

# LOCUST ATTACK IN INDIA

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Disaster and disaster management

Swarms of locusts have invaded vast swathes of land in India since April 11th this year. They [entered several districts of Rajasthan](#) via [Pakistan's Sindh province](#). Few days later, they entered the neighbouring State of Madhya Pradesh. Many districts in [Uttar Pradesh have now been put on alert](#).

This locust attack has affected about 90,000 hectares across 20 districts in Rajasthan. Favourable rain-bearing winds aided their transport towards India. This quickly growing swarm is now threatening to amplify into an agrarian disaster.

Also read | [Swarms of locusts spotted in border villages of Punjab](#)

[A huge challenge is likely to emerge](#) when they start breeding. Last year, mature locusts had entered parts of India after a gap of 26 years. But the locusts that have come in this year are immature. Immature locusts are not fully grown and have the capacity to cause more harm. They also have a longer lifespan.

The locusts which entered India were about 10-12 days old and were flying huge distances in search of food. Since the Rabi crop harvesting is over and the Kharif sowing season is yet to begin, they were unable to find any vegetation.

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They will now start laying eggs after the onset of monsoon and continue breeding for two more months. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the destructive power of a typical locust swarm can be enormous. The size of these swarms can vary - from less than one square kilometre to several hundred square kilometres.

A one square kilometre swarm contains about 40 million locusts. They can eat as much food as 35,000 people assuming that each individual consumes 2.3 kg of food per day.

[Editorial | The swarm: On locust attack](#)

Most countries combating locust swarms are mainly relying on organophosphate chemicals. These are applied in small concentrated doses by vehicle-mounted and aerial sprayers. [Drones have been deployed for controlling locusts](#) in Rajasthan. A drone can spray pesticide on nearly 2.5-acres during a flight of 15 minutes.

In Uttar Pradesh, local villagers have been asked to make noise by beating 'thalis' and bursting crackers. Officials say these measures will help in controlling or eliminating locusts at their resting place.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation, however, has warned of more such attacks along both sides of the India-Pakistan border. But for a country which is already battling a pandemic, [this is yet another challenge](#).

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A huge challenge is likely to emerge when the swarms flying over 20 districts in Rajasthan start breeding.

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