MINGACHEVIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Discover the Fauna of Our Campus

Desert Locust (Schistocerca gregaria)

Order: Orthoptera (Grasshoppers and Crickets)

Family: Acrididae (Short-horned Grasshoppers)

Genus: Schistocerca

Species: Desert Locust (Schistocerca gregaria)

The desert locust is considered one of the most dangerous agricultural pests in the world. These insects can form enormous swarms and travel thousands of kilometers. A single swarm may contain billions of individuals, capable of destroying all green vegetation in their path.

They are widely distributed across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. Their life cycle includes two distinct phases: a solitary phase and a gregarious (swarming) phase. When environmental conditions such as humidity change, solitary individuals aggregate and undergo changes in color and behavior.In the swarming phase, locusts become yellowish-black in color. A swarm can consume its own body weight in vegetation each day, devastating grain fields and orchards.Desert locusts are highly mobile and can be transported rapidly by wind. Throughout history, they have caused famine and agricultural disasters. Today, their movements are monitored using satellite technology.

Control measures include chemical and biological methods. These insects are adapted to tropical and subtropical climates. Females lay eggs in moist sand, with each female capable of laying several hundred eggs. The hatchlings, known as nymphs, are wingless and move in large groups across the ground.

Adults have strong flight capabilities. Their mouthparts are of the chewing type. In some countries, locusts are also used as food. Their migration is considered an international concern, and organizations such as the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) implement monitoring and control programs.Their reproductive rate is extremely high. Desert locusts are among the few species capable of causing large-scale ecological disasters.

Their physiology allows them to survive long periods without water. Their population dynamics are closely linked to climate change. Scientists study pheromones that regulate their swarming behavior. They cause millions of dollars in damage each year. Although some bird species feed on them, natural predators are often insufficient to control large swarms.