



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Guam National Wildlife Refuge *Planning Update 1, July 2007*



Photo © Isaac Chelimum

The Guam National Wildlife Refuge's Ritidian Unit will be the focus of an effort to plan long-term management activities.

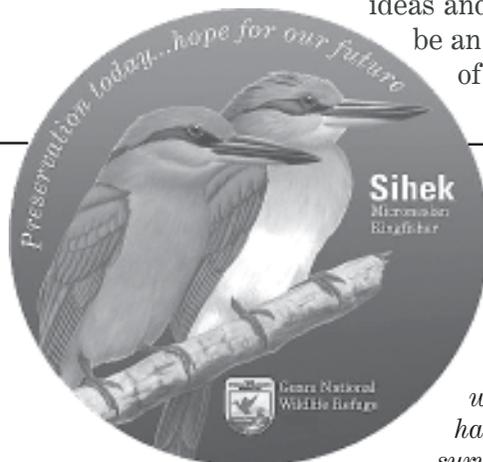
Guam National Wildlife Refuge Plans for the Future!

Guam National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) staff is starting an important multi-year process to develop a Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) for the Refuge. The CCP will guide overall Refuge management for the next 15 years. The public involvement phase of the process begins with this update and a Public Meeting at the Refuge's Nature Center on July 14, 2007, followed by an 8-day informal Open House (see page 6 for details). Your

ideas and comments will be an important part of the process.

This planning update is the first in a series of updates distributed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to keep you informed about the CCP planning process and announce opportunities to provide comments on the Refuge's CCP. This update provides an overview of the CCP planning process and your role in the process. It also provides background information on the purposes for which the Refuge was established and a preliminary list of issues, concerns, and opportunities to be addressed in the CCP.

We welcome your comments on the Refuge and issues described in this update. Please feel free to contact the Project Leader, Chris Bandy, or Deputy Project Leader, Matt Brown, if you have any questions. See page 6 for contact information.



The Guam Micronesian kingfisher (or sihek) is one of the most endangered species in the world. Refuge habitat is vital to the survival of this species.

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About the CCP

When Congress amended the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act (Act) in 1997, it ratified an underlying philosophy that “wildlife comes first” on refuges. The Act provided the Service with guidance for managing refuges to ensure the long-term conservation of fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats. It also identified six wildlife-dependent public uses on National Wildlife Refuges—wildlife observation and photography, hunting, fishing, interpretation, and environmental education—and strengthened the compatibility determination process used to assure that all activities permitted on refuges do not conflict with refuge management purposes and goals.

The Act requires all lands within the National Wildlife Refuge System be managed in accordance with an approved CCP. The CCP for the Guam Refuge will outline Refuge goals, objectives, and management strategies for achieving the purposes for which the Refuge was established. It will be a flexible, “living” document that will be updated every 15 years. The CCP will ensure that

management of the Refuge reflects its purposes and the mission, policies, and goals of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The CCP will also:

- Inform the public about proposed Refuge management actions;
- Provide a vision statement that describes desired future conditions for the Refuge;
- Ensure the compatibility of current and future uses of the Refuge with its purposes;
- Provide long-term continuity in Refuge management;
- Provide opportunities for members of the public to have input on management decisions; and
- Provide budget justification for operations, maintenance, and facility development requests.

We will also develop an environmental analysis document that evaluates the consequences of implementing various management alternatives. This analysis will be developed in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Planning Schedule

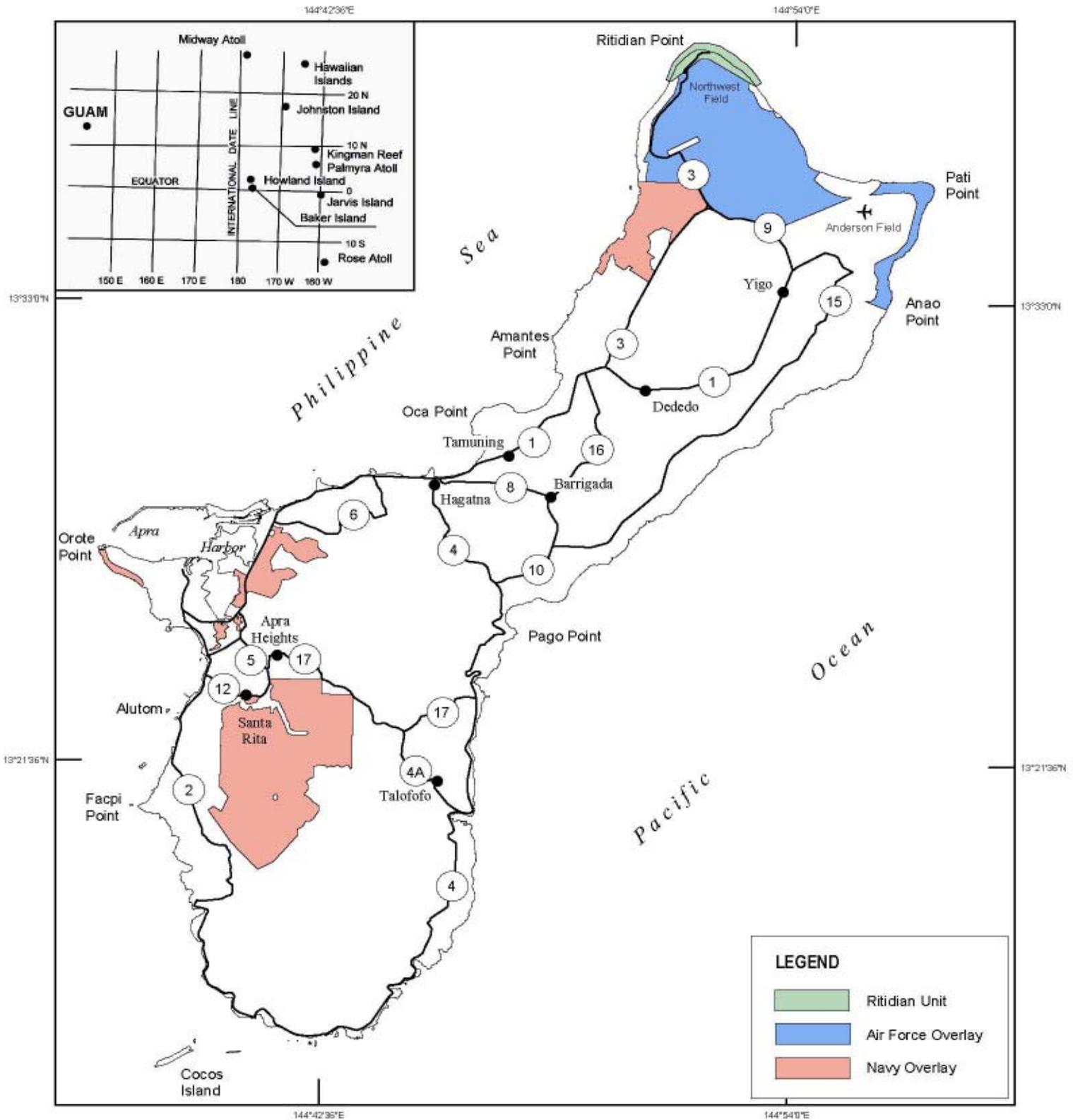
Planning Step:	Target Date:
Planning Update 1.....	July 2007
Public scoping meeting.....	July 14, 2007
Public Open House.....	July 15-22, 2007
Public Comments Due.....	August 31, 2007
Planning Update 2 (scoping results)..	September 2007
Develop CCP (1 to 1½ years)	
Open house–review of preliminary alternatives; Planning Update 3.....	January 2008
Public review of Draft CCP and EA.....	July 2008
Response to public comments on the draft CCP/EA; Planning Update 4.....	October 2008
Distribution of final CCP/EA and final Planning Update.....	December 2008

We will keep you informed if the target dates change as CCP planning progresses.

Your Involvement Can Help the Refuge

Written comments on the scope of the CCP are welcome. The planning team identified preliminary issues, concerns, and opportunities for the Refuge in the early planning stages of the CCP. Your comments and/or participation will be critical to the success of this CCP’s development. The Public Meeting on July 14, 2007, and Open House from July 15-22, 2007, are your first opportunities to meet the Refuge planning team; help us identify issues, concerns, and opportunities; and have your questions about the Refuge or the CCP answered. Participating during scoping is the best way to ensure that your issues and ideas are considered during the early stages of the CCP planning process. You will have opportunities to comment in later phases of CCP development as well.

We encourage you to attend the public meetings and invite others who are interested in the future of the Refuge. Written comments may be submitted at the Public Meeting or the Open House, or sent to us via mail, fax, or e-mail (see page 6 for contact information). Comments received by August 31, 2007, will be considered during the development of the draft CCP and NEPA document. Other formal public review and comment time periods will be announced as planning progresses, however, comments are welcome at anytime during the CCP planning process. We project that the draft CCP and NEPA document will be available for public review in July 2008.



PRODUCED IN THE DIVISION OF REFUGE PLANNING
 PORTLAND, OREGON
 LAND STATUS CURRENT TO 3/15/05
 MAP DATE: 5/30/07
 BASEMAP: DRG 21K
 MERIDIAN:
 FILE: 07-067-1.MXD



An Overview of Guam National Wildlife Refuge

Guam National Wildlife Refuge is comprised of three units located in 5 areas on the Island of Guam (see map). The Ritidian Unit, located in northern Guam, is the focus of the CCP, and the location of the Refuge's headquarters. Two overlay Refuge units (one at Anderson Air Force Base in northern Guam, and the other on several Navy facilities in northern, central and southern Guam) are part of the Refuge and are managed through cooperative agreements with the Air Force and Navy.

The Ritidian Unit, in northern Guam features high quality natural habitats including coastal strand, backstrand, and limestone forest, sandy beach, and

nearshore marine habitats. The clear waters of the Refuge, sandy areas, platform reefs, and corals support a diversity of fish, marine invertebrate, and other sea life, and provide foraging areas for endangered hawksbill and threatened green sea turtles.

The Refuge contains essential habitats for several endangered species including the endangered Mariana crow, Guam rail, Guam Micronesian kingfisher, and *Serianthes nelsonii* tree, and the threatened Mariana fruit bat. Threatened green sea turtles nest on the beach at the Ritidian Unit. Refuge habitats also support a diversity of other native plants and animals, all of which benefit from management projects.

The Purposes of the Ritidian Unit, Guam National Wildlife Refuge

The Act directs the Service to manage each refuge to fulfill the mission of the National Wildlife Refuge System; to maintain and, where appropriate, restore the refuge's ecological integrity; and achieve the specific purposes for which the refuge was established. The Ritidian Unit's purposes follow:

...to conserve (A) fish or wildlife...listed as endangered species or threatened species....or (B) plants...16 USC §1534 (Endangered Species Act of 1973).

...for the development, advancement, management, conservation and protection of fish and wildlife resources...16 USC §742f(a)(4), (Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956).

...for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds. 16 USC §715d (Migratory Bird Conservation Act).

...suitable for (1) incidental fish and wildlife-oriented recreational development, (2) the protection of natural resources, and (3) the conservation of endangered species or threatened species...16 USC §460k-1 (Refuge Recreation Act (16 USC §460k-460k-4), as amended).

Overlay Refuge Units

The Air Force and Navy overlay Refuge units support high quality native habitats and some of the rarest species on Guam. The Department of Defense (DoD) has primary jurisdiction over lands in the overlay units and manages the natural resources in partnership with the Service, in accordance with DoD's Integrated Natural Resources Management Plans, which are currently being revised. Therefore, the Service will focus on the Ritidian Unit in this CCP, incorporating key information from DoD's management plans as needed.

Crabs use the beach at Ritidian Point. Photo: Isaac Chellman.



Overview of Preliminary Management Issues on the Ritidian Unit

Habitat and Wildlife

Among the preliminary issues the Service has identified as priorities for management are:

- How can the Service best protect and manage endangered and threatened species and their habitats to promote recovery of the species that are or can be supported on the Refuge?
- How can the Service best continue to protect and enhance Refuge habitat, both marine and terrestrial, to ensure suitable roosting, foraging, and nesting habitat is available for the suite of species that historically occurred on the Refuge?
- How can the Service most effectively relocate and protect swiftlets or rails and their habitat?
- How can the Service most effectively protect and enhance endangered *Serianthes* and other rare plants?
- The brown tree snake preys on native species. How can the Service most effectively control it on the Refuge?
- How can the Service most effectively protect the coral reef and associated marine species?
- How can the Service best manage feral ungulates and other invasive species on the Refuge to achieve refuge purposes?
- How can the Service most effectively monitor management results to make informed adaptive management decisions?
- How can the Service expand partnerships with the Guam Department of Agriculture, University of Guam, DoD, and other conservation partners to increase benefits to natural resources?

Management programs will be developed in the CCP to address issues noted above and will reference detailed step-down plans that address other discrete management topics. These include a Refuge wildlife health plan that addresses monitoring and early response to potential problems such as avian flu and West Nile virus; a spill response plan; and a wildlife management plan. An Integrated Pest Management Plan will be part of the CCP itself.

Visitor Services

The Service will continue to provide opportunities to visit the Ritidian Unit and take part in public programs. Opportunities for the public to see, learn about, and enjoy the native resources of the Refuge help foster an understanding of and support for stewardship of Guam's



Brown tree snakes are considered the primary cause of the decline of native bird species in Guam. Photo: USFWS.

natural environment. As part of the planning process the Service will review and evaluate existing visitor programs to see if changes are needed to ensure activities are compatible with Refuge purposes. Some of the issues that will be examined follow.

- Do current programs and outreach efforts attract a broad range of visitors to the Refuge?
- How can the quality of the programs on the Refuge be improved?
- What measures are needed to enhance visitor safety for water activities?
- Are all visitor programs consistent with the Service's appropriate use policy?
- Are fishing programs affecting the resource? What methods can be used to monitor the impacts and inform management decisions?
- What new facilities, if any, or changes are needed?
- What are the visitor service priorities?
- What alternative funding sources are available to support and enhance the Nature Center and its education programs?
- How much should the Service charge for the permit required for all commercial activities?

Cultural Resources Management

A draft Cultural Resources Management Plan will be incorporated into the CCP. Among the issues it will include are:

- What procedures will be used to ensure cultural resources protection and management at the Ritidian Unit? How can the Service, the Guam Historic Preservation Office and concerned parties work together to manage, study, and interpret the Refuge's cultural resources, and develop procedures for proper treatment of burial remains and funerary objects that may be found in the future?

Public Meeting and Open House

Dates and Location:

Public Meeting:

Saturday, July 14, 2007, from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

A presentation will begin at 10:30 a.m. and an Open House will follow the presentation with Refuge staff available at tables for one-on-one discussions.

Open House:

Sunday July 15, 2007, thru Sunday July 22, 2007. An informal open house will occur for 8 days, with a Refuge staff member present to answer your questions, and informational materials (maps, handouts) and comment forms available for your use.

Location: The Guam National Wildlife Refuge Nature Center will host the Meeting and the Open House. It is Open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

Directions to the Nature Center:

From Hagatna or Tamuning: Take Marine Drive (Rt.1) north to Rt. 3. Head north on Rt. 3 to Potts Jct. (Rt. 3a, opposite the blue dolphin). Turn left on Rt. 3a and go 6 miles to the Refuge.

From Yigo: Take Rt. 1 north to Rt. 9. Follow Rt. 9 to Potts Jct., and turn right on Rt. 3a (Potts Jct.). Go 6 miles to the Refuge.

Comments or Questions? Contact us

Address comments, questions, and requests for more information to:

Chris Bandy, Project Leader
Guam National Wildlife Refuge
P.O. Box 8134, MOU-3
Dededo, Guam 96929
(671) 355-5096

Comments may be faxed to (671) 355-5098 or emailed to: FW1PlanningComments@fws.gov. Include "Guam NWR CCP" in the subject line.

Visit the planning website at: <http://www.fws.gov/pacific/planning> and select the link for "Projects Online" then select "Guam NWR."

General information about Refuges and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available at: <http://www.fws.gov>.



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Change of address requested.

In this issue:
Learn about a
planning process
being initiated to
plan management
activities at the
Guam National
Wildlife Refuge.