



Forest Service

Southwestern Region
Regional Office

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File Code: 1920

Date: March 13, 2023

Route To:

Subject: Approval of Updates to List of Species of Conservation Concern

To: Camille Howes, Forest Supervisor, Gila National Forest

I received your request for my review and concurrence for changes to the Gila National Forest Species of Conservation Concern (SCC) list. You recommended adding one species and removing one species to the previously concurred upon list based on newly available scientific information. These changes would keep the total number of SCC at 57 species.

With the assistance of the Regional Office staffs for Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants, and Rangeland Management (WFRPRM) and Ecosystem Resources and Environmental Planning (EREP), I have reviewed the proposed changes to ensure compliance with the 2012 planning rule and directives governing SCC. Pursuant to Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 10, section 12.52b, item 1b, I concur with your recommended changes and determination that the species identified in the enclosed list meet the criteria for SCC for the Gila National Forest's revised Land Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

I recognize that due to the changing nature of the best available scientific information, identification of species of conservation concern is a dynamic process. My staff will continue to work with the Gila National Forest to evaluate new information and changing conditions to determine if future adjustments are warranted.

Please direct any questions about the SCC requirements and review to either Michelle Dela Cruz, Natural Resource Specialist – WFRPRM at michelle.delacruz@usda.gov or Ariel Leonard, Regional Planner – EREP at ariel.leanard@usda.gov.

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Regional Forester

Enclosure (1)

cc: Robert Trujillo, Wendy Jo Haskins, Jennifer McRae, Ron Maes, Michelle Dela Cruz, Ariel Leonard, Jenny Rasmussen



Update to initial SCC list 1/10/2023

Species of Conservation Concern

One hundred twelve species met the initial criteria for being identified as a species of conservation concern on the Gila NF, some of those species were removed from the consideration due to one of the following conditions: 1) the species was not known to occur on the Forest, or 2) the best available scientific information did not indicate substantial concern for the species to persist on the Forest. Fifty-seven species were identified as potential species of conservation concern on the Gila NF during 2019 (Table 2). Since 2019 additional species have been reviewed due to the availability of new information. One new species, Pinyon Jay (bolded and highlighted in the table below) has been added to the list. One species, Wright's Dogweed (strikethrough in the table below), has been removed from the list. The rationale for adding or removing the identified species follows.

Table2. Potential Species of Conservation Concern (SCCs) relevant to the plan area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	NatureServe Rank
Amphibians		
Arizona toad	<i>Anaxyrus microscaphus</i>	G4/S2?
Birds		
Gila Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	G5/S2B,S2N
Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	G4/S3B,S3N
Pinyon Jay	<i>Gymnophinus cyanocephalus</i>	G3/S2S3
Fish		
Rio Grande sucker	<i>Catostomus plebeius</i>	G3G4/S2
Roundtail (Headwater) Chub	<i>Gila robusta</i>	G3/S2
Invertebrates		
"Gila" May Fly	<i>Lachlania dencyanna</i>	G1/SNR
A Stonefly	<i>Capnia caryi</i>	G1/SNR
Bearded Mountainsnail	<i>Oreohelix barbata</i>	G1/S1

Common Name	Scientific Name	NatureServe Rank
Black Range Mountainsnail	<i>Oreohelix metcalfei acutidiscus</i>	G2/T1/SNR
Black Range Mountainsnail	<i>Oreohelix metcalfei hermosensis</i>	G2/T1T2/SNR
Black Range Woodlandsnail	<i>Ashmunella cockerelli cockerelli</i>	G1/T1/S1
Cockerell Holospira Snail	<i>Holospira cockerelli</i>	G1/S1
Gila Springsnail	<i>Pyrgulopsis gilae</i>	G2/S2
Iron Creek Woodlandsnail	<i>Ashmunella mendax</i>	G1/S1
Marsh Slug Snail	<i>Deroceras heterura</i>	G1G2/SNR
Mineral Creek Mountainsnail	<i>Oreohelix pilsbryi</i>	G1/S1
Morgan Creek Mountainsnail	<i>Oreohelix swopei</i>	G1/S1
New Mexico Hot Springsnail	<i>Pyrgulopsis thermalis</i>	G1/S1
Nitrocris Fritillary Butterfly	<i>Speyeria nokomis nitocris</i>	G3/T3/SNR
No Common Name Snail	<i>Ashmunella cockerelli argenticola</i>	G1/T1/S1
No Common Name Snail	<i>Ashmunella cockerelli perobtusa</i>	G1/T1/S1
No Common Name Snail	<i>Ashmunella tetrodon animorum</i>	G3/T3/S3
No Common Name Snail	<i>Ashmunella tetrodon inermis</i>	G3/T2/SNR
No Common Name Snail	<i>Ashmunella tetrodon mutator</i>	G3/T2/SNR
No Common Name Snail	<i>Oreohelix metcalfei radiata</i>	G2/T2/SNR
No Common Name (Black Range mountainsnail)	<i>Oreohelix metcalfei concentrica</i>	G2/SNR
Silver Creek Woodlandsnail	<i>Ashmunella binneyi</i>	G1/S1

Common Name	Scientific Name	NatureServe Rank
Sonoran Snaggleteooth Snail	<i>Gastrocopta prototypus</i>	G1/SNR
Stonefly	<i>Taenionema jacobii</i>	G2/SNR
Tiger Moth	<i>Alexicles aspersa</i>	G1G2/SNR
Western Bumble Bee	<i>Bombus occidentalis occidentalis</i>	G4/T1T3/SNR
Whitewater Creek Woodlandsnail	<i>Ashmunella danielsi</i>	G1/S1
Plants		
Arizona Crested-Coralroot	<i>Hexalectris arizonica</i>	G5/T2T4/S2
Chiricahua Mountain Mudwort	<i>Limosella pubiflora</i>	G1Q/S1
Cliff Brittlebush	<i>Apacheria chiricahuensis</i>	G2/S2
Davidson's Cliff Carrot	<i>Pteryxia davidsonii</i>	G2/S2
Gila Morning Glory	<i>Ipomoea gilana</i>	G1G2/S1S2
Gooding's Onion	<i>Allium gooddingii</i>	G4/S1
Greene Milkweed	<i>Asclepias uncialis</i> ssp. <i>uncialis</i>	G3G4/T2T3/S2
Heartleaf Groundsel	<i>Packera cardamine</i> (= <i>Senecio cardamine</i>)	G3/S3
Hess's Fleabane	<i>Erigeron hessii</i>	G1/S1
Metcalf's Penstemon	<i>Penstemon metcalfei</i>	G1/S1
Mimbres Figwort	<i>Scrophularia macrantha</i>	G2/S2
Mogollon Clover	<i>Trifolium neurophyllum</i>	G2/S2
Mogollon Death Camas	<i>Zigadenus mogollonensis</i>	G3/S3
Mogollon Hawkweed	<i>Hieracium brevipilum</i> (= <i>H. fendleri</i> var. <i>mogollense</i>)	G4/T2?/S2?
Mogollon Mountain Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis angustifolia</i>	G2/S2
Pinos Altos Flame Flower	<i>Talinum humile</i>	G2/S2
Porsild's Starwort	<i>Stellaria porsildii</i>	G1/S2

Common Name	Scientific Name	NatureServe Rank
Ray Turner's Spurge	<i>Euphorbia rayturneri</i>	G1
Wooton's Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus wootoniana</i>	G2/S2
Wright's catchfly (campion)	<i>Silene wrightii</i>	G2/S2
Wright's Dogweed	<i>Adenophyllum wrightii</i> var. <i>wrightii</i>	G1?/S1
Yellow Lady's-Slipper	<i>Cypripedium parviflorum</i> var. <i>pubescens</i>	G5/T5/S2?
Mammals		
Arizona Montane Vole	<i>Microtus montanus arizonensis</i>	G5/T4/S1
Gunnison's Prairie Dog (prairie population)	<i>Cynomys gunnisoni</i>	G5/S2
Lesser Long-nosed Bat	<i>Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuenae</i>	G3/S3

Rationale for Adding Pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*)

The Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*) is an obligate bird of pinyon-juniper and other pine-juniper woodlands that has experienced significant population declines and is of increasing conservation concern (Somershoe et al. 2020). Over the period from 1967–2015, populations declined by 3.69% annually for an estimated total loss of 83.5% (Somershoe et al 2020). In New Mexico, Pinyon Jays are associated primarily with Colorado pinyon (*Pinus edulis*). The species may be found in foothills throughout the state, wherever large blocks of pinyon-juniper woodland habitat are present (NMPIF 2007). Extensive Pinyon Jay home ranges mean that only land managers with jurisdiction over very large pinyon-juniper landscapes can effectively manage for the year-round habitat needs of even one Pinyon Jay flock (Johnson et al. 2016). The species may also occur in pine/oak woodlands as well as shrubland ERUs on the Gila NF which amount to 1,763,121 acres well distributed across the Gila NF. All these ERUs are in low to moderate departure (Chapter 2: Upland Vegetation). However, as Pinyon Jay populations have declined, the pinyon-juniper woodlands that provide most of their habitat across the species range continues to also face potential threats, including removal of trees to accomplish other management priorities, long-term fire suppression, changes in woodland age and tree density, and changing climatic conditions that cause reduced pinyon nut production and increased pinyon pine mortality (Somershoe et al 2020) and continued grazing pressure that reduces habitat.

Recent information considers pinyon jay at-risk. The State of New Mexico has designated the Pinyon Jay as a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The species was petitioned to be listed under the Endangered Species Act as either threatened or endangered in April 2022. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service has not addressed whether the listing is warranted or not at this time. NatureServe (2023) lists the Pinyon Jay as a globally vulnerable (G3) and imperiled (S2) in New Mexico.

Despite the potential importance of the Gila NF to the Pinyon Jay's rangewide population, no systematic surveys of the area were previously performed prior to 2021 and 2022. Surveys for Pinyon Jays in the Gila NF occurred March and April 2021 and 2022 and suggest that Pinyon Jays are scarce in the south, common in the east, and abundant in the north indicating that the Gila NF has significant management responsibility for Pinyon Jays (Johnson et al, 2023). Pinyon Jay habitat on the Gila NF is affected by the same threats described above and those threats are likely to continue under the revised forest plan.

References

- Johnson, K., N. Petersen, G. Sadoti, and L. Wickersham. 2023. Pinyon Jay Surveys in the Gila National Forest, New Mexico 2022 – Final Report to Share with Wildlife. New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. Santa Fe. NM.
- Johnson, K., T.B. Neville, J.W. Smith, M.W. Horner. 2016. Home range- and colony-scale habitat models for Pinyon Jays in piñon-juniper woodlands of New Mexico, USA *Avian Conserv. Ecol.*, 11 (2016)
- NatureServe. 2023. NatureServe Network Biodiversity Location Data accessed through NatureServe Explorer [web application]. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <https://explorer.natureserve.org/>. (Accessed: January 24, 2023).
- New Mexico Partners in Flight. 2007. New Mexico Bird Conservation Plan, version 2.1. C. Rustay and S. Norris, compilers. Albuquerque, NM.
- Somershoe, S. G., E. Ammon, J. D. Boone, K. Johnson, M. Darr, C. Witt, and E. Duvuvuei. 2020. Conservation Strategy for the Pinyon Jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*). Partners in Flight Western Working Group and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Rationale for Removing Wright's Dogweed (*Adenophyllum wrightii* var. *wrightii*)

Wright's dogweed is an annual plant that flowers in September. The plant is often found in open grasslands with igneous gravel and cobble substrates, but also sandy or silty soils in swales and drainages in pinion-juniper woodland (Sivinski 2007) at 7,000 to 7,200 feet elevation in New Mexico (NMRPTC, 1999). The plant occurs in Catron, Grant, and Sierra counties, New Mexico; adjacent southeastern Arizona; and in northern Chihuahua, Mexico (NMRPTC, 1999 updated 2023).

This plant was formerly known from a few very old collections made near the Santa Rita copper mines and in the Black Range, New Mexico, near Springerville, Arizona, and in Chihuahua, Mexico (NMRPTC, 1999). Once poorly known and overlooked but recent collections and observations suggest it is common to possibly abundant in the region of southwestern New Mexico where it is known to occur (NatureServe, 2023). Richard Spellenberg (2010) reported finding *Adenophyllum wrightii* var. *wrightii* in western Chihuahua, Mexico. The presence of populations in Chihuahua, Mexico, make the total range of this plant well over 100 miles. *Adenophyllum wrightii* var. *wrightii* can no longer be considered rare under NMRPTC criteria (NMRPTC, 1999 updated 2023). NatureServe (2023) lists the variety as vulnerable (T3) and the species is apparently secure (G4) globally, and the plant is no longer ranked at the state level.

Threats to the plant are generally unknown but may include livestock grazing (NatureServe, 2023). However, Spellenberg (2010) located the plant in Mexico within a heavily grazed pasture, where livestock had completely avoided it, and commented that the plant was so numerous that he deemed it “weedy”.

The known range of this plant has increased recently and additional records within the plan area have been identified. The plant is not at risk within its range, within New Mexico, or within the plan area.

References

NatureServe. 2023. NatureServe Network Biodiversity Location Data accessed through NatureServe Explorer [web application]. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available <https://explorer.natureserve.org/>. (Accessed: January 24, 2023).

New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council. 1999. New Mexico Rare Plants. Albuquerque, NM: New Mexico Rare Plants Home Page. <https://nmrareplants.unm.edu> (Latest update 24 Jan 2023).

Sivinski, R. 2007. New Mexico Rare Plants: *Adenophyllum wrightii* var. *wrightii* (Wrights dogweed)). New Mexico Rare Plant Technical Council, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Online. Available: <http://nmrareplants.unm.edu> (Accessed 2019).

Spellenberg, R., and W. Anderson. 2010. New flowering plant records for the north of Mexico. *Phytoneuron* 2010-22:1-3.