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PEST REPORT

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FIDS PEST REPORT 94-30

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FOREST TENT CATERPILLAR IN THE PRINCE GEORGE FOREST REGION 1994 DAMAGE AND FORECAST FOR 1995

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DAMAGE

Forest tent caterpillar, *Malacosoma disstria*, defoliated more that 40 000 ha of trembling aspen, similar to the area attacked in 1993. Increases in area of feeding were mapped in the Prince George and Dawson Creek forest districts and a decease noted in the McBride Forest District.

In the Prince George Forest District, tent caterpillar populations increased for the second consecutive year. Aspen was severely defoliated over nearly 33 000 ha from Prince George Airport south to the district boundary, up from 22 000 ha in 1993. An additional 3200 ha of severe defoliation was noted along McLeod Lake.

Almost 1500 ha of severe defoliation was mapped in the Dawson Creek Forest District south of Taylor. Defoliation was reported in the same areas in 1993.

In the McBride Forest District, the areas defoliated decreased after three consecutive years of increase. Severe defoliation occurred over 4500 ha, down from 16 000 ha in 1993. The damage was scattered along the Robson Valley, from Rider west of McBride to Valemount in the east. The decline was due to weather, parasitism and disease.

FORECAST

The number of new egg masses found during the 1994 fall surveys (map) in the Prince George Forest District remained static with an average of 21 (range 8-64) per 10 cm dbh tree (table), similar to 23 (range 7-42) per 12 cm dbh tree in 1993. The prediction is for an increased population and continued severe defoliation.

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In the Dawson Creek Forest District near Taylor, new egg masses found decreased to 6 down from 18 in 1993. This indicates a declining population with moderate defoliation in 1995.

In the McBride Forest District, new egg masses found declined to an average of 11 (range 5-15) down from 17 (range 6-30) in 1993. Even with this decline predictions are for severe defoliation in 1995.

CONTROLS

Homeowners can further reduce populations by clipping and destroying egg masses during the winter and early spring months. The egg masses are covered with a silvery-brown protective layer and completely encircle small twigs. These are visible on small trees before leaf flush. Larval colonies can be clipped and burned before the young larvae disperse to feed.

Once the larvae have dispersed and feeding is underway, control with insecticides may be considered when populations and damage warrant. Contact a pesticide dispenser for information on registered insecticides for forest tent caterpillar. When using insecticides always follow the directions and application rates listed on the label.

FIDS will continue to monitor forest tent caterpillar populations and damage in 1995 and report significant information.

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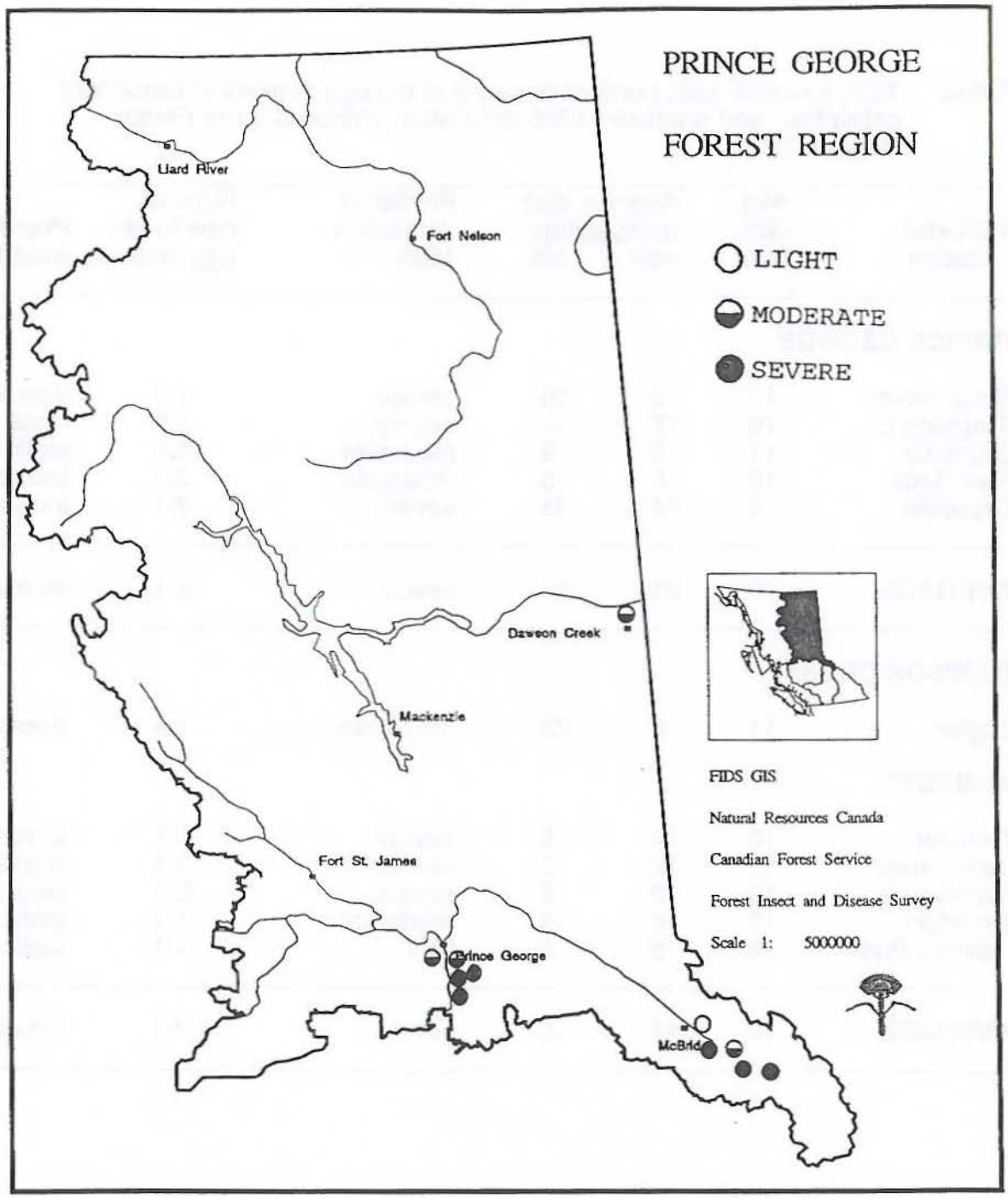
Table. TSA, location, dbh, number of new and old egg masses of forest tent caterpillar, and predicted 1995 defoliation, Prince George Forest Region, 1994.

TSA and Location	Avg. dbh (cm)	Avg. no. egg masses/tree new	old	Predicted defoliation 1995	Ratio of new to old egg masses	Population Status
PRINCE GEORGE						
Strathnaver	11	10	16	severe	1:2	decreasing
Trapping L.	10	17	12	severe	1:1	static
Stone Cr.	11	8	9	moderate	1:1	static
Red Rock	10	8	5	moderate	2:1	increasing
Crysdale	9	64	35	severe	2:1	increasing
AVERAGE	10	21	15	severe	2:1	increasing
DAWSON CREEK						
Taylor	11	6	23	moderate	1:4	decreasing
McBRIDE						
Dunster	10	14	5	severe	3:1	increasing
Tete Jaune	10	15	5	severe	3:1	increasing
Valemount	10	12	6	severe	2:1	increasing
Croydon	10	6	4	moderate	1:1	static
Holmes River	10	5	6	light	1:1	static
AVERAGE	10	11	5	severe	2:1	increasing



Map. Forecast of 1995 defoliation by forest tent caterpillar in the the Prince George Forest Region based on egg mass surveys.