

USFS: 102 million dead California trees

By Matt Stevens, Los Angeles Times

The number of dead trees in California's drought-stricken forests has risen dramatically to more than 102 million in what officials described as an unparalleled ecological event that heightens the danger of massive wildfires and damaging erosion.

Officials said they were alarmed by the increase in dead trees, which they estimated to have risen by 36 million since the government's last survey in May. The U.S. Forest Service, which performs aerial surveys of forest land, said in a study released Friday that 62 million tree died this year alone.

"The scale of die-off in California is unprecedented in our modern history," said Randy Moore, the forester for the region of the U.S. Forest Service that includes California. Trees are dying "at a rate much quicker than we thought."

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