



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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SERVICE RELEASES DRAFT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF CONSERVATION FOR HAWAIIAN PICTURE-WING FLIES

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released an analysis estimating the potential costs related to the conservation of 11 species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies and their proposed critical habitat ranging from \$46,664 to \$337,126 per year in each of the next 20 years. In releasing the analysis, the Service reopened the public comment period on its proposal to designate critical habitat for the species. Comments on the draft economic analysis and the critical habitat proposal will be accepted until January 19.

The Service is proposing to designate critical habitat for 11 species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies: *Drosophila aglaia*, *Drosophila hemipeza*, *Drosophila montgomeryi*, *Drosophila obatai*, *Drosophila substenoptera*, and *Drosophila tarphytrichia* (all found on Oahu); *Drosophila heteroneura*, *Drosophila mulli* and *Drosophila ochrobasis* (found on the island of Hawaii); *Drosophila musaphilia* (found on Kauai); and *Drosophila differens* (found on Molokai).

The draft economic analysis addresses the impacts of conservation efforts for the species on activities occurring on lands proposed for critical habitat designation, as well as those proposed for exclusion. The analysis measures lost economic value associated with a commercial timber operation, commercial cattle grazing, management of public and private conservation lands, residential development and administrative costs. Over the next 20 years, total potential costs of conservation of the 11 species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies and their critical habitat are estimated to range from \$933,270 to \$6,742,520.

The Service proposes approximately 18 acres for designation as critical habitat for the 11 species, although four of those acres are proposed for exclusion because of ongoing management activities that benefit the species. Critical habitat has not been proposed for a twelfth listed picture-wing species found only on Maui since its habitat is already protected in the Puu Kukui Management Area.

On Oahu, five acres of critical habitat are proposed within nine units, including private land owned by the Estate of James Campbell, two units on state land, and one on City and County of Honolulu land.

On the Big Island, 11 one-acre units are proposed as critical habitat, including seven acres on state land and four acres on private land. Three acres owned by Kamehameha Schools are proposed for exclusion because of ongoing management efforts by the landowner. A one-acre critical habitat unit is proposed on state land on Kauai, and the final one-acre unit on Molokai –

located on private land – is proposed for exclusion from critical habitat designation because of management activities conducted by The Nature Conservancy that benefit the species.

Under a settlement agreement approved by the United States District Court for the District of Hawaii on August 31, 2005, the Service is to finalize critical habitat for these species by April 17, 2007.

Critical habitat identifies specific geographic areas that contain features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and which may require special management considerations. The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, wilderness, reserve, preserve, or other special conservation area. It does not allow government or public access to private lands. However, federal agencies that undertake, fund or permit activities that may affect critical habitat are required to consult with the Service to ensure such actions do not adversely modify or destroy designated critical habitat.

In 30 years of implementing the ESA, the Service has found the designation of critical habitat provides little additional protection for most listed species, while preventing the agency from using scarce conservation resources for activities with greater conservation benefits.

In almost all cases, recovery of listed species will come through voluntary cooperative partnerships, not regulatory measures such as critical habitat. Habitat is also protected through cooperative measures 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 Private Stewardship Grants and 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.

There are approximately 106 identified species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies. Each species is specially adapted to a particular island and a specific habitat type, ranging from desert-like habitats to rain forests and swamplands.

Hawaiian picture-wings have been called the "birds of paradise" of the insect world because of their spectacular displays during courtship and defense of their territories. The picture-wings are known for their elaborate markings on otherwise clear wings, and belong to the intensively studied *Drosophilidae* family. Future conservation efforts will focus on monitoring existing populations and controlling threats to enhance populations of listed species.

The notice of availability of the draft economic analysis was published in the January 4 *Federal Register*. The complete report and proposed rule to designate critical habitat for the 11 species of Hawaiian picture-wing flies are available by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service at 808 792 9400 and will be posted at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>.

The Service will consider comments from all interested parties received by January 19. Comments may be sent via the Internet to fwlpie_pwfchp@fws.gov. Comments and information may also be mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered to Patrick Leonard, Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (Fax 808 792 9581).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million- acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices, and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American Tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.

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