

Southern Pine Beetles

Cause

WIDESPREAD DAMAGE

this Summer

From June 5, 2017 to September 1, 2017

2,124 SPOTS DETECTED

Forestry professionals' earlier predictions of a bad year for pine beetles is unfortunately coming to pass, especially for some counties in Alabama. Timber losses may be significant according to officials with the Alabama Forestry Commission (AFC).

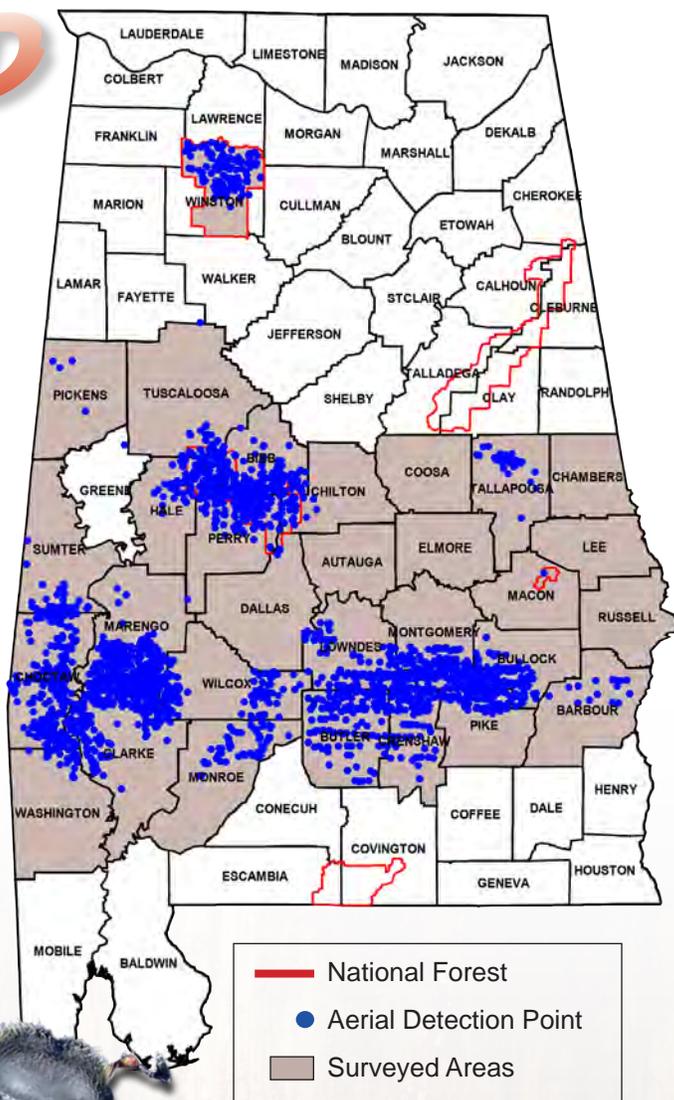
“When trees are drought-stressed as many are from last fall, their weakened state makes them more prone to insects and diseases,” commented AFC Forest Health Coordinator Dana Stone. “This summer, we have seen a large number of trees dying across our state’s pine forests, and the culprit is southern pine beetle. Statewide, AFC foresters have aurally detected a total of 2,124 beetle spots, compared to less than 700 last year. Affecting approximately 201,683 trees, the total value of pines destroyed is estimated to be \$1.7 million.”

In Montgomery County alone, over 100 beetle spots have been identified. When the number of beetle spots for a county exceeds one tenth of one percent of the pine-forested acres for that county, it qualifies as epidemic. Having fewer pine acres, Montgomery County has now reached that threshold.

The Alabama Forestry Commission conducts flights throughout the year for the purpose of detecting and marking beetle spots on a GPS or digital map. When spots are identified, local AFC foresters then send notification letters to forest landowners advising them that they have an infestation, along with suggested control measures.

According to Stone, “Southern pine beetles are the primary killer of pines in Alabama, with unmanaged and overcrowded stands of southern pines most susceptible to attack. Epidemic

*Beetle Map from Aerial Surveys
as of 9/1/17*



populations of this bark beetle occur periodically in the state, destroying hundreds of acres of pines. If not controlled, these expanding populations can devastate entire stands, causing millions of dollars in damage.”

“We encourage forest landowners to monitor their property for signs of damage, then contact their local AFC office or registered forester for management recommendations before taking any action,” said State Forester Rick Oates. “The Alabama Forestry Commission will continue to conduct both aerial surveys and ground checks to assess beetle activity across the state.”