



News Release

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www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/

For Release: March 27, 2007

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Completes Review of Pima Pineapple Cactus *-Cactus to retain endangered species protection-*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed its review of the Pima pineapple cactus and determined that the plant is properly classified as an endangered species under the Endangered Species Act.

The Pima pineapple cactus, listed as endangered in 1993, is known from only Pima and Santa Cruz counties in southern Arizona and northern Sonora, Mexico. The 4- to 18-inch tall, dome-shaped cacti have silky yellow flowers that bloom in early July with summer rains.

Whether the Pima pineapple cactus is a distinct subspecies and more abundant than originally thought were called into question in reports submitted to the Service in 2004. The Service reviewed those reports and all other relevant information and determined that the cactus is indeed a discrete subspecies, population numbers are low and threatened, and endangered species protection remains warranted. Thirteen of 14 independent peer reviewers concur with the Service's finding.

Development and associated loss of habitat remains the primary threat to the cactus; data analyzed by Pima County and the Service indicates that this threat will continue in the foreseeable future. The expanding threat of non-native grasses and the fire regime altered by these grasses also remain a serious concern for the long-term viability of the species.

Improvements in electronic database mapping of the Pima pineapple cactus, establishment of two conservation banks and conservation efforts that focus on habitat acquisition and protection, like those proposed by Pima County and the City of Tucson, will be important elements contributing to the long-term viability of the cactus.

Periodic status reviews of all listed species are required by the Endangered Species Act to determine if the classification of a species as endangered or threatened is still appropriate. The status review for the Pima pineapple cactus is available on the Internet at:
<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/>.

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, 63 Fish and Wildlife Management 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 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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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photos of the Pima pineapple cactus and other supporting information are available at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/> or by contacting Jeff Humphrey at (602) 242-0210.