

## Peer Review Plan for the Mariana Islands Species Proposed Critical Habitat Designation

### About the Document

**Title:** Proposed critical habitat for the Mariana Islands species

**Purpose:** The proposed critical habitat designation follows the October 1, 2015, listing of 23 species as endangered or threatened species on islands within the U.S. Territory of Guam and the U.S. Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands. The proposed rule will also address a taxonomic correction and proposed listing of one tree snail on the Island of Rota that was thought to be another federally endangered tree snail. The information in the proposed rule is likely to be influential scientific information.

The species addressed in this proposed rule include:

**Seven federally endangered plants**—*Eugenia bryanii* (no common name (NCN)), *Hedyotis megalantha* (pao de'do', pao doodu), *Heritiera longipetiolata* (ufa h lumt nu', ufa' h lomt no'), *Phyllanthus saffordii* (NCN), *Psychotria malaspinae* ( plokhatng palao'an), *Solanum guamense* (*Beringhenas halumt nu* or *Beringhenas h lom t no'*), and *Tinospora homosepala* (NCN);

**Seven federally threatened plants**—*Bulbophyllum guamense* (siboyas h lumt nu', siboyan h lomt no'), *Dendrobium guamense* (no common name (NCN)), *Cycas micronesica* (fadang, faadang), *Maesa walkeri* (NCN), *Nervilia jacksoniae* (NCN), *Tabernaemontana rotensis* (NCN), and *Tuberolabium guamense* (NCN); and

**Nine endangered animals**—the Pacific sheath-tailed bat (Mariana subspecies, *Emballonura semicaudata rotensis*; payesyas paischeey), Slevin's skink (*Emoia slevini*; guali'ek h lomt no', gholuuf), Mariana eight-spot butterfly (*Hypolimnas octocula marianensis*; ababang, libweibwogh), Mariana wandering butterfly (*Vagrans egistina*; ababang, libweibwogh), Rota blue damselfly (*Ischnura luta*; dulalas luta, dulalas luuta), fragile tree snail (*Samoana fragilis*; akaleha', do'gas, denden), Guam tree snail (*Partula radiolata*; akaleha', denden), humped tree snail (*Partula gibba*; akaleha', denden), and Langford's tree snail (*Partula langfordi*; akaleha', denden); and,

**One newly identified animal**—the Rota tree snail (*Partula lutaensis*).

### About the Peer Review Process

**Estimated Timing of Peer Review:** Approximately July - August 2025.

**Type of Peer Review:** The Service will solicit comments on the draft rule from independent scientific reviewers via individual letters (email). Peer reviewers will submit comments in written form.

**Anticipated Number of Reviewers:** The Service will request review from at least three individuals.

**Reviewer Selection Method:** A Service office not associated with development of the proposed rule will select peer reviewers and coordinate the process. In selecting peer reviewers, we will consider four key factors: expertise, balance, independence, and avoidance of conflict of interest. We are not seeking nominations for peer reviewers from the public.

**Necessary Expertise:** Peer reviewers will have expertise on these Mariana Islands species or related taxa, the ecosystems in which the species live, and the threats to or management of the species or its habitat.

Peer reviewers will not be asked to provide recommendations on the rulemaking under the Act. Peer reviewers will be asked to comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in the document; identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear; and provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document.

### **About public participation**

We anticipate publishing our decision for the Mariana Islands Species in the *Federal Register* soon after June 26, 2025, which is associated with litigation (*CBD v. Debra Haaland et al.*; Case No. 1:21-cv-00017) and the stipulated settlement agreement date for us to submit our decision to the *Federal Register*. Upon publication, we will make the peer review comments on the draft proposed rule publicly available. As appropriate, the Service will publish a final rule following consideration of all comments received from the public and peer reviewers.

This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review. The public is invited to submit comments on this peer review plan by contacting the agency person listed below.

#### Contact

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