

Rare Plant Status Review: *Lotus formosissimus*

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Background

Lotus formosissimus is a sprawling perennial herb with umbels of showy pink and yellow flowers. Its distribution is restricted to the west coast of North America, from southeastern Vancouver Island, south on the west side of the Cascade Mountains from Washington to Oregon and west of the Sierra Nevada to San Luis Obispo County. Biologists in the North Coast region have been tracking this species for some time because it is thought to be the host plant for the Federally Endangered lotis blue butterfly (*Lycaides idas lotis*). *Lotus formosissimus* is also considered Endangered in Canada. This species grows in coastal wetlands, ditches, as well as moist areas in coastal scrub, mixed evergreen forest and other habitats. Although there appear to be numerous localities distributed along the north and central coasts, several botanists with field knowledge of the plant have indicated that it is not very common, its habitat is threatened by coastal development, and it is a good candidate for List 4.

Recommended Actions

CNPS: Add to CNPS List 4 / RED 1-2-1

CNDDDB: Add to CNDDDB as G4 / S3.2

Please review the draft CNPS *Inventory* record below, respond Yes or No on the proposal to add this species to the Inventory and CNDDDB, and provide any edits or information.

Draft CNPS *Inventory* record:

Lotus formosissimus Greene

“seaside bird’s-foot trefoil” OR “witch’s teeth”

Fabaceae

(Please state any common name preference you may have.)

List 4 / RED 1-2-1

Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Monterey, Marin, San Benito, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, San Luis Obispo, Sonoma; Washington, Oregon and elsewhere

Broadleaved upland forest, coastal bluff scrub, coastal prairie, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, closed-cone coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, North Coast coniferous forest/ mesic; ditches and springs; elevation 3-700 meters.

Perennial herb (rhizomatous or stoloniferous), blooms March-July.

Endangered in Canada. Threatened by development and non-native plants. See *Pittonia* 2:147 (1890) for revised nomenclature.