

KEARNEY'S BLUE STAR
(Amsonia kearneyana)

STATUS: Endangered (54 FR 2131, January 19, 1989) without critical habitat.

SPECIES DESCRIPTION: An herbaceous perennial in the Dogbane family (Apocynaceae). It is a sub-shrub with a thickened woody root and many pubescent (hairy) stems that rarely branch. The stems are erect to ascending with alternate, oblong-lanceolate to lanceolate leaves. The leaves are 3.8-6.9 cm (1.5-2.7 in) long, 1.5 cm (0.6 in) broad and are soft and bright green with short petioles. White flowers form a terminal inflorescence in late April and May. The flowers show characteristics of moth pollination. The fruit is a follicle born singly or in pairs at the end of stems and develop in June-August.

HABITAT: Plants grow in stable, partially shaded, coarse alluvium along a dry wash at 1,097-1,158 m (3,600-3,800 ft) elevation. The wash is lined with desert riparian trees and shrubs such as Arizona walnut (*Juglans major*), Mexican blue oak (*Quercus oblongifolia*), and velvet mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*). The vegetation surrounding the wash is Sonoran desertscrub or desertscrub-grassland transition zone.

RANGE: Current: Known from a west-facing drainage in the Baboquivari Mountains, Pima County.

Potential: Other west-facing drainages in the Baboquivari Mountains.

REASONS FOR DECLINE / VULNERABILITY: This species is vulnerable to extinction because of the small number of plants in a single locality and perhaps insufficient reproduction. Because the plants occur along the margins of a steep wash that floods periodically, the population is susceptible to destruction from major flood events. The species is also threatened by overuse of the habitat by livestock.

LAND MANAGEMENT / OWNERSHIP: Tohono O'Odham Tribe and Bureau of Land Management.

NOTES: Like many species in the family, *A. kearneyana* has milky toxic sap and appears not to be grazed even in drought times and when surrounding vegetation is grazed. In fall 1988 and winter 1989, 181 individuals of this species were transplanted into a canyon on the east side of the Baboquivari Mountains to create a living biological reserve for the species. During the summer of 1990, a flood removed many of the individuals that had survived the transplant. In mid-1990, 33 of the original 181 plants were surviving. Another planting was made in winter 1992. Protected by the Arizona Native Plant Law.

A Recovery Plan for Kearney's blue star was approved May 1993 and is available online at http://ecos.fws.gov/recovery_plan/pdf_files/1993/930524.pdf