



Report of Monitoring and Assessment of Desert Locust in Africa and Asia

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Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Yemen and Saudi Arabia (April, 2023)

Integrated with multi-source Earth Observation data, e.g. meteorological data, field data, and remote sensing data (such as MODIS in the US, and Sentinel series in EU, etc), and self-developed models and algorithms for Desert Locust monitoring and forecasting, the research team constructed the 'Vegetation pests and diseases monitoring and forecasting system', which could regularly release thematical maps and reports on Desert Locust.

This report focuses on the dynamics of desert locust monitoring and loss assessment in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. The remote sensing monitoring results showed that, in April 2023, the desert locusts were mainly distributed in Yemen's western, interior, and Gulf of Aden coastal regions, as well as along the Red Sea coast in western Saudi Arabia. The total damaged vegetation areas in Yemen and Saudi Arabia were 44.9 and 22.1 thousand hectares, respectively. It is expected that in the next two months, there will be precipitation in Yemen's western, interior, and Gulf of Aden coastal regions, as well as in the inland areas of Saudi Arabia, where adults in Yemen will lay eggs and reproduce, and locusts along the Red Sea coast in western Saudi Arabia will also migrate to inland areas to mature, lay eggs and reproduce, causing further increase in the number of desert locusts in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. This period is the important planting and growth seasons for crops in Yemen and growth and harvest seasons for crops in Saudi Arabia. It is still necessary to pay continuous attention to the dynamics of the desert locust disaster in Yemen and Saudi Arabia to prevent losses to its agricultural and pasture production. The specific research results are as follows.

■ 1. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Yemen



The monitoring results showed that in April, the total damaged vegetation area was 44.9 thousand hectares in Yemen, including 7.6 thousand hectares of grassland, and 37.3 thousand hectares of shrub (Figure 1), accounting for 2.5% and 1.0% of the total area of grassland and shrub, respectively. Compared with March 2023, the newly damaged vegetation area was 35.0 thousand hectares, including 6.1 thousand hectares of grassland, and 28.9 thousand hectares of shrub. Al-Hudaydah province had the largest area of vegetation affected, with 31.9 thousand hectares. Followed by Hajjah province, with 10.3 thousand hectares of vegetation affected. The affected areas of vegetation in Amrān, Hadramawt, Lahij, and Al-Mahwīt provinces were 1.3, 0.6, 0.5 and 0.3 thousand hectares, respectively.



Fig. 1 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Yemen (April 2023)

■ 2. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Saudi Arabia

In April 2023, there was sufficient precipitation along the Red Sea coast in western Saudi Arabia, providing sufficient material conditions for oviparous reproduction, causing a gradual increase in the number of desert locusts. The remote sensing monitoring results showed that in April, the total damaged vegetation area in Saudi Arabia was 22.1 thousand hectares, including 11.3 thousand hectares of cropland, 3.0 thousand hectares of grassland, and 7.8 thousand hectares of shrub (Figure 2), accounting for 0.6%, 0.8%, and 0.5% of the total area of the cropland, grassland and shrub in Saudi Arabia, respectively. Compared with March 2023, the newly damaged vegetation area was 16.2 thousand hectares, including 8.0 thousand hectares of cropland, 2.2 thousand hectares of grassland, and 6.0 thousand hectares of shrub. Makkah province had the largest area of vegetation affected, with 18.3 thousand hectares. Followed by Al Madīnah province, with 2.5 thousand hectares of

vegetation affected. The affected areas of vegetation in Al Bāhah, 'Asīr, and Tabūk provinces were 0.9, 0.3, and 0.1 thousand hectares, respectively.

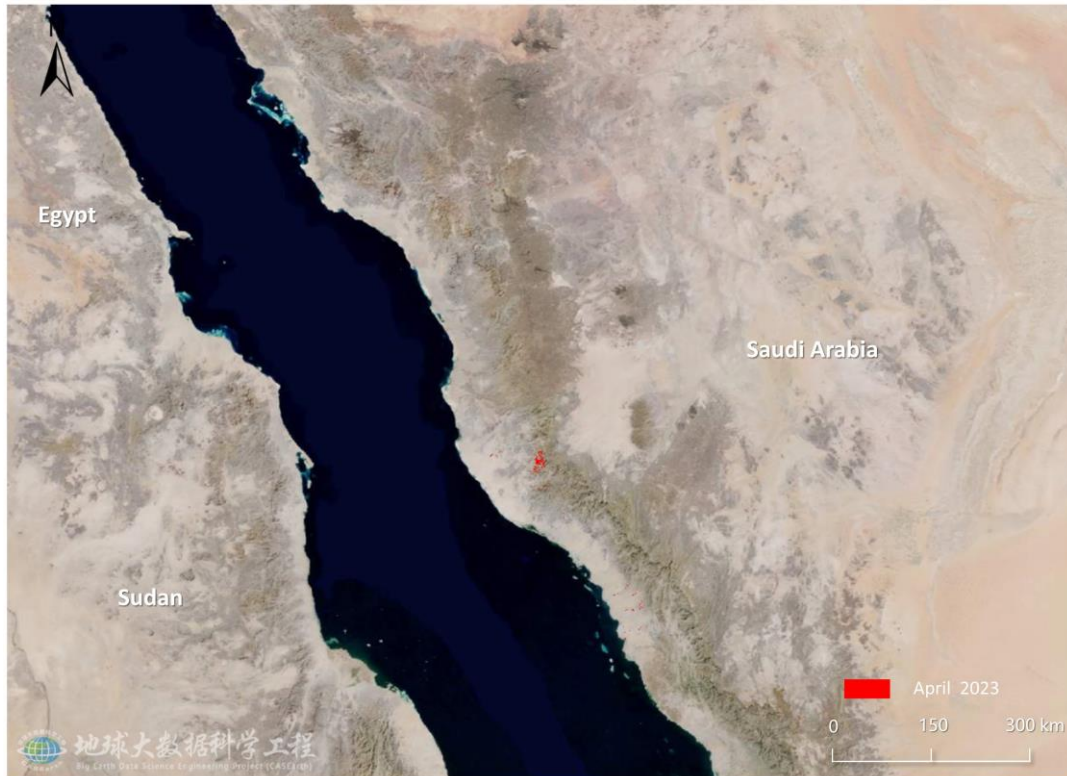


Fig.2 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Saudi Arabia (April 2023)

This study also used Sentinel-2 satellite remote sensing data to monitor the desert locust damage in the severely damaged vegetation areas along the Red Sea coast in western Saudi Arabia (Figure 3). The study area is located in the Makkah province, 40.3 kilometers from Makkah city in the northwest and 39.6 kilometers from At Tā'if city in the northeast. In the study area, the total vegetation area was 26.47 thousand hectares, and the affected area of vegetation was 10.69 thousand hectares, accounting for 40.4% of the total vegetation area. Among them, the affected area of cropland was 3.91 thousand hectares, the affected area of grassland was 0.77 thousand hectares, and the affected area of shrub was 6.01 thousand hectares, accounting for 40.3%, 39.4%, and 40.6% of the total area of cropland, grassland, and shrub in the region, respectively.

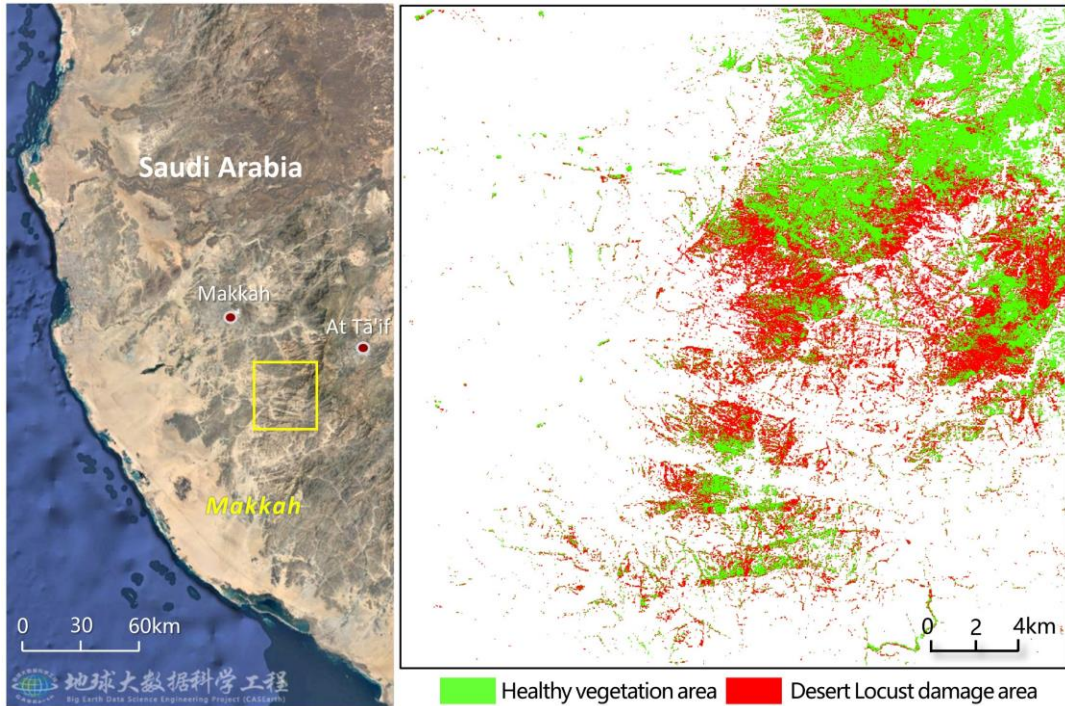


Fig. 3 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in the key damage areas of Saudi Arabia based on Sentinel-2 images (April 2023)

The comprehensive analysis shows that, in the next two months, there will be adequate precipitation in Yemen's western, interior, and Gulf of Aden coastal regions, as well as in the inland areas of Saudi Arabia, which will be favorable for the oviparous reproduction of desert locusts, and the number of locusts will further increase. It is still necessary to continue to pay attention to the dynamics of the desert locust disaster in Yemen and Saudi Arabia to prevent repeated losses to its agricultural and pasture production.

This report was released by Professor Wenjiang Huang's and Associate Professor Yingying Dong's research team in Aerospace Information Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

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