



FANIHI (Mariana fruit bat) *Pteropus mariannus*

Endangered Species

Endemic to the Marianas

The fanihi, as the Mariana fruit bat is called in Chamorro, is one of Guam's endangered mammals. It lives only on Guam and the other Mariana Islands. At one time, huge flocks of fanihi filled the evening sky. Counts made by the Department of Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources show the number of fanihi left on Guam varies from about 200-600 bats annually, depending on how many fly back and forth to Rota.

Fanihi roost in trees during the day. They live together in groups or colonies. They have good eyesight and smell, and are most active at night. These graceful flyers eat the fruit of pandanus, breadfruit, wild figs, fagot, and cycads, and the flowers of kapok, coconut, and gaogao, plus many other fruits and blossoms. The fanihi has only one baby a year. The young fanihi clings to its mother and nurses milk from her until it is old enough to find food on its own.

Fanihi live deep in the forest where they will not be disturbed by people. At present, the most serious threat to fanihi on Guam is predation on young bats by the brown tree snake. Another problem is that fanihi are still hunted because many older Chamorros like to eat them. Over the years, many fanihi have been shot and eaten by people who do not care whether we have any fanihi left for future generations to see and appreciate. With nearly all of our forest birds gone, the fanihi is one of the few pollinators and seed dispersers left in the forest. Without the fanihi, many types of forest trees could disappear because there will be no animals left to spread their seeds and pollinate their flowers.

To protect the remaining population, the fanihi has been declared an endangered species, which means it is against local and federal laws to hunt, kill, capture, or in any way harm the fanihi.

A second smaller kind of fanihi, the little Mariana fruit bat (*Pteropus tokudae*) was found on our island, but it became extinct about 1970.