

News Release

Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office
300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96850
808.792.9400
<http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands>



Date : January 24, 2012
Contact: Ken Foote, 808.792.9535 or 282.9442

PIFWO-12-02
RO-12-010

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Will Consider ‘I‘iwi for Protection

After reviewing a petition to list the ‘i‘iwi (*Vestiaria coccinea*) as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has determined that the document presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that listing may be warranted, and will initiate a 12-month review of the species’ status. The 12-month finding will determine if the petitioned action is warranted.

On August 25, 2010, the Service received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity and Life Net requesting that the Service list the ‘i‘iwi (*Vestiaria coccinea*) as threatened or endangered and designate critical habitat for the species. On September 10, 2010, the Service notified the Center for Biological Diversity and Life Net by letter that they were initiating the review of the petition.

According to the petition, several factors have contributed to the decline of ‘i‘iwi throughout Hawai‘i. These factors are: habitat degradation and loss due to browsing, trampling and digging by nonnative feral ungulates (pigs, goats, axis deer), encroachment and invasion by nonnative plants, increase in frequency and intensity of fire, and urbanization; the spread of avian malaria and avian pox parasitism by bird lice; predation by nonnative animals including rats and cats; inadequate regulations to alleviate the effects of global climate change, to protect ‘i‘iwi habitat, and to prevent the introduction and spread of nonnative species; and disease epizootics.

“The ‘i‘iwi is one of Hawai‘i’s most charismatic bird species,” said Loyal Mehrhoff, field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “As a Hawaiian honeycreeper, the ‘i‘iwi serves an important role as a pollinator of native plant species and is a vital component of healthy Hawaiian forests.”

The ‘i‘iwi is a member of the endemic “found nowhere else” subfamily Drepanidinae (Hawaiian honeycreepers). It is the only species in the genus *Vestiaria* and is classified as a discrete species by the American Ornithologists’ Union.

The ‘i‘iwi occurs on the five largest Hawaiian Islands (Hawai‘i, Maui, Moloka‘i, O‘ahu, and Kaua‘i) and is most abundant in montane wet, closed-canopied, high-stature ohia and koa forests at elevations above 4,922 feet (1,500 meters). The largest population (more than 340,000 birds) and range, about 772 square miles (2,000 square kilometers), occurs on Hawai‘i Island. On the windward (east) side of the island, the populations are generally declining except in forests above 4,922 feet (1,500 meters) in elevation.

The ‘i‘iwi is a medium sized forest bird, with bright scarlet feathers and black wings and tail, with a small white patch on its shorter flight feathers along the inner wing. The bill is long, curved, and salmon in color. The diet of the ‘i‘iwi consists primarily of nectar from the flowers of the ohia (*Metrosideros polymorpha*) and māmane (*Sophora chrysophylla*) trees, and plants in the bellflower (*Campanulaceae*) family as well as insects and spiders. The iiwi typically lays two eggs at one time, and a pair incubates one to two broods per year.

The Service is soliciting data and other information regarding the species to ensure a comprehensive review. We request that information submitted be received by March 26, 2012.

To ensure that the status review is comprehensive, the Service is seeking information regarding:

- the historical and current status and distribution, range, biology, ecology, and past and ongoing conservation measures for the species and its habitat;
- species population trends;
- species genetics and taxonomy;
- the present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of the species habitat or range;
- overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes;
- disease or predation;
- the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms;
- other natural and manmade factors affecting the species continued existence;
- information on management programs affecting the species;
- factors that pose a threat to the species and the potential cumulative effects of these factors;
- information on specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by the species that are essential to the conservation of the species; and
- the potential effects of climate change on the species and its habitat.

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: FWS-R1-ES-2011-0110; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222, Arlington, VA 22203.

Comments and materials provided by the public, including names and home addresses of respondents are available for public review. Respondents may request that the Service withhold their identity, to the extent allowable by law. Anonymous comments will not be considered. Comments received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office.

Information and materials received, as well as supporting documentation used in preparing this finding, are available for review at <http://www.regulations.gov>, or you may make an appointment during normal business hours at the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. Copies of the *Federal Register* notice may be downloaded from the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. Copies are also available by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service office in Honolulu at 808 792-9400.

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. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TTD), please call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 800-877-8339.

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>.

- FWS -