

# Early Detection News

## May 2015

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
S.F. Bay Area Network  
Inventory and Monitoring Program



### Contents

[Noteworthy Early Detections](#)

[Survey Results](#)

[What We Do](#)

### Links

[Weed Watchers](#)

[Bay Area Early Detection Network](#)

[California Invasive Plant Council](#)

[SFNPS Invasive Plant Page](#)

[Whats Invasive! Smartphone App & Web Reporting Tool](#)

### Volunteer Opportunities

[Weed Watchers](#)

[Invasive Plant Patrol](#)

[Habitat Restoration Team](#)

*The Early Detection Team (EDT) surveys roads and trails in the San Francisco Bay Area Network of National Parks (SFAN). We detect, map, and remove new populations of invasive plants before they can spread.*

*Do you have early detections to report, or need more information? Contact the Early Detection Coordinator, Eric Wrubel, [Eric.Wrubel@nps.gov](mailto:Eric.Wrubel@nps.gov) (415) 289-1849.*

## Noteworthy Early Detections

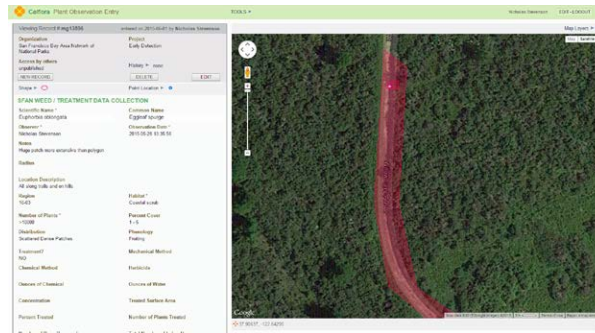


Oblong spurge above Stinson Beach.  
Photo by Nicholas Stevenson, NPS.

### [Oblong spurge](#) [\(\*Euphorbia oblongata\*\)](#)

In late May the Early Detection Team visited the Willow Camp Fire Road, on the northwestern boundary of Stinson Beach. This area has high concentrations of escaped ornamental plants, such as oblong spurge, that are not as common in other parts of the SF Bay Area National Parks. The EDT recorded 14 new patches of oblong spurge here, indicating that active spread continues in this area.

Oblong spurge is a rhizomatous perennial species native to southeastern Europe. It is naturalized in parts of California, Oregon, Nevada, and Washington. It is known to inhibit the growth of neighboring plants, and is not known to serve as a food source for wildlife. The California Invasive Plant Council ([Cal-IPC](#)) classifies the statewide impact of oblong spurge as limited ([plant profile](#)).



Calflora Weed Manager screenshot showing oblong spurge invasion corridor.

Previously mapped patches of oblong spurge on Willow Camp Fire Road have expanded in the past few years to form continuous corridors, as illustrated in the screen capture to the left. Click [here](#) to see this record in the Calflora Weed Manager database.

Sources:

[Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board](#)  
[California Invasive Plant Council EDD MapS](#)



Tall fescue culms.

Photo by James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org.

## **Tall Fescue** **(*Festuca arundinacea*)**

The EDT discovered a small patch of tall fescue During May surveys in McCabe Canyon, at Pinnacles National Park. This is the first record of tall fescue at Pinnacles, and one of only three records for San Benito County in the [Calflora](#) database. Tall fescue is much more common in coastal parts of the SF Bay Area, where it invades moist, disturbed sites. Most parts of Pinnacles are too dry for tall fescue to be of concern. However, perennially moist riparian areas and seeps, such as those found in McCabe Canyon, are vulnerable to invasion by tall fescue and other cool-season perennial grasses.

Tall fescue is an aggressive, rhizomatous species that can form extensive colonies. It is adapted to a wide range of conditions, making it a popular lawn and pasture grass. It is widespread throughout California, and worldwide. The California Invasive Plant Council ([Cal-IPC](#)) classifies the statewide impact of tall fescue as moderate ([plant profile](#)).

Tall fescue is frequently infected with an endophytic fungus that is intentionally developed in many cultivars. This fungus repels insects and other herbivores, and can alter soil characteristics, killing soil organisms and beneficial mycorrhizal fungi.

Sources:

[USDA Invasive Species Assessment Invasive.org](#)  
[Cal-IPC](#)



Andean tussockgrass inflorescences.  
photo by Eric Wrubel (NPS) 2011

## [Andean tussockgrass](#) [\(\*Stipa manicata\*\)](#)

The EDT recorded three new populations of Andean tussockgrass in the Marin Headlands this May. Andean tussockgrass has been a high priority species for early detection since it was first reported in the Marin Headlands in 2011, by Alisa Shor, Director of Golden Gate Nurseries.

Andean tussockgrass was first recorded in California in 1946, on Angel Island. Little to no

documentation exists of the plant between the time of this original sighting and 1989 when it was identified on the Sonoma county coastline. Directed searches in the Marin Headlands in 2011 found extensive populations of Andean tussockgrass in the lawns at Fort Baker and the Capeheart housing complex, indicating that the species has been present and undetected in the Headlands for a long time. Since 2011, the EDT has continued to find new populations each year along paved roads, which suggest that the grass is actively spreading along these roads. The

Originally from the Andean regions of central South America, Andean tussockgrass shares morphological characteristics with the native purple needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra*) – a widespread, ecologically and culturally important species. This similarity is a cause of concern because field identification is challenging, which could cause Andean tussockgrass populations to go unnoticed, or even to be collected and propagated for revegetation projects. The California Invasive Plant Council ([Cal-IPC](#)) classifies the statewide impact of *Stipa manicata* as limited ([plant profile](#)).

Click [here](#) to see an article by David Amme on *Stipa* species in California.

Click [here](#) to see a comparison of the florets of *Stipa manicata* and *S. pulchra*.

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## Survey Results

**Golden Gate National Recreation Area**  
**Pinnacles National Park**  
[May 2015](#)

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## What We Do

The Weed Watchers map, assess, and report occurrences of priority invasive plants along trails and roads in the San Francisco Bay Area network of National Parks, treating localized infestations when feasible.

The monthly data presented via the Google Earth KML files in this newsletter represent only new observations of patches of priority invasive plant species. A patch is defined as a group of individuals that is at least 20 meters from the next nearest group. Some patches may not be mapped in a given month if they have already been recorded in previous years, or if the patch is too large (see below).

## Priority Species Lists

### Golden Gate National Recreation Area John Muir National Historic Site Pinnacles National Park Point Reyes National Seashore

See the table below for more information about our priority invasive species and the data that we collect:

| Our Priorities                              | Example                                                                                                  | Explanation                                                                                                                                                                                              | Data Collected                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>List 1<br/>(Highest Priority Plants)</b> | <br>Fertile capeweed    | List 1 plants are highly invasive and are typically not widespread. Control or even eradication is often feasible.                                                                                       | <i>Point occurrences*</i> and <i>polygon assessments**</i> are recorded for all patches, regardless of their size.                                                          |
| <b>List 2<br/>(High Priority Plants)</b>    | <br>Cape ivy            | List 2 plants are highly invasive and usually more common than List 1 species, but are still feasible to control in many places.                                                                         | <i>Point occurrences</i> are recorded for all patches regardless of their size, and <i>polygon assessments</i> are recorded for all patches smaller than 100 square meters. |
| <b>List 3<br/>(Medium Priority Plants)</b>  | <br>Sweet fennel      | List 3 plants are usually widespread and difficult to control at the scale of the park. Uncommon species of concern are also listed here to improve our understanding of their distribution in the park. | <i>Point occurrences</i> are recorded for all patches smaller than 100 square meters.                                                                                       |
| <b>List 4<br/>(Lower Priority Plants)</b>   | <br>Rattlesnake grass | List 4 plants include all other exotic species that are not captured by Lists 1 – 3. Typically, these are ubiquitous invasive plants and are beyond control, or they are waifs.                          | These plants are not mapped. Skilled observers may record presence/absence.                                                                                                 |

\*Point occurrences are individual points recorded to represent an entire patch of invasive plants

\*\*Polygon assessments describe the size, shape and coverage of a patch