NOAA FISHERIES

Pacific Islands Region

corals

HAWAII SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

of the 59 Indo-Pacific coral species being proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act

NOAA FISHERIES
Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Acropora paniculata

(fuzzy table coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Colonies of *Acropora paniculata* are large plates or tables that can frequently grow up to greater than 1 meter across. Branchlets are short and compact. Colonies are cream, grey or blue in color (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Acropora paniculata grows on upper reef slopes, just subtidal (i.e., below the low tide mark but still shallow and close to shore), reef edges, and sheltered lagoons (Carpenter et al., 2008).

NOAA FISHERIES
Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Montipora flabellata/ M. dilatata/M. turgescens

(blue rice coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Montipora flabellata: Colonies are encrusting (see below), with uneven lobe-like growths. Colonies are usually blue (which may photograph pink), also brown or purple (Veron, 2000).

Montipora dilatata: Colonies are encrusting to submassive, which means they grow as a flat sheet along the substrate, and can also form knobs, columns or wedges that protrude up from the encrusting base. *M. dilitata* also has irregular shaped branch-like growths that grow upwards and become flattened near their ends. Colonies are pale to dark brown in color (Veron, 2000).

Montipora turgescens: Colonies can either be massive (ball-shaped or boulder-like), flat, semi-circular or form columns. Colonies are brown, cream or purple (Veron, 2000).

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora flabellata/M. dilatata/M. turgescens grows in most reef environments (Veron, 2000).

INTERESTING FACT

The Biological Review Team decided to group these three species together into a "species complex" and review them as a single unit since specimens examined from Hawai`i are impossible to tell apart genetically, and the physical characteristics of these species can take on many different forms, shapes, sizes, etc.

Montipora flabellata (left), Montipora dilatata (middle), Montipora turgescens (right)

NOAA FISHERIES
Pacific Islands Region

corals

PROPOSED AS THREATENED

Montipora patula/ M. verrilli

(spreading or sandpaper rice coral)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Montipora patula: Colonies colonies are tan, most often with little purple polyps, and either grows flat along the surface (i.e., encrusting) or forms plate-like tiers that overlap each other.

Montipora verrilli has similar characteristics, but is described only as encrusting.

WHERE IT'S FOUND

Montipora patula grows in shallow reef environments and reef flats (Veron, 2000). *Montipora patula* is common in environments with considerable wave action, but less so in areas that are impacted by pollution and sediments in the water (Jokiel et al., 2007). *Montipora patula/M. verrilli* also has a very restricted range, centered in the main and Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

INTERESTING FACT

The Biological Review Team decided to evaluate *Montipora patula/M. verrilli* as a single unit since they are impossible to tell apart genetically and their skeletons are physically indistinguishable on a microscopic scale (Forsman et al., 2010).

Montipora patula (left), Montipora verrilli (right)