



## 2014 Mississippi Southern Pine Beetle Outlook

By Dr. John J. Riggins, Forest Entomologist.

The southern pine beetle (*Dendroctonus frontalis*, Fig. 1) continued to have increased impacts on Mississippi forests during 2012 and 2013. 1,068 spots were reported from Mississippi during 2012 in total (Fig. 2). Many of these infestations were very active (Fig. 3), and resulted in more than 1,500 acres of forest mortality.

Statewide during 2013, Mississippi reported only 140 southern pine beetle spots (Fig. 4). Since SPB outbreaks usually last 2-4 years, it was surprising that this outbreak on the Homochitto during 2012 seemed to collapse during 2013. Spring trapping surveys (deployed statewide by the Mississippi Forestry Commission and the U.S.D.A. Forest Service) will shed light on what we should expect in this area and throughout the rest of the State during 2014.

The Trace Unit of the Tombigbee National Forest (between Houston and Tupelo, MS) seems to have increasing Southern pine beetle (SPB) populations during 2013 and thus far during 2014. Areas in and around the Trace Unit of the Tombigbee National Forest

experienced 140 SPB spots during 2013 (Fig. 5), and anecdotal reports from January and February of 2014 indicate that there are new spots popping up and that there are plenty of trees with viable SPB brood. Forest stakeholders near the Trace Unit in counties such as Chickasaw, Pontotoc, Calhoun, Webster, Clay, Monroe, and Lee should pay special attention to signs of SPB activity.

Although SPB populations around Homochitto National Forest seem to have declined somewhat last year, landowners in Franklin, Amite, Wilkinson, Adams, Jefferson, Lincoln, and Copiah Counties are still urged to be diligent and conduct inspections of their lands to determine if SPB activity is present.

Landowners in the rest of the state are also encouraged to pay close attention for SPB activity. With SPB populations on the rise in various areas of the state over the last two years, forest stakeholders throughout Mississippi should keep a close eye on things as this year progresses.

This [publication](http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/CAT87208970/PDF) (<http://naldc.nal.usda.gov/download/CAT87208970/PDF>) provides a good overview of

SPB signs and symptoms. If any SPB activity is suspected, please contact your local MFC office. Timely salvage or cut and leave operations can dramatically limit total timber losses incurred due to a SPB outbreak, and can limit a landowners liability should the infestation spread to adjacent properties.

### For additional information contact:

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Figure 1: The southern pine beetle (*Dendroctonus frontalis*) is historically the most destructive forest insect pest of Southern forests.



Figure 2: Southern Pine Beetle infestations in Mississippi during 2012

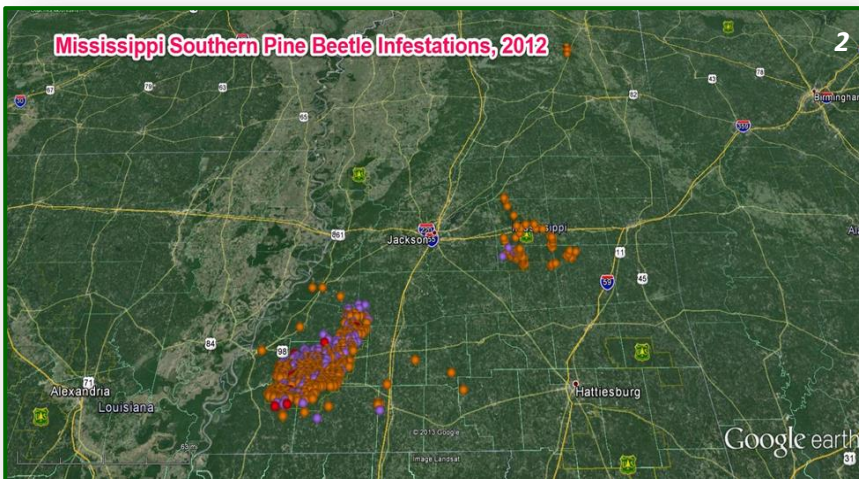


Figure 3: SPB attack densities are very high in some spots, as evidenced by pitch tubes on this tree in Homochitto National Forest on 7/31/2012. Photo Credit, John Riggins



Figure 4: 2013 Mississippi Southern Pine Beetle Spots, North of I-20.

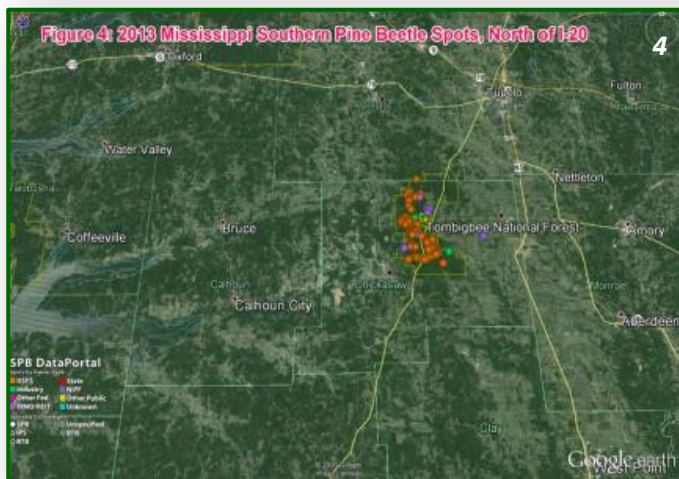


Figure 5: 2013 Mississippi Southern Pine Beetle Spots, South of I-20.

