



Termite damage discovered in bathroom windowsill with SP-1 low frequency probe

A friend of mine had just had her house inspected for termites, and invited me over to see what we could detect with the AED-2000 instrument and our new low frequency probe design, the Model SP-1. I knew we wouldn't be able to get direct access to the wood, since there were finishing materials (wallboard) over the bathroom sill area we were inspecting. I improvised by using a rubber tip slipped over the tip of the metal waveguide. This gave better contact with the sill material, and eliminated most of the frictional noise that I would otherwise generate.

Immediately I heard a sound that had a repeated mechanical pattern. Through discussions with Dr's Weste Osbrink and Richard Mankin of the USDA, I came to understand that the soldier termites engage in an activity known as "head banging". This activity is now commonplace in my experience monitoring termites—in wood, soil, near root systems, in homes, etc.

When the windowsill was opened for repairs several months later, the results are evident in the photo above. The mud tubes of subterranean termites are clearly visible on the window framing. To listen to the sound that was recorded from the AED-2000 audio output, click on the icon below

