



# Comal Springs Riffle Beetle Species Information

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**Scientific Name:** Heterelmis comalensis

**Family:** Elmidae

**Description:** The Comal Springs riffle beetle is small, only growing to a maximum length of about 0.2 cm (a bit bigger than 1/16th of an inch). The adults cannot fly and do not have gills - instead they have a bubble of air that they use as sort of a rebreather SCUBA tank. What these little beetles eat is not known. It is presumed that, like other beetles in their family, they eat materials scraped from rocks, leaves, roots, and other substrate. Almost nothing is known about the reproduction of the Comal Springs riffle beetle. Based upon collection dates of their larvae, it appears that this species reproduces year-round.

**Status:** It was listed as endangered in 1997.

**Native Area:** The larvae and adults live their entire lives in the headwaters of the Comal and San Marcos rivers.

**Additional Comments:** Some beetles have survived in captivity for more than a year. It is possible, if conditions were right, that Comal Springs riffle beetles could live for many years, like some other beetles in their family.



*Information and photos provided by San Marcos National Fish Hatchery & Technology Center*

[http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/san\\_marcos/index.html](http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/san_marcos/index.html)