

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: September 14, 1997.

William F. Shake,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.

[FR Doc. 97-25421 Filed 9-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Notice of Availability of the Draft Recovery Plan for the Pacific Pocket Mouse for Review and Comment**

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability of the draft recovery plan for the endangered Pacific pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris pacificus*) for public review and comment. The Pacific pocket mouse occurs on 3 small parcels on private or federal lands in coastal Orange and San Diego Counties, California. The Service solicits review and comments from the public on this draft plan.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan received by November 24, 1997 will be considered by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Persons wishing to review the draft recovery plan may obtain a copy by contacting the Field Supervisor at the following address: Carlsbad Field Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2730 Loker Avenue West, Carlsbad, California, 92008. Telephone requests may be made by calling (760) 431-9440. Comments and material received will be available for public inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours, at the above address.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Loren R. Hays at the above address or telephone (760) 431-9440.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Restoring an endangered or threatened animal or plant to the point where it is again, a secure, self-sustaining member of its ecosystem is a primary goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's endangered species program. To help guide this effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States. Recovery plans describe actions necessary for conservation of the species. The plans

additionally establish criteria for downlisting or delisting the species and provide estimates of the time and cost of implementing the necessary recovery measures.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act) requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that public notice be given during plan development to provide an opportunity for public review and comment. The Service will consider all significant information presented during the public comment period prior to the approval of each new or revised recovery plan. The Service and other federal agencies also will consider these comments in the course of implementing approved recovery plans.

The Pacific pocket mouse has an extremely limited distribution in coastal southern California. Less than 150 animals were detected in the 3 known populations from 1993-1995. Pacific pocket mice occur on fine-grain, sandy substrates and inhabit (or inhabited) coastal strand, coastal dunes, river alluvium, and coastal sage scrub habitats growing on marine terraces within approximately 4 kilometers (2.4 miles) of the ocean. The threats to the species include habitat destruction and fragmentation and documented depredation by cats. The conservation, protection, and management of existing populations and occupied and potential habitat are the primary goals of the recovery effort.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All significant comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to the approval of the plan.

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1533(f)).

Dated: August 19, 1997.

Thomas J. Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director.

[FR Doc. 97-25422 Filed 9-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-55-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**Fish and Wildlife Service****Availability of Draft Recovery Plan for the Micronesian megapode (*Megapodius laperouse laperouse*) for Review and Comment**

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for the Micronesian megapode (*Megapodius laperouse laperouse*). This species is known only from the Mariana islands and is currently limited to 10 islands in this archipelago with a total population of 1,000 to 1,500 individuals.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan received by December 24, 1997 will be considered by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following locations: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Office, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, room 6307, P.O. Box 50167, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (phone: 808/541-2749); the Northern Marianas College Library, P.O. Box 1250, Asterlaje Campus, Saipan, MP 96950 (phone: 670/234-5498, extension 1121/2); and University of Guam, RFK Memorial Library, UOG Station, Mangilao, Guam 96923 (phone: 671/734-9412). Requests for copies of the draft recovery plan and written comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to Brooks Harper, Field Supervisor-Ecological Services of the Pacific Islands Office at the Honolulu address given above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Michael Lusk, Fish and Wildlife Biologist, Recovery Branch, at the Honolulu address given above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States, its Territories and Commonwealths. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, criteria for recognizing the recovery levels for downlisting or

delisting them, and initial estimates of times and costs to implement the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that a public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. Substantive technical comments will result in changes to the plan.

Substantive comments regarding recovery plan implementation may not necessarily result in changes to the recovery plan, but will be forwarded to appropriate Federal or other entities so that they can take these comments into account during the course of implementing recovery actions. Individualized responses to comments will not be provided.

The species being considered in this recovery plan is the Micronesian megapode (*Megapodius laperouse laperouse*). This forest bird was historically widespread throughout the Mariana islands archipelago and found on all the islands except Farrallon de Medinilla. The extinction of birds in Micronesia began 2000 to 4000 years ago with the arrival of aboriginal man. These human populations altered vegetation, introduced predatory Polynesian rats (*Rattus exulans*), hunted adult birds and gathered eggs. Decline in bird numbers continued with the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century who brought domestic livestock that caused widespread damage to native forests. At this time, predatory black (*R. rattus*) and Norway (*R. norvegicus*) rats were also introduced. Large areas were converted to agriculture during the German (1899–1917) and Japanese (1917–1944) occupations and native forest were further damaged during World War II battles. These factors, along with the appearance of other exotic competitors and predators, such as the brown tree snake (*Boiga irregularis*), have led to reduction or extirpation of megapode populations from most of the Mariana Islands. Small remnant populations persist on Aguiguan, Tinian, and Saipan, while larger populations persist on Anatahan, Guguang, Sarigan, Alamagan, Pagan, Ascucion, and Maug. Habitat loss and exotic predators, such as the brown tree snake, continue to be the greatest threats

to the survival of the Micronesian megapode.

The Micronesian megapode is currently represented by populations on ten islands with a total estimate of 1,000 to 1,500 birds. The areas of emphasis for recovery actions are the ten islands with existing populations. In addition, the recovery plan recommends reintroduction of the species onto the islands of Agrihan and/or Rota.

The objective of this plan is to provide a framework for the recovery of this species so that protection by the Act is no longer necessary. Recovery efforts will focus on protection of all extant individuals from habitat loss, control of introduced competitors and predators, and preventing the spread of the brown tree snake. Further research on the reproductive ecology, territory size and habitat use, nesting requirements, demographics, and the impacts of predation and hunting is needed to ensure the long-term survival of the megapode. Recovery efforts will include augmenting existing populations and reestablishment of the species in protected areas throughout its former range.

Public Comments Solicited

The Service solicits written comments on the recovery plan described. All comments received by the date specified above will be considered prior to approval of this plan.

Authority

The authority for this action is section 4(f) of the Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1533(f).

Dated: September 18, 1997.

Mike Spear,

Regional Director, Region 1, Portland, Oregon.
[FR Doc. 97-25423 Filed 9-24-97; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of Draft Recovery Plan for the Hawaiian Hoary Bat, *Lasiurus cinereus semotus*, for Review and Comment

AGENCY: Fish and Wildlife Service, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of document availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announces the availability for public review of a draft recovery plan for the Hawaiian hoary bat, *Lasiurus cinereus semotus*. This subspecies is known from the islands of Hawaii, Maui, Oahu, Kauai, and

Molokai. Population numbers are not known, but Hawaiian hoary bats are observed regularly only on Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui, and the bat is apparently restricted in distribution on the latter two islands. There is a general lack of historic and current data on this subspecies, and its present status is not well understood.

DATES: Comments on the draft recovery plan received by December 24, 1997 will be considered by the Service.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the draft recovery plan are available for inspection, by appointment, during normal business hours at the following locations: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Ecoregion, Room 3108, 300 Ala Moana Boulevard, P.O. Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850 (phone: 808/541-3441). Requests for copies of the draft recovery plan and written comments and materials regarding the plan should be addressed to Brooks Harper, Field Supervisor-Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pacific Islands Ecoregion at the Honolulu address given above.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Karen Rosa, Assistant Field Supervisor-Endangered Species, at the Honolulu address given above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Restoring endangered or threatened animals and plants to the point where they are again secure, self-sustaining members of their ecosystem is a primary goal of the Service's endangered species program. To help guide the recovery effort, the Service is working to prepare recovery plans for most of the listed species native to the United States, its Territories and Commonwealths. Recovery plans describe actions considered necessary for conservation of the species, establish criteria for the recovery levels for downlisting or delisting them, and estimate time and cost for implementing the recovery measures needed.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) (Act), requires the development of recovery plans for listed species unless such a plan would not promote the conservation of a particular species. Section 4(f) of the Act, as amended in 1988, requires that a public notice and an opportunity for public review and comment be provided during recovery plan development. The Service will consider all information presented during a public comment period prior to approval of each new or revised recovery plan. Substantive technical comments will result in changes to the