

PEST REPORT

Pacific and Yukon Region • Pacific Forestry Centre • 506 West Burnside Road • Victoria, B.C. • V8Z 1M5

FIDS Pest Report 93-6

June 1993

Forest Tent Caterpillar Infestation, Cariboo Forest Region, 1993

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Forest tent caterpillar Malacosoma disstria, infestations expanded as predicted in the Cariboo Forest Region in 1993 and defoliated trembling aspen over 43 000 ha of from Horsefly to Quesnel, up from 26 000 ha last year. More than 80% of the area was severely defoliated with host trees completely stripped by the first part of June. The 100% defoliation of forest stands and urban trees caused considerable inconvenience in campgrounds, recreational sites and backyards. Masses of migrating larvae made homes and highways messy.

The infestation continued in the Horsefly area at the same locations as last year and also spread into new, nearby areas. The largest part of the outbreak covered 28 900 ha in the Horsefly area, east to Black Creek and west to near Rose Lake. New, mainly severe defoliation occurred over 14 700 ha in the Big Lake - Likely area and north along the Quesnel River to Quesnel.

Infestations collapsed near Bridge and Canim Lakes where stands consecutively defoliated for 5 years had considerable top and branch dieback and some tree mortality, especially younger stems. Parasitism by Dipteran insects increased to 80% in the Bridge Lake area in 1992, contributing to the collapse this year.

Larvae have pupated so no more feeding will result, and moths will be emerging during the first part of July. Large accumulations of moths around lights will occur in parts of the outbreak area, as the eggs for the 1994 larval population are deposited on the aspen trees. Assessment of the population and predictions for 1994 will be carried out in September.

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