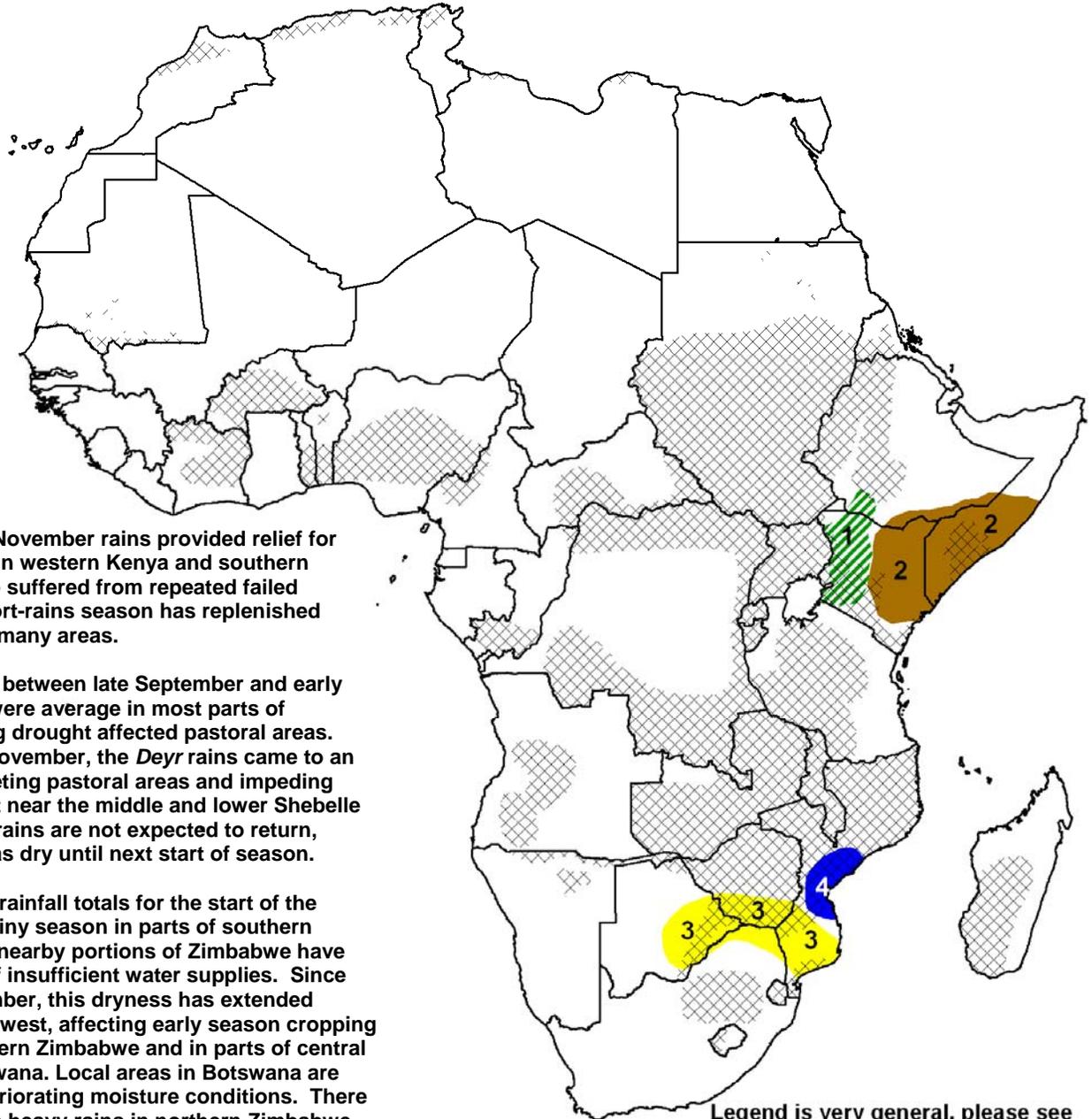


- An area of below average rainfall extending from Botswana through southern Mozambique continues to hamper crops and reduce water available for drinking. Similar conditions had been experienced in central Mozambique until the last week when heavy rainfall moved into the area.
- Poor rainfall during November and December has exacerbated crop, pastoral and agro-pastoral conditions across southern Somalia and portions of eastern Kenya. There may be impending concerns of limited water availability as conditions are likely to persist.



1) The October – November rains provided relief for many local areas in western Kenya and southern Ethiopia that have suffered from repeated failed seasons. The short-rains season has replenished water supplies in many areas.

2) The *Deyr* rains, between late September and early November 2008, were average in most parts of Somalia, including drought affected pastoral areas. However in mid-November, the *Deyr* rains came to an abrupt stop, depleting pastoral areas and impeding crop development near the middle and lower Shebelle region. Seasonal rains are not expected to return, leaving many areas dry until next start of season.

3) Below-average rainfall totals for the start of the October to May rainy season in parts of southern Mozambique and nearby portions of Zimbabwe have led to concerns of insufficient water supplies. Since the start of December, this dryness has extended further south and west, affecting early season cropping activities in southern Zimbabwe and in parts of central and eastern Botswana. Local areas in Botswana are experiencing deteriorating moisture conditions. There is potential for the heavy rains in northern Zimbabwe and central Mozambique to shift southward during the coming week.

4) Heavy rainfall in central Mozambique has brought an end to early season dryness. During the last week 200 mm of rainfall soaked areas near Beira. Some locations reported higher amounts. The heavy precipitation has caused localized flooding, damaged crops and infrastructure and left some roads impassable. The heavy rains did not improve crop conditions. Rainfall will have to be sustained for the next several months for healthy agriculture.

Legend is very general, please see numbered descriptions for details.



Excessive rainfall soaks central Mozambique, dryness spreads in Zimbabwe and Botswana

After a dry start to the season, central Mozambique received almost two months of rainfall during a period of seven days. Meanwhile, dryness continues to spread westward into Zimbabwe and Botswana. (See Figures 1 and 2) Most other areas of southern Africa remain near normal.

In central Mozambique and nearby portions of Zimbabwe and Malawi, early season dryness was approaching a critical point. Significant rainfall had not made its way into the region three dekads after precipitation normally arrives. On the 15 of December moisture finally made its way into the region. The needed rainfall, however, became a torrential downpour that so far has lasted seven days with accumulations exceeding 200 mm in some areas. The rains are expected to continue through the coming week. Flooding has been reported at many locations in the area, with damage to infrastructure and crops, and roads, especially in rural areas, rendered impassable.

As rainfall has moved into central Mozambique, dryness has deepened and spread across southern portions of the country, as well as southern Zimbabwe, and much of Botswana. Poor rainfall began as a problem when moisture had concentrated itself across much of Namibia during October and November. When the heaviest of precipitation shifted to central Mozambique last week, rainfall remained sparse across this region. Forecast models are currently showing an improvement over southern Mozambique during the next week.

It is unlikely that rainfall will continue to fall at the rate it has across central Mozambique during the next few weeks. A front currently making its way towards South Africa is expected to bring light rainfall to Botswana and Zimbabwe.

Several years of below average rainfall across southern Somalia, eastern Kenya continue

In the latest round of dismal wet seasons, southern Somalia and eastern Kenya face a poor harvest, insufficient water for drinking and degraded pasture conditions. Although the Dyer and Short Rains had begun slightly early and were robust, by mid-November they had abruptly stopped. Precipitation should have continued through the end of the year.

Nearly every rainy season during the past three years has had insufficient rainfall in these areas. Continued failed seasons will reduce herd size, seeds available for planting and reduce access to drinking water.

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