



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

## News Release

*Pacific Islands External Affairs Office*

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### **Informational Meetings Scheduled on Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the Mariana Fruit Bat**

*Meetings to be held on Saipan, Rota, and Guam*

Three informational meetings will be conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to discuss the draft revised recovery plan for the threatened Mariana fruit bat, known as fanihi in the Chamorro language. The informal meetings will be open to the public and are designed to share information and facilitate the submission of public comments. Meetings will be held on the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Guam.

The draft revised recovery plan outlines steps needed to recover the fanihi – a subspecies of fruit bat found only in the Mariana archipelago. A 90-day public comment period was announced in the Federal Register on March 30, 2010. The meetings coincide with the public comment period which closes on June 28, 2010.

The first meeting will be held in Saipan on June 1 at the Multipurpose Center, Beach Road, in Susupe, the second meeting in Rota on June 2 at the Roundhouse in Songsong Village, and the third meeting in Guam on June 4 at the University of Guam's College of Agriculture, Life Science Building, Room 127 in Mangilao. All three meetings will be from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The plan includes actions that will address the immediate management of the species to reduce threats and stabilize the existing population (e.g., eliminate hunting; protect and restore habitat; control and interdiction of the brown treesnake; and research to address gaps in our knowledge of the fanihi life history and ecology and improve scientists' ability to model the population, assess its sensitivity to specific threats and management actions, and forecast how best to ensure its continued existence).

Examples of proposed actions include involving local hunters and residents in research and recovery efforts, preventing the spread of the brown treesnake from Guam to Saipan, providing law enforcement support to local conservation officers, establishing roost site sanctuaries on other islands, improving inspection at ports of entry to prevent illegal trafficking in fanihi, controlling or eradicating ungulates in key locations, and conducting education in elementary and secondary schools.

Habitat loss and degradation along with illegal hunting are the major threats to the fanihi. The southern islands of the archipelago have lost significant habitat due to land conversion for agriculture, military, commercial, and residential development. Predation by introduced predators such as brown treesnakes, rats, and feral cats pose additional threats. Fanihi have evolved over thousands of years to adapt to impacts from natural disturbances such as typhoons and volcanic eruptions; however, human-caused threats increase the negative impacts of these natural disturbances on the fanihi population.

The fanihi is a medium-sized fruit bat in the family Pteropodidae; members of this family are often referred to as flying foxes because of the canine appearance of the face. The bats range in weight from

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0.66 pounds to 1.15 pounds (males are slightly larger than females) and have an impressive wingspan ranging from 2.75 to 3.5 feet. All animals have grizzled black to brown fur and a golden brown mantle. The head color varies from brown to dark brown.

Fanihi live in colonies ranging from a few to more than 800 individuals and group themselves into harems (1 male with 2-15 females) or bachelor groups consisting primarily of males. The bats sleep and socialize during much of the day, and depart colonies near or after sunset to forage. Important components of tropical forest systems, fruit bats disperse seeds, which helps maintain forest diversity and contributes to plant regeneration. The fruit bat feeds on a wide variety of plant material including fruits, nectar, pollen and leaves.

Copies of the draft recovery plan are available through the Fish and Wildlife Service's website at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands> or by calling the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office at 808 792 9400.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov).