

Deseret Milkvetch

Astragalus desereticus

Deseret milkvetch / USFWS

What does the Deseret milkvetch look like?

The Deseret milkvetch (*Astragalus desereticus*) is a perennial herb in the bean family. Individual plants are 2-6 inches tall and rise from the base of a two-inch-long herbaceous stem. The silvery-gray, pinnately compound leaves (feather-like arrangement with leaflets on both sides of a central stalk) are 2-4 inches long with 11-17 leaflets.

Leaflets are elliptic to ovate in shape, with dense, silvery-gray, short hairs on both sides. Seed pods are 0.4 - 0.8 inches long and densely covered with lustrous hairs. The flower petals may be either completely white or whitish with pinkish wings and a lilac keel-tip. Torrey's milkvetch (*Astragalus calycosus*) and Utah milkvetch (*A. utahensis*) are known to co-occur with Deseret milkvetch. This is important to note because milkvetches can often be confused when seed pods are not present.

Where does the Deseret milkvetch occur?

The Deseret milkvetch is a narrow endemic plant occurring only on the sandy/gravelly hillsides of the Moroni Formation near Birdseye, Utah, in Utah County. The species occurs at elevations between 5,400 and 5,600 feet. Deseret milkvetch grows with pinyon pine, Utah juniper, sagebrush, scrub oak and a variety of grasses.

Legal Status under the Endangered Species Act

Deseret milkvetch was listed as threatened on October 20, 1999 (64 FR 56590). The Service is now proposing to remove the Deseret milkvetch from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Plants.

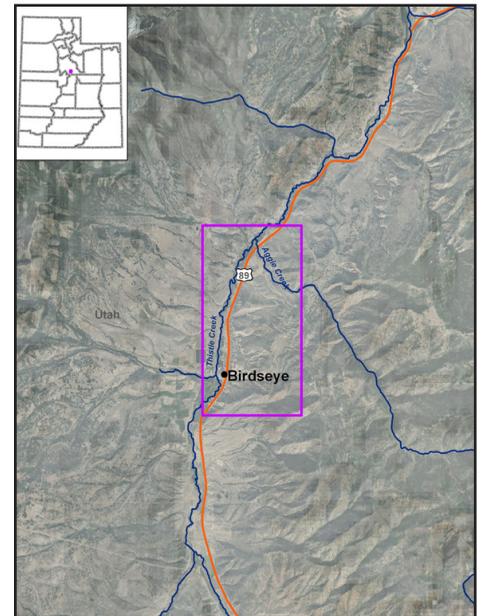
Does the Deseret milkvetch still need protection?

When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Deseret milkvetch, the agency believed residential development, highway widening, livestock grazing and trampling, and wildlife management (e.g., deer and elk trampling), combined with a small population size were threats to the species and its habitat.

In 2017, the Service concluded that the threats either have not occurred to the extent anticipated, are being adequately managed, or the species is more tolerant of the stressors than originally known.

What did partners do to recover the Deseret milkvetch?

In 2006, the Service partnered with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Department of Transportation, and Utah School Institutional Trust Lands Administration to develop an interagency conservation agreement for the species that remains in effect through 2036.



Species range / USFWS

The conservation agreement provides guidance to stakeholders and establishes goals for the long-term survival of the species.

In 2008, 2009, and 2010, the Utah Natural Heritage Program surveyed suitable habitat throughout the range of the species. The Service now knows the species occurs in much larger numbers than thought at the time of listing.

Habitat evaluation was completed to determine the full extent of potential habitat for the species and facilitate post-delisting monitoring.



Deseret milkvetch plant with flowers / USFWS

The Service worked with partners in Utah to develop a post-delisting monitoring plan to verify that the Deseret milkvetch remains secure following delisting, with no new or increasing stressors and a stable to increasing population trend.

More Information

To learn more about the Deseret milkvetch and conservation efforts on behalf of the species, please visit the following sites:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program's

website contains Federal Register notices and recovery documents: www.fws.gov/endangered

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Information, Planning and Conservation (IPaC) System: ecos.fws.gov/ipac

Mountain-Prairie Regional Office's website: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/plants/>

The Utah Field Office's website: www.fws.gov/utahfieldoffice



Deseret milkvetch seed pods / Ben Franklin



Habitat survey / USFWS

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
PO Box 25486,
Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225
<http://www.fws.gov>

For State relay service
TTY / Voice: 711

Utah Field Office
801/975 3330

October 2017

