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!

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!

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'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!

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).

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!

For more information on bess beetles and other beetles, visit us at www.ncstateparks.gov