

News Release

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes to Protect Five Species from American Samoa Under Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is proposing to list five species of animals from American Samoa as endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Service is requesting that the public provide information on these species during a 60-day public comment period on the proposed listing. Critical habitat designations for these species will be proposed under a separate rule.

The Service identified two land snails, two birds (the friendly ground-dove and the mao), and the Pacific sheath-tailed bat for federal protection, all of which are at risk of extinction because of habitat loss and degradation, predation by non-native species, and the small size of their remaining populations. This is the first time terrestrial species from American Samoa are being considered for listing under the ESA. The mao and sheath-tailed bat are likely extirpated from American Samoa, but still occur in low numbers in Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, and Vanuatu.

“These species in American Samoa are facing tremendous challenges with shrinking habitat and the onslaught of invasive species,” said Kristi Young, the Service’s acting field supervisor for the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “The Service looks forward to continuing to work with the local government, partners, and the people of American Samoa to conserve part of what makes these islands so special.”

Details about the five species proposed for listing include:

- The friendly ground dove, also known as the yuameo (*Gallicolumba stairi*), occurs on the islands of Ofu and Olosega in American Samoa, and in several other island groups in Polynesia.
- The two land snails (*Eua zebrina* and *Ostodes strigatus*) are endemic to American Samoa, with *Eua zebrina* found only on Tutuila and Ofu, and *Ostodes strigatus* found only on the western half of Tutuila.
- The Pacific sheath-tailed bat, also known as the peapea vai (*Emballonura semicaudata semicaudata*), is likely extirpated from American Samoa, but is known to occur in Samoa, Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu in low numbers.

- The mao (*Gymnomyza samoensis*), is endemic to the Samoan Archipelago and is now restricted to the islands of Upolu and Savaii in Samoa.

The proposed listing rule will publish in the *Federal Register* on October 13, 2015, and the comment period is open through December 14, 2015. Comments can be submitted electronically or by hard copy. Comments on the proposed rule and other supporting information (including comment submittal instructions and dates) are available at www.regulations.gov. The docket number for this rulemaking is FWS-R1-ES-2015-0128. Once the comment period closes, the Service will review comments received and develop a final rule. This final rule will be published in the *Federal Register*.

For more information on these species and the proposed listing, visit <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit www.fws.gov/pacific, or connect with us through any of these social media channels at [facebook.com/USFWSPacific](https://www.facebook.com/USFWSPacific), [flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific/), [tumblr.com/blog/usfwspacific](https://www.tumblr.com/blog/usfwspacific) or twitter.com/USFWSPacific.

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