

Dry winter, little snow and wind events



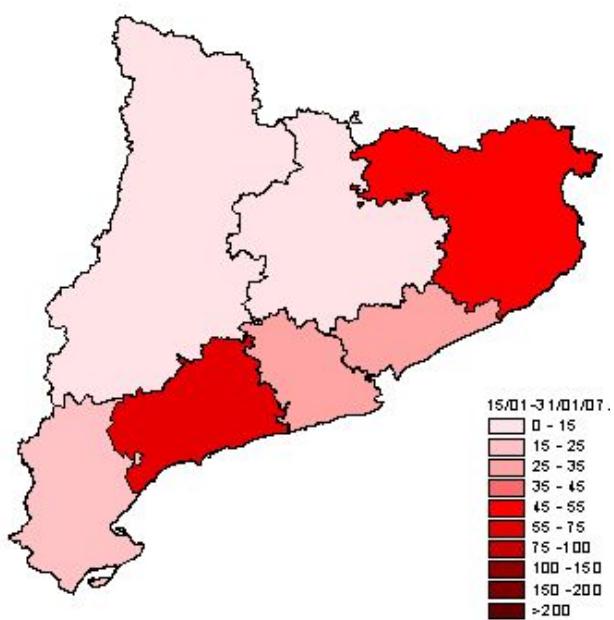
View of Pedraforca, el Taga and la Serra Cavallera from Mare de Déu del Mont (Alta Garrotxa) on 31 December 2006. The lack of snow is critical in all of the Pyrenees and the last snowfall was in the middle of January. The current state of the water sources is one of the consequences of this dry winter.

What we had

Compared trends from the start of the year until:

	31/01/2006	30/01/2007
Nº Fires (VA+VU+VF)	105	341
Area (ha)	3.3	18.5 ^(*)

^(*) PROVISIONAL AREA WAITING FOR VALIDATION



Number of fires (VA+VU+VF) from 15/01 until 30/01/07 that are larger than 2 ha.





Situation Description

Evolution of the drought (availability of live fuels and large dead fuels)

The last episode of instability left little significant snow in the Pyrenees and scarce precipitation in the south and west. This was the first and only normal snowfall of winter. Therefore, gradually the levels of drought in the country and the availability of continuous fuels increases. It is necessary to note that the lack of rains has dried out many mountain water sources; in the collective memory this has not happened in many years.



Fig. 3. Accumulated drought (Drought Code Index) from 31/01/06.

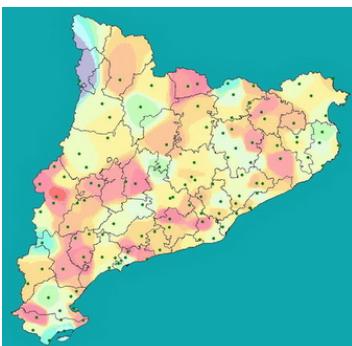


Fig. 4. Accumulated drought (Drought Code Index) from 28/01/07.

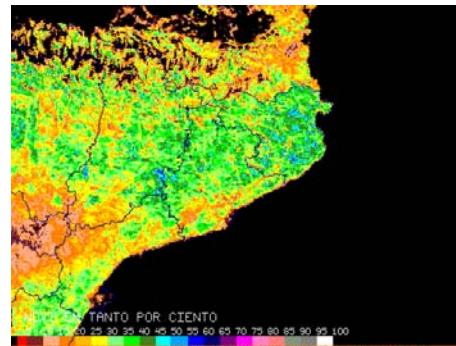
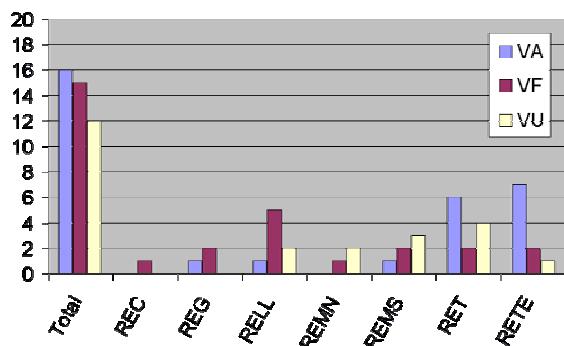


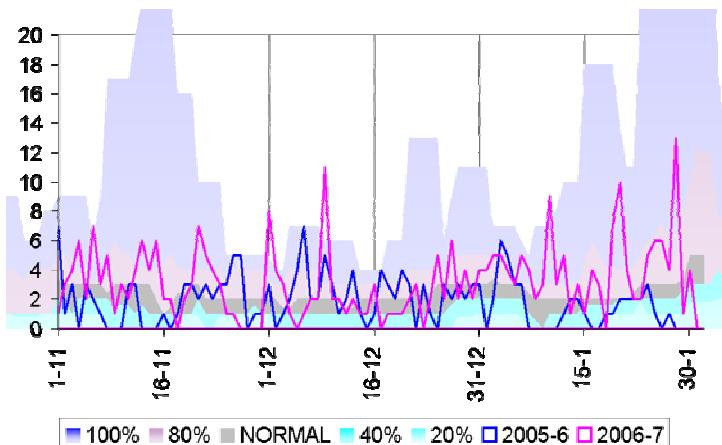
Fig. 5. NDVI index that measures vegetative activity of plants based on water content of the leaves.

Numbers of fires (VA, VU and VF)

The graph maintains medium activity levels while the risk remains higher than normal. All of the regions with high mountains had an increase in the number of VF, and the VA levels increased in the regions where remnants of the dried fruit agricultural work in the countryside were eliminated.



Graph 1. Total fire counts and for each region according to type of vegetation, of the last fifteen days from 15 to 30 of January.



Graph 2. Fire index Mbs13 (forest vegetation fires) from 01/11/06 until 01/02/07, compared with the same period in 2005/6. Also compared are the trends over the years with the normal number of fires (in grey, the 50th percentile), less than normal (in blue) and maximum (in lilac) of the last 5 years.



By region

REG

There were no significant events to report this week.

What is forecasted Little activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and level of risk.

REMN

There were no significant events to report this week.

What is forecasted Low activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and the level of risk.

REMS

There were no significant events to report this week.

What is forecasted Low activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and the lack of risk.

REC

There was a certain level of forest activity, but nothing significant to highlight.

What is forecasted Low activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and the lack of risk.

RÈTE

There was a certain level of forest activity, but nothing significant to highlight.

What is forecasted Little activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and level of risk.

RET

The agricultural reduction burns generated a certain level of activity in the region.

What is forecasted Little activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and level of risk.

RELL

There was a certain level of forest activity, but nothing significant to highlight.

What is forecasted Little activity predicted due to the current state of the vegetation and level of risk.

Activity Levels



Important Information

3.1.- Beginning of the 2007 Basic Course.

On January 25, in the auditorium of l'Escola de Policia de Catalunya, opening ceremony signaled the start of the 2007 Basic Training Course for firefighters. Present at the opening ceremony were the Head of the Operating Division, Antoni Rifà, the General Assistant Manager of Administration and Services of l'Escola de Policia de Catalunya, Joan Josep Guillem, and the director of l'Escola de Bombers i Seguretat Civil de Catalunya, Jordi Sans, among other authorities. After the inauguration of the course, the instructors, staff and tutors introduced themselves to the firefighter candidates and presented the candidates with the Firefighter Pupil Guide, the internal regime rules, and the Basic Training Course notes.



Acte d'inauguració del Curs Bàsic 2007.

In this class there are a total of 137 firefighter candidates of the Generalitat that, after finishing the basic course, must pass the last stage that consists of practicing in a fire station in Catalonia. The basic course students will receive, until the ending date of 29 of June, a total of 580 school hours, between theoretical and practical sessions.

3.2.-Forestry work during the Winter Forestry Season 2006-07.

For the third consecutive year the winter fire season started with recruited forestry workers (1 squad per region) and the last working in the forestry tasks linked with this season. The general perception of the civil society with respect to forest fires during the winter is one of calm. It is clear that the risk windows for large wildfires are normal and this generates serious problems for the firefighters (remember Àreu 02, St. Feliu de Guíxols 03, Perelló 05...). More and more our common attack systems (hose lays) requires a large number of people, increasing the need for forestry workers.



Images of water source to manage a safety zone.

Outside of these risky periods, tasks associated with pre-extinction and better suppression infrastructures are developed. In the first group there are prescribed burns at critical and strategic points and the treatment of fuels to generate areas of low fuel loading. In the second group the tasks include mowing around water sources and look-out areas to create secure zones, mowing and pruning to improve accessibility of strategic roads and to paint water sources to improve their visualization.

These tasks serve to fill black holes and absences of those responsible for prevention and at the same time accomplishing basic needs for the firefighters. The results of the first years were positive and served to strengthen relationships between DMAiH, ADF's and firefighters, giving the latter a senior presence in the territory and elevating their status as speakers on the subject of forest fires.





Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Interior
**Direcció General de Prevenció,
Extinció d'Incendis i Salvaments**
Divisió Operativa
GRAF

3.3.- GRAF fire analysis training conferences.

During the month of February, there were three training sessions to analyze past fires. One training day (done on 31/01) in the RELL region (fires of Peralta de la Sal and Ogern), the next one on Friday, 9 February in the REG region (Cistella and Ventalló) and the last on Thursday, 15 February, in the RET region (Vimbodí and Vallclara).



Forest fire analysis training session at Peralta de la sal (Aragó) and Ogern (RELL).

The goal of these training days was to remember, explain and discuss the tactics and operations that were used in fire suppression. It was not intended to judge or to appraise any person's job performance. With the intention that the attendees could gain professional knowledge from the discussed experiences, the supervisors described the situation and the reasons they chose their actions.

These conferences are open to any member of the Fire Brigade. It is the transfer from knowledge and experiences to preparations that allows us to increase our levels of training so that we may be better prepared to face similar situations in future operations.

If you are interested in attending the sessions please contact the GRAF Technical Unit (utgraf@gencat.net).

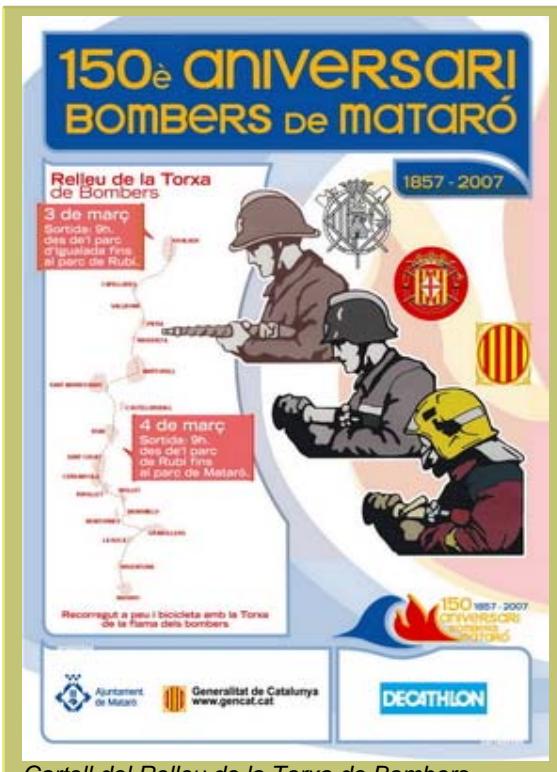
3.4.- Firefighters' Torch Relay Race from Igualada to Mataró.

Next week on the 3rd and 4th of March is the prominent Firefighters' Torch Relay Race between Igualada Park and Mataró Park, with an overnight stop at Rubí Park.

In 2006 the organization of the "Setmana dels Bombers" at Igualada began, where different activities were planned. The main act of these was the celebration of the day of patron saint Joan de Déu and the presentation of medals to the firefighters of Catalonia. In particular was the creation of a relay run (torch in the form of a spear) to carry the torch from one headquarters to the next.

This year, the second edition of the "Setmana dels Bombers" will be in Mataró, coinciding with the 150-year anniversary of firefighters' presence in this town. For the torch relay from Igualada to Mataró, the route was planned between the two town centers and between towns by bicycle. The itinerary starts in Igualada and passes through Capellades, Piera, Martorell, Rubí, Cerdanyola, Mollet, and Granollers finally arriving in Mataró.

Whoever wishes to participate can contact the Station Chiefs of Igualada or Mataró or, if you cannot reach them, send an email to utgraf@gencat.net.



Cartell del Relleu de la Torxa de Bombers

