

Slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*)

PROPOSED LISTING

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to list slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) as endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act).

DESCRIPTION OF PLANT, HISTORICAL DISTRIBUTION AND HABITAT

Slickspot peppergrass is a small annual or biennial plant that occurs in sagebrush-steppe habitats in southwestern Idaho, including the Snake River Plain, Owyhee Plateau and adjacent foothills in southwestern Idaho. The plant may be 4 to 12 inches in height, and it has many tiny, white flowers that look much like the garden flower sweet alyssum. It has four petals and four sepals, and each flower produces four seeds that are disk-shaped.

Slickspot peppergrass typically grows in big sagebrush areas on depositional microsites known as “slickspots.” Slickspots are inclusions of clay or alkaline soils within a larger matrix of saline soils. These microsites are often lower than surrounding areas, so they retain water longer than surrounding soils. The microsites may be as small as a square foot, or as large as half a basketball court, and usually are surrounded by big sagebrush, native bunchgrasses, wildflowers, mosses and lichens.

CURRENT STATUS

This plant has been found in the following Idaho counties: Ada, Canyon, Gem, Elmore, Payette and Owyhee. There are 70 occurrences currently supporting slickspot peppergrass – 18 others are considered to be extirpated or historic locations (plants have not been relocated based on collections made between 1911 and 1974). Only six occurrences are considered to be high quality. Suitable habitat with interspersed slickspots occupied by *Lepidium papilliferum* is less than 5,018 hectares (12,400 acres).

THREATS

Immediate threats to this species include habitat degradation from wildfires, fire rehabilitation efforts, livestock management, mining, exotic species, residential development, off-road vehicle use and military training activities. All populations are potentially vulnerable to naturally occurring events or human activities.

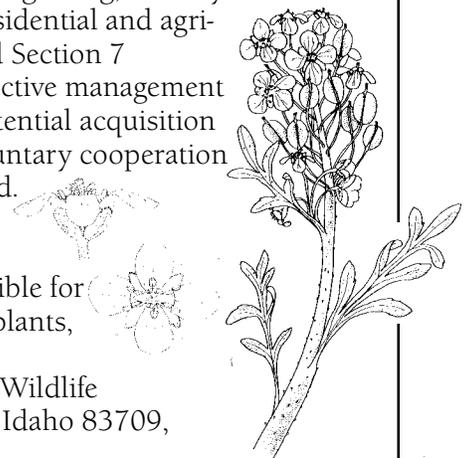
CONSERVATION MEASURES

Threats to *Lepidium papilliferum*, such as impacts associated with livestock grazing, military training, fire management, fire rehabilitation, herbicide treatment, and residential and agricultural development, will need to be addressed by the recovery plan and Section 7 consultation process. In some cases, fencing to protect populations and active management to control weed populations and discourage wildfires may be needed. Potential acquisition of private lands that contain this species may also be recommended. Voluntary cooperation from interested landowners to protect this species will also be encouraged.

WHO TO CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife and plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

For further information contact *Jeri Wood*, biologist, at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Snake River Basin Office, 1387 S. Vinnell Way, Room 368, Boise, Idaho 83709, 208-378-5243. <http://idahoes.fws.gov>



Illustrations by Tracy Wager, courtesy Idaho Army National Guard