



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

DESERT LOCUST UPDATE

DESERT LOCUST INFORMATION SERVICE

Threat Level = Serious (Central Region)

23 April 2021. Desert Locusts spread in Jordan and Syria, appearing in Lebanon

Small groups of mature Desert Locust adults continued to appear in Jordan. While brief periods of southerly winds caused a further spread into western and central areas as well as northwards into western Syria and eastern Lebanon, the groups also moved in several different directions at other times due to variable winds. The infestations are limited in size and number. Small-scale control operations have been carried out in most areas.

In Jordan, more small groups of mature adults were seen on 18–19 April in the southern districts of Amman and near Kerak. On the 21st, similar infestations were mainly concentrated near Azraq but were also reported northeast of Ma'an and in the Jordan Valley.

In eastern Syria, a few small groups of mature adults moved northwest along the Euphrates Valley from Al Bukamal to Deir ez-Zur. In the west, a few small groups of mature adults were seen north of the Jordan border near Suwayda on 18–19 April and then further north near Qarah on the 22nd. Egg-laying was seen on the 23rd in the Qalamun Mountains north of Damascus.

In Lebanon, a few small groups of mature adults crossed the Anti-Lebanon Mountains from Syria into the Bekaa Valley near Aarsal and Ras Baalbek on 22 April. On the following day, a few returned to Syria near Flitah as the winds shifted. Control operations were quickly launched in both areas.

In western Iraq, there was a late report of mature adult groups seen near Rutba two weeks ago on 8 April.

The rare appearance of Desert Locust in these countries is a result of extensive breeding during this past winter along the northern Red Sea coastal plains in Saudi Arabia. In March, adult groups and swarms moved from the coast to the interior of Saudi Arabia where they scattered throughout a large portion of the north and laid eggs that have given rise to hopper bands recently. However, strong southerly winds carried some of the mature adult groups north from Saudi Arabia to Jordan, Iraq and Syria. Although control operations have treated more than 200,000 ha in Saudi Arabia this year, it is common that some infestations escape detection and control because of the vast and remote breeding areas.

A few more small groups of mature adults may arrive in Jordan and Syria, spreading northwards during southerly winds that are expected on 24–25 April. As the adults are already mature, there remains a risk that limited egg-laying will take place in moist sandy areas. If this is the case, hatching can be expected in about two weeks and small hopper groups and bands could form. If so, control teams should wait at least a week to ensure that all hatching is finished before treating in order to avoid spraying the same area more than once.

Elsewhere, widespread rains this past week have caused some of the swarms remaining in Ethiopia and Kenya to mature. Consequently, egg-laying, hatching and band formation are expected in May but at a much smaller scale than last year. Control operations continue.

www.fao.org/ag/locusts

