



News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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48 Kaua‘i Species Protected Under Endangered Species Act *45 Plants, 2 Birds, 1 Insect Listed in Ecosystem-based Approach*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced a major step forward in conserving imperiled animals and ecosystems on the Hawaiian island of Kaua‘i, adding 48 species unique to the island to the federal list of threatened and endangered species.

Salazar also announced that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which is responsible for administering the Endangered Species Act, is designating critical habitat on the island for 47 of these species.

“Our action today reflects President Obama’s determination to base conservation decisions on the best available science and to move quickly to protect our nation’s wildlife and ecosystems when, like the fragile ecosystem of Kaua‘i, they are at risk,” said Salazar.

The designation of critical habitat for the 47 species represents a significant step forward from the Service’s past efforts to designate critical habitat for threatened and endangered species in Hawai‘i. Previous critical habitat designations created an overlapping patchwork of habitat that did not maximize conservation efforts for these species and Hawai‘i’s natural communities.

“The ecosystem-based approach that our scientists used to make this decision represents an efficient and innovative model for conserving imperiled species and their habitats,” said Salazar. “By highlighting species that share ecosystems and common threats, we can more effectively focus conservation management efforts to address these threats and restore ecosystem function for these species and the entire ecological community.”

“This extensive listing provides new hope for Kaua‘i’s many endangered species,” said Suzanne Case, Hawai‘i executive director for The Nature Conservancy. “The ecosystem approach being adopted is the right approach because it will focus protection efforts on large-scale threats like invasive weeds and feral pig and goat populations. Controlling these threats will not only help ensure the survival of listed species, it will benefit entire ecosystems.”

“The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s listing of 48 plant and animal species as endangered on the island of Kaua‘i marks an important milestone both for species protection and native ecosystem management in Hawai‘i,” stated Executive Director of the Hawai‘i Conservation Alliance

Deanna Spooner. "This new approach not only helps to address the backlog of candidate species awaiting federal protection, it recognizes that the overall health of an ecosystem is vital to species recovery."

Hawai'i has more threatened and endangered species than any other state in the country. All of the Kaua'i species included in this decision are threatened by ongoing habitat destruction or modification due to feral ungulates such as pigs and sheep, and nonnative plants. Several Kaua'i species are threatened by destruction or modification of habitat due to fire, landslides and flooding. In addition to the threats to their habitat, one or more of the 48 species are threatened by limited numbers, predation, competition from nonnative plants, lack of reproduction, diseases, vandalism and overcollection.

The 45 plant species now listed as endangered include a variety of ferns, vines, shrubs and trees found nowhere else in the world. Twenty-three of the plant species have fewer than 50 individuals remaining in the wild, and some have not been seen for several years, though they are believed to still exist in remote areas. One fern, *Diellia manii*, was thought to be extinct since the early 1900s, but a single individual was rediscovered in 2002 at Kōke'e State Park. The addition of these plant species to the endangered species list brings the total number of endangered Hawaiian plants to 309. Another 10 are considered threatened.

The two bird species added to the endangered species list are both Hawaiian honeycreepers in the finch family: the 'akeke'e, or Kaua'i 'ākepa, and the 'akikiki, or Kaua'i creeper. Both species were considered common in the late 1800s and into the early 1960s. The 'akeke'e population appeared to be relatively stable at that time, even while other endemic Kaua'i birds were sharply declining, and its population was estimated to be nearly 8,000 birds in 2000. However, the population had dropped to approximately 3,500 birds by 2007. The 'akikiki population has declined even further, by about 80 percent in the last 40 years, to approximately 1,300 birds in 2007. These two species join 33 other bird species listed as endangered and another listed as threatened in Hawai'i.

Drosophila sharpi is a large species of Hawaiian picture-wing fly found in Kaua'i's wet forests. The rule proposing to list this species named the species as *Drosophila attigua*, but that species was found to be identical to *Drosophila sharpi*. The final rule reflects this recent taxonomic revision. The species joins 12 other Hawaiian picture-wing flies on the endangered species list.

A total of 26,582 acres in six different ecosystem types are being designated as critical habitat for 47 of the species. Of the total acreage, 98 percent (26,050 acres) overlaps existing critical habitat for other species. The majority of the designated critical habitat, 21,666 acres, is located on state-owned lands, while 4,918 acres are located on privately owned lands.

An additional 1,052 acres proposed as critical habitat were excluded from the final designation because the designation would have had a negative effect on the private landowner's voluntary ongoing and future conservation activities. The land is owned by Alexander & Baldwin, Inc., and is located in the Upper Wainiha Valley. The area is managed by The Nature Conservancy for the long-term protection of this upper watershed. The exclusion is permitted under section 4(b)(2) of the Endangered Species Act.

The Service used the best scientific data available in designating critical habitat for the species

by identifying the common ecosystems and habitat components inhabited by those species. This information was developed by using the known locations of the 47 species, site-specific species information, species information from multiple databases, ecosystem maps, digital aerial photographs, previously designated critical habitat for other listed species on the island of Kauaʻi, recent biological surveys and reports, and discussions with individuals familiar with these species and ecosystems.

In today's decision, critical habitat for the plant *Pritchardia hardyi*, or loulu, was determined not to be prudent because this rare palm is attractive to collectors. A critical habitat designation could trigger an increased risk by alerting collectors to its location.

In the past, the Service focused Hawaiian critical habitat designations on small areas known to be recently occupied by the species. However, the Service rarely had species-specific information sufficient enough to determine if those areas occupied by the last individuals of a species were the best areas to emphasize for future conservation efforts. Studies have shown that many rare Hawaiian plants and animals can occur in areas with marginal habitat if threats are reduced, and that species thrive in historical sites when threats are controlled and native Hawaiian species are reintroduced.

"This monumental ruling is historical in its scope and significance. Many of us have long realized the importance of looking at ecosystems holistically because of the interdependency of these life forms," stated Chipper Wichman, Director and CEO, National Tropical Botanical Garden, headquartered on Kauaʻi. "Recognition of Kauaʻi as a hotspot in the battle to prevent species from going extinct brings even greater focus to the importance of this work. This decision is a really big deal for Kauaʻi and for all of Hawaiʻi. It should help leverage funding and increase protection for these unique species."

On October 21, 2008, the Service published a proposed rule to list these 48 species as endangered and proposed designation of critical habitat for 47 of them. During a 60-day public comment period, 21 comments were received, including several that provided information incorporated into the final rule.

Species endemic to single islands are inherently more vulnerable to extinction than more widespread species because of the higher risks posed to a few populations and individuals by genetic bottlenecks, random demographic fluctuations, climate change and localized catastrophes such as hurricanes, floods and disease outbreaks. These problems are further magnified when populations are few, restricted to a limited geographic area, and the number of individuals is very small.

Over the next several years, the Service plans to use the ecosystem approach to propose listing and designating critical habitat for all of the endemic candidate species from the other Hawaiian Islands: one rule each for Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi and Maui Nui (Maui, Kahoʻolawe, Molokaʻi and Lanaʻi). The Service will also propose a single rule for Hawaiian species found on multiple islands. Each action will propose endangered or threatened status for each species and will also propose critical habitat for species when considered prudent.

The final rule will be published in the *Federal Register*. For more information visit the Service's website at www.fws.gov/pacificislands.

Critical habitat is a term in the Endangered Species Act. It identifies specific geographic areas that contain features essential for the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that 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.

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 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 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.

Note to Editors: Images and video are available by calling Ken Foote at 808-792-9535.

The newly designated endangered species are listed below:

Plants (45)	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Pa‘iniu	<i>Astelia waialealae</i>
‘Āwikiwiki	<i>Canavalia napaliensis</i>
‘Akoko	<i>Chamaesyce eleanoriae</i>
‘Akoko	<i>Chamaesyce remyi</i> var. <i>kauaiensis</i>
‘Akoko	<i>Chamaesyce remyi</i> var. <i>remyi</i>
Pāpala	<i>Charpentiera densiflora</i>
Hāhā	<i>Cyanea dolichopoda</i>
Hāhā	<i>Cyanea eleeleensis</i>
Hāhā	<i>Cyanea kolekoleensis</i>
Hāhā	<i>Cyanea kuhihewa</i>
Ha‘iwale	<i>Cyrtandra oenobarba</i>
Ha‘iwale	<i>Cyrtandra paliku</i>
No common name	<i>Diellia mannii</i>
No common name	<i>Doryopteris angelica</i>
No common name	<i>Dryopteris crinalis</i> var. <i>podosorus</i>
Na‘ena‘e	<i>Dubautia imbricata</i> ssp. <i>imbricata</i>
Na‘ena‘e	<i>Dubautia kalalauensis</i>
Na‘ena‘e	<i>Dubautia kenwoodii</i>
Na‘ena‘e	<i>Dubautia plantaginea</i> ssp. <i>magnifolia</i>

Na‘ena‘e	<i>Dubautia waialealae</i>
Nohoanu	<i>Geranium kauaiense</i>
No common name	<i>Keysseria erici</i>
No common name	<i>Keysseria helenae</i>
Kāmakahala	<i>Labordia helleri</i>
Kāmakahala	<i>Labordia pumila</i>
Lehua maka noe	<i>Lysimachia daphnoides</i>
No common name	<i>Lysimachia iniki</i>
No common name	<i>Lysimachia pendens</i>
No common name	<i>Lysimachia scopulensis</i>
No common name	<i>Lysimachia venosa</i>
Alani	<i>Melicope degeneri</i>
Alani	<i>Melicope paniculata</i>
Alani	<i>Melicope puberula</i>
Kōlea	<i>Myrsine knudsenii</i>
Kōlea	<i>Myrsine mezii</i>
No common name	<i>Phyllostegia renovans</i>
Hō‘awa	<i>Pittosporum napaliense</i>
Pilo kea lau li‘i	<i>Platydesma rostrata</i>
Loulu	<i>Pritchardia hardyi</i>
Kōpiko	<i>Psychotria grandiflora</i>
Kōpiko	<i>Psychotria hobdyi</i>
No common name	<i>Schiedea attenuata</i>
No common name	<i>Stenogyne kealiae</i>
‘Ohe ‘ohe	<i>Tetraplasandra bisattenuata</i>
‘Ohe‘ ohe	<i>Tetraplasandra flynnii</i>

Animals (3)	
Common Name	Scientific Name
‘Akeke‘e	<i>Loxops caeruleirostris</i>
‘Akikiki	<i>Oreomystis bairdi</i>
Hawaiian picture-wing fly	<i>Drosophila sharpi</i>