

**PROGRESS REPORT
COORDINATION PROJECT SEGMENT**

STATE: Territory of Guam

PROJECT NO.: W-1R-7
SUB-PROJECT NO.: W-6
STUDY.: 1
JOB NO.: 1

JOB TITLE: Technical Assistance to Activities Affecting Guam's Wildlife Resources
(1210)

PERIOD COVERED: October 1, 1998 to September 30, 1999

BACKGROUND

The Wildlife Section professional staff of the Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources (DAWR) devoted a significant percentage of their time and effort to technical assistance. The pace of development on the island is requiring increasing amounts of time from the Section's staff to fulfill its statutory responsibility to review and comment on development plans, rezoning applications, and various permit applications most of which are local Government of Guam or private sector. In addition, the Section also provides comment and review of numerous activities and proposals from the military bases on Guam that may affect Guam's endangered species and wildlife resources and their habitat. Often this includes commenting on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Section 7 consultations concerning impacts of military projects on endangered species. Because of the size and complexity of some of these developments, the Section's review responsibility will require a continuing commitment that often extends beyond project completion.

The professional staff in the Wildlife Section provide technical support to the Division's technical assistance program staff and often take the lead in the review of projects involving their particular expertise, such as those that may have endangered species impacts or those involving wetlands. This effort is extremely important for the management and conservation of Guam's natural resources.

OBJECTIVES

1. To minimize adverse environmental impacts resulting from the construction of recreational, commercial, residential, industrial, military, or public utility facilities.
2. Provide technical assistance to farmers and other landowners, including private, territorial, and federal, for controlling wildlife damage to crops, native habitat, and other property.
3. Provide technical assistance to military and civil agencies relative to the management and protection of Guam's wildlife resources.
4. Provide data and analyses to assist the Department in promulgating hunting regulations for the Territory to provide recreational opportunities for the public, control damage to native habitat, and other needs as they arise.

FINDINGS

Wildlife Section staff have been actively involved in the technical guidance function during this segment. Numerous development plans, impact statements, and permit applications, which were submitted to the Division for review required the Wildlife Section's assistance. Field investigations and meetings with responsible agencies have been conducted in many cases as a part of the review process.

Various Section staff members actively serve as members of the following groups:

1. Region IX Regional Response Team - Oceania
2. Fish and Wildlife Natural Resource Committee - Andersen Air Force Base
3. Mariana Crow Recovery Team
4. Captive Breeding Working Group, USFWS
5. Area Committee for Oil Spills

Members of the Wildlife Section have attended numerous meetings and hearings pertaining to the protection of Guam's natural resources and have actively consulted with various civil and military agencies on environmental matters. Section staff maintain close liaison with the Department of Parks and Recreation, Guam Bureau of Planning, Guam Environmental Protection Agency (GEPA), University of Guam, USFWS, U.S. Geological Survey's Biological Resources Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, and Air Force regarding matters of environmental concern. In addition, staff members actively consulted with numerous off-island visitors, representing various agencies and organizations, who visited during the segment.

Considerable public contact was maintained by Section staff during the reporting segment. In addition to occasional interviews on radio, television, and in newspapers, staff members gave talks to a number of civic groups, sportsman clubs, and school and university classes.

Some more specific Technical Assistance activities of the Wildlife Section included:

1. The Division reviewed and commented on ACOE applications for wetland fill. Mitigation recommendations were often included in these comments. Comments and concerns were also provided to various local agencies. Wildlife staff provided significant input into the responses for these applications. Endangered species were of primary concern to the Section with Mariana common moorhens found in most wetlands on Guam.
2. The Section provided technical support to the Division's enforcement staff by identifying and evaluating wildlife, testifying at court hearings, and recommending disposition for confiscated wildlife.
3. Section staff provided technical assistance to the Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection Quarantine Division by identifying confiscated wildlife and wildlife products, holding wildlife in quarantine, and in general supporting their efforts at preventing illegal imports of wildlife to Guam.

4. The Division reviewed and commented on numerous Environmental Impact Statements/Assessments of proposed developments particularly when wildlife issues were present. These comments included recommendations for grading and clearing, erosion control, project design and orientation. These recommendations were made to reduce and/or eliminate impacts to the immediate and adjacent environments.
5. The Division's Wildlife Section provided comments at the request of the USFWS for numerous Section 7 Consultations under the Endangered Species Act, including the following:
 - a. Numerous military training exercises at AAFB and Naval bases on Guam.
 - b. Several wetland related development activities for civilian and military projects.
 - c. Dept. of Defense programmatic EIS for military training in the Mariana Islands.
6. The Section reviewed and commented on several legislative bills that would affect wildlife.
7. The Section responded to many requests for information on laws and regulations pertaining to fish, wildlife, endangered species, hunting and fishing, and importation of wildlife.
8. The Section responded to numerous public requests for information on native wildlife, particularly endangered species.
9. The Section answered numerous requests for information on hunting from both on and off-island individuals. Specific requests included information on hunting areas, hunter safety classes, firearm regulations, hunting seasons and limits, and laws and regulations.
10. Section staff provided technical assistance to numerous farmers and the Air Force and Navy regarding damage by wild pigs, deer, and carabao (water buffalo). Damage control permits requests were evaluated and issued when warranted.
11. Section staff reviewed wildlife-related manuscripts for professional journals. One of our staff is an editor for the University of Guam's journal *Micronesica* and in this capacity reviewed several articles for publication.
12. Section staff assisted in presented hunter safety briefings at Anderson Air Force Base, the Mangilao Community Center, and the University of Guam to provide pertinent information to hunters.
13. Section staff made numerous presentations on fish and wildlife resources at meetings of various organizations during the year.
14. Section staff prepared numerous press releases to keep the public informed of fish and wildlife issues including hunting and hunting seasons, brown tree snake issues, fish and wildlife laws and regulations, endangered species, fish and wildlife importation, etc.
15. Technical assistance and logistic support was provided to various personnel from the USFWS, USGS Biological Resources Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services working on the brown tree snake problem on Guam and in the mainland U.S.
16. The Section staff, at the request of numerous developers, met with them, their consultants and other government representatives to discuss proposed development

projects and their potential impacts on endangered species, wetlands and native habitat as well as erosion, project design, etc.

17. Section staff provided technical assistance to USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service law enforcement personnel on various matters including the importation of endangered species items.
18. Technical advice on wetland issues have been provided to the Development Review Section at GEPA.
19. Section staff participated in the Navy Installation Restoration Program by providing information to Navy consultants, accompanying them on several site visits, and attending public meetings.
20. Section staff provided technical support to the ACOE, GEPA, and Navy in evaluating severe erosion and damages to wetland resources caused by firebreak maintenance at Naval Ordnance Annex. Recommendations were made for mitigation of the environmental damage.
21. Staff gave visiting lectures for various University of Guam biology classes on wildlife related topics.
22. Section staff assisted the military in planning field training exercises at various military bases on Guam so that endangered species and their habitat and other wildlife resources would be minimally impacted. Military units involved included:
 - a. Guam National Guard
 - b. Various Air Force units
 - c. Air National Guard
 - d. University of Guam Army ROTC
 - e. Various DOD special operations units
 - f. U.S. Army Reserves
23. Section staff on numerous occasions met with representatives of the press to discuss wildlife issues the media was interested in. Contact was made with the following organizations:
 - a. Pacific Daily News, Guam
 - b. KUAM TV News, Guam
 - c. Guam Cable TV News
 - d. KGTF public radio, Guam
 - e. K-57 radio news, Guam

PROGRAM COST

The estimated cost of the technical assistance project under W-1R-7 is \$60,000.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue technical assistance activities in support of the conservation of Guam's wildlife.

Report prepared by: Robert Beck