

# News Release

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
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## **Service Reopens Public Comment Period for Development of Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Invasive Rodent and Mongoose Control** *Public Comment Period Reopened for 120 Days*

HONOLULU, Hawaii – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has reopened the public comment period as part of the development of a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) for Invasive Rodent and Mongoose Control and Eradication in native ecosystems in Hawaii. The public comment period will close on April 7, 2016.

“The impacts of invasive rats, mice, and mongooses threaten what makes Hawaii so special. With so many plants and animals that can only be found here, with every species lost, we lose what makes us Hawaii,” said Mary Abrams, Field Supervisor for the Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. “We have an opportunity to turn the tide and restore our native places. We welcome everyone to join us in these discussions and working together to restore Hawaii.”

Rodents and mongooses, which are not native to Hawaiian ecosystems, are known to kill and eat native birds and eat plants and their seeds. Rodents and mongooses have caused extinctions and severe declines of many native species in Hawaii including the Oahu elepaio, Oahu tree snails, and native palms. Many of these plants and animals also are important to Native Hawaiian cultural values and practices.

Methods to effectively control rodents and mongooses in urban and agricultural areas exist, but need to be adapted for conservation areas. The Draft PEIS will evaluate methods to protect native wildlife and plants, including federally listed threatened and endangered species and the ecosystems that support them.

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, the environment, and cultural rights, practices, and resources.

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 lead agencies for preparing the PEIS 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 PEIS 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 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 PEIS.

The Service's Notice of Intent will publish December 9, 2015, in the *Federal Register*. In early 2016, Hawaii's Division of Forestry and Wildlife is expected to publish an Environmental Impact Statement Preparation Notice in *The Environmental Notice*, published by the Hawaii State Office of Environmental Quality Control. The Service's reopening of its public comment period for an additional 120 days allows for both agencies to jointly hold public meetings throughout the Hawaiian Islands. Meeting dates, locations, and times are yet to be determined, but will be posted at:

<http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/nativerestoration/>.

Comments regarding the proposed action and the proposed PEIS 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.

If you have previously submitted comments during the first public comment period from June 30, 2015, to October 28, 2015, there is no need to resubmit them. The Service has already incorporated them in the public record and will fully consider them in the development of the Draft PEIS.

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

More information is available at <http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/nativerestoration/>. For further information contact: Mary Abrams, 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. If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf, please call the Federal Information Relay Service at 800-877-8339.

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