

# Beetle found not to be endangered

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SOQUEL — Soquel resident and naturalist Randall Morgan has lost a three-year battle to list the metallic-green Ohlone tiger beetle as an endangered species with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The beetle, first collected in Santa Cruz County in 1990, has suffered at the hands of development projects and recreational use of grasslands on Santa Cruz's coastal terraces, Morgan states in his report to the service.

Although Santa Cruz County has 15,000-20,000 acres of open grassland, Morgan's report said, only 200-300 contain the proper slope, soil and exposure for the beetle.

Twenty surveys since 1990 have found five populations in 300 acres of grassland, the report said.

But the Fish and Wildlife Service said Saturday that while Morgan's petition had merit, the information about the beetle's life history and habitat was inadequate. They said the service cannot assess the threats to the species due to the beetle's relatively recent discovery, uncertainty about its habitat requirements and no data on the larvae cycle.

"We don't deny that there are development activities and potential threats in this habitat," said David Klinger, press officer with U.S. Fish and Wildlife, "but that's not enough to add a species to the list."

Klinger also Congress last year placed a moratorium on the listing of new endangered species.

"There haven't been any new listings in a long time, but that doesn't preclude the need to look at new petitions. But in this case it was a lack of available data," Klinger said.

Attempts to reach Morgan Saturday were unsuccessful.

The Fish and Wildlife Service invites scientific and technical information about the Ohlone Tiger Beetle, particularly on the distribution, habitat needs and threats facing the species.

Comments should be sent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Field Office, 2140 Eastman Ave., Suite 100, Ventura Calif. 93003.