

Droughts: A Global Assessment (Hazards and Disasters)

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Drought hazard assessment and spatial characteristics analysis in China

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Abstract: Based on the monthly precipitation data for the period 1960–2008 from 616 rainfall stations and the phenology data of main grain crops, the spatial characteristics of drought hazard in China were investigated at a 10 km×10 km grid-cell scale using a GIS-based drought hazard assessment model, which was constructed by using 3-month Standard Precipitation Index (SPI). Drought-prone areas and heavy drought centers were also identified in this study. The spatial distribution of drought hazard in China shows apparent east-west difference, with the eastern part of China being far more hazardous than the western part. High hazard areas are common in the eastern and central parts of Inner Mongolian Plateau, the central part of Northeast China Plain, the northern part of Heilongjiang, the southeastern part of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the central and southern parts of Loess Plateau, the southern part of North China Plain, the northern and southern parts of Yangtze River Plain, and Yunnan-Guizhou Plateau. Furthermore, obvious differences in drought hazard were found both within and between different agricultural zonings.

Keywords: drought; hazard; spatial characteristics; grid; GIS

1 Introduction

Drought is a normal, recurrent feature of climate, it occurs almost everywhere. Drought is considered by many to be the most complex but least understood of all natural hazards, affecting more people than any other hazard (Hagman, 1984; Wilhite, 2000). The data from Emergency Events Database (www.em-dat.net) show that, throughout the world, droughts account for 5% of the natural disasters, but losses from droughts have caused up to 30% of losses from all disasters, ranking droughts the first among all the natural hazards. A warmer climate, with its increased climate variability, will increase the risk of both floods and droughts (IPCC, 2007). Drought studies have received special attentions in recent years be-

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and indexes. Subjects, Droughts. Other authors/contributors, Wilhite, Donald.Stephane and Bangalore, Mook and Ward, Philip J. () Disaster risk, climate Assessing the Global Exposure of Poor People to Floods and Droughts. 3. 4.

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