

East Africa is *reeling* from an invasion of locusts

“Let my people go, so that they may worship me. If you refuse to let them go, I will bring *locusts* into your country tomorrow.” So said God, rather *vengefully*, according to Moses and Aaron. But although the locust *infestation wreaking havoc* on east Africa is of biblical proportions, it is not a *portent* of end times, said experts at a press conference in Nairobi this month. Still, the finger-length bugs spell big trouble for the countries most affected.

reel 迷惑; 震惊

locust 蝗虫

vengeful 复仇的

infestation 感染; 侵扰

wreak 发泄; 报复

havoc 破坏

portent 前兆; 预示

It is the worst locust invasion in decades for Kenya, Ethiopia and *Somalia*. One enormous *swarm*, recently over north-eastern Kenya, contains nearly 200bn of the creatures and occupies a space in the sky three times the size of New York City. There are dozens of swarms in Kenya alone.

Somalia 索马里

swarm 一大群

Killing the bugs early is vital. They can be managed with surveillance and *spraying*, particularly if they are doused when still young and hopping, and before the population booms.

spray 喷射

FAO 联合国粮农组织

Early action is also cost-effective. But prevention does not attract much funding. “This is a Catch-22,” says Keith Cressman, the Senior Locust Forecasting Officer at the *FAO*. “Donors are interested in funding big emergencies, big problems.” And governments, unlike locusts, move slowly.

Meanwhile, extreme weather has given the locusts six legs up. Last year there were eight **cyclones** over the northern Indian Ocean. The resulting **vegetation** gave the insects plenty to **munch** on.

cyclone 旋风

vegetation 植被; 植物

munch 咀嚼

Several international organisations are building systems that trigger the release of aid from an existing pot when forecasts of drought, another **bane** of east Africa, grow **dire**. The same could be done to stop locusts before they get off the ground.

bane 毒药; 祸害

dire 可怕的; 悲惨的