



Africanized Honey Bees (Killer Bees)

AFRICANIZED HONEY BEES (KILLER BEES): A THREAT TO FORESTERS, FOREST LANDOWNERS AND CITIZENS OF MISSISSIPPI

Africanized honeybees (AHB) are at the doorstep of Mississippi. Since 1957, pure African bees and their hybrid offspring, the Africanized honeybee, have rapidly increased in numbers and extended their range throughout South, Central, and North America at rates frequently exceeding 200 miles per year.

The first AHB discovery in Alabama was in August 2004 in Mobile County and in Louisiana July 2005 in Caddo Parish and recently reported in the New Orleans area. Also in July 2005 the AHB was discovered in the Tampa area with four counties reporting AHB's in Florida. Total US fatalities as of 9/15/07 stands at 23. The recent reported fatalities being in Mission, TX on 9/15/07; Graham County, AZ on 9/15/07; San Antonio, TX on 9/7/07; Montana Vista, TX on

8/30/07; and Hildago, TX on 8/27/07.

Based upon the history of the AHB movement and current information on its spread, it could migrate or hitchhike on ships, barges, truck trailers, etc. into all areas of Mississippi. Africanization is occurring in counties around Miami and New Orleans and possibly Mobile, Alabama due to escapes of AHB swarms from ships coming into port as stated in the Action Plan for Mississippi (see attachment).

The AHB is of particular concern in our forested areas and associated forestry operations. Special concern is for our equipment operators associated with these forestry operations. The noise and vibrations associated with these activities is an irritant to bees' because of their aggressive behavior. The AHB is very aggressive and defend their nest from intruders up to 50 feet away by stinging in the hundreds and chasing intruders up to a mile. They have caused deaths of pets, livestock, and even people, giving them their "killer bee" nickname.

People and other animals are usually killed only if they are unable to get away.

We should take this threat seriously and be on the lookout for these aggressive bee colonies. More general information can be found on the Africanized Honey Bee Fact Sheet

<http://www.ent.uga.edu/bee/Publications/B1290.pdf>.

For additional information contact:

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