

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance No. 83.100, "Flood Insurance.")
Dated: January 14, 1997.
Richard W. Krimm,
Executive Associate Director, Mitigation Directorate.
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

50 CFR Part 17

RIN 1018-AD39

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Notice of Reopening of Comment Period on Proposed Endangered Status for Sixteen Plants From the Northern Channel Islands of California

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Proposed rule; notice of reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), provides notice of reopening of the comment period for 16 plant species that have been proposed as endangered—*Arabis hoffmannii* (Hoffmann's rock-cress), *Arctostaphylos confertiflora* (Santa Rosa Island manzanita), *Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis* (island barberry), *Castilleja mollis* (soft-leaved paintbrush), *Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *insularis* (Santa Rosa Island dudleya), *Dudleya* sp. nov. "East Point" (munchkin dudleya), *Dudleya nesiotica* (Santa Cruz Island dudleya), *Galium buxifolium* (island bedstraw), *Gilia tenuiflora* ssp. *hoffmannii* (Hoffmann's slender-flowered gilia), *Helianthemum greenei* (island rush-rose), *Heuchera maxima* (island alumroot), *Malacothamnus fasciculatus* ssp. *nesioticus* (Santa Cruz Island bushmallow), *Malacothrix indecora* (Santa Cruz Island malacothrix), *Malacothrix squalida* (island malacothrix), *Phacelia insularis* ssp. *insularis* (island phacelia), and *Thysanocarpus conchuliferus* (Santa Cruz Island fringepod). The comment

period has been reopened to receive public comments on new information on the conservation measures proposed by the National Park Service for those proposed endangered plant species on Santa Rosa Island since the close of the original comment period on October 9, 1995.

DATES: The public comment period, which originally closed on October 9, 1995, now closes February 21, 1997.

ADDRESSES: Written comments and materials concerning this proposal should be sent directly to the Field Supervisor, Ventura Field Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003. Comments and materials received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tim Thomas, Botanist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, at the address listed above; telephone 805-644-1766, facsimile 805-644-3958.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On July 25, 1995, the Service published in the Federal Register (60 FR 37993) a proposal to list 16 plants as endangered species pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), and requested public comment. The 16 plants are restricted primarily to the northern Channel Islands (Anacapa, Santa Cruz, Santa Rosa, and San Miguel) of California. The Service received comments until the close of the original comment period on October 9, 1995. Since that time, the National Park Service has prepared a Resource Management Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement to address the conservation needs for the proposed endangered plants on Santa Rosa Island, which is within the boundaries of the Channel Islands National Park.

Since the publication of the proposed rule, new information has been made available to the Service that may affect the status of one or more of the proposed species. In 1996, *Arabis hoffmannii*, last seen on the Island in the 1930's, was discovered on a small protected ledge in Lobo Canyon on

Santa Rosa Island. A small population of *Malacothrix indecora* was discovered on Santa Rosa Island, previously only known from Santa Cruz and San Miguel Islands. A new population of the *Heuchera maxima* has been discovered in Lobo Canyon on Santa Rosa Island. The editor of *Madroño* (Journal of the California Botanical Society) has provisionally accepted the manuscript for the description of the "new" dudleya (munchkin dudleya) species from Santa Rosa Island to be published as *Dudleya gnoma*. The National Park Service has constructed exclosure fencing around the entire population of this dudleya and a portion of the largest population of *Gilia tenuiflora* ssp. *hoffmannii*. In compliance with the terms and conditions of a section 7 consultation for the western snowy plover, the park constructed an electric fence to keep cattle off of the beaches that include the entire population of *Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *insularis*. In spite of active surveys, there have been no observations of *Thysanocarpus conchuliferus* for 2 years.

Public Comments Solicited

Due to the changes in resource management plans and the need to review the best scientific information available during the decision-making process, the comment period is being reopened. The Service is requesting comments from the public on the measures presented by the National Park Service to protect the proposed endangered plant species on Santa Rosa Island and the new information on distribution and status of the proposed species. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered in the Service's final decision.

Authority

The authority for this action is the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

Dated: January 13, 1997.

H. Dale Hall,

Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1.

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