

Millipede feared extinct is found

July 31 2006

U.S. biologists say *Illacme plenipes*, a millipede with up to 750 legs that was last seen 80 years ago, has been found in California.

Biologists Paul Marek and Jason Bond discovered the millipede in the California Floristic Province, south of Santa Cruz. Scientists said the millipede lives nowhere else on Earth.

Petra Sierwald of the Field Museum in Chicago confirmed the find after the biologists sent her the leggiest -- 660 legs -- of the 20 specimens uncovered by their initial search, the Chicago Sun-Times reported Monday. The 2-inch-long specimen, only half a millimeter wide, was preserved in alcohol.

The millipede was first described -- and last seen -- in 1926 by Howard Frederick Loomis, who spent part of his career at the Field Museum, and Orator Fuller Cook, the newspaper said.

The Field Museum is believed to have the world's fifth largest collection of millipedes with about 30,000 specimens.

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