



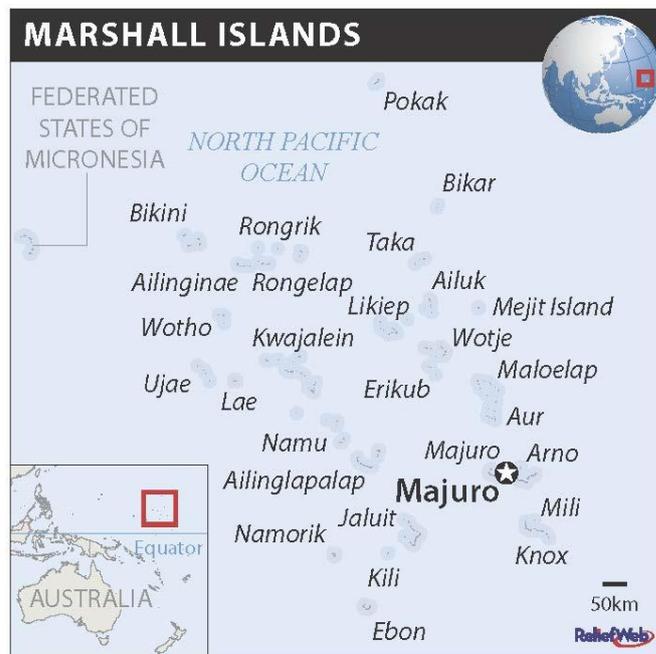
This report is produced by OCHA in collaboration with humanitarian partners. It was issued by the OCHA Regional Office for the Pacific. It covers the period from 19 to 30 April 2013. The next report will be issued on or around 8 May 2013.

Highlights

- Following persistently low rainfall during the dry season, the Republic of the Marshall Islands declared a state of emergency for the northern Marshall Islands on 19 April 2013.
- Severe drought conditions are being experienced in Wotje and the atolls of the Marshall Islands north of Majuro.
- An initial assessment of the impact of the drought is underway through the mobilization of three multi-disciplinary teams, led by the National Disaster Management Office and supported by experts from OFDA/USAID and International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- The severe drought conditions may have affected drinking water supplies, rainwater catchment storage, salinity of groundwater and agriculture / food production on the atoll islands requiring immediate as well as long-term response measures.

3,200

People living in the affected atolls



Map Sources: UNCS, Gov't. of U.S.A.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Map created Jun 2010 - www.reliefweb.int

Situation Overview

Republic of the Marshall Islands

The Republic of the Marshall Islands Cabinet and the Chief Secretary declared a state of emergency for the northern Marshall Islands last week on 19 April 2013 due to a prolonged dry season and severe drought.

The prolonged dry season and associated drought condition continues in the northern atolls of the Marshall Islands despite some rainfall being recorded late last week. According to weather forecasts the dry conditions and below-normal rainfall patterns are expected to last through May.

Islands located above the 10° N latitude are expected to have a high vulnerability, islands between 8° and 10° N latitude are expected to have a medium vulnerability and islands below 8° N are expected to have a low vulnerability to drought.

The estimated total population of the most affected 12 atolls north of Majuro, and 10° N latitude is 3,200 people (2011 census data).

Three disaster emergency teams comprising of various government agencies (Public Works, Majuro Water and Sewerage Company, Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Agriculture) led by the National Disaster Management Office and supported by experts from OFDA/USAID and IOM have and will be dispatched in Marshall Islands between 27 April and 2 May 2013 to assess the drought affected northern islands.

Field reports, providing more details on the situation, the impact of the drought and short-term and long-term needs, are expected to come in daily as assessment teams check in with the National Disaster Management

Office. The assessments are to be consolidated towards the end of the week or early next week (first week of May) after which a draft assessment report could be provided by the Chief Secretary's Office.

The Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) WASH cluster members convened an emergency meeting on 29 April 2013 to discuss the current situation, updates and to coordinate plans for possible response.

Humanitarian Response



Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Needs:

A preliminary indication of immediate needs have been identified as follows:

- Maximizing Reverse Osmosis (RO) capacity on the islands to ensure sufficient potable drinking water for immediate relief.
- Ship water from RO plants located at Kwajalein and Majuro to the northern atolls with bladders.
- Provision of bottled water.

A preliminary indication of medium- to long-term needs could include:

- Promote water conservation practices.
- Repair and maximize rainwater harvesting systems and related infrastructure.
- Assess impacts on groundwater and monitor salinity levels.
- Improve data and information on water availability and needs.
- Improve drought management practices and promote the use of seasonal forecasts.

Response:

- USAID is providing an initial response on request of the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) Government and under the provisions of the compact agreement between RMI and the US. USAID will join the national assessment team to the far north atolls of RMI and will also provide additional support through the provision of two new mobile RO desalination plants. The plants have a 250~350 gallon/day capacity and are destined for two of the affected islands. Technicians and training will also be provided.
- Nine desalination units with 250~350 gallon/day capacity are available for immediate drinking water needs. This however, will still fall short of the minimum required amount of 3.3 gallon/person/day (~15 l/p/d) for many of the islands.
- Australia received a specific request from RMI Government for the provision of four desalination units for an amount of US\$100,000 but without indication for which islands these are destined.
- The Government of New Zealand, IFRC and WHO also indicated that based on the outcomes of the assessment, support for immediate assistance can potentially be provided.
- SPC through their Northern Pacific Office in Pohnpei will join the third assessment team departing on 2 May 2013. SPC's Water and Sanitation Programme may be able to provide assistance in drought assessments and support long-term measures to improve water management, storage and conservation based on best practices from earlier drought events in the region.
- SPC's Disaster Risk Programme is scheduling a training session in the coming weeks on disaster risk reduction in collaboration with the Asia Foundation which could consider inclusion of current emergency coordination issues.

Gaps & Constraints:

- Due to the remoteness of the affected atolls, operating water boats on a regular basis is a challenge, including fuel supply.



Logistics

Gaps & Constraints:

- Travel and shipment capacity is relatively poor and the geographical spread of the islands is a major challenge for delivering support and reaching the atolls.

 **Food Security****Needs:**

- The severe drought conditions may have damaged agriculture on many of the atolls. Preliminary reports from people living on the affected atolls report food crops becoming brownish, a sign of the drought effect.

Response:

- RMI is providing limited rations of rice and flour to some of the most affected people, as well as fuel for the water boats.

Gaps & Constraints:

- The assessment will provide additional information on the situation.

General Coordination

The response is being coordinated by the Marshall Islands National Disaster Task Force chaired by the Chief Secretary. On receiving the letter of request for assistance on 26 April 2013, the UN Resident Coordinator in Suva mobilized the PHT WASH Cluster led by UNICEF which called partners together on 29 April. As information comes in from assessment teams, the PHT WASH cluster and OCHA Pacific will continue to liaise with the RMI Chief Secretary and National Disaster Management Office regarding PHT partner support to RMI Government. The National Disaster Task Force and the WASH Cluster will continue to convene meetings as needed during the state of emergency.

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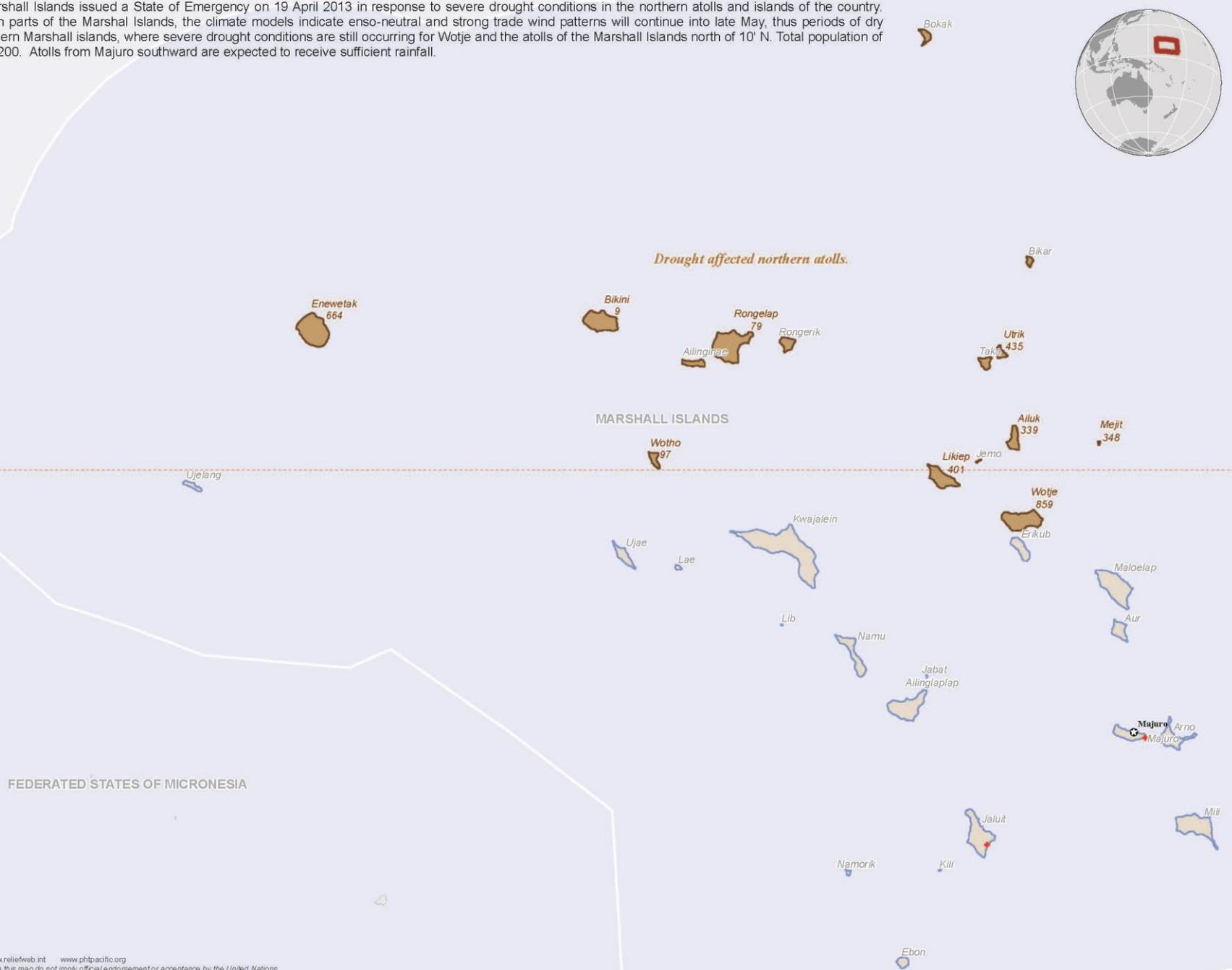
The President of the Republic of Marshall Islands issued a State of Emergency on 19 April 2013 in response to severe drought conditions in the northern atolls and islands of the country. Despite the heavy rainfall mid-April in parts of the Marshall Islands, the climate models indicate enso-neutral and strong trade wind patterns will continue into late May, thus periods of dry weather are still expected in the northern Marshall Islands, where severe drought conditions are still occurring for Wotje and the atolls of the Marshall Islands north of 10° N. Total population of the affected northern atolls is about 3200. Atolls from Majuro southward are expected to receive sufficient rainfall.



Population - Census 2011	
Ailinglaplap	1,729
Ailuk	339
Amo	1,794
Aur	499
Bikini	9
Ebon	706
Enewetak	664
Jabat	84
Jaluit	1,788
Kili	548
Kwajalein	11,408
Lae	347
Lib	155
Likiep	401
Majuro	27,797
Maloelap	682
Mejit	348
Mili	738
Namdrik	508
Namu	780
Rongelap	79
Ujae	364
Ujelang	
Utirik	435
Wotho	97
Wotje	859
Total	53,158

Legend

- Hospital
- Capital
- Drought Affected Atolls - north of 10°N
- Atolls



Creation date : 25 April 2013
 Sources: RMI Statistics Office (Census 2011), OCHA, GAUL
 Feedback: maps@ochapacific.org www.unocha.org www.reliefweb.int www.phpacific.org
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