

fasciculatus ssp. *nesioticus*, *Malacothrix indecora*, *Malacothrix squalida*, *Phacelia insularis* ssp. *insularis*, and *Thysanocarpus conchuliferus* as endangered. Threats to the 16 taxa include soil loss, habitat alteration by mammals alien to the Channel Islands (pigs, goats, sheep, donkeys, cattle, deer, elk, horses, bison) and direct predation by these same alien mammals, habitat alteration by native seabirds, habitat alteration due to vehicular traffic, overcollection for scientific or horticultural purposes, and competition with alien plant taxa. The 16 taxa also have an increased vulnerability to extinction due to reduced genetic viability, depressed reproductive vigor, and stochastic environmental events resulting from small numbers of individuals and populations. Because these 16 taxa are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their ranges, they fit the definition of endangered as defined in the Act. Critical habitat is not being proposed for these taxa for reasons discussed in the "Critical Habitat" section of this proposal.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is defined by section 3 of the Act as: (i) the specific areas within the geographical area occupied by a species, at the time it is listed in accordance with the Act, on which are found those physical or biological features (I) essential to the conservation of the species and (II) that may require special management considerations or protection and; (ii) specific areas outside the geographical area occupied by a species at the time it is listed, upon a determination that such areas are essential for the conservation of the species. "Conservation" means the use of all methods and procedures needed to bring any protected species to the point at which the measures provided pursuant to the Act are no longer necessary (50 CFR 424.02(c)).

Section 4(a)(3) of the Act, as amended, and implementing regulations (50 CFR 424.12) require that, to the maximum extent prudent and determinable, the Secretary specify critical habitat at the time a species is proposed for listing. The Service finds that designation of critical habitat is not prudent for *Arabis hoffmannii*, *Arctostaphylos confertiflora*, *Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis*, *Castilleja mollis*, *Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *insularis*, *Dudleya* sp. nov. "East Point," *Dudleya nesiotica*, *Galium buxifolium*, *Gilia tenuiflora* ssp. *hoffmannii*, *Helianthemum greenii*, *Heuchera maxima*, *Malacothamnus fasciculatus* ssp. *nesioticus*, *Malacothrix indecora*,

Malacothrix squalida, *Phacelia insularis* ssp. *insularis*, and *Thysanocarpus conchuliferus* at this time. Service regulations (50 CFR 424.12(a)(1)) state that designation of critical habitat is not prudent when one or both of the following situations exist: (1) the species is threatened by taking or other human activity, and identification of critical habitat can be expected to increase the degree of such threat to the species, or (2) such designation of critical habitat would not be beneficial to the species.

The National Park Service, the Department of Defense, The Nature Conservancy, and other pertinent parties have been notified of the location and importance of protecting these species' habitat. Because protection of these species' habitat will be addressed through the recovery process and through the section 7 consultation process as a result of listing these species, there would be little additional benefit to designating critical habitat. Therefore, the Service finds that designation of critical habitat for these plants is not prudent at this time as such designation would provide little additional benefit beyond that provided through the section 7 consultation process.

Available Conservation Measures

Conservation measures provided to species listed as endangered or threatened under the Act include recognition, recovery actions, requirements for Federal protection, and prohibitions against certain practices. Recognition through listing encourages and results in conservation actions by Federal, State, and private agencies, groups, and individuals. The Act provides for possible land acquisition and cooperation with the States and requires that recovery actions be carried out for all listed species. The protection required of Federal agencies and the prohibitions against certain activities involving listed plants are discussed, in part, below.

Section 7(a) of the Act, as amended, requires Federal agencies to evaluate their actions with respect to any species that is proposed or listed as endangered or threatened and with respect to its critical habitat, if any is designated. Regulations implementing this interagency cooperation provision of the Act are codified at 50 CFR part 402. Section 7(a)(4) requires Federal agencies to confer informally with the Service on any action that is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a proposed species or result in destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. If a species is

subsequently listed, section 7(a)(2) requires Federal agencies to ensure that activities they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of such a species or to destroy or adversely modify its critical habitat. If a Federal action may affect a listed species or its critical habitat, the responsible Federal agency must enter into formal consultation with the Service.

The Service and NPS have recently agreed to pursue development of a Conservation Agreement under the Secretary of the Interior's directive for Federal agencies to cooperate in the conservation of species for which listing may be appropriate (U.S. Dept. of Interior 1994). The Conservation Agreement would focus on the prelisting recovery needs of the other plant and animal candidate taxa from the northern Channel Islands, such that listing for some of those taxa may be avoided, and would also serve as a template for the future development of a recovery strategy for the 16 taxa included in this proposal. In addition, if threats to these 16 taxa can be reduced or eliminated, final listing of some or all of the proposed taxa may be precluded.

Of the 16 proposed taxa, all except 3 (*Dudleya nesiotica*, *Malacothamnus fasciculatus* ssp. *nesioticus*, and *Thysanocarpus conchuliferus*) have populations or historical habitat located on Federal lands. Three of the taxa (*Galium buxifolium*, *Malacothrix indecora*, and *Phacelia insularis* ssp. *insularis*) have populations or historical habitat on San Miguel Island, which is owned by the Navy and managed by NPS through a Memorandum of Agreement and Interagency Agreement. Navy activities that could potentially affect these taxa and their habitats include military exercises and equipment testing and retrieval carried out under the Executive Order that established the Pacific Missile Test Center (PMTTC) Sea Test Range, which includes Anacapa, San Miguel, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and Santa Rosa Islands and their environs.

Three of the taxa (*Berberis pinnata* ssp. *insularis*, *Heuchera maxima*, and *Malacothrix squalida*) have populations or historical habitat on Anacapa Island, which is owned and managed by NPS. Eleven of the 16 taxa have populations or historical habitat on Santa Rosa Island, which is owned and managed by NPS. Five of those 11 taxa are single island endemics (*Arctostaphylos confertiflora*, *Castilleja mollis*, *Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *insularis*, *Dudleya* sp. nov. "East Point," *Gilia tenuiflora* ssp. *hoffmannii*). NPS activities that could potentially affect these taxa and their