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66 Million Dead Trees in California Increases Wildfire Risk

Those orange tree patches pictured aren't harbingers of winter. They are dying or dead trees in California, most likely the result of pine beetle forest damage.

It's hot now in much of the golden state, and as temperatures continue to rise, something else is happening: Trees are dying in unprecedented numbers.

A recent [U.S. Forest Service aerial detection survey](#) revealed a record 66 million dead trees in southern Sierra Nevada. What we're left with is a breeding ground for wildfires in [a state where wildfires are already rampant](#)—particularly this time of year.

40 million trees died statewide from 2010 to October 2015, but an additional 26 million trees died in California since October 2015.

Rust colored patches of once thriving trees stretch out over acres of dense forest. The areas surveyed by the U.S. Forest Service covered six southern Sierra counties including Fresno, Kern, Madera, Mariposa, Tuolumne and Tulare. You can view photos and video for yourself [here](#).

The root causes of this tree die-off: Four consecutive years of severe statewide drought, a dramatic rise in bark beetle infestation, and warmer temperatures.

Officials claim that California's severe drought has deprived trees of water, making them more vulnerable to attack from beetles.

Read more: <http://www.care2.com/causes/66-million-dead-trees-in-california-increases-wildfire-risk.html#ixzz4DTFc8ztV>

Image: Dead trees in Sequoia National Forest, California via [NASA](#)

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