

✓ Gypsy moth

Another defoliating moth found in Aptos

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A third gypsy moth, the second to be found in the same neighborhood, has been located in Santa Cruz County.

The insect, which in great num-

bers can defoliate hardwood forests, was trapped in the Seacliff area of Aptos — about one block from where another gypsy moth was caught last month.

County Agricultural Commis-

sioner Dave Moeller said the second find in the same neighborhood may mean that "a very small and very restricted population" of the bugs lives in Seacliff. He said his staff has increased the number of traps in the area.

"Because of the female gypsy moth's secretive habit of laying eggs in out-of-the-way places, someone moving into the Seacliff area from the East Coast or someone visiting here may have been the unwitting accomplice to the moth's instinct to proliferate undetected," Moeller said in a statement.

He asked Seacliff-area residents

to keep their eyes peeled for bunches of eggs in their yards.

"I want to make it very clear," he said, "that we're not looking to point an accusing finger at anyone who may have inadvertently brought gypsy moths into the area. What person could possibly know that a female gypsy moth had laid eggs inside the frame of an aluminum lawn chair, for example, that they'd brought here from the East?"

He asked anyone suspecting that moths or their eggs or cocoons are in their yards to contact his office at (408) 761-4080.