



Report of Monitoring, Early Warning and Assessment of Desert Locust

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Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Morocco, Algeria and Saudi Arabia (March 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 March 2026, desert locusts mainly affected the central-southwestern regions of Morocco, localized northwestern areas of Algeria, and the central-northern inland areas of Saudi Arabia, affecting 64.3, 21.7, and 18.1 thousand hectares of vegetation, respectively. Morocco remained the core area of desert locust activity in North Africa. Under the influence of continued northward migration from Western Sahara and southern Morocco, together with intensified spring breeding, the affected area expanded slightly from the previous month and extended from the southwest toward the central regions. In Algeria, affected areas were mainly located in the northwest, where limited external population input and improving spring vegetation conditions increased localized locust risk. In Saudi Arabia, damage was mainly distributed in the central-northern inland areas. Although the overall situation remained light, increased rainfall across the Arabian Peninsula and localized inland greening still provided conditions for small-scale spring breeding. Over the next two months, central-southwestern Morocco is expected to remain the key area for breeding and population dispersal, with localized adults possibly continuing to migrate northeastward and increasing the risk of influx into northwestern Algeria. Small-scale breeding may occur in northwestern Algeria, while Saudi Arabia is expected to remain at low-

density and dispersed risk, despite possible localized breeding in the central-northern inland areas and parts of the Eastern Province. Given the crop development stages in the three countries, 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 Morocco

In March 2026, spring rainfall continued to increase in Morocco, and vegetation conditions in the southern and central regions were favorable, providing suitable conditions for desert locust egg-laying and breeding. Under the continued northward migration of populations from Western Sahara and southern Morocco, both adult and hopper activity remained relatively active, and population levels stayed high. Monitoring results showed that in March 2026, desert locusts affected 64.3 thousand hectares of vegetation in Morocco, including 10.7 thousand hectares of cropland, 18.9 thousand hectares of grassland, and 34.7 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 1), accounting for 0.14%, 0.28%, and 0.25% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Meknès-Tafilalet recorded the most extensive damage, with 24.4 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Souss-Massa-Draâ with 14.8 thousand hectares. Guelmim-Es-Semara, Marrakech-Tensift-Al Haouz and Tadla-Azilal were also affected, with 10.4, 8.0 and 6.7 thousand hectares, respectively.



Fig. 1 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Morocco ((March 2026)

■ 2. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Algeria

In March 2026, rainfall increased in northwestern Algeria, and vegetation gradually turned green, providing conditions for localized spring breeding. Meanwhile, under the

influence of a small number of immature adults entering from the direction of Morocco, desert locust activity increased slightly compared with the previous month, although the overall situation remained low-density and localized. Monitoring results showed that in March 2026, desert locusts affected 21.7 thousand hectares of vegetation in Algeria, including 6.1 thousand hectares of cropland, 7.3 thousand hectares of grassland, and 8.3 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 2), accounting for 0.40‰, 0.58‰, and 0.32‰ of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Sidi Bel Abbès recorded the most extensive damage, with 5.6 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Saïda with 5.0 thousand hectares. Tlemcen, Aïn Témouchent, Mascara and Laghouat were also affected, with 4.1, 3.2, 2.1 and 1.7 thousand hectares, respectively.



Fig. 2 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Algeria (March 2026)

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

In March 2026, rainfall increased markedly in Saudi Arabia, and localized vegetation in the central-northern inland areas turned green, improving conditions for small-scale spring breeding. However, no evident external population input or widespread locust development was observed, and desert locust activity remained generally weak. Monitoring results showed that in March 2026, desert locusts affected 18.1 thousand hectares of vegetation in Saudi Arabia, including 3.8 thousand hectares of cropland, 5.4 thousand hectares of grassland, and 8.9 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 3), accounting for 1.73%, 0.27%, and 0.22% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Ar Riyadh recorded the most extensive damage, with 9.7 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Al Jawf with 3.6 thousand hectares. Ha'il and Al Quassim were also affected, with 2.6 and 2.2 thousand hectares, respectively.

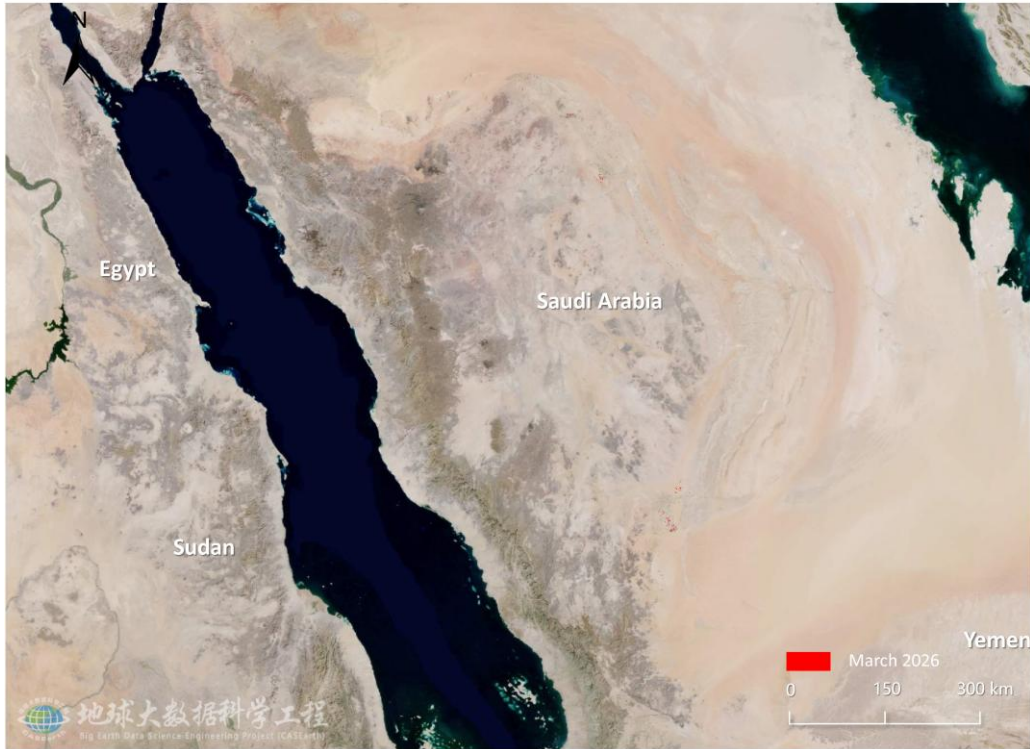


Fig. 3 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Saudi Arabia (March 2026)

The analysis indicates that, over the next two months, the central-southwestern regions of Morocco are expected to remain the key areas for breeding and population dispersal. Localized adults may continue to migrate northeastward, increasing the risk of influx into northwestern Algeria. In northwestern Algeria, small-scale breeding may occur under the combined influence of external population replenishment and improving spring breeding conditions. In Saudi Arabia, the overall risk is expected to remain low-density and dispersed, although small-scale spring breeding may begin locally in the central-northern inland areas and parts of the Eastern Province. Continuous monitoring of desert locust dynamics in Morocco, Algeria and Saudi Arabia is recommended to prevent repeated impacts on food crop growth and agropastoral production.

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