

News Release

National Wildlife Refuge System



Hawaiian and Pacific Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex
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Guam National Wildlife Refuge Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan Released for Public Review and Comment

The draft comprehensive conservation plan and environmental assessment for Guam National Wildlife Refuge was released today for public review and comment by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The draft plan outlines management goals, objectives, and strategies for the Refuge over the upcoming 15 years and focuses its attention on the Ritidian Unit on the northern tip of the island. Two open house meetings have been scheduled to answer questions and receive comments from the public during the 30-day review period.

“The Ritidian area offers opportunities to protect and restore habitats and the native wildlife that depend upon them, to safeguard important cultural resources, and to provide opportunities for environmental education and recreation,” said Chris Eggleston, the refuge’s acting manager. “We’re now seeking comments from the public to improve our ‘roadmap’ that will guide us toward future management of the natural and cultural resources of the refuge.”

Information about the draft plan will be presented during the two open house meetings, and participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and submit comments. The meetings are scheduled:

Tuesday, August 4, 6-8 p.m., Dededo Community Center, 319 Iglesia Circle, Dededo

Thursday, August 6, 6-8 p.m., Hagatna Community Center, 236 East O’Brian Drive, Hagatna

Guam National Wildlife Refuge includes three units located in five areas on the Island of Guam. Two overlay units – one on Andersen Air Force Base and the other on U.S. Navy facilities in northern, central, and southern Guam – are managed as part of the refuge through cooperative agreements. The Department of Defense has primary jurisdiction in these overlay units and is developing Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans for these bases with assistance from the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Service has fee title to the Ritidian Unit, the focus of this comprehensive conservation plan. The three plans together will fulfill management planning requirements for the refuge.

The draft plan and environmental assessment identifies and evaluates three alternatives for managing the refuge. The proposed action is to implement Alternative B, which the Fish and Wildlife Service believes will best achieve the refuge purpose, vision, and goals and contribute to the National Wildlife Refuge System mission, while at the same time being cost efficient and practical to implement.

Alternative A – the no action alternative – assumes continuation of current management programs and is considered the base from which to compare the action alternatives.

Alternative B, the preferred alternative, describes a considerable, intense short term increase in the wildlife and habitat management program on the Ritidian Unit. The refuge proposes construction of a multi-species barrier to greatly reduce brown tree snakes, feral ungulates, and nonnative pest species on the refuge. Long term maintenance of the program would be less than that described for Alternative C. Visitor services, historical, and cultural resource programs would increase from existing levels.

Alternative C describes a modest initial increase in the wildlife and habitat management program on the Ritidian Unit. This alternative includes an ungulate barrier to reduce the number of feral ungulates on the refuge. Moderately intense brown tree snake control is proposed under this alternative. Long term maintenance of the program would require greater effort than that described for Alternative B. Visitor services would focus on wildlife dependent public uses only, but refuge staff would increase the number of off-site environmental education programs. The historical and cultural resources program would remain relatively unchanged from existing programs.

The comprehensive conservation plan/environmental assessment is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning> or by requesting a compact disk or hard copy from the Fish and Wildlife Service's Guam National Wildlife Refuge at 671/355-5096. Comments must be received by August 24 and can be mailed to Project Leader, Guam National Wildlife Refuge, P.O. Box 8134, MOU-3, Dededo, Guam 96912 or sent by fax to 671/355-5098. Comments also may be e-mailed to FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov; include "Guam CCP" in the subject line.

Guam National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1993. The Ritidian Unit encompasses 1,217 acres, including 385 terrestrial acres and 832 acres of submerged offshore area. Its terrestrial areas are the only designated critical habitat on Guam for the fanihi (Mariana fruit bat), sihek (Guam Micronesian kingfisher), and aga (Mariana crow). Threatened green turtles nest on its beaches and forage in its waters. Its sandy areas, platform reefs, and corals support a diversity of fish, marine invertebrates, and other sea life, including endangered hawksbill sea turtles.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.