



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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Draft Economic Analysis of Proposed Critical Habitat for Hawaiian Picture-wing Flies Released for Public Review *Comment Period for Critical Habitat Designation Also Reopened*

As part of the critical habitat designation process, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released a draft economic analysis for 12 species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies for a 30-day public review period. At this time, the Service is also reopening the comment period on the November 28, 2007 proposed critical habitat designation.

The species for which critical habitat is proposed are: *Drosophila aglaia*, *Drosophila hemipeza*, *Drosophila montgomeryi*, *Drosophila obatai*, *Drosophila substenoptera*, and *Drosophila tarphytrichia* (found on O'ahu); *Drosophila heteroneura*, *Drosophila ochrobasis*, and *Drosophila mulli* (found on Hawai'i); *Drosophila musaphilia* (found on Kaua'i); *Drosophila neoclavisetae* (found on Maui); and *Drosophila differens* (found on Moloka'i).

The draft analysis addresses economic impacts to government agencies, private businesses, and individuals and finds that all or nearly all of the incremental costs would be borne by Federal and State agencies, although a portion of the preservation and watershed management costs would be borne by a few private landowners. The draft analysis identifies only the additional impacts associated with the proposed revised critical habitat designation and not those associated with listing of the species under the Endangered Species Act.

The analysis quantifies costs associated with preservation and watershed management, game management and public recreational hunting, timber harvesting in the Stainback and Waiakea Forest units, potential for future development on about 3 acres of the Pit Crater unit on the Big Island, and Federal agencies' required section 7 consultations with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The draft economic analysis estimates the incremental cost of the proposed designation to be between \$685,450 and \$531,870 over the next 20 years, using a three percent and seven percent discount rate respectively. Incremental costs are those costs incurred specifically with the designation of critical habitat above and beyond baseline costs. Baseline costs are those costs that would occur regardless of the designation of critical habitat. The proposed critical habitat would designate 9,238 acres of Federal, State, City and County of Honolulu, and private land on Oahu, Hawaii (the Big Island), Kauai, Maui, and Molokai as critical habitat for the 12 species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies.

On May 9, 2006, 11 of the Hawaiian picture-wing fly species were federally listed as endangered species, and one species (*D. mulli*) was listed as threatened. On November 11, 2007, the Service published a proposal to designate critical habitat for the 12 species of picture-wing flies on a total of 9,238 acres of land in the State of Hawaii.

The public comment period for the proposal to designate critical habitat closed on January 28,

2008. To address public concerns the Service held two public hearings on the proposed designation, one in Hilo on April 8 and one in Honolulu on April 10, 2008. The Service is required, under Court Order, to submit a final critical habitat rule to the *Federal Register* by November 15, 2008.

Critical habitat identifies geographic areas that contain features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations. For the 12-species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies, these essential physical and biological features relate to particular ecosystem types and include host plant species required by the picture-wing flies for their larval development and adult life stages.

The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve or other conservation area. Under the Endangered Species Act, all federal agencies must ensure any action they authorize, fund, or carry out does not adversely modify designated critical habitat.

Habitat for the 12 Hawaiian picture-wing fly species may also be protected through cooperative measures under habitat conservation plans, safe harbor agreements and state programs. Accordingly, we are soliciting public comments on the sufficiency of conservation activities being conducted by the Maui Land and Pineapple Company on 450 acres of their land within the proposed Puu Kukui critical habitat unit 1, with regard to benefits to *Drosophila neoclavisetae*. Voluntary partnership programs such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program also restore habitat. Habitat for listed species is provided on many of the Service's National Wildlife Refuges, and state wildlife management areas.

The Service will consider comments from all interested parties received by September 11, 2008. Comments can be sent by one of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal* at <http://www.regulations.gov> . Follow the instructions for submitting comments.
- Via U.S. mail or hand delivery to Public Comments Processing, Attn: RIN 1018- AV91; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203.

The draft Economic Analysis and the November 2007 critical habitat proposal are available on the Service website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. For further information contact: the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, P.O. Box 50088, Honolulu, HI 96850; (808-792-9400).

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