

CITIZEN SCIENCE

IN ACTION AT UC SANTA CRUZ FORT ORD NATURAL RESERVE

A story about a scorpion, a scorpion specialist, and iNaturalist!

Comic illustrated by Sonja Pinck of Pink Fig Studios



One day while out checking coverboards for reptiles and amphibians, a Fort Ord Natural Reserve Steward was surprised by a creature he had never seen before!

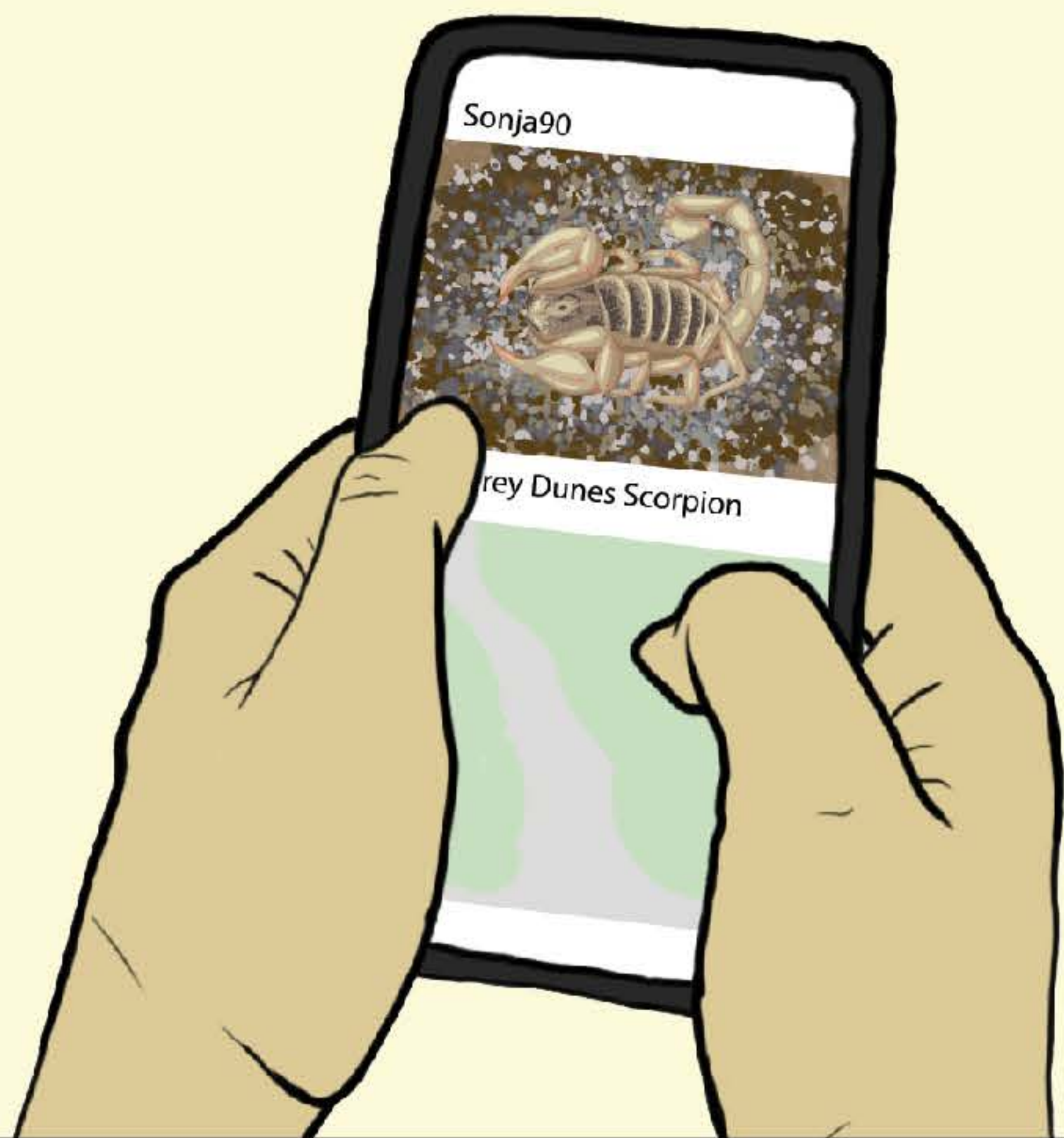


It was a scorpion, but what kind?



He had never seen one just like this, and there were markings on the carapace (just behind the eyes) that looked like something new...

Reserve staff always turns to iNaturalist in times like these! iNaturalist is a website and app that helps identify plants and animals, and is a community of over a million scientists and naturalists who can help you learn more about nature!



Meanwhile on iNaturalist, a scorpion specialist named Prakrit was on the case!



“Distinguished from *P. silvestrii* by pigment pattern of mesosomal terga not extending to posterior margin of terga...” - Stan Williams

so this should be *Paruroctonus maritimus*. New locality, as far as I can tell. Very interesting!”

Prakrit thinks we have found a rare species named *Paruroctonus maritimus*, otherwise known as the Monterey Dunes Scorpion!

Back at the UCSC Fort Ord Natural Reserve office, the Reserve Manager is super excited! Plans are made to get more information about the scorpion, and make an official collection and description for the natural history museum. It seems they have found something that has never been described at the reserve!



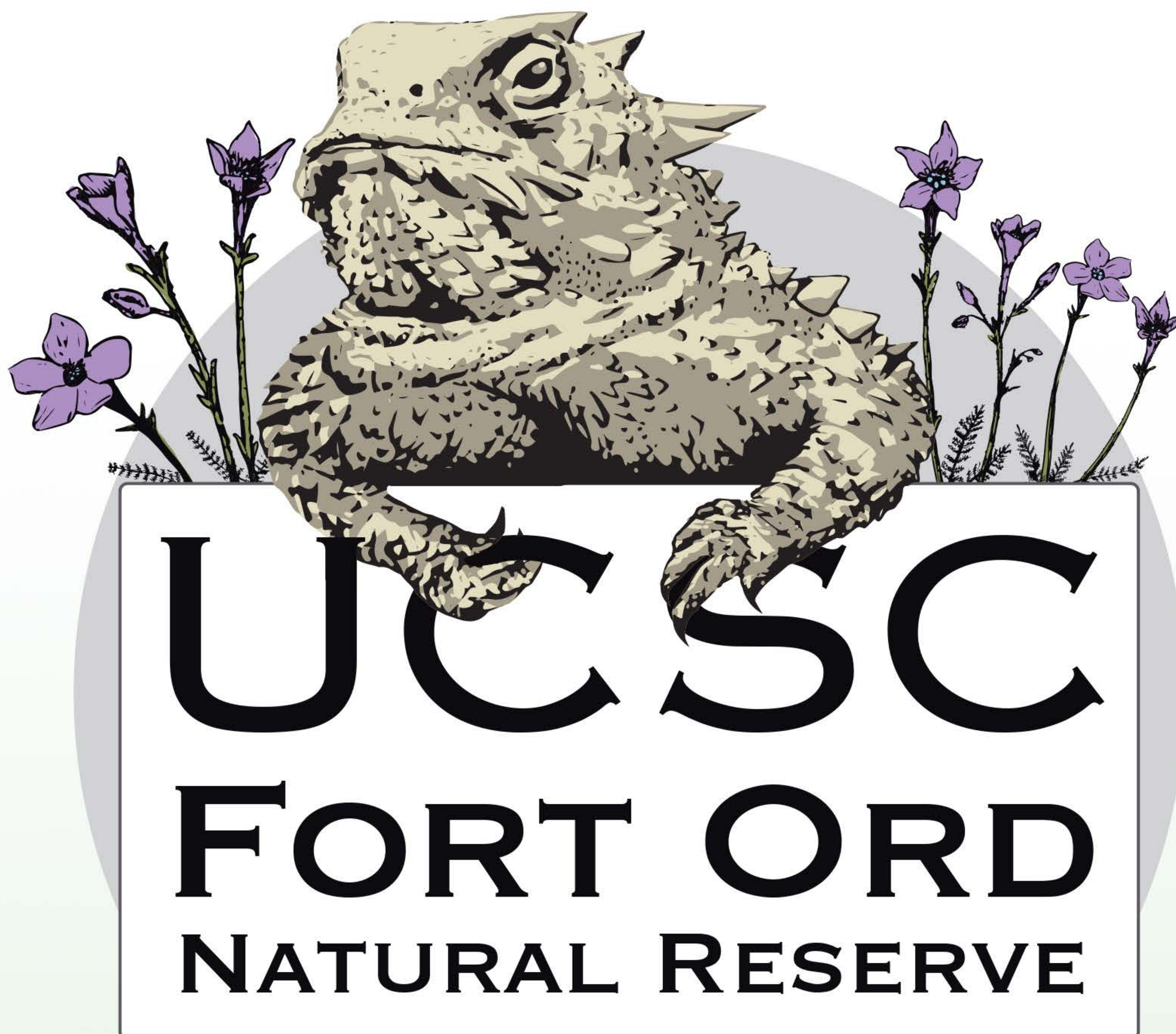
Citizen Science is a very cool tool, where the community can help with conservation and knowledge about what lives in our special open spaces. Thanks to iNaturalist and Prakrit, UC Santa Cruz Fort Ord Natural Reserve has a new species to look out for and protect!



Scorpion Fun Facts

- There are over 1750 known species of scorpion found on all continents except Antarctica.
- Only about 25 species have venom capable of killing a human.
- Scorpions can eat a massive amount of food in one meal. Their large food storage organs combined with a low metabolism rate and an inactive lifestyle means that, if necessary, they can survive 6-12 months without eating.
- Scorpions are nocturnal. Under UV light, such as a black light, scorpions glow due to the presence of fluorescent chemicals in their exoskeleton, which may be an adaptation that helps a scorpion know when it is exposed to predators.





iNaturalist



Science Illustration Program



California State University
MONTEREY BAY
College of Extended Education
& College of Science