



# Report of Monitoring, Early Warning and Assessment of Desert Locust

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## Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen (January 2026)

Integrated with multi-source Earth Observation data, e.g. meteorological data, field data, and remote sensing data (such as MODIS in the US, 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.

The remote sensing monitoring results showed that, in January 2026, desert locusts were mainly distributed in the upper Nile Valley corridor of Egypt, the southwestern Red Sea coastal zone of Saudi Arabia, and the southern Gulf of Aden coastal plains of Yemen, affecting 15.7, 19.2 and 21.2 thousand hectares of vegetation, respectively. Over the next two months, desert locust activity across the region is expected to rise moderately as spring rainfall gradually increases. Populations are also expected to become increasingly concentrated along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden breeding belts. In Egypt, only small numbers of scattered adults are likely to persist in the southeastern Red Sea and southern irrigated areas, and large-scale population buildup is unlikely. In Saudi Arabia, localized small-scale spring breeding may occur along the western Red Sea coast, but overall expansion remains limited. In Yemen, activity is expected to remain confined to low-density adults and hoppers along the Gulf of Aden coastal plains. Given that this period aligns with the main growing season in Egypt and Saudi Arabia and the major harvest season in Yemen, continued monitoring is recommended to prevent recurrent impacts on agropastoral production. The specific results are as follows:

## ■ 1. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Egypt

In January 2026, overall rainfall in Egypt remained limited, and suitable habitats were mainly concentrated in the upper Nile Valley corridor and adjacent areas. Constrained by ecological conditions, desert locust populations remained at low levels, with activity largely characterized by localized persistence and no evident expansion trend. Monitoring results showed that desert locusts affected 15.7 thousand hectares of vegetation in Egypt in January, including 4.9 thousand hectares of cropland, 5.7 thousand hectares of grassland, and 5.1 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 1), accounting for 0.13%, 0.42%, and 0.64% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Asyut recorded the most extensive damage, with 5.6 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by New Valley with 4.5 thousand hectares. Suhaj, Qina and Aswan were also affected, with 2.6, 1.6 and 1.4 thousand hectares, respectively.



Fig. 1 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Egypt (January 2026)

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

In January 2026, vegetation conditions along the western Red Sea coast of Saudi Arabia remained relatively stable in localized areas, forming limited continuous suitable habitats. As a result, desert locusts exhibited localized patch-like distribution along parts of the coastal belt, but overall population levels remained low and characterized by low-density activity. Monitoring results showed that desert locusts affected 19.2 thousand hectares of vegetation in Saudi Arabia in January, including 3.0 thousand hectares of cropland, 7.3 thousand hectares of grassland, and 8.9 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 2), accounting for 1.37%, 0.37%, and 0.22% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Makkah recorded the most extensive damage, with 7.6 thousand hectares of

affected vegetation, followed by Jizan with 6.8 thousand hectares. Al-Baha was also affected, with 4.8 thousand hectares.

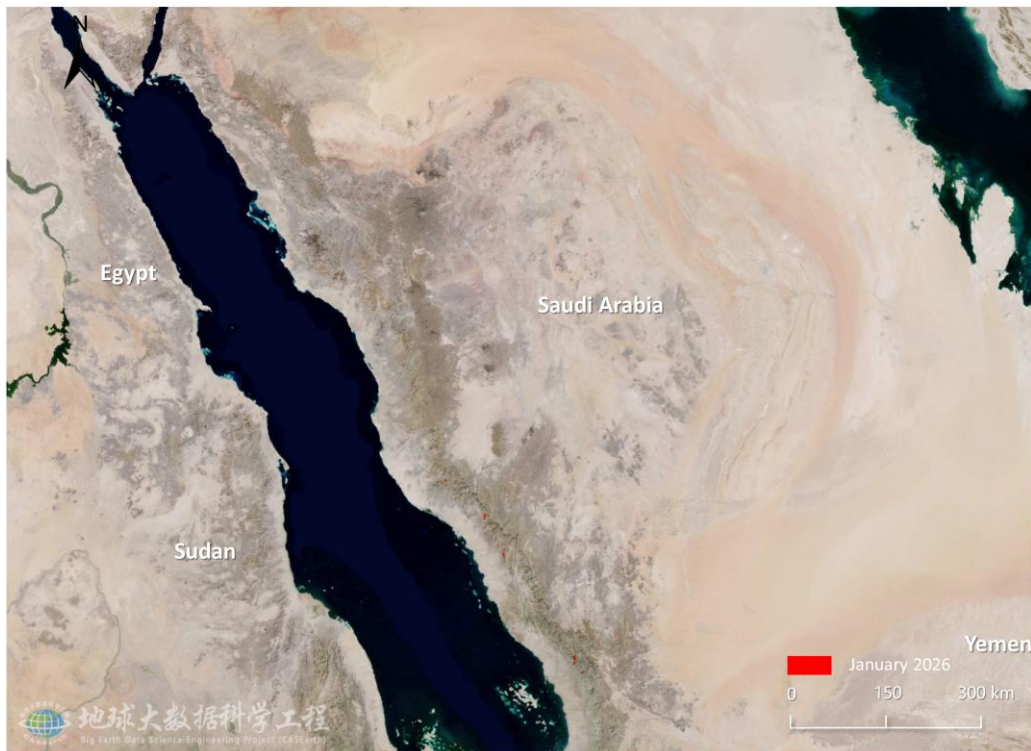


Fig. 2 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Saudi Arabia (January 2026)

### ■ 3. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Yemen

In January 2026, rainfall in Yemen remained limited, and most inland areas were dry. Desert locust activity was mainly concentrated in the southern Gulf of Aden coastal plains and adjacent lowland areas, with localized extension into transitional inland zones. Overall locust conditions remained stable at low intensity, without clear signs of expansion or aggravation. Monitoring results showed that desert locusts affected 21.2 thousand hectares of vegetation in Yemen in January, including 4.9 thousand hectares of cropland, 6.4 thousand hectares of grassland, and 9.9 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 3), accounting for 0.99%, 0.16%, and 0.18% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Ibb recorded the most extensive damage, with 6.3 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Abyan with 5.3 thousand hectares. Lahij, Ta'izz and Al-Baydā were also affected, with 4.8, 3.2 and 1.6 thousand hectares, respectively.



Fig. 3 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Yemen (January 2026)

The analysis indicates that desert locust activity across the region is expected to rise moderately over the next two months as spring rainfall gradually increases. Populations are also expected to become increasingly concentrated along the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden breeding belts. In Egypt, only small numbers of scattered adults are likely to persist in the southeastern Red Sea and southern irrigated areas, and large-scale population buildup is unlikely. In Saudi Arabia, localized small-scale spring breeding may occur along the western Red Sea coast, but overall expansion remains limited. In Yemen, activity is expected to remain confined to low-density adults and hoppers along the Gulf of Aden coastal plains. Continuous monitoring of desert locust dynamics in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen is recommended to prevent repeated impacts on food crop growth and agropastoral production.

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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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