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News Release

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Kempthorne Announces Proposal to Protect 48 Hawaii Species

New Ecosystem-based Approach Provides Hope

HONOLULU, HI - Applying a newly developed, ecosystem-based approach to species conservation, the Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne today announced a proposal to add 48 species found only on the island of Kauai to the federal endangered species list and designate critical habitat. This new approach, undertaken by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, provides hope for Kauai's natural ecosystems and the species that call them home. The 48 species include 45 plants, two birds and one Hawaiian picture-wing fly.

“By addressing the common threats that occur across these ecosystems, we can more effectively focus our conservation efforts on restoring the functions of these shared habitats,” said Secretary Kempthorne. “This holistic approach will benefit the recovery of the listed species and also all the species within the native ecological community.”

The new ecosystem-based approach to the listing and critical habitat designation process is designed to protect multiple species that occur in shared ecosystems and experience common threats. Critical habitat was identified using the best available scientific information.

“Kauai, the oldest island of the main Hawaiian Islands, has been called a ‘treasure trove of biodiversity’ and is believed to house the greatest diversity of plants in the state,” said Patrick Leonard, Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “Therefore, it is appropriate that we begin this new approach to listing species and designating critical habitat in Kauai.”

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 Hawaiian Islands, one rule each for Oahu, Hawaii and Maui Nui (Maui, Molokai and Lanai). The Service will also propose a single rule for Hawaiian species that are found on multiple islands. Each rule will propose endangered or threatened status for each species and will also propose critical habitat for species when prudent.

Today's proposed listing of 48 species includes 45 plants, two Kauai birds – the akikiki and akekee – and one Hawaiian picture-wing fly. *(The full list of all 48 species can be found at the end of this release)*

The species are found in six ecosystem types ranging from rainforest mountains to moist lowlands and dry cliffs. Although most of the species are found in just a single ecosystem, a few of them occur in more than one of the ecosystems. A total of 22 separate geographic areas comprising 27,674 acres in 6 different ecosystem types are being proposed as critical habitat. Of the total proposed acres, 26,028 acres overlap existing critical



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habitat for other species and 1,646 acres are proposed as new critical habitat. The majority of the proposed critical habitat (21,704 acres) is located on State of Hawaii lands, while 5,970 acres are located on private lands owned by approximately 12 different landowners.

In today's proposal, critical habitat for one of the 48 species, the plant *Pritchardia hardyi*, was considered not prudent and is not being proposed because this rare palm is attractive to illegal collectors. A critical habitat designation could increase its risk of collection by alerting collectors to its location.

This proposed rule departs significantly from the Service's recent efforts to designate critical habitat for threatened and endangered species in Hawaii. In the past, the Service focused 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 remaining individuals of a species were the best areas to emphasize for future conservation efforts.

Species that are endemic to single islands are inherently more vulnerable to extinction than 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 and disease outbreaks. These problems are further magnified when populations are few and restricted to a very limited geographic area and the number of individuals is very small.

All of the Kauai species are threatened by ongoing destruction or modification of habitat due to feral ungulates such as pigs and goats, nonnative plants and hurricanes. Several Kauai 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 over collection.

Given the number of listed species in Hawaii, designations based solely on the historical distributions of individual species have created an overlapping patchwork of critical habitat that has not been optimal in directing conservation efforts for these species and Hawaii's natural communities. Ecosystem-based critical habitat designation identifies areas most appropriate for conservation action; focusing recovery planning and actions in these areas will benefit a suite of species, including non-listed native species.

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 which 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.



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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 proposal was sent to the Federal Register today for publication, which will begin a 60-day public comment period. During the 60-day public comment period the Service is accepting all comments on the proposed rule but is specifically seeking information concerning:

- Biological, commercial trade or other relevant data concerning threats (or lack thereof) to these species;
- Additional information about the range, distribution and population sizes of these species, including the locations of any additional populations;
- Any information on the biological or ecological requirements of these species;
- Current or planned activities in the areas occupied by these species and possible impacts of these activities on these species;
- Which areas would be appropriate as critical habitat for these species and why they should be proposed for designation as critical habitat; and
- Reasons why areas should or should not be designated as critical habitat, and why the benefits of designation would outweigh threats to the species that a designation could cause, to ensure that the designation of critical habitat is prudent.

Once the proposal is published in the Federal Register in the near future, comments may be sent via the Internet to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Comments may also be mailed or hand-delivered to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS-RA-ES-2008-0046; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 222; Arlington, VA 22203. All comments and materials received will be made available for public inspection.

For more information contact: Patrick Leonard, Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (Telephone 808-792-9400, Fax 808-792-9581).

When the proposed rule is published in the Federal Register, copies may be downloaded from the Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands> or by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office at 808-792-9400.



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

The species proposed for listing are:

Plants (45)	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Painiu	<i>Astelia waialealae</i>
Awikiwiki	<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>
Papala	<i>Charpentiera densiflora</i>
Haha	<i>Cyanea dolichopoda</i>
Haha	<i>Cyanea eleeleensis</i>
Haha	<i>Cyanea kolekoleensis</i>
Haha	<i>Cyanea kuhihewa</i>
Haiwale	<i>Cyrtandra oenobarba</i>
Haiwale	<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>
Naenae	<i>Dubautia imbricata</i> ssp. <i>imbricata</i>
Naenae	<i>Dubautia kalalauensis</i>
Naenae	<i>Dubautia kenwoodii</i>
Naenae	<i>Dubautia plantaginea</i> ssp. <i>magnifolia</i>
Naenae	<i>Dubautia waialealae</i>
Nohoanu	<i>Geranium kauaiense</i>
No common name	<i>Keysseria erici</i>
No common name	<i>Keysseria helena</i>
Kamakahala	<i>Labordia helleri</i>
Kamakahala	<i>Labordia pumila</i>
Lehua makanoe	<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>



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Kolea	<i>Myrsine knudsenii</i>
Kolea	<i>Myrsine mezii</i>
No common name	<i>Phyllostegia renovans</i>
Hoawa	<i>Pittosporum napaliense</i>
pilo kea lau lii	<i>Platydesma rostrata</i>
Loulu	<i>Pritchardia hardyi</i>
Kopiko	<i>Psychotria grandiflora</i>
Kopiko	<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
Akekee	<i>Loxops caeruleirostris</i>
Akikiki	<i>Oreomystis bairdi</i>
Hawaiian picture-wing fly	<i>Drosophila attigua</i>