



Report of Monitoring, Early Warning and Assessment of Desert Locust

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Aerospace Information Research Institute, Chinese Academy of Sciences
State Key Laboratory of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth
The International Research Center of Big Data for Sustainable Development Goals (CBAS)
Key Laboratory of National Forestry and Grassland Administration on Forest and Grassland Pest Monitoring and Warning
National Engineering Research Center for Agro-Ecological Big Data Analysis & Application
China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation
Sino-UK Crop Pest and Disease Forecasting & Management Joint Laboratory
Key Lab of Aviation Plant Protection, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, P.R. China

Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Morocco, Algeria and Saudi Arabia (April 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 April 2026, desert locusts mainly affected the central-southwestern regions of Morocco, localized northwestern areas of Algeria, and the northern inland areas of Saudi Arabia, affecting 84.8, 20.9, and 18.5 thousand hectares of vegetation, respectively. Due to northward migration and favorable breeding conditions, Morocco's affected area expanded by approximately 20.0 thousand hectares, spreading from the southwest to the center. In Algeria, the affected area remained concentrated in the northwest and largely stable compared to last month; although local risks increased due to minor external inputs and spring greening, overall expansion remained limited. In Saudi Arabia, locusts were mainly in the northern inland, with the affected area expanding slightly while maintaining a stable, low-level epidemic. Over the next two months, central-southwestern Morocco will remain a main breeding area. Adults are expected to migrate northeast and east, raising transboundary risks for Algeria, while sporadic swarms may head south into Mauritania. In northwestern Algeria, habitat conditions have improved due to rainfall, local grazing, and adult incursions, which could trigger population growth. Saudi Arabia remains at a low, sporadic risk level, though limited small-scale spring breeding may occur in north-central and eastern inland regions. Currently, grain crops in Morocco and

Algeria are at the critical jointing-to-booting stage, while Saudi crops are in the filling-to-milking stage and summer crops are being sown. This high-vulnerability period demands continuous monitoring to safeguard regional agricultural and pastoral production. The detailed results are as follows:

■ 1. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Morocco

In April 2026, persistent spring precipitation and improved vegetation habitats in central and southern Morocco provided favorable conditions for desert locust egg-laying and breeding. Meanwhile, the continued northward migration and influx of overwintering populations from Western Sahara and southern Morocco sustained frequent occurrences of both adults and hoppers, resulting in relatively high locust population levels across the country. Monitoring results showed that in April 2026, desert locusts affected 84.8 thousand hectares of vegetation in Morocco, including 10.2 thousand hectares of cropland, 19.1 thousand hectares of grassland, and 55.5 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 1), accounting for 0.13%, 0.28%, and 0.40% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Souss-Massa-Draâ recorded the most extensive damage, with 32.6 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Meknès-Tafilalet with 24.4 thousand hectares. Tadla - Azilal, Marrakech-Tensift-Al Haouz and Guelmim-Es-Semara were also affected, with 14.1, 8.7 and 5.0 thousand hectares, respectively.



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

■ 2. Desert Locust Monitoring and Loss Assessment in Algeria

In April 2026, increased precipitation in northwestern Algeria promoted vegetation greening and provided suitable habitats for spring breeding. Meanwhile, the cross-border migration of a small number of immature adults from Morocco led to a slight increase in desert

locust activity compared to the previous month. Nevertheless, locust populations remained localized and sporadic at low densities. Monitoring results showed that in April 2026, desert locusts affected 20.9 thousand hectares of vegetation in Algeria, including 5.8 thousand hectares of cropland, 6.8 thousand hectares of grassland, and 8.3 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 2), accounting for 0.38‰, 0.54‰, and 0.32‰ of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Sidi Bel Abbès recorded the most extensive damage, with 7.1 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Saïda with 5.5 thousand hectares. Mascara, Tlemcen and Beard were also affected, with 4.3, 3.6 and 0.4 thousand hectares, respectively.



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

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

In April 2026, Saudi Arabia received significant precipitation, leading to localized vegetation greening in the northern inland and improving habitats for small-scale spring breeding. In the absence of significant external swarm replenishment and large-scale locust dispersal, desert locust activity in this region remained low and stable overall. Monitoring results showed that in April 2026, desert locusts affected 18.5 thousand hectares of vegetation in Saudi Arabia, including 3.5 thousand hectares of cropland, 5.7 thousand hectares of grassland, and 9.3 thousand hectares of shrubland (Figure 3), accounting for 1.59%, 0.29%, and 0.23% of the country's total cropland, grassland, and shrubland areas, respectively. Ar Riyad recorded the most extensive damage, with 7.6 thousand hectares of affected vegetation, followed by Ha'il with 5.5 thousand hectares. Al Jawf and Al Quassim were also affected, with 3.8 and 1.6 thousand hectares, respectively.

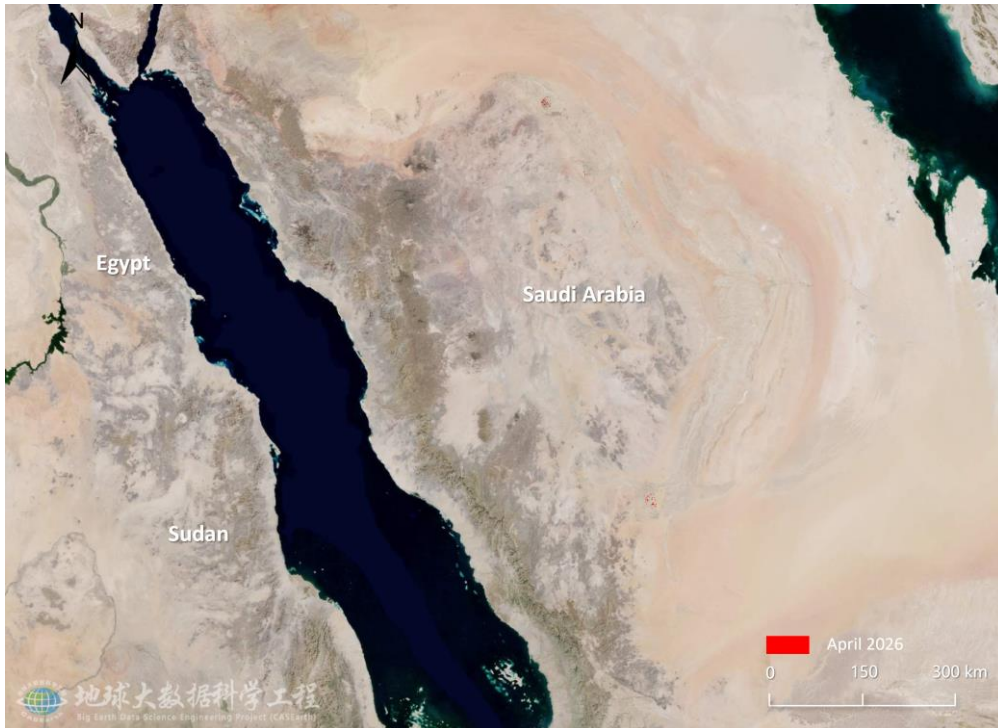


Fig. 3 Monitoring of Desert Locust damage in Saudi Arabia (April 2026)

The analysis indicates that, over the next two months, central-southwestern Morocco will remain a key breeding area. Adults are expected to migrate northeast and east, raising transboundary risks for Algeria, while sporadic swarms may head south into Mauritania. In northwestern Algeria, habitat condition has improved due to rainfall, local grazing, and adult incursions, which could trigger population growth. Saudi Arabia remains at a low, sporadic risk level, though small-scale spring breeding is possible in north-central and eastern inland regions. 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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Chinese Contributors

Wenjiang Huang, Yingying Dong, Biyao Zhang, Linyi Liu, Kun Wang, Quanjun Jiao, Xiangmei Qin, Gang Sun, Yanli Zhang, Jingcheng Zhang, Yantao Zhou, Linsheng Huang, Longlong Zhao, Anting Guo, Xueling Li, Yanru Huang, Hansu Zhang, Binxiang Qian, Zhuoqing Hao, Jing Guo, Rui Hou, Mingxian Zhao, Kehui Ren, Xiangzhe Cheng, Bohai Hu, Minghao Wang, Yan Zhang, Xuanli He, Chao Ruan, Huiqin Ma, Yue Shi, Naichen Xing, Qiong Zheng, Xiaoping Du, Huichun Ye, Bei Cui, Huifang Wang, Yu Ren, Chao Ding, Ruiqi Sun, Yingxin Xiao, Weiping Kong, Juhua Luo, Jinling Zhao, Dongyan Zhang, Xiaodong Yang, Yanhua Meng, Yue Liu, Wei Feng, Xianfeng Zhou

Foreign Contributors

Belinda Luke, Bethan Perkins, Qiaoyun Xie, Yue Shi, Bryony Taylor, Hongmei Li, Wenhua Chen, Pablo Gonzalez Moreno, Sarah Thomas, Timothy Holmes, Stefano Pignatti, Giovanni Laneve, Raffaele Casa, Simone Pascucci, Martin Wooster, Jason Chapman.

Advisory Experts

Bing Zhang, Gensuo Jia, Jihua Wang, Qiming Qin, Puyun Yang, Guofei Fang, Shouquan Chai, Yuying Jiang, Jingquan Zhu, Jinfeng Zhou, Dongmei Yan, Xiangtao Fan, Jianhui Li, Tianhua Hong, Yubin Lan, Jingfeng Huang, Huo Wang, Anhong Guo, Zhanhong Ma, Yilin Zhou, Xiongbing Tu, Wenbin Wu, Feng Zhang, Zhiguo Wang, Lifang Wu, Dong Liang, Stefano Pignatti, Giovanni Laneve, Liangxiu Han, Yanbo Huang, Chenghai Yang, Jiali Shang, Jadu Dash, Hugh Mortimer, Jon Styles, Andy Shaw.

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Contact Us

Tel: +86-010-82178178 Fax: 010-82178177 Email: rscrop@aircas.ac.cn
Address: No.9 Dengzhuang South Road, Haidian District, Beijing 100094, China
Websites: <http://www.rscrop.com> / <http://desertlocust.rscrop.com> Post Code: 100094

