

Desert locust incursion in India

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About Desert Locust

It is a species of Locust, a swarming short-horned **grasshopper**. The Plagues of desert locusts have **threatened agricultural production in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia for centuries**. It is potentially the most dangerous of the locust pests due to its ability of swarms to fly rapidly across great distances

Impact on agriculture

Locust swarms devastate crops and cause major agricultural damage and attendant human misery—famine and starvation. The Desert locust plagues may threaten the economic livelihood of one-tenth of the world's humans

Desert Locust in India

There is an incursion of Desert locust (belongs to the category of grasshoppers) in low to medium density since May 2019 onwards, from the border areas of Pakistan mainly in the Jaisalmer district of the Rajasthan State. Its presence has also been noticed in the Barmer and Jalore districts of Rajasthan and Banaskantha district of Gujarat.

But there is no evidence of crop damages by desert locust. Neither the desert locust control teams nor any State agriculture functionaries have reported any damage to the crops.



Locust Control measures in India

- **India has a Locust Control and Research scheme** that is being implemented through the **Locust Warning Organisation** (LWO), established in 1939 and amalgamated in 1946 with the Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage (PPQS) of the Ministry of Agriculture, according to the PPQS.
- The LWO's responsibility is monitoring and control of the locust situation in Scheduled Desert Areas mainly in Rajasthan and Gujarat, and partly in Punjab and Haryana.
- Under the Locust Control & Research, the Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare has established 10 Locust Circle Offices at Barmer, Jaisalmer, Bikaner, Suratgarh, Churu, Nagaur, Phalodi, Jalore in Rajasthan and Palanpur & Bhuj in Gujarat covering almost all the desert areas.
- In addition, **Locust Warning Organization has been established at Jodhpur** which acts as the head quarter of the circle offices.
- Furthermore, a **Field Station on Investigation in Locust has also been established at Bikaner**

The bulletin of LWO on the Locust situation

The LWO publishes a fortnightly bulletin on the locust situation. The latest bulletin on the PPQS website, for the second fortnight of June, said control operations had covered 5,551 hectares by June 30. By July 3, this had risen to 8,051 hectares, according to the minister's written reply in Parliament