

Wright Fishhook Cactus

Sclerocactus wrightiae



Wright fishhook cactus / USFWS

What does the Wright fishhook cactus look like?

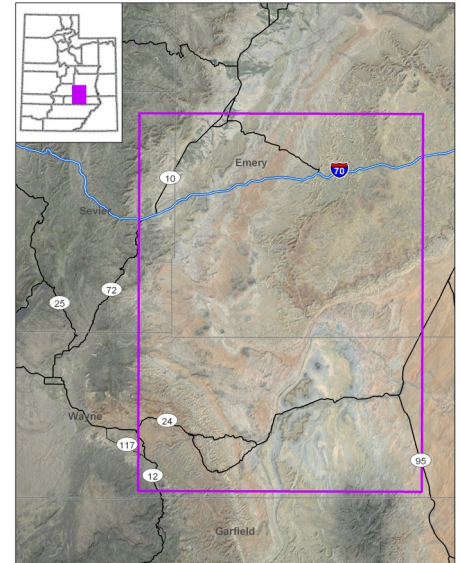
The Wright fishhook cactus (*Sclerocactus wrightiae*) is a small barrel shaped cactus. It typically grows as a single plant but can form multiple stems. Spines are clustered and include 1 - 4 central spines and 8 - 11 radial spines. The lower central spine is hooked and is typically 0.4 - 0.8 inches long. Mature individuals can get up to 7 inches tall. Adult plants produce funnel-shaped, yellowish to white or pinkish flowers with magenta filaments. Flowers are up to 1.4 inches long. Flowering occurs from April through May.

The Wright fishhook cactus is distinguished from similar cacti by

its shorter spine length, early flowering time, small flower size, and magenta filaments.

Where does the Wright fishhook cactus occur?

Wright fishhook cactus is known to occur across portions of Wayne, Emery, and Sevier Counties in central Utah. It has been found on a variety of geological formations, including Mancos shale, Carmel, Moenkopi, Dakota, Morrison, Summerville, Curtis, and Entrada sandstone. This cactus is generally found in sparsely vegetated areas within desert scrub or open piñon-juniper woodland communities at 4,200 - 7,600 feet in elevation.



Species range / USFWS



Wright fishhook cactus habitat / Daniela Roth, USFWS

Legal Status under the Endangered Species Act

On October 11, 1979, the Wright fishhook cactus was listed as an endangered species (44 FR 58866).

Why does the Wright fishhook cactus need protection?

When we listed Wright fishhook cactus, the primary threats were exploration and development of energy and mineral resources, off highway vehicle use, illegal



Wright fishhook cactus in flower / Dorde Woodruff

collection, and small population sizes. Recreational use, including off highway vehicles, grazing, high mortality to recruitment ratios, predation, and drought related impacts are the largest threats this species faces today. In addition, the Wright fishhook cactus is highly sought by cactus collectors, making illegal collection a concern.

What have we done to recover the Wright fishhook cactus?

In December 1985, we published a recovery plan that lists necessary actions to recover the species and remove it from the list of endangered species. We are working to revise the recovery plan to reflect the best scientific and commercial information available.

We surveyed for additional populations across the range of the species and monitored some populations to get a better understanding of threats and population trends. Despite our better understanding of this

species’ distribution and threats, the Wright fishhook cactus continues to face threats across its entire range.

What do we need to do to recover the Wright fishhook cactus?

In addition to revising the recovery plan, our last review of the Wright fishhook cactus (August 2008) recommended the following actions:

- Protect State lands that support Wright fishhook cactus’ habitat.
- Complete range wide surveys and regular monitoring to quantify the impacts of grazing, off highway vehicle use, and predation.
- Increase educational programs to facilitate appreciation of sensitive areas.
- Support the recovery of Wright fishhook cactus by providing personnel and fiscal resources to implement recovery actions.
- Develop a recovery team to update the recovery plan and to annually prioritize, assess, and fulfill recovery actions.

In addition, we need to work proactively with Federal, State, and private partners to implement recovery actions and establish important areas for long-term species conservation.

Research into this species’ life history and ecology are essential to better understand and abate the threats the species is facing. This information will guide management decisions and the evaluation of recovery progress for the Wright fishhook cactus.

More Information

To learn more about the Wright fishhook cactus and conservation efforts on behalf of the species, please visit the following sites:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Program’s website: www.fws.gov/endangered

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Information, Planning and Conservation (IPaC): ecos.fws.gov/ipac

Mountain-Prairie Regional Office’s website: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/plants/>

The Utah Field Office’s website: www.fws.gov/utahfieldoffice

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6

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