



For Immediate Release, October 16, 2023

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## 21 U.S. Animals, Plants Declared Extinct

### *Grim Announcement Highlights Need For More Action to Stop Extinction Crisis*

WASHINGTON— The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today finalized a rule removing 21 species from the list of threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act because of extinction.

The extinct species include eight of Hawai'i's precious honeycreepers, the bridled white-eye and little Mariana fruit bat of Guam, a Texas fish, nine [southeastern mussels](#) and the Bachman's warbler. They join the [list of 650 U.S. species](#) that have likely been lost to [extinction](#).

"My heart breaks over the loss of these 21 species," said Noah Greenwald, endangered species director at the Center for Biological Diversity. "These plants and animals can never be brought back. We absolutely must do everything we can to avert the loss of even more threads in our web of life."

In a single bright spot, the agency retained protection for one Hawaiian plant species because it may still survive. It also delayed removal of the ivory-billed woodpecker based on scientific disagreement over its extinction.

Scientists from around the world [warn](#) that the planet is at risk of losing more than a million species in the coming decades if swift action isn't taken to protect more of the natural world, stop exploitation of species, address climate change, reduce pollution and stop the spread of alien invasive species.

The Hawaiian birds declared extinct today are a case in point. Their forest habitats were razed by development and agriculture. The introduction to the islands of mosquitoes, which are not native and carry both avian pox and avian malaria, provided the nail in the coffin. Now several other native Hawaiian birds are on the brink, including the 'akikiki, which is down to as few as five pairs in the wild because climate change is allowing mosquitoes to reach further up into their mountain habitat.

"Few people realize the extent to which the crises of extinction and climate change are deeply intertwined," said Greenwald. "Both threaten to undo our very way of life, leaving our children with a considerably poorer planet. One silver lining to this sad situation is that protecting and restoring forests, grasslands and other natural habitats will help address both."

All food and most medicines come directly from plants and animals. Species also form the building blocks of ecosystems, which purify air and water, pollinate crops, cycle nutrients, moderate climate and more. Every lost species threatens to unravel ecosystems and in the process reduce the services they provide.

"It's not too late to stop more plants and animals from going extinct, but we have to act fast," said Greenwald.

### Species Background

**Bachman's warbler:** Bachman's warbler was a small yellow and black songbird that once bred in swampy thickets in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee and overwintered in Cuba, where it was seen for the last time in 1962. It was lost to habitat destruction and collection.

**Bridled white-eye:** A green, yellow and white tropical lowland forest bird from Guam that was 4 inches long, with a prominent ring around its eye. It became extinct because of predation from the invasive brown tree snake.

**Little Mariana fruit bat:** Also known as a flying fox, the little Mariana fruit bat lived on Guam and foraged on tropical fruits. It was last seen in 1968 and went extinct because of habitat loss from agriculture and military activity, brown tree snake predation, and overharvesting for use as food. It had a 2-foot wingspan, gold on the sides of its neck and yellowish-brown fur on the top of its head.

**San Marcos gambusia:** The San Marcos gambusia was a 1-inch-long fish that ate small invertebrates and gave birth to live young instead of laying eggs like many species of fish. It lived in clear spring water from the headwaters of the San Marcos River in Texas. Last seen in 1983, the fish went extinct because of water overuse that depleted groundwater and spring flow.

**Scioto madtom:** The Scioto madtom was a small catfish found only in Big Darby Creek in Ohio. It was listed as endangered in 1975 but was last seen in 1957. It was lost because of silt accumulation from dams and runoff.

The eight freshwater mussels proposed for delisting include the **flat pigtoe**, **green-blossom pearly mussel**, **southern acornshell**, **stirrupshell**, **tubercled-blossom pearly mussel**, **turgid-blossom pearly mussel**, **upland combshell** and **yellow-blossom pearly mussel**. [Freshwater mollusks](#) are the most endangered group of organisms in the United States, with 36 mussels and more than 70 freshwater snails already lost.

[Click here](#) for background on the lost Hawaii species, including eight birds and a flower.

### Extinctions by State or Territory

#### Related Information:

[Extinction Crisis](#)

**Alabama:** Bachman's warbler, southern acornshell, stirrupshell, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel, turgid-blossom pearly mussel, upland combshell, yellow-blossom pearly mussel

**Arkansas:** turgid blossom pearly mussel

**Florida:** Bachman's warbler

**Georgia:** Bachman's warbler, southern acornshell, upland combshell

**Guam:** bridled white-eye, little Mariana fruit bat

**Illinois:** tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

**Hawai'i:** Eight birds and one flower ([click here](#) to read more)

**Indiana:** tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

**Kentucky:** ivory-billed woodpecker, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel

**Mississippi:** flat pigtoe

**North Carolina:** Bachman's warbler

**Ohio:** Scioto madtom

**South Carolina:** Bachman's warbler

**Tennessee:** Bachman's warbler, green-blossom pearly mussel, southern acornshell, tubercled-blossom pearly mussel, turgid-blossom pearly mussel, upland combshell, yellow-blossom pearly mussel

**Texas:** San Marcos gambusia

**Virginia:** green-blossom pearly mussel

**West Virginia:** tubercled-blossom pearly mussel



Po'ouli photo by Hawai'i DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife. [Image is available for media use.](#)

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