

# Beetle officially listed as endangered

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Almost 15 years after it was discovered, a beetle unique to Santa Cruz County was listed as an endangered species Wednesday.

**COUNTY** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made the announcement about the Ohlone tiger beetle, a brightly colored insect. The beetle is found on less than 20 acres at five locations in the county.

The designation means the owners of those properties will have to take the beetle into account before building or changing any habitat where the creature lives.

"Basically, they need to manage the effect of whatever project they have," said Colleen Scully of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

She said the property owners will have to work with the service to develop a conservation plan. That means paying a \$25 fee to the department and most likely hiring an environmental consultant to help craft a plan, Scully said.

The land where the beetle lives is both private and public, with some habitat owned by the state Parks Department and cities of Santa Cruz and Scotts Valley.

Grey Hayes, an ecologist who in 1997

submitted information to Fish and Wildlife to get the beetle listed, said Wednesday that he remains particularly worried about the beetle's habitat at Gray Whale Ranch, a 2,000-acre state park along Empire Grade Road near UC Santa Cruz. There are plans to put trails on the land, and the state so far has given short shrift to the beetle, Hayes maintains.

State parks officials could not be reached to comment Wednesday.

Hayes praised the city of Santa Cruz for its management of grassland beetle habitat in Pogonip, about 600 acres between UCSC and Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park.

The beetle has attained notoriety in Scotts Valley as a factor in the much debated Glenwood development. A park once proposed as part of that project had to be shifted and a buffer zone designated to protect the bug's habitat.

Scotts Valley planner Laura Kuhn said the city planned the latest version of the development as if the beetle already had endangered-species status.

The beetle also has been discovered on the so-called Bombay property, a greenbelt owned by the city on the Westside of Santa Cruz. It is also on

private property north of Skyview Drive-In in Soquel, the Younger Ranch property in Santa Cruz and on Marshall Field at UCSC.

While the listing might anger landowners, environmentalists praised it.

"It's been a long time and a lot of work to get the beetle listed," Hayes said.

The Aptos resident discovered the beetle in 1987. Volunteers subsequently combed the coastal grasslands where

the bug lives looking for more. In 1996, a first bid to have the beetle federally protected failed.

The bugs are known for their metallic green, blue, red and yellow color. They grow to be a half-inch long.

There are more than 2,000 species of tiger beetles worldwide.

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