



## San Rafael man wins hunt for endangered species

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San Rafael's Steve Price found himself in a dive suit in a creek a few months ago, bound and determined to find a California freshwater shrimp.

He did, and it's one the reason's why he was co-winner of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area's Endangered Species Big Year. He was awarded his cash prize Saturday in San Francisco.

"I had a wetsuit and goggles and I was in the middle of this creek shivering, but I saw them," Price said with a laugh. "The California freshwater shrimp was one of the harder species to get."

The Endangered Species Big Year was a yearlong event aimed at connecting visitors with the 33 endangered plant and animal species found in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, which stretches from coastal Marin through San Francisco and San Mateo County.

The northern spotted owl, mission blue butterfly and Tiburon paintbrush, a wildflower, are among the endangered species in Marin. Of the GGNRA's 80,400 acres, 44,000 are in Marin County.

Participants logged on to the Big Year Web site - [www.ggnrbigyear.org](http://www.ggnrbigyear.org) - to record their finds. The site also features a page for each of the 33 plants and animals detailing their natural history, threats and likely observation locations. In order to check a species off the list, participants had to observe it alive within the GGNRA and complete a specific conservation action item for that species.

For example, the task for the shrimp was to minimize water leaks in your home to provide more water for creeks in which the shrimp live.

Price, 50, completed 52 of the 66 possible actions and sightings to win the competition along with Liam O'Brien of San Francisco. Each will received \$1,250 in prize money.

"I do enjoy getting outdoors once in awhile, but I liked the idea of the list and I got hooked," Price said. "It was described as a safari inside the GGNRA, which it was, and it took me to all these great places."

The Big Year ran on the honor system, but highly unusual sightings were subject to verification. About 4,000 participated with about 250 people becoming serious competitors.

The GGNRA contains more endangered species than any other unit of the National Park Service in continental North America, including Yosemite, Yellowstone, Kings Canyon and Sequoia national parks combined.

"We did a lot of trips with big groups," said Brent Plater, director of the contest. "In the end I think it encouraged a lot of people to come to the parks, and they got a better understanding of our endangered species."

### SPECIES IN MARIN

Endangered species in the area managed by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in Marin County: Steller sea lion, humpback whale, California red-legged frog, salt marsh harvest mouse, western snowy plover, northern spotted owl, marbled murrelet, brown pelican, California clapper rail, tidewater goby, coho salmon, steelhead trout, Chinook salmon, mission blue butterfly, California "tug y cvgt  
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