

Uniting the Nations

Regular outbreaks of migrant pests such as the African armyworm (*Spodoptera exempta*), four species of locust, and the quelea bird (*Quelea quelea lathamii*) often occur in the SADC (Southern Africa Development Community) region. These highly mobile pests readily cross political boundaries, making active management and cooperation between neighbouring countries vitally important.



The migrant pests – African armyworm, locust (brown locust is shown here) and the red-billed quelea bird

To manage or control an outbreak – before it becomes a serious problem – it is necessary to determine its current status, distribution, and scale of infestation. This is especially true in the case of armyworm where its sudden appearance, rapid development and disappearance necessitate quick action. Where more than one country is at risk from the outbreak, communication between control organizations is imperative.

The 1999 regional CPP Migrant Pest Workshop held in Pretoria identified a “*lack of reliable and sustainable cross-border communication with respect to migrant pests as a serious constraint to effective forecasting.*” Endorsed by SADC members at the Plant Protection Sub-Committee in 2000, it became the focus of the ICOSAMP project (R7890). As well as providing a platform for technical cooperation and sharing of research

information ICOSAMP has:

- Established a central point of migrant pest information in the SADC region which, in turn has revived migrant pest monitoring in some countries
- Established regional cooperation between information officers and control operators, and
- Established a standardized reporting network.

In reviewing the collection, inputting and dissemination of migrant pest information, ICOSAMP has updated and standardised information gathering procedures – and developed a computer-based information system for the input of pest and related ecological data, as well bibliographic entries. Monthly maps of all three pests are easily generated.

ICOSAMP provides an up-to-date picture of migrant pest activity in the region through monthly bulletins and via its website hosted by EcoPort in Rome (<http://icosamp.ecoport.org>). These bulletins are sent to IPMnet News (with a readership of nearly 5000 in at least 128 countries), to USAID for inclusion in their email bulletins, and posted on the South African National Department of Agriculture website (<http://www.agis.agric.za>). ICOSAMP contributes to cross-border communication and cooperation and has established itself as an internationally recognized forum for the status and distribution of migrant pests in the SADC region.

Regional cooperation means that migrant pest information is now exchanged throughout southern Africa and pest problems are being controlled, saving money and reducing the potentially devastating impact of these pests.



Evaluating session for ICOSAMP's central computer-based pest information network

R7890: Establishment of an 'Information Core for Southern African Migrant Pests' (ICOSAMP)
Contact: Margaret Kieser, Plant Protection Research Institute (PPRI), South Africa