

education and interpretation. The CCP will be reviewed and updated at least every 15 years.

Established in 1933, Blackwater NWR is the oldest and largest in the complex. It encompasses 23,686 acres and consists of extensive marshes, moist-soil impoundments, and croplands that form a mosaic of habitats important to migrating and wintering waterfowl. The forests of Blackwater NWR provide unique and important habitats for a variety of migratory songbirds, the bald eagle, and the largest remaining population of the Federal-listed endangered Delmarva fox squirrel. Martin NWR was established in 1954. It consists of 4,569 acres and is closed to the public. Tidal marsh, coves and creeks and vegetated ridges form a habitat complex important to thousands of migratory waterfowl and nesting songbirds. Susquehanna NWR was established in 1942 and consists of a 4-acre island with scattered trees mixed in with grass and shrubs. Eastern Neck NWR is a 2,286-acre refuge that was established in 1962. This refuge is not included in this CCP, and will undergo the planning process for a CCP at a later date.

Our final CCP includes management direction for each of the three refuges, and includes habitat management and public use goals and objectives based on the vision for the refuge that has been developed as a part of the CCP process. Our adopted management direction represents adaptive management based on the results of scientific survey and monitoring programs. It focuses on restoring, enhancing, and maintaining ecological processes and natural biological communities and biodiversity. It emphasizes managing the complex for the benefit of all migratory bird species, maintaining and recovering endangered or threatened species, restoring submerged aquatic vegetation and wetlands, reducing or eliminating invasive plant and animal species, and adding research and inventories, including those for butterflies, reptiles, amphibians and fish.

The final CCP includes the decision to expand the boundary of Blackwater NWR, primarily through partnerships and easements, in two areas: 15,300 acres surrounding the refuge, and 16,000 acres east of the refuge along the Nanticoke River. All of that acreage contains low-lying forest and marsh habitats.

Finally, the CCP improves our ability to provide opportunities for compatible, wildlife-dependent recreation. This includes a new, accessible fishing pier and parking area at Key Wallace Bridge,

new hiking and canoe trails, a canoe access ramp and wetland observation deck, rebuilding the wildlife observation tower, remodeling and expanding the visitor center, updating the exhibits at the center, enhancing signage, providing new hunting opportunities for turkey, resident Canada geese, and waterfowl, and providing many more outreach and environmental education programs.

The Service solicited comments on the draft CCP/EA for Chesapeake Marshlands NWR Complex from May 3 through July 15, 2005. We developed a list of substantive comments that required responses. Editorial suggestions and notes of concurrence with, or opposition to, certain proposals were noted and included in the decision making process, but did not receive formal responses. The final CCP includes responses to all substantive comments. Comments are considered substantive if they:

- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the document,
- Question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analysis,
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the EA,
- Cause changes or revisions in the CCP,
- Provide new or additional information relevant to the analysis.

Based upon the comments we received, we chose management alternative B to develop into the final CCP, with the following modifications:

- *Land Protection:* We received a mixed response to the proposed boundary expansion. While there was a degree of support, a number of comments expressed concern about the scope of the Land Protection Plan (LPP) and proposed boundary expansion. Some comments indicated a concern about the potential for condemnation of land by the Service.

We revised the LPP to include protection measures other than fee-title acquisition for the Nanticoke Division of Blackwater NWR. The use of easements and management agreements, for example, is authorized for this division. Fee-title acquisition is authorized only for the boundary expansion contiguous to the existing Blackwater NWR.

- *Marshbird Habitat Improvement:* We received comments that the CCP should recognize the distinctness and conservation value of the brackish marsh bird community and plan for its long term management.

We have added a new objective to Goal 1 to capture the significance of the brackish marsh bird community and future management strategies, including

the need to adaptively manage fire in marsh ecosystems.

Dated: August 7, 2006.

**Richard O. Bennett,**

*Acting Regional Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Hadley, Massachusetts.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Recovery Plan for *Camissonia benitensis* (San Benito evening-primrose)

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), announce the availability of the Recovery Plan for *Camissonia benitensis* (San Benito evening-primrose). This plant species is found primarily in the Clear Creek Management Area (CCMA) in San Benito County, California; the CCMA is managed by the Hollister Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

**ADDRESSES:** Printed copies of this recovery plan will be available in 4 to 6 weeks by request from the Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B, Ventura, California 93003 (phone: 805/644-1766). An electronic copy of this recovery plan is now available on the World Wide Web at <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Connie Rutherford, botanist, at 805/644-1766.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

##### Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of our endangered species program. The Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Recovery plans help guide the recovery effort by describing actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establishing criteria for downlisting or delisting listed species, and estimating time and cost for implementing the measures needed for recovery.

Section 4(f) of the Act requires that public notice and an opportunity for

public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. In fulfillment of this requirement, information presented during the public comment period and comments from peer reviewers have been considered in the preparation of this final recovery plan, and are summarized in Appendix D to the recovery plan. We will forward substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation to appropriate Federal or other entities so they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions.

*Camissonia benitensis* was listed as threatened in 1985 and is associated with serpentine-derived soils within the San Benito serpentine body in the southern Coast Ranges of California. Populations of *Camissonia benitensis* are usually found on small streamside terraces that have formed at the base of slopes within watersheds that flow off of San Benito Mountain, which, at 5,247 feet (2,000 meters), is the highest point in this stretch of the Coast Ranges. The entire range of the species spans an area about 20 miles long and 5 miles wide.

*Camissonia benitensis* is an ephemeral annual species whose numbers of individuals can fluctuate drastically from year to year. While favorable climatic conditions in an occasional year may result in tens of thousands of individuals, more often populations are small in numbers of individuals and in the amount of acreage they occupy.

The primary threat to *Camissonia benitensis* is off-highway vehicle recreation activity in the CCMA. Although most terrace sites that support occupied or suitable habitat for the species have been administratively closed and either wholly or partially fenced by the Bureau, off-highway vehicles continue to access a certain number of these sites and cause direct damage to plants and their habitat. Other forms of recreation such as rock collecting, hunting, and nature hiking are comparatively minor threats. In addition, the natural erosion rate of the serpentine slopes above the terraces is exacerbated by human recreational activities that contribute to deposition on top of the terraces as well as erosion of the terraces due to sediment loading of streams and subsequent flooding.

The objective of a recovery plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of the species so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary. Actions necessary to accomplish this objective include: (1) Protecting existing populations and suitable habitat, (2) reducing or eliminating soil erosion and stream sedimentation in the watersheds

that support habitat for the species, (3) developing a species management plan that includes needed research and monitoring, (4) establishing an *ex situ* seed collection, and (5) developing and implementing a public outreach program.

#### Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

#### Steve Thompson,

Manager, California-Nevada Operations Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Fish and Wildlife Service

#### Draft Recovery Plan for the Nosa Luta or Rota Bridled White-eye (*Zosterops rotensis*)

**AGENCY:** Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of document availability for review and comment.

**SUMMARY:** We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announce the availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for the Nosa Luta or Rota Bridled White-eye (*Zosterops rotensis*), for public review and comment.

**DATES:** Comments on the draft recovery plan must be received on or before November 20, 2006.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the draft recovery plan are available by request from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (phone: 808/792-9400). Written comments and materials regarding this draft recovery plan should be addressed to the Field Supervisor at the above Honolulu address. An electronic copy of the draft recovery plan is also available at <http://endangered.fws.gov/recovery/index.html#plans>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Fred Amidon, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, at the above Honolulu address.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

#### Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystems is a primary goal of our endangered species program. The Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (ESA) requires

the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Recovery plans help guide the recovery effort by describing actions considered necessary for the conservation of the species, establishing criteria for downlisting or delisting listed species, and estimating time and cost for implementing the measures needed for recovery.

Section 4(f) of the ESA requires that public notice, and an opportunity for public review and comment, be provided during recovery plan development. We will consider all information presented during the public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. Substantive comments on the recovery needs of the species or other aspects of recovery plan development may result in changes to the recovery plan. Substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation may not necessarily result in changes to the recovery plan, but will be forwarded to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Individual responses to comments will not be provided.

The Rota bridled white-eye, known as nosa Luta in Chamorro, is a bird endemic to the island of Rota in the Mariana archipelago and was federally listed as endangered in 2004 (January 22, 2004, 69 FR 3022). In 1999, the population was estimated to be approximately 1,000 individuals, representing a 90 percent decline since 1982, and the species' core range consisted of approximately 628 acres (254 hectares) of forest above 490 feet (150 meters) elevation. Available information indicates that habitat loss and degradation and predation by introduced rats (*Rattus* spp.) and black drongos (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) are having some impact on the nosa Luta population. Due to its restricted range and small population size, the species is also highly susceptible to random catastrophic events such as typhoons and the accidental introduction of new predators such as the brown treesnake (*Boiga irregularis*), and avian diseases such as West Nile virus.

The draft recovery plan for the nosa Luta focuses on the following actions: (1) Protecting and enhancing forests in the species' range; (2) determining the specific habitat requirements of the nosa Luta to manage areas for the species' conservation; (3) assessing the impact of predation by black drongos and rats, and controlling these species as appropriate; (4) preventing the