

Common Name: **Hawaiian reef coral**



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Scientific Name: *Montipora dilatata* (Studer, 1901)

Taxonomy: Phylum Cnidaria; Class Anthozoa; Order Scleractinia

Area of Concern: *Montipora dilatata* (Studer 1901) is a rare coral that has been reported only from the Hawaiian archipelago, in Kaneohe Bay, and in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands at Midway atoll and Maro Reef.

Year First Listed as a “Species of Concern”: 2004

Species Description:

The coral builds horizontally expanding thin sheets that are often leaflike, 1.5 cm thick. This species requires calm water.

Rationale for “Species of Concern” Listing:

Demographic and Diversity Concerns:

The species has not been recorded in any transect surveys, but it has been found to be uncommon in extensive surveys. In Kaneohe Bay, where it formerly was abundant, extensive surveys during 2000 identified only three colonies.

Factors for decline:

The main threats include 1) habitat degradation and modification as a result of sedimentation, pollution and alien species (*Kappaphycus* spp.) and invasive green alga (*Dictyosphaeria cavernosa*) (Kaneohe Bay); 2) a limited distribution; 3) damage by anchors, fish pots, swimmers, and divers; and 4) coral bleaching.

Coral collection is not allowed in the State waters of Hawaii.

Status Reviews/Research Completed or Underway:

Two other species *M. turgescens* (*M. dilatata* cited by Dana 1971 at Kure is probably *m. turgescens*) and *M. cf. dilatata* (recorded at one site out of 30 sites surveyed at Maro Reef in 2000-2002) are similar, and genetic analysis should be done to confirm their separation into distinct species. If the Kaneohe and Maro species are the same, then the argument could be made that they are still rare enough to be listed as threatened or endangered under the ESA since only a single site with several colonies was reported at Maro. But if the so-called *M. turgescens* is the same as the *M. dilatata* of Kaneohe Bay, then there may be little justification for listing except that it is rare in the MHI (but prolific in the distal NWHI).

References:

For further information on this Species of Concern, or on the Species of Concern Program in general, please contact Ms. Marta Nammack, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, 1315 East West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910, (301) 713-1401, Marta.Nammack@noaa.gov; or Dr. Jason Baker, NMFS, Pacific Islands Fishery Science Center, 2570 Dole Street, Honolulu, HI 96822-2396, (808) 983-5303, Jason.Baker@noaa.gov.