

5-YEAR REVIEW

Clara Hunt's milkvetch (*Astragalus claranus*)

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Species: Clara Hunt's milkvetch (*Astragalus claranus*), a plant species; as currently listed in 50 CFR 17.12

Date listed: October 22, 1997

FR citation(s): 62 FR 55791

Classification: Endangered

State Listing

Clara Hunt's milkvetch was listed by the State of California as threatened in 1990.

BACKGROUND:

Most recent status review: Since the original listing in 1997, there has been one 5-year review for this species in 2009 [[CLICK HERE TO VIEW DOCUMENT](#)]

FR Notice citation announcing this status review: A notice announcing initiation of the 5-year review of this species and the opening of a 60-day period to receive information from the public was published in the Federal Register on 18 June, 2018 (83 FR 28251-28254).

ASSESSMENT:

Information acquired since the last status review:

This 5-year review was conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office (SFWO). Data for this review were solicited from interested parties through a Federal Register notice announcing this review on June 18, 2018, but we did not receive any information regarding this species from the public in response to the notice. We used personal communications with species experts, performed a literature search, and obtained data from an occurrence search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) maintained by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Personal communications with species experts and records from CNDDDB were our primary sources of information.

We obtained updated occurrence records from species experts and from CNDDDB. Updated occurrence information indicates that the species is still known from at least four of the five localities described in the last status review (USFWS 2009). At the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park location, no plants were observed during site visits in 2012, 2014, and 2015 (J. Bjerke, *in litt.* 2018; C. Freeman, *in litt.* 2018). The Lewelling Lane population was last surveyed in 2009 and found to support 450 individuals (CNDDDB 2018). The Spring Valley and Saint Helena Road populations were last surveyed in 2011, and were found to support 10 and 1000-1500 plants, respectively. The Lake Hennessey population was found to support 60-150 plants in 2018 (J. Bjerke, *in litt.* 2018), although only 15-23 plants were found from 2013-2017 (R. Preston, *in litt.*

2018; J. Ruygt, *in litt.* 2018). The species was not found on the north side of the road at the Lake Hennessey population in 2017, and has not been seen on the north side of the road since 2009 (J. Ruygt, *in litt.* 2018). Based on the lack of plants found at the Bale Grist Mill site and updated reports on locations at Lake Hennessey, the species distribution might be reduced relative to the previous status review. However, it is unclear if seeds might still be present in the seed bank at prior known locations from these occurrences.

Seed collection mentioned in the last status report was described in a 2010 report by the California Department of Fish and Game (now California Department of Fish and Wildlife; CDFG 2010). Seeds were collected at four CNDDDB element occurrences (EOs 3, 11, 12, 13) by collecting fully matured fruits from which seeds were subsequently extracted (n=1969, range 64-1612). Seed germination tests were conducted using seeds from two of the four collection sites, with percent germination ranging from 93-100% (CDFG 2010).

Threats remain the same as in the 2009 status review (USFWS 2009). A modeling approach looking at potential vineyard expansion in Napa County predicted that 68% of modeled habitat could be lost with future vineyard expansion (Link 2012). This study emphasizes the continued threat of habitat modification or loss, particularly for occurrences located on private lands.

Conclusion:

After reviewing the best available scientific information, as included in the 2009 status review and updated here, we conclude that Clara Hunt's milkvetch remains an endangered species. The evaluation of threats affecting the species under the factors in 4(a)(1) of the Act and analysis of the status of the species in our 2009 status review remains an accurate reflection of the species current status.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE ACTIONS:

Recommendations remain the same as in the past status review (USFWS 2009). In particular, we recommend completion of a recovery plan for Clara Hunt's milkvetch. Additionally, we recommend focused surveys at the Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park occurrence to determine if the plant is still extant, as this population was not represented during seed banking completed in 2009 and has not been seen during the last few site visits. If it is determined the population at Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park is extirpated, the SFWO will discuss the possibility of reintroduction with the California Department of Parks and Recreation and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Lead Field Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service

Approve  Date 5/2/2019

References

- [CDFG] California Department of Fish and Game. 2010. Seed Collection and Banking of 50 Plant Species of Critical Conservation Concern. Unpublished final performance report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Endangered Species Act (Section-6) Grant-in-Aid Program.
- [CNDDDB] California Natural Diversity Data Base. 2018. Element Occurrence Reports for Clara Hunt's milkvetch. Unpublished cumulative data current to [July 12, 2018].
- Link, E. E. 2012. A modeling and geospatial approach to predicting effects on biodiversity due to vineyard expansion in Napa County. Master's thesis, California State University, Sacramento.
- [USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2009. *Astragalus claranus* (Clara Hunt's milkvetch), 5-Year Review: Summary and Evaluation. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, California. 16pp.

In litteris References

- Bjerke, J. 2018. Electronic mail from Jeb Bjerke (California Department of Fish and Wildlife—Native Plants Program) to Samantha Lantz regarding site visits to EOs 7 and 11. July 23, 2018.
- Freeman, C. 2018. Electronic mail from Christina Freeman (California State Parks—Bay Area District) to Samantha Lantz regarding site visits to Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park (EO 7). July 16, 2018.
- Ruygt, J. 2018. Electronic mail from Jake Ruygt (California Native Plant Society) to Samantha Lantz regarding site visits to known occurrence elements. July 14 and 23, 2018.
- Preston, R. 2018. Electronic mail from Robert Preston (ICF) to Samantha Lantz regarding site visits notes for CNDDDB record PRE13I0001 and accompanying photo. July 15, 2018.