

Dudleya traskiae

Channel Islands National Park currently is studying what appears to be a success story involving the Endangered Species Act. The Santa Barbara Island live-forever, *Dudleya traskiae* (Rose) Moran, is a succulent, perennial plant whose natural distribution is limited to Santa Barbara Island. It was listed as Endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in April 1978 (FR 43 17916). This status was deemed appropriate based on the fact that the past land-use practices, including farming, burning, and introduction of rabbits, had reduced the presence of *Dudleya traskiae* to such an extent that in 1970 it was thought to be extinct in the wild; however, it was rediscovered in 1975 as one population of a few individuals.

The NPS, meanwhile, had initiated an intensive effort to eradicate the rabbits, which were the primary cause of the near demise of a number of native plant species on the island. Complete removal of the rabbits was accomplished in 1981. Following that, Park personnel conducted surveys for the live-forever in 1982, 1983, and 1984. These surveys indicated a trend of increasing numbers and range for the species, which is still restricted to rocky sea and canyon bluffs of moderate to vertical slope.

In late 1984, while the USFWS's recovery plan was undergoing final review, a study of the population dynamics and habitat requirements of *Dudleya traskiae* was initiated by Bill Halvorson and Ronilee Fowler of Channel Islands. Support for the study has come from the USFWS and the State of California Dept. of Fish and Game's Endangered Species Program in the form of botanists giving their time in consultation and in partial funding of the research. The study will map populations and individuals, record habitat characteristics, and determine population dynamics for this species.

This information was not available for inclusion in the recovery plan and therefore will be essential to the carrying out of the plan's objective to restore the Santa Barbara Island live-forever to 95 percent of the suitable potential habitat with vigorous and self-sustaining populations. Though it appears to be expanding again, the successful long-term management of this extremely rare species requires the completion of this coordinated, jointly-funded research effort. Upon completion we're hoping to show not only successful recovery of an endangered species, but a successful venture into three-way interagency cooperation.

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