

(nontraining areas) and an area within the City of Carlsbad. The area proposed on Camp Pendleton includes lands leased by the Marine Corps to the California Department of Parks and Recreation and private interests; Cockleburrr preserve; and nontraining lands around the Wire Mountain housing area. These pools represent some of the best examples of coastal pools still remaining in San Diego County. The other vernal pools on Camp Pendleton that occur within mission-essential training areas have been excluded from proposed critical habitat under section 4(b)(2) of the Act, but are considered essential for the recovery of the San Diego fairy shrimp. Within the jurisdiction of the City of Carlsbad, the vernal pool complex located in the vicinity of Palomar Airport is currently designated as critical habitat. However, based on recent surveys, we have determined that this vernal pool complex is not essential for the San Diego fairy shrimp. The pool complex at Poinsettia Lane train station, in the City of Carlsbad, is proposed as critical habitat. The Poinsettia Lane pools represent the most coastal location where the San Diego fairy shrimp and the endangered Riverside fairy shrimp co-occur. The Recovery Plan identifies these vernal pools as essential for recovery of the San Diego fairy shrimp because of their role in stabilizing populations and preventing habitat loss. As discussed in the Recovery Plan (Service 1998), vernal pools must be conserved on a geographical scale and these examples represent coastal terrace vernal pools found in northern San Diego County. Given the rarity of San Diego fairy shrimp and the limited amount of remaining vernal pool habitat, this unit is essential to the conservation of this species because of need to conserve vernal pools throughout the range of the species in order to meet the overall recovery of this species, and its role in maintaining the genetic diversity and population stability of the San Diego fairy shrimp.

Unit 3: San Diego: Inland Valley

Unit 3 encompasses 1,225 ha (3,027 ac) in San Diego County within the San Diego Inland Valley Management Area, as outlined in the Recovery Plan. Lands proposed as critical habitat for the San Diego fairy shrimp contain vernal pool complexes within the jurisdiction of the City of San Marcos and the community of Ramona. In the community of Ramona, one of the complexes is within the boundaries of Ramona Airport. These vernal pool complexes are generally isolated from maritime influence (greater than 10 km (6 mi)

from the coast) and are representative of vernal pools associated with alluvial or volcanic type soils. The vernal pools in San Marcos are associated with native grassland and a unique association of multiple species of *Brodiaea*. The Recovery Plan specifically identifies these vernal pools as essential for recovery of the San Diego fairy shrimp because of their role in stabilizing populations and preventing habitat loss. Protection of these areas will help meet the Recovery Plan goal of reclassifying this species in a future downlisting/delisting action. This unit includes vernal pools within the easternmost edge of the geographical distribution of the species. Conservation of vernal pools in this unit will help maintain the diversity of vernal pool habitats and their unique geological substrates, and will retain the genetic diversity of these geographically distinct populations.

Unit 4: San Diego: Central Coastal Mesa

Unit 4 encompasses 73 ha (181 ac) in San Diego County within the San Diego Central Coastal Mesa Management Area, as outlined in the Recovery Plan. Lands considered for this critical habitat unit contain vernal pool complexes within the jurisdiction of the City of San Diego, State of California, Service, Navy, and private lands. The Recovery Plan specifically identifies these vernal pools as essential for the recovery of the San Diego fairy shrimp because of their role in stabilizing populations and preventing habitat loss. These vernal pool complexes are associated with coastal terraces and mesas found south of the San Dieguito River to San Diego Bay. While many of the vernal pool complexes in this unit have been destroyed or fragmented, these complexes represent some of the best remaining vernal pools in San Diego County.

On MCAS, Miramar, vernal pools identified in the Recovery Plan are considered to be essential for the conservation of the San Diego fairy shrimp. MCAS, Miramar is successfully implementing its INRMP and the majority of these pools are considered to be of the highest quality and irreplaceable. These pools are encompassed within Level 1 Management Areas under the installation's INRMP. We have considered, but have not proposed critical habitat designation under 3(5)(A) of the Act for MCAS, Miramar based on the INRMP. Further, to the extent that these areas do meet the definition of critical habitat as defined in 3(5)(A)(i)(II), it is additionally appropriate to exclude these areas from critical habitat pursuant to the "other

relevant impacts" provisions of section 4(b)(2). Therefore, MCAS, Miramar lands are not being proposed as critical habitat for this species.

Many of the vernal pools considered for this unit receive conservation protection by virtue of their land ownership and management. These pools represent the some of the best opportunities for long-term protection for the San Diego fairy shrimp. Many of these vernal pools are within the MSCP. We have considered, but have not proposed as critical habitat those vernal pools within approved HCPs (MSCP) where the San Diego fairy shrimp is a covered species. Vernal pools that are included in this critical habitat unit consist of four subunits that are federally owned. This unit includes pools that occur on Del Mar Mesa that are within the San Diego National Wildlife Refuge. This unit also includes land owned by the Department of Defense which meet the definition of critical habitat at Tierrasanta South and at Chollas Heights. This unit provides for the conservation of the San Diego fairy shrimp by protecting vernal pools essential for the future reclassification (downlisting/delisting actions) of this species. It includes vernal pools within the center of this species' geographical distribution, and retains the genetic diversity of these geographically distinct populations.

Unit 5: San Diego: Southern Coastal Mesa

Unit 5 encompasses 666 ha (1,645 ac) in San Diego County within the San Diego Southern Coastal Mesa Management Area, as outlined in the Recovery Plan. Essential habitat for the San Diego fairy shrimp occurs in vernal pool complexes within the jurisdiction of the Service, the Cities of San Diego and Chula Vista, County of San Diego, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), other DoD lands, and private lands within unit 5. These vernal pool complexes are associated with coastal mesas from the Sweetwater River south to the international border with Mexico. We have considered, but have not proposed as critical habitat those vernal pools within approved HCPs (MSCP) where the San Diego fairy shrimp is a covered species. We have considered, but have not proposed critical habitat designation under 3(5)(a) of the Act for NRRF based on their INRMP. The remaining lands identified as essential in the recovery plan are proposed as critical habitat. These vernal pool complexes occur on Federal lands and lands included in the Major Amendment areas of San Diego County. These pools represent the southern most