



While it was raining at home, English got burned



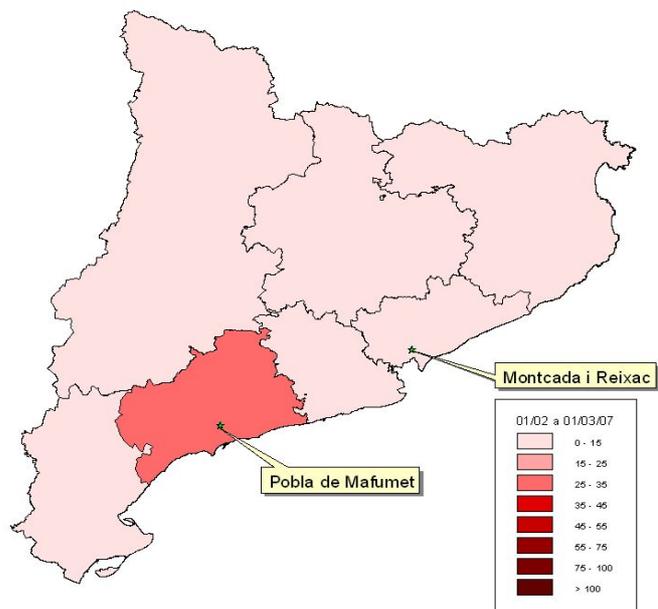
Photograph: GRAF. Image of a prescribed burning carried out in England, international exchange within the framework of the FIREPARADOX project and training of Catalan Fire-fighters.

What we had

Compared trend from the beginning of the year until:

	07/05/2006	07/05/2007
Num. Fires (VA+VU+VF) ¹	1190	1717
Area (ha)	1351	177 (**)

¹ VA: AGRICULTURAL VEGETATION
 VU: URBAN VEGETATION
 VF: FOREST VEGETATION
 (**)PROVISIONAL AREA WAITING FOR VALIDATION



Number of fires (VA+VU+VF) from 24/04/07 until 07/05/07, larger than 1 ha.



Description of the situation

Drought evolution (live fuels and coarse dead fuels availability)

During the end of March and April, low pressures have dominated the Southern Europe. There have been 3 significant rain episodes: from 31st March to the 3rd April, from the 12th to the 14th April and from the 27th April to the 2nd May. Main rainfalls have affected all regions. This rain has caused a decrease of the accumulated drought values below those of the last year.

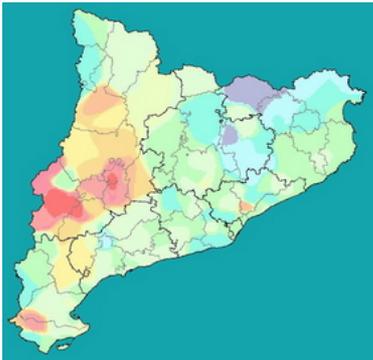


Fig. 3. Accumulated drought (Drought Code index) of 02/05/06.

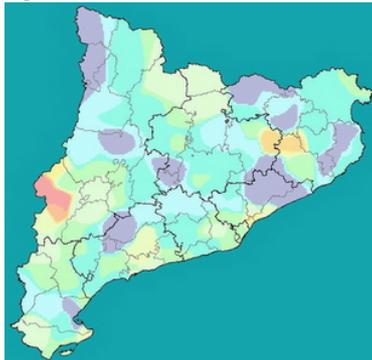


Fig. 4. Accumulated drought (Drought Code index) of 02/05/07.

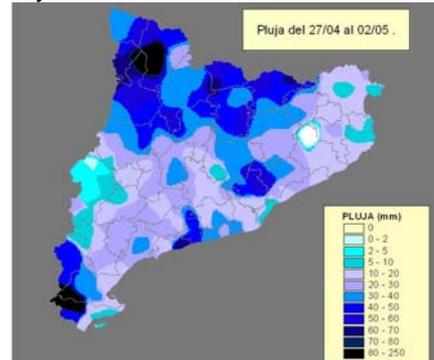
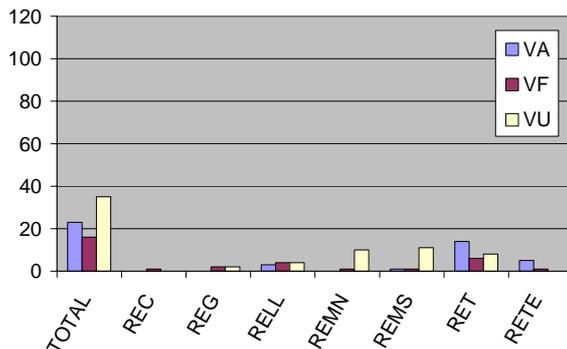


Fig. 5. Accumulated rainfalls (mm) from 27/04 to 02/05.

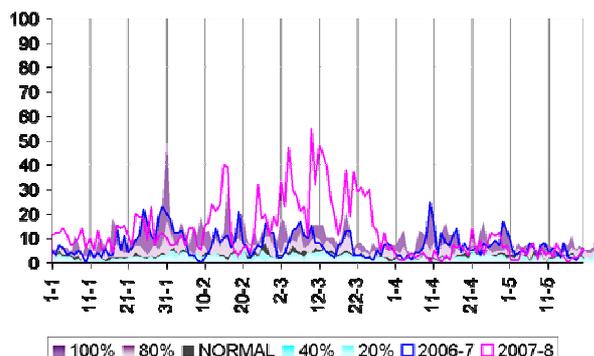
Fire services trend (VA, VU and VF)

The number of fire services goes downwards, only the RET shows some activity although it is less than 20 services (most of them due to farmers). Again, the metropolitan regions have been represented by urban vegetation services. The MBS13 shows how March has had more services this year than last year. Nevertheless, the situation nowadays is better than in 2006 due to the above mentioned rainfalls.



Graph 1. Total services and region services according to the type of vegetation involved, for the last fortnight (from 24/04/07 to 07/05/07).

Graphic 2. Fire index Mbs13 (services in forest vegetation) from 01/01/07 until 07/05/07 (magenta), compared to last year Mbs13 for the same period in 2006 (blue). Trends over time of number of normal services (grey, 50% percentile), less than normal services (cyan) and maximum services (lilac) for the last 5 years.





By region

REG

There are not vegetation services, although the region has been affected by a short episode of northerly wind.

What's forecasted Little outstanding activity due to the current status of the vegetation. Short episodes of instability followed by northerly situations of little duration are expected.

REMN

There is little activity; only urban vegetation services can be highlighted. The rest of the services are virtually nil.

What's forecasted Low activity due both to the current status of the vegetation and the lack of risk episodes. Gradual increment of urban vegetation services is also expected.

REMS

There is little activity; only urban vegetation services can be highlighted. The rest of the services are virtually nil.

What's forecasted Low activity due both to the current status of the vegetation and the lack of risk episodes. Gradual increase of urban vegetation services is also expected.

REC

No services to highlight.

What's forecasted Low activity due to the current state of the vegetation, waiting for a gradual increase of the services of fine, agricultural and urban fuel.

RETE

There is minimum activity of agricultural vegetation. Level of forest activity is low, merely punctual like in the Paüls fire. Regarding the rest of vegetation services, the activity is very low.

What's forecasted Little outstanding activity, waiting for risk situations. Instability episodes followed by short and less important northerly situations are expected for the moment.

RET

Burnings of agricultural remains have been the only activity of the region. However, these services give fewer emergencies than past years.

What's forecasted Low activity of urban vegetation and some short episodes of northerly winds are expected.

RELL

Activity has been very low during the last month. Records of accumulated rainfall (oscillating between 10 to 200 l) and the homogeneous distribution of rainfalls over time have benefited both the physiological activity of non-available plants and the low accumulated drought indexes.

What's forecasted Low activity related to dead fine fuel. Increasing services are expected as long as stubbles are harvested, which looks set to be a fortnight delayed (mid-June).

Activity Levels

 Low
  Normal
  Medium
  High
  Critical
  Large Wildfire



Important Information

3.1.-Workshop about operational coordination between fire-fighters and Forest Defence Associations (ADF).

Last Saturday 5th May, one more workshop about information and operational coordination among *Bombers* and ADF's (the association of Catalan forestry owners) took place in Santa Coloma de Farners (La Selva, Girona) in the forestry school premises. The workshop was carried out in the presence of the recently appointed ADF's president, the fire chief of Girona Region, the chiefs of local fire stations, voluntary Fire-fighters and all the ADFs of the region: Farners-Argimon-Sils, Guillerries-Montseny, Massanes, Hostalric, Cadiretes-Montbarbat and Riells del Montseny.

The workshop had a block of talks devoted first to improve the operational coordination between both institutions and second to remember the main supporting functions that *Bombers* needs from ADFs, the mechanisms and communication channels among them and the integration of volunteers into *Bombers*' structure. Finally, safety issues were highlighted in terms of equipment, driving, suppressing activities like finishing the perimeters off or fire duties and so on.

The second part consisted on practical activities carried out jointly by *Bombers* and ADFs, either on water line manoeuvres (to pull, to fold in hank, to pick up...) or using manual tools to make defence lines (manoeuvre of indirect or parallel attack) or finishing perimeters off.



Photography: Some images of the practical activities carried out in La Selva.

Next foreseen workshops:

- ✚ Saturday 12/05 Vallès Oriental and l'Anoia ADF's
- ✚ Saturday 19/05 Massís de les Gavarres ADF's
- ✚ Saturday 02/06 Vallès Occidental ADF's fire drills
- ✚ Saturday 09/06 Vallès Oriental ADF's fire drills



3.2.- A short preview of 2007 summer season

Although an analytical and detailed description of the coming season will be provided in the next issue, we will give you a few hot points:

- We are not in a drought campaign, hence severe forest fires are not expected every day.
- We won't have severe fires unless the effects of rainfalls disappear (July and more likely August)
- If this situation arises, fires won't be expected every day, only windy days and days affected by a southerly wave.
- Rainfalls in May or June will definitively carry us to a normal campaign.
- The current rainfalls guarantee a great deal of herbs in the forest. If it does not rain and the heat wave is confirmed, fires will be fast because of that.
- These fires give very good night windows, since herb is very sensitive to the disappearance of sun heating.
- Cereal fires are reasonably expected, due to the important production of stubbles.
- Fires in the wildland-urban interface are also expected, due to an important herb growth in these areas.

3.3. - Exchange of experiences with other fellows



Taking advantage of the quiet meteorological situation, some exchanges of experiences have been carried out with several fellows recently. The former took place during the weeks before and after Easter with fire fighters from Bilbao, Basque Country (Bizkaiko suhiltzaileak). Training in forest fire fighting and in prescribed burning was conducted. Although forest fires are not such a big problem in the Basque Country, fires in young reforestation areas of Eucalyptus have fast and intense behaviours as some fires do in Catalonia.

Photograph: 4 images of burnings in Bilbao, in a forest exploitation of eucalyptus.

The second experience was held in Portugal. A training programme was developed with the main objective of incorporating the use of fire in suppressing activities. It was addressed to fire and forest services chiefs. With this purpose, 40-50 ha pasture plots were used with the idea of going from uncontrolled to controlled fire.

The last interchange experience was with English fire-fighters (Northumbria, north of United Kingdom). They are starting to deal with forest fires just now. Training was based on basic concepts either about interpreting fire spread or suppression tactics and techniques. Field work was based on creating a real fire scenario where English fire-fighters could decide the suitable fire-fighting manoeuvres.