

News Release  
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**The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announce the availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the reintroduction of the third wild population of the Puerto Rican parrot in Puerto Rico.**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced today the availability for public comments of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the reintroduction of the third wild population of the Puerto Rican parrot in Puerto Rico. This Draft EA has been prepared as a requisite of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Once abundant and widespread throughout the Puerto Rican archipelago, the Puerto Rican parrot (*Amazona vittata*) is presently one of the 10 most endangered birds in the world. Habitat loss together with natural enemies is considered among the major causes for the precipitous decline of the species during the 20th century. Currently, a single wild population of 20-25 individuals survives in the El Yunque National Forest and a population of 55-112 individuals near the Rio Abajo Commonwealth Forest. The Puerto Rican parrot is currently listed as endangered.

The purpose of the proposed federal action presented in the Draft Environmental Assessment is to implement recovery actions that will help achieve the recovery of the Puerto Rican parrot. Specifically, the goals are to downlist and then delist the species, and assure its long-term viability in the wild. The Draft Environmental Assessment considers a range of reintroduction alternative sites that were evaluated by an interagency work group composed by experts from the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER), the U.S. Forest Service and the USFWS. The document presents as the preferred alternative the reintroduction of the Puerto Rican Parrot at the Maricao Commonwealth State Forest in the Municipalities of San Germán, Maricao and Sabana Grande, Puerto Rico. This alternative is preferred over the others because it assembles the desirable features for a successful reintroduction. To promote a successful reintroduction and reproduction at the Maricao Commonwealth State Forest, a series of management activities would be implemented, similar to those used in the El Yunque National Forest and Rio Abajo Commonwealth Forest. Actions needed to reestablish the third population in the wild includes:

- 1) The release of captive-reared parrots at the selected site;
- 2) Protect and manage the reintroduced population at the selected site;
- 3) Implement improvements to the parrot habitat at the selected site; and
- 4) Work with private landowners near the selected site and stakeholders to develop and implement short and long term habitat conservation programs in the lands surrounding the release area.

The USFWS is requesting written comments on the draft EA. Based on the comments received; the Service would modify the draft EA. Comment must be submitted within 30 days of this announcement. The Draft Environmental Assessment is available at <http://www.fws.gov/caribbean/ES/3rd-Pop-PRparrot.html>. The draft will also be available at the Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program Office located at Calle Garcia de la Noceda Local 38, Rio Grande, Puerto Rico 00745.

For additional information about the Puerto Rican parrot can be found at the following web address: <http://www.fws.gov/caribbean/es/Parrot.html>

Comments must be submitted to:

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