

# News Release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office

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## **Service Seeks Public Comments for Development of Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Invasive Rodent and Mongoose Control**

*Public Comment Period Open for 120 Days*

HONOLULU, Hawaii – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is seeking public comments as part of the development of a Programmatic Draft Environmental Impact Statement (PDEIS) on control or eradication of invasive rodents and mongooses in native ecosystems in Hawaii.

Rodents and mongooses, which are not native to the Hawaiian ecosystem, are known to kill and eat native seabirds, and eat plants and their seeds. They have caused extinctions and severe declines of many native species in Hawaii including the Oahu elepaio, Oahu tree snails, and native palms. The PDEIS will evaluate methods to protect native wildlife and plants, including federally listed threatened and endangered species and designated critical habitats.

“The introduction of invasive rats and mongooses has decimated many native species in Hawaii,” said Kristi Young, Acting Field Supervisor for the Service’s Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “We encourage the public to help us achieve the best solution to protect our native wildlife and plants. This public comment period will help the Service and its partners ensure that all relevant information is considered in the environmental review process.”

The proposal seeks to:

- Increase the effectiveness of rodent and mongoose management in the main Hawaiian Islands and make more efficient use of limited financial resources;
- Develop techniques for an integrated pest management approach to eradicate rodents from uninhabited islands within the main Hawaiian Islands and from other U.S. Pacific Islands within the National Wildlife Refuge System; and
- Avoid adverse impacts to human health, safety and the environment.

The public comment period will close on October 27, 2015.

“For many of Hawaii’s threatened and endangered species, reducing or removing rats, mice and mongooses could mean the difference between survival and extinction,” said Suzanne Case, Chairperson of the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. “With every plant and animal species we lose, it is not only a loss of the species itself, but also the connection to Hawaii’s culture and traditions.

It is therefore important that our community be an active participant in the discussion about rodent and mongoose control for restoration in Hawaii.”

The proposed use of integrated pest management would include an assessment of how rodents and mongooses negatively impact native species; identify merits and impacts of integrating new or additional methods of control and eradication, post-eradication monitoring of the target species for effectiveness, and monitoring potential non-target species impacts.

The PDEIS will be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and in compliance with the State of Hawaii’s environmental review process. The lead agencies for preparing the PDEIS are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife. The Service and Division of Forestry and Wildlife request comments, recommendations, and advice on the scope of issues, alternatives, and mitigation to be addressed in the PDEIS.

The Service’s Notice of Intent will publish June 30, 2015 in the *Federal Register*. In early summer, Hawaii’s Division of Forestry and Wildlife is expected to publish an Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notice in *The Environmental Bulletin*, published by the Hawaii State Office of Environmental Quality Control. Following the publication of the state document, public meetings will be held throughout the Hawaiian Islands. Meeting dates, locations, and times are yet to be determined.

Comments regarding the proposed action and the proposed PDEIS may be sent by one of the following methods:

- *Electronically:* <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on Docket No. FWS–R1–ES–2015–0026.
- *U.S. Mail:* Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R1–ES–2015–0026; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; MS: BPHC; 5275 Leesburg Pike; Falls Church, VA 22041–3803.

The Service will publish all comments at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

More information is available at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/>. For further information contact: Kristi Young, Acting 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.

For more detailed information, including videos and fact sheets, visit the Partnership to Protect Hawaii’s Native Species at <http://RemoveRatsRestoreHawaii.org/>.

*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](http://www.fws.gov/pacific), or connect with us through [facebook.com/USFWSPacific](https://www.facebook.com/USFWSPacific), [twitter.com/USFWSPacific](https://twitter.com/USFWSPacific), [tumblr.com/blog/usfwspacific](https://www.tumblr.com/blog/usfwspacific), [flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwspacific/) and [youtube.com/user/USFWS](https://www.youtube.com/user/USFWS).*

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