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Summary of Forest Pest Conditions Prince Rupert Forest Region

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This report briefly summarizes the activities of some of the important forest pests active in the Prince Rupert Forest Region in 1990. A more detailed report on these and other pests, their impacts and potential for continued damage will be available later in the year.

The area of mature lodgepole pine killed by the **mountain pine beetle** declined by approximately 20% from the 4400 ha recorded in 1989, due mainly to continued declines in the western part of the region, especially in the Cranberry Junction area of the Kispiox TSA where the majority of regional mortality has occurred since the early 1970's. Elsewhere in the TSA, scattered, mostly light infestations continued at similar levels along the north side of the Skeena River between Kitwanga and Big Oliver Creek. In the Morice TSA, increased attacks were seen particularly in the area between Babine Lake and Morrison Lake, and south of Houston near Owen Hill. In the Bulkley and Lakes TSA's, early indications are that mortality will be at similar to slightly increased levels over last year. **Lodgepole terminal weevil** damage increased in most areas of chronic activity. An average of 10% of the leaders of young pine were killed in plantations in Trout Creek in the Bulkley TSA and between McBride and Morice lakes in the Morice TSA. Between 1 and 5% of the young pine were attacked in scattered stands in the northern areas of both TSA's. **Warren's root collar weevil** continued to infest up to 90% of the pine in young planted and natural stands in the Kispiox TSA, but average mortality was less than 1%. Continued monitoring of diameter growth in some of the more severely infested stands since 1988 has found, as yet, no difference between infested and non-infested trees.

Since 1989 was a non-flight year for the **spruce beetle** no new white spruce mortality was mapped during aerial surveys. Preliminary data from probes into infested stands near Haul Lake in the Morice TSA however, indicate significant levels of current attack in standing timber. Beetle populations are also building in scattered individual windthrown trees in the Morice River corridor. **White pine weevil** killed an average of 20% of the terminals of young Sitka spruce in parts of the Skeena and Kitimat valleys, similar to 1989 levels. **Spruce budmoth** continued to cause light damage to the current foliage of all species of spruce throughout the southern part of the region.

Western balsam bark beetle killed increased numbers of alpine fir, particularly in the southern part of the Morice TSA. Up to 30% of total stand volume has been lost in accumulated mortality in parts of the Mosquito and Shelford hills areas, in upper Walcott Creek and near Dome mountain.

Western blackheaded budworm populations collapsed throughout the areas infested during the last three years in the Bulkley and Morice TSA's. Only small numbers of larvae (maximum 35/sample) were collected in beatings in previously infested areas.

Seedling mortality caused by **Rhizina root disease** declined throughout the wetter parts of the region due primarily to decreased broadcast burning, decisions to delay planting, and prolonged dry weather. However, an average of 20% of seedlings were killed in six plantations in the Nass River drainage, as well as 30% in a single plantation in the Burdick Creek area in the Kispiox TSA. Mortality of 3 to 10% of the seedlings was found in seven plantations in the Bulkley and Morice TSA's, five of which were in areas not infected in 1989.

Black army cutworm defoliated conifer seedlings in two plantations in the Kispiox Valley and single sites on the east side of Babine Lake and southeast of Meziadin Lake. No seedling mortality was recorded at any of the sites.

Western tent caterpillars lightly to severely defoliated black cottonwood, some for the second consecutive year, over about 3000 ha in scattered stands adjacent to and on islands in the Skeena River, west of Terrace.

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