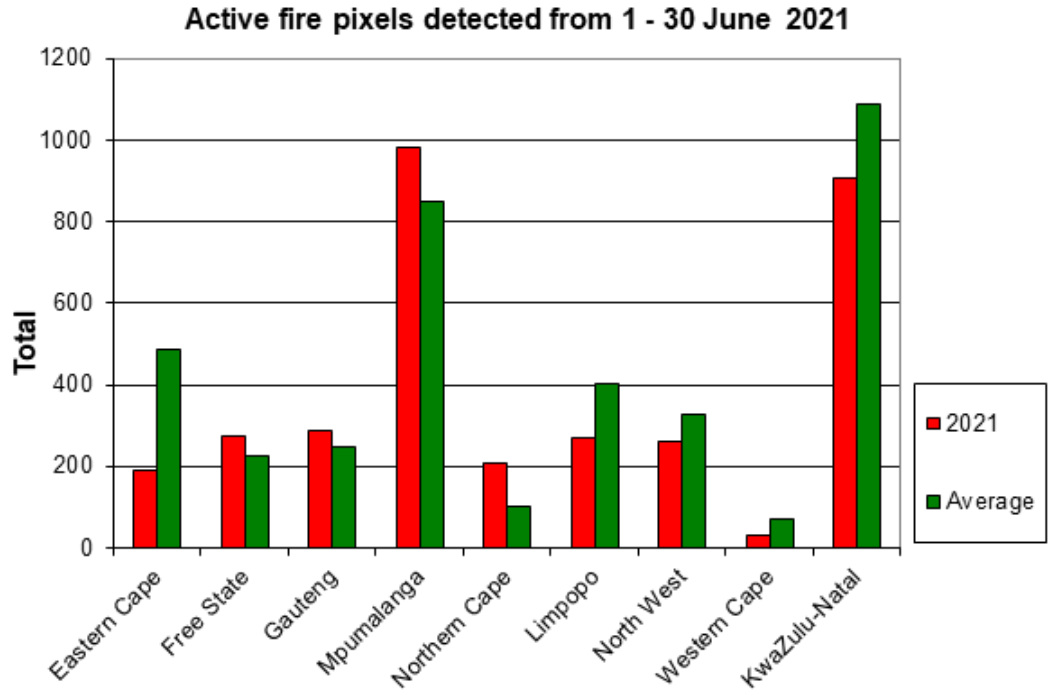


Figure 29

Figure 30:

The map shows the location of active fires detected between 1-30 June 2021.

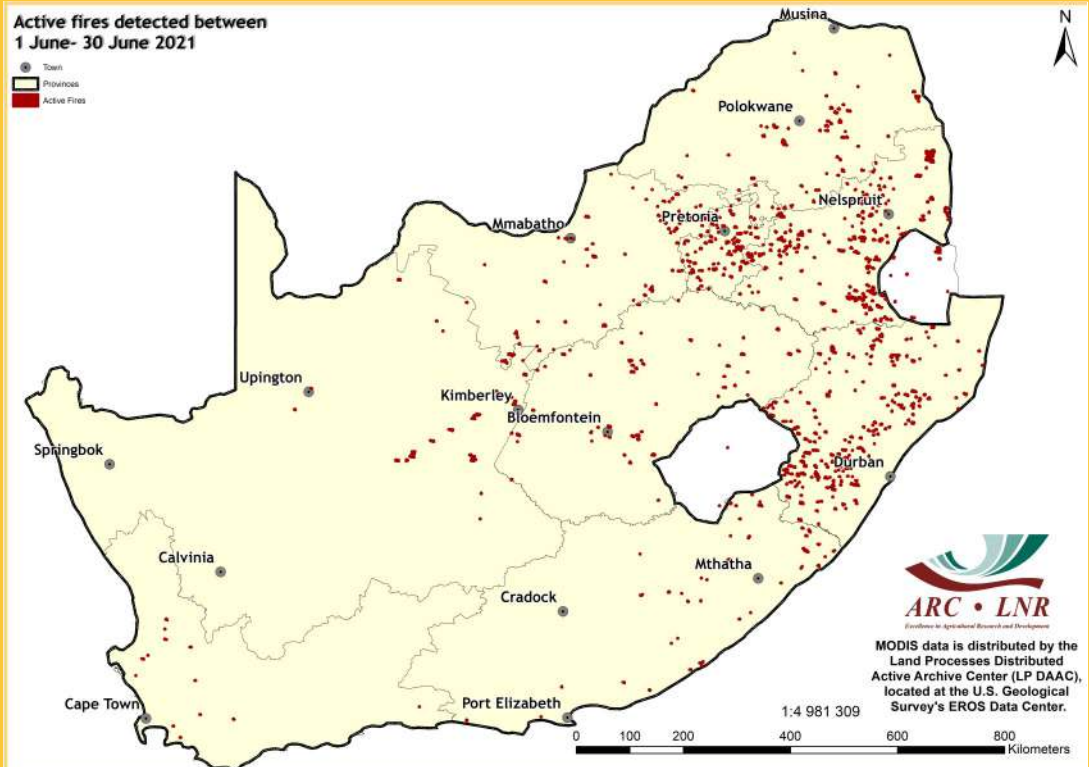


Figure 30

ARC • LNR
Evidence in Agricultural Research and Development
 MODIS data is distributed by the Land Processes Distributed Active Archive Center (LP DAAC), located at the U.S. Geological Survey's EROS Data Center.

Figure 31:
The graph shows the total number of active fires detected between 1 January and 30 June 2021 per province. Cumulative fire activity was lower in all provinces compared to the long-term average.

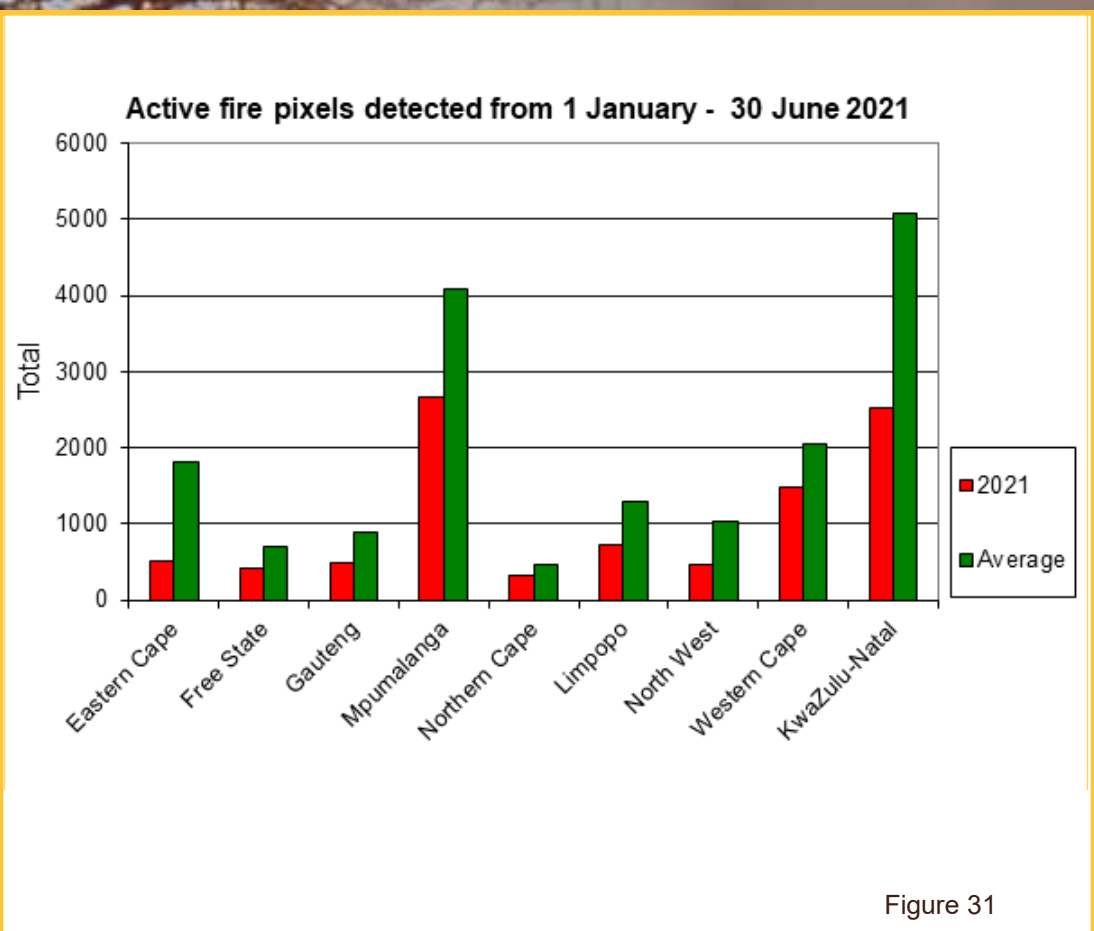


Figure 31

Figure 32:
The map shows the location of active fires detected between 1 January and 30 June 2021.

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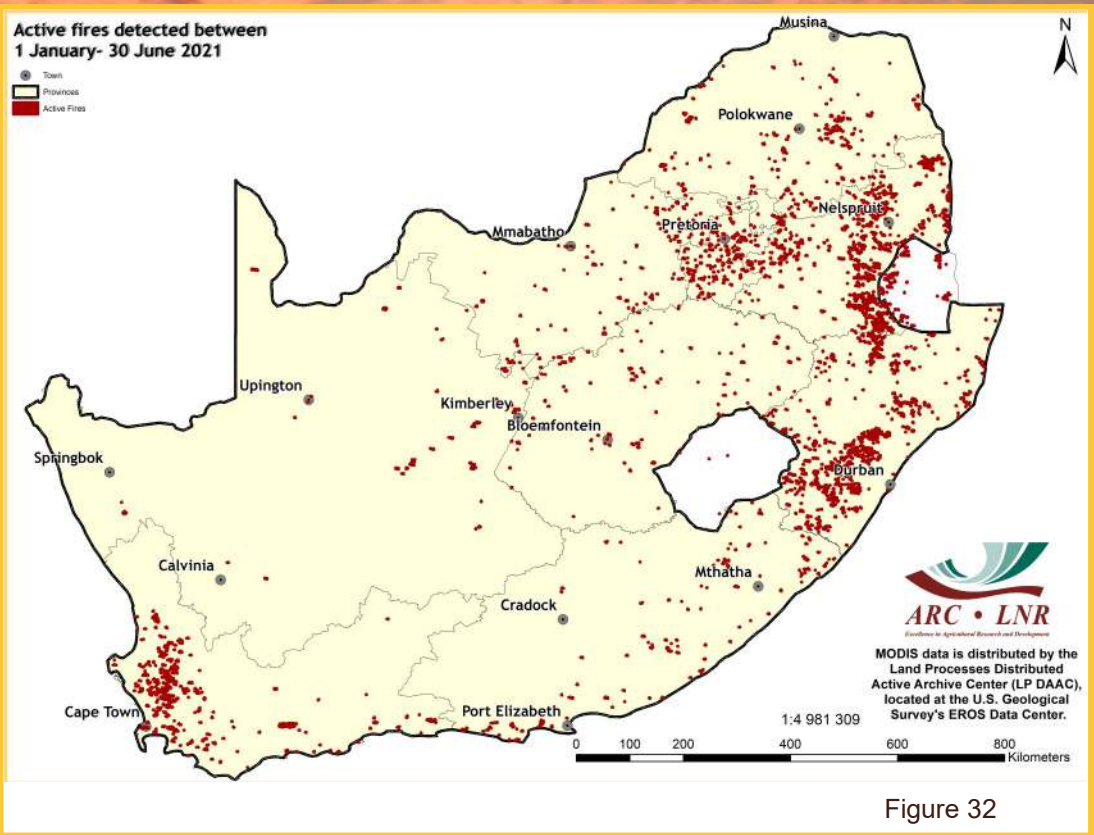


Figure 32

8. Surface Water Resources

Countrywide surface water areas (SWAs) are mapped on a monthly basis by GeoTerraImage using Sentinel 2 satellite imagery from the start of its availability at the end of 2015.

Figure 33 shows a comparison between the area of water available now and the maximum area of surface water recorded in the last 5 years. Values less than 100 represent water catchments within which the current month's total surface water is less than the maximum extent recorded for the same area since the end of 2015. Figure 34 shows a comparison between the area of water available now and for the same month last year. On this map, values less than 100 represent water catchments within which the current month's total surface water is less than that recorded in the same water catchment, in the same month, in 2020.

The long-term map for June 2021 shows very similar water patterns to the previous month, with the majority of the summer rainfall region catchments showing water levels equivalent to 80-100% of the 5-year, long-term maximum water. Catchments in the central Karoo, Western Cape and western coastal region of the Eastern Cape continue to show much more variable and typically lower current water levels compared to long-term maximum values.

The comparison between June 2021 and June 2020 indicates a similar pattern to that recorded last month, with the majority of the country showing current water levels between 50% and 150% of the 2020 levels. Exceptions to this are the central Karoo, which is still showing significantly lower water levels, and a number of catchments bordering Botswana and Zimbabwe which are still showing higher water levels in June 2021 compared to last year.

The SWA maps are derived from the monthly data generated and available through GeoTerraImage's 'Msanzi Amanzi' web information service:
<https://www.water-southafrica.co.za>

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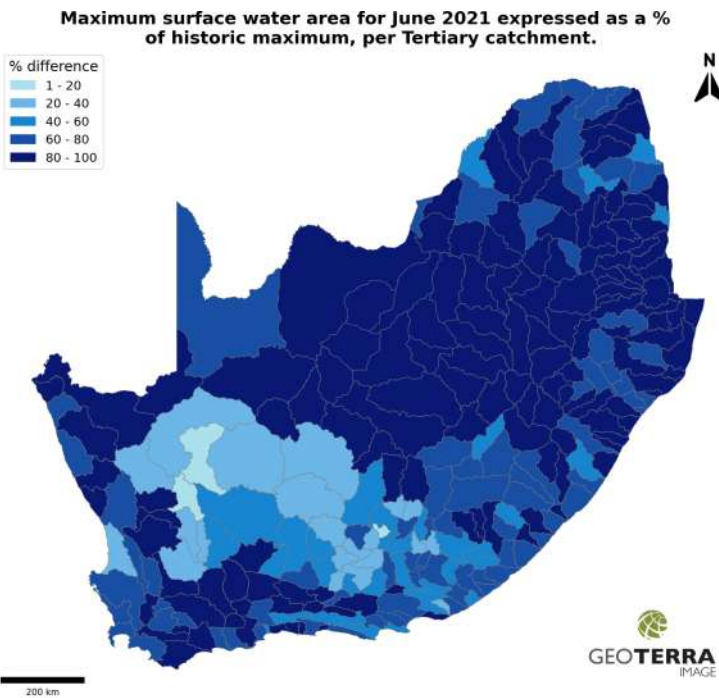


Figure 33

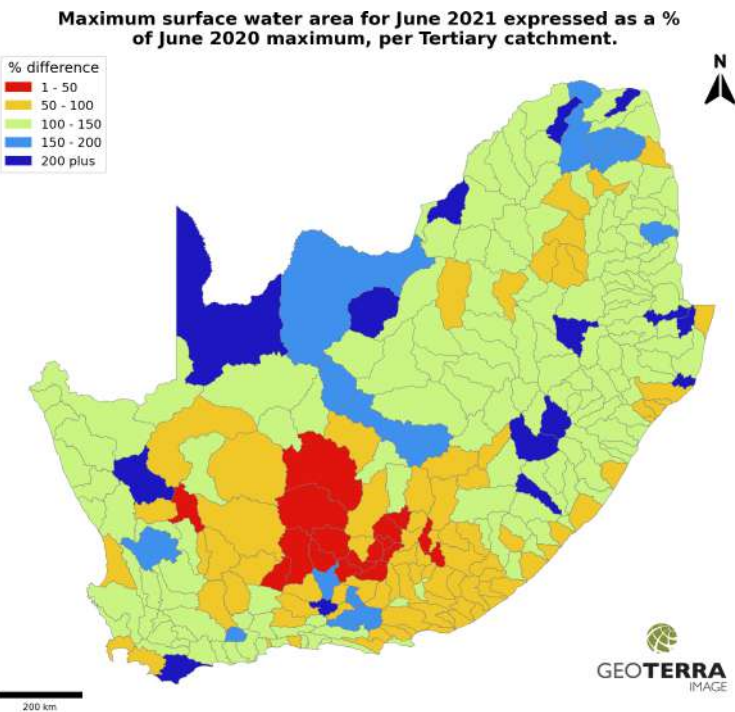


Figure 34

Agrometeorology



The programme focuses on the use of weather and climate information and monitoring for the forecast and prediction of the weather elements that have direct relevance on agricultural planning and the protection of crop, forest and livestock. The Agro-Climate Network & Databank is maintained as a national asset.

FOCUS AREAS

Climate Monitoring, Analysis & Modelling

- Analysis of climate variability and climate model simulation
- Use of crop modelling to assess the impact of climate on agriculture
- Development of decision support tools for farmers



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Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation

- National greenhouse gas inventory in the agricultural sector
- Improvement of agricultural production technologies under climate change
- Adaptation and mitigation initiatives, e.g. biogas production in small-scale farming communities

Climate Information Dissemination

- Communication to farmers for alleviating weather-related disasters such as droughts
- Dissemination of information collected from weather stations
- Climate change awareness campaigns in farming communities

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Geoinformation Science



The programme focuses on applied Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Earth Observation (EO)/Remote Sensing research and provides leadership in applied GIS products, solutions, and decision support systems for agriculture and natural resources management. The Coarse Resolution Satellite Image Archive and Information Database is maintained as a national asset.

FOCUS AREAS

Decision Support Systems

- Spatially explicit information dissemination systems, e.g. Umlindi newsletter
- Crop and land suitability modelling/assessments
- Disease and pest outbreaks and distribution modelling
- Precision agriculture information systems



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Early Warning & Food Security

- Drought and vegetation production monitoring
- Crop estimates and yield modelling
- Animal biomass and grazing capacity mapping
- Global and local agricultural outlook forecasts
- Disaster monitoring for agricultural systems

Natural Resources Monitoring

- Land use/cover mapping
- Invasive species distribution
- Applications of GIS and EO on land degradation/erosion, desertification, hydrology and catchment areas
- Rangeland health assessments
- Carbon inventory monitoring

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The Coarse Resolution Imagery Database (CRID)

NOAA AVHRR

The ARC-ISCW has an archive of daily NOAA AVHRR data dating from 1985 to 2004. This database includes all 5 bands as well as the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), Active Fire and Land Surface Temperature (LST) images. The NOAA data are used, for example, for crop production and grazing capacity estimation.

MODIS

MODIS data is distributed by the Land Processes Distributed Active Archive Center (LP DAAC), located at the U.S. Geological Survey's EROS Data Center. The MODIS sensor is more advanced than NOAA with regard to its high spatial (250 m² to 1 km²) and spectral resolution. The ARC-ISCW has an archive of MODIS (version 4 and 5) data.

- MODIS v4 from 2000 to 2006
- MODIS v5 from 2000 to present

Datasets include:

- MOD09 (Surface Reflectance)
- MOD11 (Land Surface Temperature)
- MOD13 (Vegetation Products)
- MOD14 (Active Fire)
- MOD15 (Leaf Area Index & Fraction of Photosynthetically Active Radiation)
- MOD17 (Gross Primary Productivity)
- MCD43 (Albedo & Nadir Reflectance)
- MCD45 (Burn Scar)

Coverage for version 5 includes South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

More information:

<http://modis.gsfc.nasa.gov>

VGT4AFRICA and GEOSUCCESS

SPOT NDVI data is provided courtesy of the VEGETATION Programme and the VGT4AFRICA project. The European Commission jointly developed the VEGETATION Programme. The VGT4AFRICA project disseminates VEGETATION products in Africa through GEONETCast.

ARC-ISCW has an archive of VEGETATION data dating from 1998 to the present. Other products distributed through VGT4AFRICA and GEOSUCCESS include Net Primary Productivity, Normalized Difference Wetness Index and Dry Matter Productivity data.

Meteosat Second Generation (MSG)

The ARC-ISCW has an operational MSG receiving station. Data from April 2005 to the present have been archived. MSG produces data with a 15-minute temporal resolution for the entire African continent. Over South Africa the spatial resolution of the data is in the order of 3 km. The ARC-ISCW investigated the potential for the development of products for application in agriculture. NDVI, LST and cloud cover products were some of the initial products derived from the MSG SEVIRI data. Other products derived from MSG used weather station data, including air temperature, humidity and solar radiation.

Rainfall maps

- Combined inputs from 450 automatic weather stations from the ARC-ISCW weather station network, 270 automatic rainfall recording stations from the SAWS, satellite rainfall estimates from the Famine Early Warning System Network: <http://earlywarning.usgs.gov> and long-term average climate surfaces developed at the ARC-ISCW.

Solar Radiation and Evapotranspiration maps

- Combined inputs from 450 automatic weather stations from the ARC-ISCW weather station network.
- Data from the METEOSAT Second Generation (MSG) 3 satellite via GEONETCAST: <http://www.eumetsat.int/website/home/Data/DataDelivery/EUMETCast/GEONETCast/index.html>.



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The operational Coarse Resolution Imagery Database (CRID) project of ARC-ISCW is funded by the National Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development. Development of the monitoring system was made possible at its inception through LEAD funding from the Department of Science and Technology.

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What does Umlindi mean?
UMLINDI is the Zulu word for “the watchman”.

Disclaimer:

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