

News Bulletin

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Service Reopens Public Comment Period on Proposal to Protect 23 Species in Guam and CNMI

Public meetings and public hearings scheduled on Guam and the CNMI

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will reopen the public comment period on the proposed rule to protect 23 species in Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). The Service will hold two public hearings and four public information meetings during this time. These additional meetings and hearings will allow all interested parties additional time and opportunity to comment on the proposed rule.

The reopened 30-day public comment period will allow the public to review and comment on the proposal and provide additional information. All relevant information will be considered and addressed in the Service's final listing determination. The public comment period will close on February 11, 2015.

Public hearings provide a formal, structured opportunity for interested parties to verbally express comments or to submit written comments on the proposed rule. All verbal and written comments will be included in the final record and considered during the decision-making process. Public hearings involve official testimony only, and do not allow for questions. The public information meetings allow for a free flow of information between the Service and members of the public.

The Service will hold the following public meetings and public hearings:

- **GUAM:** January 27 – 5-6 p.m. informational meeting; 6-8 p.m. public hearing. University of Guam, Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building, Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Room 129, UOG Station, Mangilao, Guam 96923
- **SAIPAN:** January 28 – 5-6 p.m. informational meeting; 6-8 p.m. public hearing. Multi-Purpose Center (Saipan), Beach Road, Susupe, Saipan.
- **ROTA:** January 29 – 6-8 p.m. informational meeting. Sinapalo Elementary School Cafeteria (Rota), Sinapalo I, Songsong Village, Rota, MP 96951.
- **TINIAN:** January 31 – 9-11 a.m. informational meeting. Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria, San Jose Village, Tinian, MP 96952

The Service originally proposed to protect these 23 species under the Endangered Species Act on October 1, 2014 (Federal Register 59364/Vol. 79/ No.190R). The 23 species proposed for listing comprises 14 plants, four tree snails, two butterflies, one insectivorous bat, one skink, and one damselfly. Two of the plant species — *Cycas micronesica* and *Tabernaemontana rotensis* — are

proposed for threatened status, the other plants and animals are proposed as endangered. The Service is seeking new information from the public and the scientific community that will assist the agency in making a final determination.

Of the 23 species proposed for listing:

- Five plants are endemic to the island of Guam – *Eugenia bryanii*, *Hedyotis megalantha* (paudedo), *Phyllanthus saffordii*, *Psychotria malaspinae* (aplokating-palaoan), and *Tinospora homosepala*.
- Eight plants are known from Guam and the CNMI – *Bulbophyllum guamense* (cebello halumtano), *Dendrobium guamense*, *Heritiera longipetiolata* (ufa-halumtano), *Maesa walkeri*, *Nervilia jacksoniae*, *Solanum guamense* (berenghenas halomtano), *Tabernaemontana rotensis*, and *Tuberolabium guamense*.
- One plant, *Cycas micronesica* (fadang), occurs in Guam, the CNMI, Palau and Yap.
- Three animals are island endemics – the Guam tree snail (*Partula radiolata*; akaleha) is endemic to Guam, the Rota blue damselfly (*Ischnura luta*) is endemic to Rota, and Langford's tree snail (*Partula langfordi*; akaleha) is endemic to Aguiguan.
- The remaining six animals are known from both Guam and islands in the CNMI – the Pacific sheath-tailed bat (*Emballonura semicaudata rotensis*; liyang), Slevin's skink (*Emoia slevini*; guali'ek halomtano), the Mariana eight-spot butterfly (*Hypolimnas octocula marianensis*), the Mariana wandering butterfly (*Vagrans egistina*), the humped tree snail (*Partula gibba*; akaleha), and the fragile tree snail (*Samoana fragilis*; akaleha).

The 23 species being considered for federal listing face current and ongoing threats, including: habitat loss and degradation due to urbanization and development; competition with nonnative plants and animals; predation by nonnative animals; climate change; inadequate existing regulatory mechanisms to prevent the introduction and spread of nonnative plants and animals; ordnance and live-fire from military training; recreational vehicles; and small numbers of individuals and populations.

More information and copies of the proposed rule are available at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. For further information contact: Kristi Young, Deputy Field Supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, Room 3-122, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96850; telephone (808) 792-9400 or fax (808) 792-9581.

Images of some of the species are available at www.flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific/sets/72157648170464632/

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