

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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## MONA ISLAND REPTILES LISTED AS THREATENED

A snake, the Mona boa constrictor, and a lizard, the Mona iguana, both known to occur only on tiny Mona Island, Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, have been listed as threatened species, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

The rulemaking, published in the February 3, 1978, Federal Register, also includes a determination of critical habitat for the species.

Development for roads and recreational camping could destroy key sites, such as sandy areas, which are required for nesting and feeding of the native reptiles, particularly the Mona ground iguana. The iguana and Mona boa, both of which reach 4 feet, could become subject to harassment because of their size; most of the large Caribbean iguanas and boas have been extensively hunted throughout the islands and this has contributed to their serious decline.

The native Mona reptiles are subject to an additional threat to their continued survival--the introduced mammals, chiefly pigs, rats, cats, and goats, that destroy vegetation as well as eggs, young, and occasionally, adults of the two species. Unless these predators and competitors are controlled, the unique Mona reptiles may continue to decline even without major new development.

Two other endangered animals, the hawksbill sea turtle and the yellow-shouldered blackbird, occur on Mona or use its beaches extensively. By listing the Mona boa and the Mona ground iguana, the Service has recognized the unique character and fragile nature of the fauna of Mona.

No major federally sanctioned or funded projects will be affected by this action.

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