

Santa Clara Pyrg (*Pyrgulopsis santaclarensis*)

Species Status Statement.

Distribution

The currently understood distribution of Santa Clara pyrg is a spring-fed ditch adjacent to the Left Fork of the Santa Clara River, in the Pine Valley Mountains of Washington County, Utah (Hershler et al 2017). The entire known distribution is within Dixie National Forest.

Table 1. Utah counties currently occupied by this species.

Santa Clara Pyrg
WASHINGTON

Abundance and Trends

Peter Hovingh and Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (UDWR) personnel collected 29 specimens from the site in 2014. Robert Hershler subsequently described this species, in 2017 (Hershler et al. 2017). No one has yet completed any surveys to evaluate abundance or trends.

Statement of Habitat Needs and Threats to the Species.

Habitat Needs

Springsnails are dependent on persistent springs with high water quality, and they often occur within a limited distance from the springhead (Hershler 1998).

Threats to the Species

The limited distribution of this snail makes the species susceptible to any catastrophic natural events, or human actions, that could destroy or degrade the spring habitat where it lives. Small, isolated seeps, springs, or spring complexes are very susceptible to small-scale habitat destruction or modifications that alter the springhead or flow. Potential threats include factors that decrease flow regionally such as prolonged drought or groundwater pumping. There are also potential local threats to individual springs such as wildfire, nonnative plants and animals, ungulate trampling and grazing, herbicide use, spring outflow alteration, and diversion of spring discharge. Managers have not yet conducted a species-specific threat assessment for Santa Clara pyrg, but they note the springs in which it occurs are adjacent to a trail near a campground. There may currently be some impacts from recreation.

Table 2. Summary of a Utah threat assessment and prioritization completed in 2014. This assessment applies to the species' entire distribution within Utah. For species that also occur elsewhere, this assessment applies only to the portion of their distribution within Utah. The full threat assessment provides more information including lower-ranked threats, crucial data gaps, methods, and definitions (UDWR 2015; Salafsky et al. 2008).

Santa Clara Pyrg
No Identified Threats - Data Gaps Only

Rationale for Designation.

Santa Clara pyrg appears to be restricted to a small, isolated spring system. Direct human pressures, and climate change, presently threaten many springs and spring systems in Utah, and managers and scientists expect these issues to intensify. In order to develop a better understanding of the distribution and status of this species in Utah, managers need to conduct occasional surveys, and monitor potential threats. These activities will help prevent the possibility of Endangered Species Act listing of this species.

Economic Impacts of Sensitive Species Designation.

Sensitive species designation is intended to facilitate management of this species, which is required to prevent Endangered Species Act listing and lessen related economic impacts. An ESA listing of Santa Clara pyrg would have unknown economic impacts to the Dixie National Forest and Washington County. Designated Sensitive Species with no identified threats, only data gaps, will be researched until concerns are allayed, or specific threats are identified for management. In the absence of specific threats to manage, generic measures to protect springs are recommended.

Literature Cited.

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- Salafsky, N., D. Salzer, A.J. Stattersfield, C. Hilton-Taylor, R. Neugarten, S.H.M. Butchart, B. Collen, N. Cox, L.L. Master, S. O'Connor, and D. Wilkie. 2008. A standard lexicon for biodiversity conservation: unified classifications of threats and actions. *Conservation Biology* 22: 897–911.

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