

News Release



Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 5-122
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96850
808.792.9400
<http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands>

September 17, 2012
Contact: Ken Foote, 808.792.9535 or 282.9442

PIFWO-12-06
RO-12-142

23 O'ahu Species Receive Endangered Species Act Protection

Input from agencies and public helps identify habitat essential to species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that 20 plant species and three Hawaiian damselfly species found on the Hawaiian island of O'ahu will receive protection under the Endangered Species Act. As part of the Service's ecosystem-based approach to the conservation of imperiled plants, animals and habitat on the island, the agency also identified habitat essential to the survival of these and other threatened and endangered species.

The 20 endangered plant species include an annual herb, shrubs, trees and a fern. The three endangered animal species are the crimson Hawaiian damselfly, blackline Hawaiian damselfly and the oceanic Hawaiian damselfly.

"Protecting these O'ahu species and identifying the habitat they and other native threatened and endangered species need to survive enables us to work with our state and federal conservation partners, private landowners and other groups to address the threats they face and to protect and restore the unique ecosystems that support them," said Loyal Mehrhoff, field supervisor for the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "Like its native species, the people of Hawai'i depend on this habitat for clean air, water and their livelihoods."

These species will join 437 other threatened and endangered species found in Hawai'i - the highest number of any State in the nation. The native plants and animals of Hawai'i, like those of other island ecosystems that evolved in isolation from mainland species, are highly specialized and depend on one another for survival. The introduction of alien diseases, as well as alien species, which compete for food and habitat and sometimes become predators of native species, has had a devastating effect on the native plants and animals of the islands.

The 23 species added to the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants face immediate and significant threats throughout their ranges, including habitat destruction and modification caused by invasive, nonnative plants, feral pigs and goats, and agricultural and urban development. Other threats include predation by nonnative feral pigs and goats, and other introduced species such as rats, fish, bullfrogs, slugs and ants. Native habitat is also threatened by the effects of climate change, which may intensify existing natural threats such as fire, hurricanes, landslides and flooding. In addition, existing regulatory mechanisms are inadequate to protect the species.

Service biologists, with input from the public and the scientific community, have identified 42,804 acres in seven different ecosystems on Oahu that are essential to the conservation of these species and more than 100 other native ferns, vines, shrubs, grasses, herbs and trees. Nearly 93 percent of this habitat,

which includes tropical rainforests, coastal wetlands and other unique features, has previously been identified as essential to the conservation of these and other species.

Of the total acreage designated 47 percent is located on State of Hawai'i lands, 11 percent on federal lands, 9 percent on city and county lands, and 33 percent on private lands.

In developing the final rule, the Service fully considered comments from the public and peer reviewers, and conducted additional field visits in response to comments received from the development community. These field visits confirmed that certain areas in Kalaeloa initially identified as essential to the species' survival no longer have the biological or physical characteristics needed by the species. These areas have been removed from the acreage identified today.

Other modifications have been made due to newer scientific information showing that many native Hawaiian plants and animals can be successfully reestablished when reintroduced into historical habitats if threats are effectively managed, as well as new information on plant occurrences and a better understanding of the species' biological requirements.

Specifying the location of habitat essential for the conservation of the species, which the ESA terms "critical habitat," helps Federal agencies identify where to utilize their authorities to benefit the species as the law requires. Identifying this habitat also helps focus the conservation efforts of other conservation partners, such as State and local governments, non-governmental organizations, and individuals. Identifying this habitat at the time of listing provides early conservation planning guidance to bridge the gap until the Service can complete more thorough recovery planning.

Although private and non-federal lands have been identified as containing habitat essential to the species, activities on these lands will not necessarily be affected. Only if an activity requires federal actions, funding or permitting will the agency in question need to work with the Service to avoid, reduce or mitigate potential impacts to listed species or habitat.

The areas identified as critical habitat do not include Department of Defense lands covered by an Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP). This includes six U.S. Army training installations on Oahu totaling 8,098 acres and 380 acres of U.S. Navy lands at Lualualei, which are being managed to provide a conservation benefit under their respective INRMPS.

Habitat for these and other listed species on O'ahu is also protected through voluntary conservation efforts under the ESA, including Habitat Conservation Plans, Safe Harbor Agreements, Candidate Conservation Agreements and state programs. In addition, voluntary partnership programs such as the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife program also restore habitat. Habitat for listed species is also provided on many of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges and state wildlife management areas.

The final rule can be downloaded from the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. For further information contact: Loyal Mehrhoff, Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96850; telephone 808/ 792-9400 or fax 808/ 792-9581.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We

are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>

Note to Editors: Images are available online at:
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific/sets/72157631522153726/>

The newly designated species are:

Plants (20)	
Common Name	Scientific Name
ko‘oko‘olau	<i>Bidens amplexans</i>
hāhā	<i>Cyanea calycina</i>
hāhā	<i>Cyanea lanceolata</i>
hāhā	<i>Cyanea purpurellifolia</i>
ha‘iwale	<i>Cyrtandra gracilis</i>
ha‘iwale	<i>Cyrtandra kaulantha</i>
ha‘iwale	<i>Cyrtandra sessilis</i>
ha‘iwale	<i>Cyrtandra waiolani</i>
No common name	<i>Doryopteris takeuchii</i>
hulumoa	<i>Korthalsella degeneri</i>
alani	<i>Melicope christophersenii</i>
alani	<i>Melicope hiiakae</i>
alani	<i>Melicope makahae</i>
No common name	<i>Platydesma cornuta</i> var. <i>cornuta</i>
No common name	<i>Platydesma cornuta</i> var. <i>decurrens</i>
hala pepe	<i>Pleomele forbesii</i>
kōpiko	<i>Psychotria hexandra</i> ssp. <i>oahuensis</i>
kaulu	<i>Pteralyxia macrocarpa</i>
‘ohe	<i>Tetraplasandra lydgatei</i>
a`e	<i>Zanthoxylum oahuense</i>

Insects (3)	
Common Name	Scientific Name
blackline Hawaiian damselfly	<i>Megalagrion nigrohamatum nigrolineatum</i>
crimson Hawaiian damselfly	<i>Megalagrion leptodemas</i>
oceanic Hawaiian damselfly	<i>Megalagrion oceanicum</i>