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# News Release



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## Endangered Species Act protection not warranted for four species of Nevada sand dune beetles

**LAS VEGAS** — The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) today announced that four species of sand dune beetles in Nye County, Nevada, do not warrant federal protection under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (ESA). The four dune beetle species are the Crescent Dunes aegialian scarab (*Aegialia crescenta*), Crescent Dunes serican scarab (*Sercia ammomenisco*), large aegialian scarab (*Aegialia magnifica*), and Giuliani's dune scarab (*Pseudocotalpa giulianii*). The decision, known as a 12-month finding, was published in today's edition of the *Federal Register*.

"We found the Bureau of Land Management's implementation of regulatory mechanisms and policy to be successful in minimizing threats to the species from solar development, off-road vehicle use and mining," said Ted Koch, the Service's state supervisor. "Our decision that protection of the four species of beetles is not warranted was made upon completion of a thorough review of the best available scientific and commercial information."

This finding follows a 12-month status review and a 90-day petition evaluation and finding issued by the Service on August 4, 2011. The reviews and subsequent findings were completed in response to a petition the Service received on February 2, 2010, from Wild Earth Guardians seeking to protect six species of Nevada sand dune beetles. As announced in the 90-day finding, the petition did not present substantial scientific or commercial information necessary to warrant further review of two of the species — Hardy's aegialian scarab and Sand Mountain serican scarab.

The four sand dune beetles included in the 12-month finding are known to occur only on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The Crescent Dunes aegialian scarab occurs at Crescent Dunes and San Antonio Dunes, while the Crescent Dunes serican scarab occurs at Crescent Dunes. Designated as an off-road vehicle (ORV) recreation area, Crescent Dunes is located approximately 12 miles northwest of Tonopah. San Antonio Dunes is approximately 15 miles north of Crescent Dunes. The large aegialian scarab and Giuliani's dune scarab occur only at Big Dune and Lava Dune, located approximately 10 miles west of Lathrop Wells. Big Dune is a designated ORV recreation area; however, BLM closed a portion of the recreation area to ORVs to protect the habitat of the two petitioned species of beetles found there. BLM also prohibits ORV recreation at Lava Dune.

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The dune beetles live beneath the clumps of living vegetation in unstable sand surrounding the dunes. They burrow into the loose sand and eat decomposed plant matter. The Service reviewed potential threats to the dune beetles — including mining, solar development, and ORV use — and found that mining is limited in scope, only one solar power project is in development, and ORV use is also limited. For all requests to develop solar power, BLM must evaluate the potential effects on the dune beetles and adhere to its sensitive species policy. Additionally, the Service would have the opportunity to provide recommendations to protect the beetles under the National Environmental Policy Act. To date, BLM's implementation of regulatory mechanisms has been adequate to minimize these threats.

This finding is available on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> — Docket Number FWS–R8–ES–2011–0041. The supporting documentation used in preparing this finding is available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130. Please submit any new information on threats to the beetles, materials, comments, or questions concerning this finding to the above street address.

For more information, contact Edward D. Koch, State Supervisor, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office, by mail to 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130; by telephone at 775–861–6300; or by facsimile at 775–861–6301. Those using a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) can call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800–877–8339.

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