



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

News Release

Pacific Islands External Affairs Office

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Two Extinct Mariana Species Removed from the Endangered Species List

After a review of all available scientific information, biologists from several agencies throughout the Pacific, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have concluded that two Mariana Island birds – the Mariana mallard and the Guam broadbill – are extinct. A final rule was published in today's *Federal Register*, removing both species from the Federal list of threatened and endangered species.

“Although these two species have been lost forever, we can learn from this experience,” said David B. Allen, Regional Director of the Service's Pacific Region. “We need to renew our efforts to conserve and protect the habitats that our native species rely upon for their survival, and that includes controlling, if not eliminating, invasive species. The northern Mariana Islands still have many of their native species, and we're convinced that we can restore numerous species on Guam, but only if their habitats are protected.”

While more than 1300 species have been listed as endangered or threatened in the 30-year history of the Endangered Species Act, only these two species plus seven others have gone extinct. Besides the Mariana mallard and the Guam broadbill, the seven extinct species include two other birds, the dusky seaside sparrow and the Santa Barbara song sparrow; and five fishes, the longjaw cisco, the amistad gambusia, the Sampson's pearly mussel, the blue pike and the Tecopa pupfish.

The Mariana mallard was a large duck, with a grayish and green head separated from a chestnut breast by a white collar, a white tail, yellow bill and orange legs. The bird once inhabited the islands of Guam, Tinian, Saipan, and Rota – all on the Mariana archipelago in the western Pacific Ocean. The Mariana mallard was listed as endangered by the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands in 1976 and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in June 1977. The species was probably never abundant, since the Mariana Islands have few freshwater marshes and lakes.

Mariana mallards were last seen on Guam in 1967 and Tinian in 1974. There have been no confirmed sightings of the Mariana mallard since it was last observed on Saipan in 1979. The Division of Fish and Wildlife of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources of Guam, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have conducted extensive surveys since 1982, but no evidence of the Mariana mallard has been found.

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Exact causes for the extinction of the Mariana mallard are unknown. Possible factors contributing to its decline include the massive loss of suitable wetland habitat and years of unregulated hunting.

The Guam broadbill was a small flycatcher. The male was glossy blue-black in color. The female was brownish gray above and white below, with variable amounts of buff tinge on its breast. This species only occurred on the island of Guam. It was listed as endangered on Aug. 27, 1984. At the time of its listing, fewer than 100 individuals remained, all in the Pajon Basin of northern Guam. There have been no confirmed sightings or other evidence of the Guam broadbill since May 15, 1984, despite surveys conducted by Guam biologists. The brown tree snake is likely the major factor contributing to the extinction of this bird.

The proposed rule to delist Mariana mallard and Guam broadbill was published in the *Federal Register* on Jan. 25, 2002. During a 60-day public comment period, only one comment was received. The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands' Division of Fish and Wildlife stated that it concurred with the Service's conclusion that the birds are extinct and should be delisted. Three Mariana Islands waterbird experts also reviewed the proposal and concurred with the Service that species are extinct.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 542 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.