

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

2023 Citizen Centric Report



ENABLING AUTHORITY

The Division of Fish and Wildlife is established by Public Law 2-51 and further amended by Public 10-57. The Division falls under the Department of Lands and Natural, headed by a Director serving under the supervision and control of the Secretary. The Director is responsible for the day-to-day administration and enforcement of Fish, Game, and Endangered Species Act.

DFW ORGANIZATION

Division Director	:	Manny M. Pangelinan
Administrative Section Supervisor	:	Rosemary Camacho-Chance
Wildlife Section Supervisor	:	Steven Mullin
Fisheries Section Supervisor	:	Michael C. Tenorio
Boating Access Supervisor	:	Vicente A. Camacho
Aquatic Education Supervisor	:	Gina Tomokane
Conservation Enforcement Supervisor	:	Robert Magofna
Fisheries Data Section Supervisor	:	Michael Tenorio
Brown Tree Snake Section Supervisor	:	Joe Cruz, Acting

DFW CONSERVATION AND ENFORCEMENT PROGRAMS

The Division conservation program covers a wide range of marine and terrestrial research, monitoring, fisheries data collection, fisheries development program, boating access, permitting, and enforcement programs. All of the Division's program is funded by Federal grants with the exception of permitting and conservation enforcement. The DFW research and monitoring program is focused on providing scientific information on species of greatest concern for managing species, recovery, down-listing, or delisting of threatened or endangered species. Conservation enforcement officers are responsible for enforcing a wide range of local and Federal conservation laws. They are also responsible for monitoring permit compliance, as well as monitoring for poaching activities and violation of threatened and endangered species. General programs being managed by the Division:

- Management and Compliance of Federal Grants
- Wildlife Research & Monitoring Program
- Recreation Boating Access Program
- Aquatic Education and Outreach Program
- Fisheries Research & Development Program
- Fisheries Data Collection Program
- Conservation Enforcement Program
- Brown Tree Snake Interdiction Program
- Technical Guidance

MISSION STATEMENT

The Division mission is to conserve, protect, and enhance wildlife resources, including fish, game, threatened or endangered species.

VISION STATEMENT

Through best conservation management practice research, monitoring, and enforcement, the Division seeks to ensure the long-term survival and sustainability of the CNMI's natural resources for present and future generations.

ADDRESS

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CNMI Division of Fish and Wildlife

2023 Overview

FISHERIES RESEARCH SECTION

Program Management and Technical Guidance Support:

This program provides assistance towards various research, marine recreation, development and management activities in the CNMI.



The Division of Fish and Wildlife works in collaboration with resource stakeholders to discuss marine resource issues, activities, and plans for the CNMI. One recent activity which required staff assistance was the fishing base revetment and boating access projects, which required a biological assessment of resources within and adjacent to the project site. Other activities associated with this project are the review and commenting on federal, state, military, research and commercial activities which affect the marine environment or its natural resources. In addition to these activities, technical guidance will be provided to reviewing, assessing and providing biological recommendations to proposed nearshore fishery regulations.

Fish Habitat Surveys and Monitoring Program



This Fish Habitat Surveys and Monitoring Program aims to collect data that can be linked to local fish population dynamics (e.g., recruitment, growth, distribution, and abundance) and essential fish habitat quality (benthic and water quality). Such information can help differentiate the potential impacts to fish and essential fish habitats from natural variation in mortality, land-based sources of pollution, and fishing. Activities associated with this program are the installation of temperature sensors at various locations with the Saipan lagoon to obtain information on the changes in temperature between sites.

FISHERIES DATA SECTION:



The DFW Data Section (DS) continues to conduct CREEL surveys throughout the island of Saipan. Two types of CREEL surveys are performed on a weekly basis, which are the boat-based/offshore surveys and the shore-based/inshore surveys. Both surveys occur during night and day shifts to illustrate trends in data collection throughout different times during a 24 hour period. The west coast of the island is where the majority of the CREEL surveys continue to take place as it is more accessible for the roving participation portion of the shore-based surveys. However, occasional opportunistic surveys continue to be scheduled and are conducted on the east coast of the island when allowable. A pilot study is being conducted to perform more east coast surveys as route 36 has opened and allowed for a more accessible route from north to south on the eastern coast of Saipan. The boat-based surveys continue to be prominent on the west coast of the island as these are areas where the boat ramps for fishermen are located. We have noticed that over the past few months, more and more fishers are using kayaks to conduct their fishing trips inside the lagoon. Data collection under the CREEL surveys continue to allow DFW to illustrate species diversity, size frequency, and catch per unit effort. These surveys are both scheduled throughout the day and the evenings.

Commercial receipt collection is continuously ongoing through paper form and will soon be available online through Sell It Log It, an online database created to house the CNMI's local commercial purchases. The Mandatory Data Reporting Implementation Plan has been finalized and the DS is taking action, such as preparing application packages for commercial harvesters and purchasers, finalizing outreach materials, planning orientation events, gathering all materials needed before launching the program to the public and preparing fish identification posters and guides. The Report It Log It app for admin users, such as the DS staff, has been launched and is being utilized. Updates on the application are ongoing before launching the Sell It Log It application for public use. Paper receipts will continue to be an option for commercial purchasers to use once the online version has concluded. Commercial harvesters will also be required to fill out paper forms or online forms through Catch It Log It in the future. Discussions between DFW and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center have been constant regarding improving the online versions and paper versions of the commercial collection, and the updated regulation as well. Guidance from the DFW Director has been significant in this process.



AQUATIC EDUCATION:



Aquatic Education Program is a vital outreach initiative that aims to engage various stakeholders and to educate citizens about the importance of marine conservation. It recognizes the importance of involving young individuals in fishery activities and the essential need to support this program and ensure its success by promoting awareness and understanding of marine conservation amongst each other.

The main objective of this program is to encourage and support fishing activities, as well as provide students with knowledge about the various fishing techniques that can be utilized in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Additionally, the program aims to emphasize the importance of water safety, familiarize students with the fishing code of conduct, and teach them about essential knots and lures used in fishing. The Aquatic Education Program seeks to achieve this by providing educational resources, workshops, and training sessions on topics such as marine ecology, sustainable fishing practices, and the impact of human activities on marine ecosystems. Finally, the Aquatic Education Program aims to empower citizens to take action towards protecting and conserving our marine resources.



COORDINATION SECTION: The coordination Section commonly referred to as the Administrative Section is an integral part of DFW organization and operation. Coordination staff provides all types of administrative support to the other DFW sections needed to carry out the implementation of the grant project objectives. The Coordination Section staffs accounts for all revenue and expenditures to ensure that expenditures are allowable, necessary, reasonable, and allocable and that the expenditures are obligated in conformance to both Federal and Local regulations.

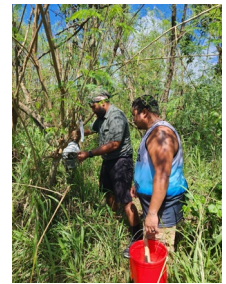
WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT:



DFW Wildlife Section presented oral presentations, poster presentations, career panels, and workshops at a total of 16 outreach events and conferences. Under DFW wildlife section Technical Guidance and Disaster Risk Management project, the staff provided information requests for the CBDG-DR Program and other NMHC Programs as well as provided recommendations to over 298 technical guidance assessments (over 502 site surveys). Through direct management effort to prevent the extirpation of Partulid Snails, the staff conducted monthly snail surveys at all the colonies on Rota. In our effort to continue monitoring and managing the Fruit Bat population in the CNMI, the staff completed the second annual Tinian and Saipan

Bat counts, counting fanihi on both islands. The DFW staff also conducted monthly bat surveys at all major colonies on Rota and provided population estimates.

The wildlife staff has located and monitored a total of 17 nests, assisted in developing capture methods, captured and banded 12 Rota White-eyes, and deployed 10 nest cameras to record nest fate under the measuring nest predation rates and nesting success of the Rota White-eye project. In our effort to ensure that the Avian Monitoring and Management project were carried out, the staff conducted quarterly bird surveys at a total of 150 stations on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, quarterly seabird monitoring at the I Chenchon colony on Rota, biannual surveys for the Rota White-eye on Rota, and Wedge-tailed Shearwater colony counts on Managaha.



The Wildlife Section continued to be busy with their conservation efforts, the staff conducted semi-annual bird surveys in the Saipan Upland Mitigation Bank Area in Marpi and collected camera trap data to estimate populations of the Micronesian Megapode. The staff also assisted the Pacific Bird Conservation, our collaborating partner, with trapping and/or husbandry operations for Nightingale Reed-warbler in preparation for future translocations, deployed 19 autonomous recording units (ARU) to record bird vocalizations over time on Alamagan, assisted USDA in collecting camera trapping and disease sampling data on Alamagan to evaluate the status of feral ungulate populations, and continued ongoing preparations for our expeditions to Agrihan.

Under DFW Wildlife Section project Prey and Prey Abundance for the Mariana Swiftlets and Pacific Sheath-Tailed Bats, staff counted over 1,500 arthropod samples and identified over 200 species. Staff also conducted prey collection surveys on Rota and Saipan as well as collected Mariana swiftlet guano samples for determining swiftlet diet preferences. DFW staff identified a family of wasps, Pompilidae, unknown previously in the Mariana Islands. To better understand the life history of the Nightingale Reed-warbler (NIRW), the staff resighted and tracked NIRW. Lastly, the staff conducted surveys for the Mariana Common Moorhen at Lake Hagoi and Bateha wetlands and collected vegetation data to characterize habitat for the species, as part of the Conservation and Management of Mariana Common Moorhen on the Tinian Military Lease Area.

CONSERVATION ENFORCEMENT: DFW Conservation Enforcement staff continue to conduct random monitoring of the conservation areas for poaching activities. Marine and terrestrial enforcement actions are also done on random basis. The Conservation Enforcement Staff are also being assigned to monitor the transient dock for the loading and off loading of commercial passengers.



SMILING COVE MARINA:

As part of on-going maintenance and up-keeping of the marina facilities, the following projects were completed at Smiling Cove Marina in Saipan.

- Installation of the Beacon Light Pole, Replaced the Dilapidated Concrete Pole; With constant meeting with DPW Engineer and coordination with USCG on the Beacon Light requirements, we came up with an Aluminum Pole design with a Solar Operated Beacon Light. This project is very much needed to navigate our boaters to the Smiling Cove Marina channel. Total cost is about 8K.



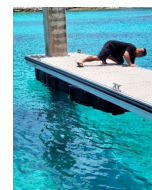
- Installation of a New 28' Aluminum Gangway with a built-in ADA railings at Marina Entrance Gate #2. This project is part of the Typhoon Yutu Project Worksheet 88. The total cost is about 30k.

- Installed 30 New Aluminum Concrete Piling Signages. Replaced the old wooden signages to an aluminum material.
- Replacement of Rusty Fencing to New Plastic Coded Fence at Gate Entrance #1, #2 and #3.
- Continued the On-going Maintenance and up-keeping of the Marina Facility in Tinian. Other Projects that were completed on the Fiscal year 2023 was the newly installed aluminum railings



and the Main Marina Entrance Fence and Gate. As for the Docking System, DFW is currently waiting for the approval of the Project Worksheet 104 extension request from FEMA.

- Continued the On-going Maintenance and up-keeping of the Marina Facility which includes the annual re-painting of the Marina Railings and the emergency repair work at Fingers #4 and #5. The repair works consist of re-alignment of the dock floaters, due to missing three floaters caused by Typhoon Mawar.



BROWN TREESNAKE INTERDICTION PROGRAM: The Brown Tree Snake Detector Dog personnel continued to provide BTS inspections at the seaport, airport, and at the consignee’s off-site location on containers, cargoes, break bulks, vehicles, or equipment to ensure that the CNMI continue to be free of Brown Tree Snake. The BTS Detector Dog staff also provided BTS inspection in Tinian for cargoes that are coming in from Guam, especially cargoes that are associated with the military buildup projects. The BTS Detector Dog staff also maintained an inspection of about 95% throughout the year.

Financial Information

The Division of Fish and Wildlife’s annual appropriation for the fiscal year 2024 is \$409,008 which includes personnel and operation expenses. Forty grants from different Federal agencies were managed by DFW Coordination Section. These grants were comprised of both single and multiple-year grant awards that amount to \$6.8 million. DFW receives funding from various Federal programs, particularly from the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife State Wildlife Grant, the Department of Defense, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Office of Insular Affairs. DFW is also a recipient of formula grants but is successful in receiving funding from competitive grants. The grants received from the various granting agencies support conservation research projects, outreach, staffing, and operational expenses that are directly related to accomplishing and fulfilling the project objectives.

The following are the funding information of DFW:

Funding Source	Grantor	Grant Title	Account no.	Operations Budget	Total Grant Award	Grant Period Start	Grant Period End
Federal Grants	WSFR	Wildlife Technical Guidance and Disaster Readiness - FY 2023	FG19080009	\$ 32,601.00	\$ 200,013.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Measuring Nest Predation Rates and Nesting Success of the Rota White-Eye - FY 2023	FG19080010	\$ 8,581.00	\$ 76,110.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	CNMI Nightingale Reed-Warbler Adult Apparent Survival and Site Fidelity Phase II - FY 2023	FG19080011	\$ 6,819.00	\$ 31,754.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Biometric Support and Evaluation of Wildlife Monitoring and Research Projects	FG19080012	\$ 49,154.00	\$ 49,154.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Avian Monitoring and Management - FY 2023	FG19080013	\$ 39,635.00	\$ 123,605.00	10/01/22	03/31/24
Federal Grants	WSFR	Spatial Data Management, Support, and Analysis of Wildlife Projects for Improved Species Conservation - FY 2023	FG19080014	\$ 61,441.00	\$ 177,997.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Insect Prey & Abundance for the Mariana Swiftlet and Pacific Sheath-Tailed Bat - FY 2023	FG19080015	\$ 31,601.00	\$ 61,997.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Wildlife Restoration Program Management & Outreach - FY 2023	FG19080017	\$ 142,986.00	\$ 299,241.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Mariana Fruit Bat Monitoring and Management	FG19080026	\$ 48,224.00	\$ 128,348.00	07/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Northern Islands Conservation and Management - FY 2023	FG19080027	\$ 256,717.00	\$ 320,130.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Mariana Cave Characteristics and Bat/Swiftlet Occupancy on Aguiguan and Rota - FY 2023	FG19080029	\$ 22,898.00	\$ 82,158.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Rota Tropical Monitoring Avian Productivity and Survival 2023	FG19080018	\$ 177,225.00	\$ 187,170.00	10/01/22	03/31/24
Federal Grants	WSFR	Slate Wildlife Grant Implementation - FY 2023	FG19080028	\$ 47,723.00	\$ 130,760.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	CNMI Aquatic Education and Outreach Program FY2023	FG19080016	\$ 103,383.00	\$ 169,403.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Fisheries Dependent Data Collection and Analysis Program FY 2023	FG19080019	\$ 33,418.53	\$ 210,719.25	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	CNMI Fish Aggregating Device Program FY2023	FG19080020	\$ 69,364.87	\$ 113,773.82	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Fish Habitat Surveys and Monitoring Program FY2023	FG19080021	\$ 13,631.51	\$ 83,980.99	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Fish Life History Analysis Program FY2023	FG19080022	\$ 48,686.75	\$ 122,448.26	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	CNMI Marine Resource Assessment Program FY2023	FG19080023	\$ 40,757.86	\$ 91,275.30	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	CNMI Sport Fish Restoration Program Management FY 2023	FG19080024	\$ 101,794.81	\$ 202,714.37	10/01/22	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	CNMI FY23 Fish and Wildlife Coordination Program	FG19080025	\$ 204,504.00	\$ 480,892.00	10/01/22	09/30/23
		NEW GRANTS AWARDS			\$ 3,343,643.99		

Funding Source	Grantor	Grant Title	Account no.	Operations Budget	Total Grant Award	Grant Period Start	Grant Period End
Federal Grants	WSFR	Fishing Platform Development Scoping - Phase 1: Environmental Study (AMD #1 - NO COST)	1908220014	\$ 13,875.10	\$ 39,941.78	10/01/21	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	SWG Coral Reef Management Program - Phase 1: Planning (AMD #1 - NO COST)	1908220001	\$ 23,821.70	\$ 86,646.70	10/01/21	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Spatial Data Management, Support, and Analysis of Wildlife Projects for Improved Species Conservation	1908220018	\$ 54,615.00	\$ 161,127.00	10/01/21	03/31/23
Federal Grants	SWG	State Wildlife Grant Implementation - FY 2022 (AMD. 01 - NO COST)	1908220020	\$ 56,410.00	\$ 98,581.00	10/01/21	09/30/23
Federal Grants	CSWG	CSWG-Alamagan Ecosystem Restoration to Benefit Mariana Skink and Multiple SGCN - Phase 1: Planning & Preparation (AMD. 01 - NO COST) (JDE ACCT. 10634B)	1908210067	\$ 217,266.00	\$ 272,964.00	10/01/20	09/30/23
Federal Grants	CSWG	CSWG-Determining the Distribution and Ecological Associations of the Rota Blue Damselfly (AMD. 01 - NO COST) (JDE ACCT. 10634C)	1908210068	\$ 351,534.00	\$ 466,660.00	01/01/21	12/31/24
Federal Grants	WSFR	E.A. for Mariana Swiftlet & Pacific Sheath-Tailed Bat Reintroductions to Rota - FY 2020 (AMD. 03 - NO COST) (JDE ACCT. 10611F)	1908210053	\$ 112,011.00	\$ 115,396.00	10/01/19	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Mariana Fruit Bat Monitoring and Management - FY 2020 (AMD. 04 - NO COST) (JDE ACCT. 10611C)	1908210050	\$ 90,058.00	\$ 205,164.00	10/01/19	09/30/23
Federal Grants	CSWG	CSWG-Preventing Extirpation of Partulid Snails Through Direct Management Grant (JDE ACCT. 11634A)	1908210073	\$ 134,968.00	\$ 249,086.00	10/21/21	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	Micronesian Megapode and Nightingale Reed-Warbler Surveys in Marpi Conservation Areas	1908220006	\$ 33,975.00	\$ 166,451.00	10/01/21	09/30/23
Federal Grants	WSFR	In-Water Hatcheries for Fish Population Augmentation	1908210075	\$ 209,914.00	\$ 263,836.00	10/01/20	09/30/23
		Amendment to Extend Performance Period			\$ 2,125,853.48		
Federal Grants	IFA	IFA 2023-2027 (First Year Allocation)	NA23NMF4070286		\$ 16,518.00	09/01/23	09/30/24
Federal Grants	WPacFin	WPacFin Data Collection and Entry Project	NA23NMF4370199		\$ 150,000.00	07/01/23	09/30/24
Federal Grants	TAP	TAP - CNMI-2021-3 CNMI Wetlands Management Plan	D21AP10099		\$ 183,876.00	05/10/21	09/30/23
Federal Grants	NWFW	NWFW-OPD-Coastal Community Resilience Initiative for Wetlands and Corals in Saipan's Priority Management Watershed (JDE ACCT N0663A)	2605210014		\$ 792,802.30	12/01/20	10/01/23
Federal Grants	DOD	DOD-Cooperative Agreement - U.S. Department of the Navy (NAVFAC)	FG19080002	\$ 78,907.00	\$ 164,990.00	08/11/21	12/11/23
		NON-Wildlife Sport Fish Restoration Program Grants (WSFR)			\$ 1,308,186.30		
		Total Grant Active Grant Awards			\$ 6,777,683.77		
Local Funds	Local Appropriation	FY 2024 Public Law 23-09	1420		\$ 409,008.00	10/01/23	09/30/24
	Total	Total Local Funds			\$ 409,008.00		
	GRANT	GRANT TOTAL: New Awards and Extended			\$ 7,186,691.77		

2024 PLANS

FISHERIES RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

The following fisheries research and monitoring program will continue into 2023:

1. Continue to work with on-going fisheries research and FADs projects;
2. Hire a Hatchery Fishery Biologist to be the project lead for In-water Hatchery Program, newly funded;
3. Complete the Comprehensive Coral Reef Western Lagoon Management Plan;
4. Hire a Technical Guidance Biologist;
5. DFW plans to analyze age and maturity information on previously processed otolith and gonad samples. Continue sampling of target species will be conducted in order to obtain a sufficient sample size for analysis. Results generated from this project will be shared with management. Target species will remain as previously proposed sizes until sufficient sample sized have been acquired

FISHERIES DATA SECTION

Implement Mandatory Fisheries Data Collection Standard Operation Procedure, the SellIt LogIt Electronic Data Collections portion of the Plan and hire a Fisheries Data Analyst to analyze all the commercial and nearshore data collected.

AQUATIC EDUCATION PROGRAM

- Will work with an app developer to develop a fish identification app to be used by recreational fishermen.
- Develop a Fish identification link or QR Code to share online and on printed materials as well as a possible project on developing a Fish ID pocket book/fish ID app

- Continue collaborating with different NGOs towards projects on sustainable fishing, marine conservation, and sustainable resource management

SMILING COVE MARINA

- Work with DLNR for the extension of FEMA funding for the Tinian marina;
- Complete Tinian Marina once the extension and the Flex Matching Program is approved;
- Complete the projects under the FEMA project worksheets;

CONSERVATION ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

Re-organize the Conservation Enforcement Section, fill in the vacant Conservation Enforcement Officer I positions. Work towards re-instating the Joint Enforcement Agreement with NOAA-OLE;

WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

- Conduct an island-wide survey on Agrihan island to include birds, plants, invertebrates, reptiles, habitat vegetation;
- Follow the various conservation efforts pursuant to the new grant awards;
- Conduct the Saipan Upland Mitigation Bank surveys for birds and bats, but the emphasis will be on Nightingale Reed-warbler (NIRW) and Megapod.

BTS INTERDICTION PROGRAM

- Fill the vacancy for Tinian BTS Training Handler;
- Send rest of the BTS staff who have not yet gone to the BTS Rapid Response Training (RRT) to the BTS RRT training;
- Request OPM for the reallocation of the BTS handler staff to Detector Dog Specialist position.
- Send the Rota BTS Handler Training to the USDA BTS Detector Dog training to be certified BTS Detector Dog Handler;
- Continue to look for funding for the construction of the new BTS kennel and administrative facilities in Lower Base;