



CNDDDB Newsletter

Biogeographic Data Branch
Department of Fish and Game

September 2010

Dear Friends,

This is the ninth edition of a periodic newsletter letting you know of important updates and changes in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB).

Please feel free to share this email with your staff or with others who didn't receive it. If you have colleagues who would like to receive this, just let us know by emailing BDB@dfg.ca.gov to update our list of recipients. You may also access this newsletter, and previous CNDDDB newsletters, on our website at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cnddb/>.

September 2010 NEWS from the CNDDDB

Changing the Name "CNPS List" to "California Rare Plant Rank"

Over the past few months DFG changed the name of "CNPS List" or "CNPS Ranks" to "California Rare Plant Rank" (or Rare Plant Rank, RPR) in our products and publications. This was done to reduce confusion over the fact that currently the Rare Plant Status Review groups (300+ botanical experts from government, academia, NGOs and the private sector) produce the rank assignments for rare plants and that both DFG and CNPS jointly manage this collaborative effort. The old name gave the false impression that CNPS solely assigned the ranks and therefore had excessive influence on the regulatory process. We made this name change in consultation and agreement with the CNPS Executive Director and the CNPS Board of Directors. Nothing about the actual process of rare plant review or rank assignment has changed and the same committee of experts from many organizations (including DFG and CNPS) still review each change and ultimately assign the ranks. As before, these Rare Plant Ranks are visible on DFG's *Special Vascular Plant, Bryophyte and Lichens* list along with other status factors. They are also visible in our applications such as RareFind 4 and in BIOS/CNDDDB, where the field "Rare Plant Rank" replaces "CNPS List." This will also be the case with the GIS shapefiles that we distribute to subscribers.

Name changes for special status plants

In August, 2010, both CNPS and the CNDDDB changed the latin names of 74 rare plants. This was done to come into compliance with the new Jepson Interchange "final" treatments and name changes. Many of the changes will be hardly noticeable, such as where varieties changed to subspecies and vica versa, with no real Latin name changes. However, some major plant groups did change radically, including:

- many *Lotus* changed to *Acmispon* or to *Hosackia*

- all but one *Callitropsis* (formerly *Cupressus*) changed to *Hesperocyparis*. The one that did not change was *Callitropsis nootkatensis*. Apparently, taxonomists are still deciding which genus *C. nootkatensis* belongs in.
- Most rare *Arabis* changed to the genus *Boechea*.
- Our rare *Coreopsis* spp. changed to *Leptosyne*

The rest of the changes were unique changes or minor. These will be reflected in new data updates and on the next version (October 2010) of the *Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes and Lichens List*.

Acknowledging our partners

- The CNDDDB would like to thank our recent funding partners including the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, who have provided funding for updating rare species of the Sierra Nevada for the past three years. This funding has resulted in a large reduction of the backlog for the lower elevation Sierra Nevada, particularly for rare plants. Since January 1, 2010, the CNDDDB has processed almost 1000 sources for the Sierra Nevada region.
- We would like to thank CalTrans for funding they provided to update rare species occurrences along highways and particularly in Orange County.
- We would like to thank the California Energy Commission and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management for funding provided to update rare species in the California deserts. The deserts have been a rather neglected part of the state in recent CNDDDB priority setting, and this targeted funding allowed us to make major progress in eliminating the desert source backlog (unprocessed, unmapped data). Since January 1, 2010, the CNDDDB has processed just over 2000 sources for the Desert region.
- Finally, we would like to thank the California Native Plant Society for developing and finding funding for a "Rare Plant Treasure Hunt" program that began in 2010. This project involves finding volunteers to work with citizen scientists to hunt for historical occurrences of rare plants as well as locating new occurrences. This effort was wildly successful in 2010 with (to date) almost 400 new or updated occurrences turned in. Fully 10% of these were re-finds of historical sites, which is quite high for these most difficult occurrences.