

# Santa Cruz/Monterey

## GYPSY MOTH Gypsy moth-hunters zero in on Seacliff

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If you're an Aptos resident and Santa Cruz County Agricultural Commissioner Dave Moeller comes knocking on your door Saturday, he's not just paying you a friendly visit. He's looking for moths.

Moeller and a team of bug-seekers will be going door-to-door in the Seacliff neighborhood of Aptos, hoping to track down a possible infestation of gypsy moths in someone's yard.

Two of the moths, which can cause se-

vere damage to hardwood forests, have been found in the Seacliff area in recent weeks. The finds have led Moeller to believe there may be a breeding site for the moths in the neighborhood.

"To locate such a breeding site is a real-life example of finding the proverbial needle in a haystack," Moeller said.

"We can't easily do this alone. We're asking the residents in the Seacliff neighborhood where the moths were found to be our partners in this effort."

While the moths are not native to the

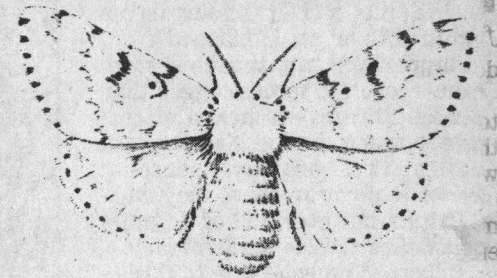
West Coast and generally are found in the East and in New England, they travel to other areas by "hitching" rides westward. They can attach themselves to vehicles or items such as lawn furniture and thus can relocate when tourists visit California or when Easterners move their belongings to the area.

The discovery of the two gypsy moths in Seacliff may indicate that the insects have established a breeding site in the neighborhood above Monterey Bay. Moeller hopes his visits, and the pamphlets he and his

team will hand out, will help residents look for nesting sites in their own yards.

"Our plan for Saturday," Moeller said, "is to walk the neighborhood door-to-door and distribute informational fliers and color brochures describing gypsy moths to about 300 residents. We hope ... they'll be able to provide us information that may help us pinpoint the spot from which the moths may be originating."

Moeller said a state entomologist will accompany the agricultural commissioner's staff in canvassing the neighborhood.



Gypsy moth