

HOOVER’S WOOLLY-STAR

Hoover’s Woolly-star is a species plant in the phlox family that grows to about 4”-8” in height and consists of wiry stems with narrow, thread-like leaves, and small white flowers. The woolly-star lives in central and southern California.

There are six issues surrounding the conservation of Hoover’s woolly-star under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

- The plant is clearly a case of data error. After the woolly-star was listed under the ESA in 1990, surveys discovered the plant was much more widespread and abundant than previously thought. Subsequent to listing, the woolly-star’s population increased from 38 sites and a few hundred thousand plants to almost 1,400 populations containing over 135 *million* plants.
- Almost all of the threats used by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to justify listing Hoover’s woolly-star—agriculture, livestock grazing, oil and gas development, off-road vehicles, urbanization—turned out not to be threats or are much less significant.
- Due to surveys carried out subsequent to listing, the woolly-star underwent a massive range expansion, including habitat types previously thought unsuitable.
- Compared to data error, habitat conservation under the ESA was relatively insignificant.
- The FWS unnecessarily delayed delisting the woolly-star, which eventually occurred in 2003.
- Despite that Hoover’s woolly-star is clearly a case of data error, the FWS has made a considerable effort to deny this.