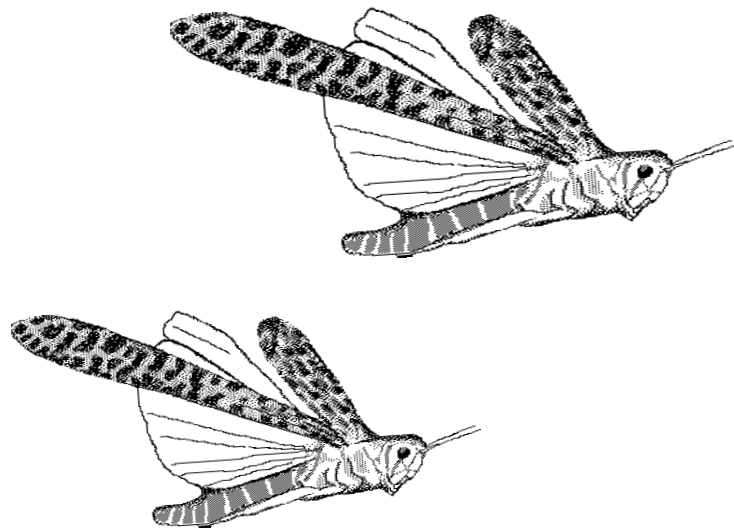


Desert Locust Joint Survey in the Spring Breeding Areas of the I.R. Iran and Pakistan

April 2004



**Desert Locust Joint Survey
in the Spring Breeding Areas
of Pakistan and the I.R. Iran**

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Summary and Recommendations

The 2004 survey was the 10th survey of the spring breeding areas in Pakistan and I.R. Iran. The survey was carried out for a period of 32 days from 1 April to 1 May 2004. The joint team was comprised of two Locust experts from each country. The first half of the survey was carried out in Pakistan from 1 to 16 April, covering 6,118 km, and the second half was in I.R. Iran from 17 April to 1 May, covering 5,330 km. During the survey, the team did not observe any solitary or gregarious Desert Locusts except for a very low population of isolated solitary mature and copulating adults, and first and second instar hoppers in a narrow strip (400m by 2.5 km) near Gwadar (251003N/621354E) in Pakistan. Due to low rainfall on both sides of the border and a continuing drought, vegetation was mostly dry and ecological conditions were not favourable for locusts.

The team has several recommendations to improve future joint surveys. These are:

1. The first half results of the survey could be sent from Karachi instead of Zahedan.
2. The communication equipment recommended by the 2003 Joint Survey (satellite phone, walkie-talkies) should be provided by FAO to the Team Leader of each country.
3. Energetic locust experts who can work well in desert conditions should be appointed for the Joint Survey. The Joint Survey is a tough job not an opportunity to be availed.
4. Drivers in I.R. Iran should be appointed from Sistan-Baluchistan province due to their suitability and knowledge of the area and their experience in desert driving.
5. Proper arrangement of rest houses in Pakistan may be considered as in I.R. Iran.
6. Four vehicles may exclusively be maintained and reserved in I.R. Iran, like Pakistan, for the Joint Survey.
7. Paragraph 9 of the recommendation of the 2003 Joint Survey (DSA) should be implemented in letter and spirit retrospectively.
8. Laptop computers may be provided by FAO to review SPOT-VGT imagery in the areas, reinstall eLocust on Psion if the software becomes damaged, and used for Internet connection for sending the survey reports and any other information to FAO DLIS.

Desert Locust Joint Survey in the Spring Breeding Areas of Pakistan and the I.R. Iran

April 2004

Introduction

The present survey was the 10th Joint Survey carried out in the spring breeding areas of the Desert Locust in Pakistan and I.R. Iran since 1995. The main objective of the survey was to survey the breeding areas in I.R. Iran and Pakistan. Desert Locust outbreaks in the survey area can threaten adjoining areas in Southwest Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. FAO DLIS provided SPOT-VGT imagery covering the spring breeding areas of I.R. Iran and Pakistan to the Joint Survey team. The month-long Joint Survey was undertaken for 16 days in Pakistan and the rest in I.R. Iran. Both countries made all possible arrangements for comfortable boarding and lodging for the team in order to conduct survey smoothly.

The survey was carried out according to the proposed itinerary with minor modifications in Pakistan. The team reached Quetta on 14 April 2004 via Pasni and Uthal (with an overnight in Uthal) rather than from Turbat and Uthal (and spending the night in Khuzdar).

The weather was hot and dry during the survey and the vegetation in the entire area was dry and patchy. The perennial bushes and trees were green with a few exceptions. No Desert Locusts were seen during the entire survey except in Gwadar, Pakistan. Ecological conditions were unfavourable for Desert Locust so the upcoming summer season should be calm.

The team covered 11,448 km during the Joint Survey, surveying an estimated area of 3,520 ha (65 stops) in Pakistan and 35,522 ha (88 stops) in I.R. Iran.

Methodology

The Joint Survey team comprised of four Locust Experts, two each from Pakistan and I.R. Iran, accompanied by a Maintenance Assistant from each country (Appendix 1). As per the recommendation of FAO, each team had a Team Leader who was responsible for all arrangements in their respective countries.

The I.R. Iranian team crossed the border into Pakistan at Mirjaveh/Taftan border on 1 April 2004 and joined Pakistani team on the same day (Appendix 2). The team surveyed potentially green areas as indicated by SPOT-VGT imagery and other suitable habitats in Pakistan from 1 to 16 April. On 17 April, the team crossed the Taftan/Mirjaveh border and entered I.R. Iran. The results of the first half of the survey were downloaded from the Psion palmtop computer to a computer at the Agriculture Office in Zahedan and sent by email to FAO DLIS. During the 13-day survey in I.R. Iran up to 28 April, the team followed the same procedure that was used in Pakistan.

Two teams, each comprising one Pakistan Locust Expert and one Iranian expert were formed during the Joint Survey to facilitate good coordination and understanding during the survey. An HF radio system was utilized in Pakistan for communication while Walkie-Talkies were used in I.R. Iran. Prior to starting the survey, both Team Leaders entered the SPOT-VGT coordinates provided by FAO DLIS into the GPS with the help of 1:500,000 TPC maps. This year for the first time, the team used TERRA MODIS satellite images for survey. These are higher resolution (250 m) than the SPOT-VGT (1 km). The GPS GOTO function was used for locating the SPOT VGT. It is noted that most of the SPOT-VGT locations were unapproachable due to hills and natural barriers.

Information was also collected from shepherds and other local people. Almost every evening, the team sat down together and discussed survey activities, their observations and achievements and the difficulties of the day. The route, area and planning for the next day's survey were reviewed. Rainfall data was collected from sources in both countries (Appendix 3). Data collected in the field and observations were recorded on the Psion palmtop computer using the eLocust program as well as on the *FAO Desert Locust Survey and Control Form* (Appendices 4 and 5). The RealMap program on the Psion was also utilized for a thorough survey of the area. Photographs of many interesting Desert Locust habitats were also taken with a digital camera provided by FAO (Appendix 6).

The last day of the survey was spent in Zahedan, I.R. Iran for drafting and preparing the final report. Photos taken by the digital camera and other data were downloaded from the Psion to the computer at the Agriculture Office in Zahedan and copied onto a CD for both Team Leaders. The data and report were sent to FAO DLIS. The CD was sent by the FAO Representation in Tehran to FAO DLIS.

Results and Discussion

Baluchistan in I.R. Iran and Pakistan can be geographically divided into three parts for the sake of the preparation of this report.

- (a) **Northern Baluchistan.** The northern part of Baluchistan consists of the Ras Koh Mountains in Pakistan and the Taftan Hills in I.R. Iran. High elevation sandy and rocky plains from Zahedan (I.R. Iran) to Nushki (Pakistan) are situated on the northern side of these hills. The natural vegetation between Taftan and Nushki was dry while patchy cultivated green fields of wheat, cumin, onion and barley were present. Low rainfall was recorded in the area on 8/02/2004 and due to the prolonged drought, the ecological conditions were unfavourable for Desert Locust.
- (b) **Central Baluchistan.** This area stretches south of the Ras Koh Mountains to the Kech Bend Mountains north of Turbat, Pakistan. In this area is the Great Sandy Desert west of Kharan and Rakhshan valley of Panjgur that extends to the Saravan, Suran and Zaboli valleys in I.R. Iran, ending in the Jaz Murian Basin and Kahnij in the west. Due to no rainfall in the entire area and the prolonged drought, natural vegetation was mostly dry and no moisture was available for locust breeding.
- (a) **Southern Baluchistan.** The southern part of Baluchistan consists of the coastal plains spread from Jask and Bandar Abbas in I.R. Iran to the Jiwani, Gwadar, and Kulanch valleys, Pasni, Ormara, Angol and Uthal in Pakistan. This region is famous for Desert Locust breeding and contains some of the best habitats between Pasni, Turbat and Chabahar (I.R. Iran). Small infestations of Desert Locust first and second instar hoppers and isolated mature and copulating adults were observed at one place, Ankra Band, near Gwadar while the remainder of the area was found free of Desert Locust activity.

The prevailing weather in both countries was hot and dry during the survey. The whole area had not received sufficient rain during the last six months. The soil moisture at all the survey stops was mostly dry and unfavourable for Desert Locust breeding. It was clear that the prevailing drought in Baluchistan had a negative impact on vegetation and ultimately on Locust activities. The habitat was on an overall basis unfavourable for locust breeding. Consequently, there are no possibilities of a Desert Locust outbreak in these areas.

Appendices

Appendix 1. List of participants

Pakistan

Manzoor Ahmad Mashvani	Entomologist	Pishavar	Team Leader
Jamal Akhtar	Locust Officer	Kharan	Locust Officer
Mohammad Akram		Karachi	Maintenance Asst.
Masoud Ahmad	Driver	Karachi	
Mohammad Navaz	Driver	Lahore	
Abdulmajid Jamali	Driver	Sukkur	
Mohammad Naser	Driver	Karachi	

I.R. Iran

Mohammadreza Ghassami	Locust Officer	Tehran	Team Leader
Vahid Ziaianahmadi	Plant Protection Expert	Chabahar	Locust Officer
Abolfazl Mahzouz		Tehran	Maintenance Asst.
Teimur Molaei	Driver	Tehran	
Aboulhassan Aboulfathi	Driver	Tehran	
Mohammad Ahmadianfar	Driver	Khash	
Mohammadreza Pischevar	Driver	Kerman	

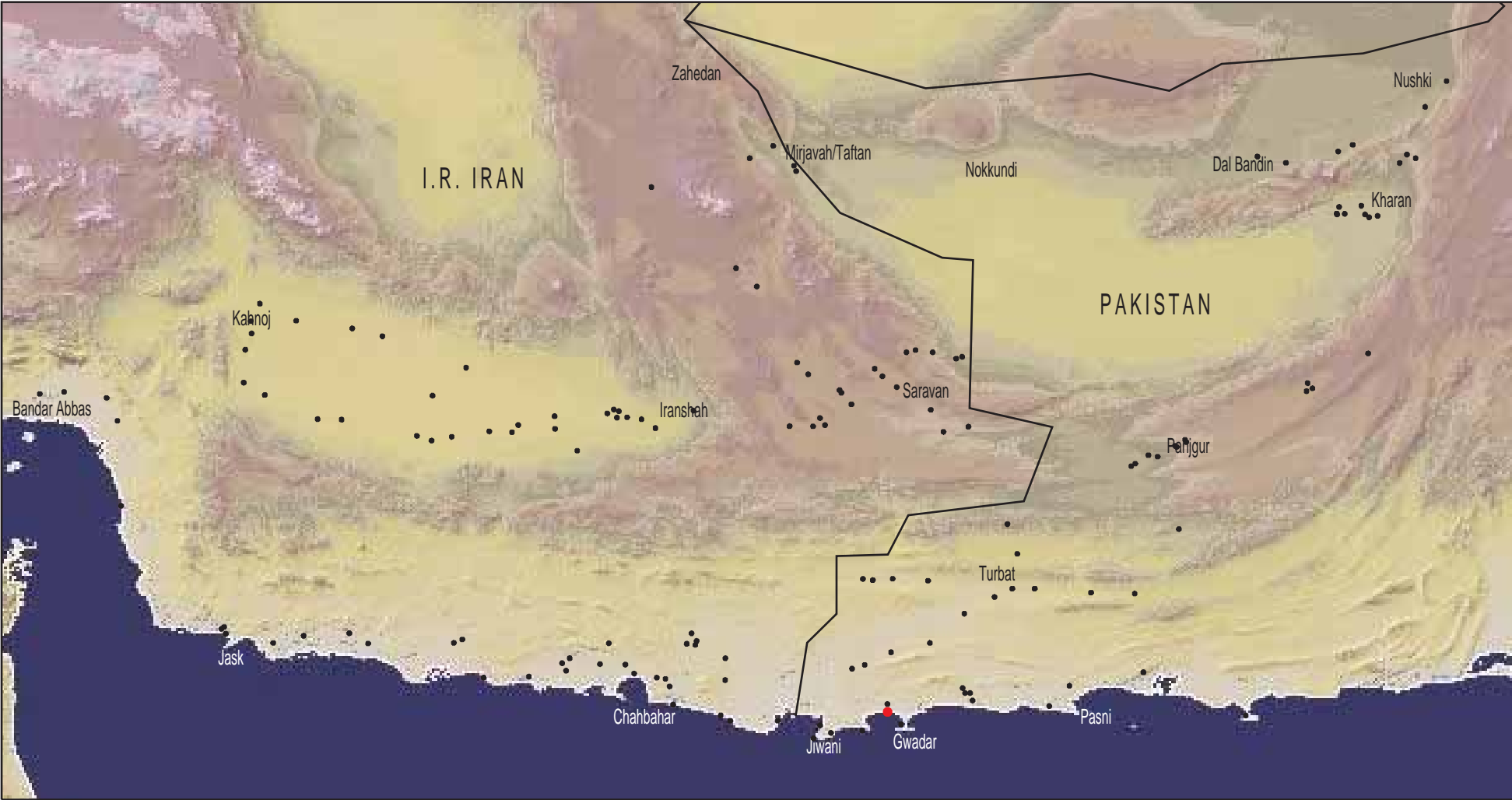
Appendix 2. Itinerary

Date	Route	km	Overnight
1 Apr	Taftan, Nokondi, Dalbandin	465	Dalbandin
2 Apr	Dalbandin, Chagai Hills, Padag, Nushki	208	Nushki
3 Apr	Nushki, Kharan	324	Nushki
4 Apr	Kharan area	250	Kharan
5 Apr	Kharan, Nag, Panjgur	482	Panjgur
6 Apr	Panjgur area	246	Panjgu
7 Apr	Panjgur, Hushab, Turbat	392	Turbat
8 Apr	Turbat area, Mand	559	Turbat
9 Apr	Turbat, Shooli, Sunsar, Gwadar	348	Gwadar
10 Apr	Gwadar, Jiwani, Gwadar	284	Gwadar
11 Apr	Gwadar, Kulanch, Pasni	288	Pasni
12 Apr	Pasni area	239	Pasni
13 Apr	Pasni, Uthal	506	Uthal
14 Apr	Uthal, Quetta	683	Quetta
15 Apr	<i>Rest day</i>	0	Quetta
16 Apr	Quetta, Taftan	844	Taftan
17 Apr	<i>cross border at Taftan/Mirjaveh, send report of 1st half</i>		Zahedan
18 Apr	Zahedan, Khash, Gasht, Saravan	306	Saravan
19 Apr	Saravan area	435	Saravan
20 Apr	Saravan, Zaboli, Saravan, Khash, Iranshahr	560	Iranshahr
21 Apr	Iranshahr, Espakeh, Nikshahr, Chabahar	388	Chabahar
22 Apr	Chabahar area	368	Chabahar
23 Apr	Govatre, Zarabad	618	Chabahar
24 Apr	Chabahar, Jask	427	Jask
25 Apr	Jask, Bandarabbas	361	Bandarabbas
26 Apr	<i>Rest day</i>	0	Bandarabbas
27 Apr	Bandarabbas, Kahnuj, Zehkalat, Dalgan, Iranshahr	866	Iranshahr
28 Apr	Iranshahr area, Sardegah, west Jaz Murian	476	Iranshahr
29 Apr	Iranshahr, Zahedan; <i>send 2nd half report</i>	325	Iranshahr
30 Apr	<i>Send final report</i>	0	Zahedan
1 May	<i>Pakistani team crosses at Mirjaveh/Taftan border</i>	200	
	total distance covered in Pakistan	6,118	
	total distance covered in I.R. Iran	5,330	
	total distance covered in Joint Survey 2004	11,448	

Appendix 3. Rainfall data

MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUG		SEPT		OCT		NOV		DEC		JAN		FEB		MAR		APR				
day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	day	mm	
PAKISTAN																										
Dalbandin																										
	0		0		4		0		0		0		10		16		2									
				17	11										20		5									
				28	34										21		7									
Nushki																										
				9	4						15		10		16		2		8		4					
				17	11										20		5									
				28	34										21		7									
															28		20									
Panjgur (no data)																										
Kharan																										
	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		8		7		0		0	
Turbat																										
27	16			7	3										7		4									
				18	5										20		7									
				17	19																					
				28	37										21		6									
				30	8										27		21									
															28		13									
															28		20									
Gwadar																										
	0		0		13		13		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0	
Pasni																										
	0		0		0		0		0		0		0		0		18		37							
																	21		1							
	0		0	9	7		0		0		0		0		0		21		6		0		0		0	
																	24		17							
IRAN																										
Iranshahr																										
30	4.5			8	2.9																					
				18	1.9																					
				23	2.4																					
				25	4	1	1.4								19	0.1				31	0.2					
				29	1.4	23	0.5								27	4.6										
Kahnoj																										
	0		0	25	4	1	1.4								19	0.1				31	0.2					
				29	1.4	23	0.5								27	4.6										
Jask																										
	0		0		0		1.2		0		0		0		0		0		2.6		0		0		0	

Appendix 4. Map of areas surveyed



(black = survey locations, red = locations with Desert Locust)

Appendix 5. Survey results

Weather, habitat and Desert Locust data collected in the field during the Joint Survey were recorded on the *FAO Desert Locust Survey and Control Forms* as well as entered into eLocust. The following pages contain these data.

Appendix 6. Photos



Suran Valley, northern Sistan-Baluchistan, I.R. Iran (20 April 2004)



Bampur – Iranshahr area, central Sistan-Baluchistan, I.R. Iran (28 April 2004)



Bampur – Iranshahr area, central Sistan-Baluchistan, I.R. Iran (28 April 2004)



South of Iranshahr, central Sistan-Baluchistan, I.R. Iran (28 April 2004)



Coastal plains near Chabahar, southern Sistan-Baluchistan, I.R. Iran (22 April 2004)



Recording location data using a GPS and entering field observations into eLocust.



Data transmission from eLocust by email via PC at the Agriculture Office, Zahedan, I.R. Iran (17 April 2004)



Participants of the 2004 Joint Survey.