

Rare butterfly experiences baby boom

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Southern California biologists are searching for new places to release a bumper crop of endangered Palos Verdes blue butterflies.

The rare butterfly was nearly extinct two years ago but a federal breeding program has been so successful there aren't enough approved places for them to be released this year, the Los Angeles Times reported Tuesday.

While there were only about 220 in the wild last spring, 2,400 have emerged in the last two weeks in a laboratory at Moorpark College. Because they are a federally protected species, landowners must be willing to accept the butterflies with all their protections, the newspaper said. The land must also have enough yellow-flowering deer weed plants to shelter the tiny butterflies.

"We've accommodated what we can with the areas that are currently available," U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service spokeswoman Jane Hendron told the Times. "They may not all get a chance to live in the wild."

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