



# The Bess Beetle

There are 500 species of bess beetles worldwide! In North Carolina, we have 1 species of bess beetle that is commonly found in forested habitats!



## Home Sweet Home

Bess beetles live in dead, decaying wood on the forest floor! They use their large mouth parts (mandibles) for chewing wood. Bess beetles are important decomposers & add nutrients back into the soil!



## What's in a Name?

Bess beetles are named from the "kissy" squeaking sound they make - the root word "Bes" means "kiss" in many languages! Patent Leather Beetle is another nickname because of their shiny, black body!



## Communication is Key

Bess beetles create a squeaking or kissing sound when they rub their wings on their body. Bess beetles communicate with 14 different sounds! Bess beetle young have a sound to communicate when they are hungry!



## Family Matters

Bess beetles lay their eggs in tunnels, or galleries, in decaying logs. Females and males work together to care for their young! Bess beetle parents pre-chew wood for their young (larvae).



## A Balanced Diet

Bess beetles feed on the rotting wood they live in. They are adapted to digest and take nutrients from the decaying wood! Bess beetles also eat their own scat, or frass, to maintain a healthy digestive tract!



## What Big Teeth You Have

Bess beetles are large with intimidating looking mandibles! But those mandibles will not hurt humans, they are for chewing wood! Bess beetles are fun to observe; remember to handle them gently and with respect!

Created by Katherine Baxter at Haw River State Park



For more information on bess beetles and other beetles, visit us at [www.ncstateparks.gov](http://www.ncstateparks.gov)