

## Worst locust invasion in East Africa in 70 years

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via Till Westermayer on flickr.com

The livelihood of farmers and other food growers in East Africa is under attack from locusts. Authorities say swarms of millions of locusts are ravaging large swathes of farmland and vegetation.

Millions of people are at risk after the insects destroyed crops in Eritrea, Kenya, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda. The swarms of locusts are spreading and could affect the agriculture, bushland and forests of neighbouring countries. The United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) report that some swarms have been sighted as far afield as Yemen and Oman in the Gulf. It is the worst locust invasion in 70 years and some say it is reaching Biblical proportions.

The locust invasion is seriously affecting the lives of over 12 million people. Many of these were already experiencing food insecurity due to poor harvests from a lack of rain. The swarms of locusts will only worsen the plight of people living in the region. Locusts are extremely voracious pests. One locust can eat its entire body weight in just 24 hours. A small swarm could chomp its way through enough food to feed 35,000 people in just one day. Esther Kithuka, a farmer in Kenya, expressed her concern about the invasion. She said: "We depend a lot on this season and we worry that the locusts will destroy our harvest and we will end up remaining hungry through the rest of the year [until] next cropping season."

Sources: [theeastafrican.co.ke](http://theeastafrican.co.ke) / [sky.com](http://sky.com) / [ecowatch.com](http://ecowatch.com)

## Writing

We need to prepare for locust invasions everywhere as the world warms up. Discuss.

## Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

livelihood / farmers / locusts / farmland / at risk / agriculture / invasion / Biblical / food / insecurity / harvest / lack of rain / plight / voracious / pest / concern / season

## True / False

- a) The article said locusts are physically attacking farmers. T / F
- b) There are billions of locusts in one swarm. T / F
- c) Locust swarms have been spotted in Oman and Yemen. T / F
- d) The invasion is like a scene from the Bible. T / F
- e) The invasion has affected the lives of nearly 10 million people. T / F
- f) Too much rain has made the locust numbers increase. T / F
- g) A locust can eat its own body weight in 24 hours. T / F
- h) A Kenyan farmer is worried the invasion could last for many years. T / F

## Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <b>livelihood</b>  | a. in peril            |
| 2. <b>ravaging</b>    | b. whole               |
| 3. <b>at risk</b>     | c. magnitude           |
| 4. <b>sighted</b>     | d. staying             |
| 5. <b>proportions</b> | e. difficult situation |
| 6. <b>lack</b>        | f. source of income    |
| 7. <b>plight</b>      | g. rely                |
| 8. <b>entire</b>      | h. absence             |
| 9. <b>depend</b>      | i. ruining             |
| 10. <b>remaining</b>  | j. spotted             |

## Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What adversely affects agriculture in your country?
- c) What are the biggest pests in your country?
- d) How can an insect eat its own body weight in just one day?
- e) What would happen if there were food shortages in your country?
- f) What technology could we use to stop the locusts?
- g) What advice do you have for the people in the region?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the FAO?

## Phrase Match

1. swarms of
  2. Millions of people are
  3. locusts are spreading and could affect
  4. swarms have been sighted as
  5. some say it is reaching Biblical
  6. Many of these were already experiencing
  7. swarms of locusts will only worsen the
  8. Locusts are extremely voracious
  9. We depend a lot
  10. we will end up
- a. at risk
  - b. on this season
  - c. proportions
  - d. plight of people
  - e. millions of locusts
  - f. remaining hungry
  - g. pests
  - h. far afield as Yemen
  - i. food insecurity
  - j. the agriculture

## Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you know about locusts?
- b) What damage can locusts do?
- c) Are locusts harmful to humans in any other way?
- d) Would you eat dishes made from locusts?
- e) Why do you think this invasion is happening?
- f) How serious could this invasion become?
- g) What can the FAO do to help people in the region?
- h) What does 'Biblical proportions' mean for the region?

## Spelling

1. The oeoivlhdil of farmers
2. mwrass of millions of locusts
3. ravaging large seahstw of farmland
4. farmland and ettvoeangi
5. sighted as far aidfel as Yemen and Oman
6. it is reaching Biblical proportions
7. experiencing food ytsrneiicu
8. Locusts are extremely caoiuosvr pests
9. eat its irtnee body weight in just 24 hours
10. omchp its way through enough food
11. epserxeds her concern about the invasion
12. the locusts will destroy our atreshv

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. a	4. j	5. c
6. h	7. e	8. b	9. g	10. d

## Role Play

### Role A – People on Trains

You think people on trains are the biggest pests. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not pests. Also, tell the others which are the most likeable of these (and why): annoying bosses, cold callers or children.

### Role B – Annoying Bosses

You think annoying bosses are the biggest pests. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not pests. Also, tell the others which are the most likeable of these (and why): people on trains, cold callers or children.

### Role C – Cold Callers

You think cold callers are the biggest pests. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not pests. Also, tell the others which are the most likeable of these (and why): annoying bosses, people on trains or children.

### Role D – Children

You think children are the biggest pests. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their people are not pests. Also, tell the others which are the most likeable of these (and why): annoying bosses, cold callers or people on trains.

## Speaking – Pests

Rank these with your partner. Put the worst pests at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- rats
- weeds
- termites
- children
- cold callers
- people on trains
- cockroaches
- annoying bosses

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.