

Welcome!



Thank you for participating in the
development of the Environmental
Impact Statement for the
eradication of invasive rats on four
uninhabited Aleutian Islands



Purpose & Need

Why prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the eradication of invasive rats on four uninhabited Aleutian Islands?

Proposed Action: Eradicate invasive rats from four uninhabited Aleutian Islands: Great Sitkin Island, Amchitka Island, Kiska Island, and Attu Island.

Purpose: Eliminate the impacts of invasive rats on native species and restore natural island ecosystems on Great Sitkin, Amchitka, Kiska, and Attu Islands.

Need: Nonnative rats on Great Sitkin, Kiska, Amchitka, and Attu Islands in the Aleutian archipelago have negatively impacted native wildlife and altered natural ecosystem functions on the islands.

Photo: Erica Wells | USDA



Impacts of Invasive Rats

Although islands account for only 6% of the world's land mass, they are home to approximately 20% of the world's bird and plant species. Approximately 30 million seabirds nest in Alaska - 87% of all seabirds in the U.S.

The Problem:

- ▶ Since 1700's non-native/invasive species have been accidentally and intentionally introduced to the Aleutian Islands
- ▶ We know rats are present on 12 Aleutian Islands including the uninhabited islands of Great Sitkin, Kiska, Amchitka, and Attu Islands

Rat Impacts:

- ▶ Eat chicks and eggs of seabirds, shorebirds, and other songbirds
- ▶ Alter food webs
- ▶ Contribute to wildlife population decline
- ▶ Intertidal zone changes

The Solution:

- ▶ Eradicate the invasive rats to restore natural island ecosystems
- ▶ In 2008 Norway rats were successfully eradicated from Hawadax Island (previously Rat Island)

The Results:

- ▶ Native bird (terrestrial and shorebirds) and intertidal species recovery
- ▶ New and historically-present species return to the rat-free island
- ▶ Food web restored/rebounding



Photo:
Island Conservation



National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – EIS Process

NEPA requires federal agencies to incorporate environmental considerations into their planning and decision making. It also requires federal agencies to undertake an assessment of the environmental impacts of and alternatives to their proposed major federal actions *prior* to making any decisions.

6 Steps of the EIS Process under NEPA:



Step 1– Project Initiation

- Develop purpose and need
- Form an interdisciplinary team
- Determine level of NEPA analysis
- Develop range of preliminary alternatives
- Hold scoping meetings with agencies, organizations, Tribes, and the public



Step 2– Data Collection

- Data identification and source material
- Define existing conditions of the affected environment



Step 3– Alternatives Analysis in the Draft EIS

- Analyze rat eradication alternatives and their impacts
- Identify environmental concerns and proposed mitigations if required



Step 4– Publish the Draft EIS for Public Review

- Draft EIS published for public comment
- Commence public comment period- minimum 45 days
- Hold public meetings and gather input



Step 5– Finalize EIS

- Address comments on the draft EIS
- Publish final EIS to public for review
- Commence wait period – minimum 30 days



Step 6- Decision

- Record of Decision documents selection of an alternative
- Commits to mitigations