

18 August 2011

## REQUEST FOR STATEMENTS OF INTEREST

### PROJECT TO BE INITIATED IN 2011

#### **Project Title: Develop and Implement Conservation and Management Actions in Support of Recovery Actions for the Mariana Crow and Mariana Fruit Bat on the island of Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands**

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential projects to be funded by the Department of the Navy (DoN) in support of recovery actions for the threatened Mariana fruit bat and the endangered Mariana crow on the island of Rota, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Approximately \$200,000 is expected to be available to support these projects (contingent upon availability of funds). Subject to the Anti-Deficiency Act (31 U.S.C. § 1341), additional funding may be available for follow on work in subsequent fiscal years to the successful Recipient(s).

#### **Background:**

Both the Mariana Fruit Bat and Mariana crow have U.S. Endangered Species Act recovery plans. We are requesting Statements of Interest associated with current research and management action needs identified in the Draft Revised Mariana Crow and Mariana Fruit Bat Recovery Plans (USFWS 2005 and 2009, respectively).

#### *Status of the Mariana Crow*

The Mariana crow was federally listed as endangered on August 27, 1984 (USFWS 1984). A five-year status review was completed in July 2005 (USFWS 2005b) and a draft revised recovery plan for the Mariana crow was completed in 2005 (USFWS 2005a). Currently, the population is estimated to consist of approximately 60 breeding pairs and 24 non-breeding individuals on Rota and one male bird on Guam.

#### *Threats to the Mariana Crow and Conservation Needs*

Threats to the Mariana crow include habitat loss, forest degradation by introduced ungulates, predation by brown treesnakes (on Guam), and human persecution. Human persecution may be a source of mortality for adult and juvenile crows. Unfortunately, the level of human persecution, as well as the motivation behind it, is poorly understood.

On both Guam and Rota, crow nests have been found exclusively in native tree species, and native trees also serve as the primary sources for foraging for the crow. Conservation needs include protection of habitat from anthropogenic losses, grazing by feral ungulates, invasion of introduced plants, and loss of pollinators such as the Mariana fruit bat.

#### *Status of the Mariana Fruit Bat*

The Mariana fruit bat is endemic to the Mariana archipelago (Guam and the CNMI), where it is

found on most of the fifteen major islands. The Guam population of the Mariana fruit bat was federally listed as endangered in 1984 (USFWS 1984). Critical habitat was designated for this species on October 28, 2004 (USFWS 2004). In 2005, the Mariana fruit bat was listed as threatened throughout the Mariana archipelago and reclassified from endangered to threatened on Guam (USFWS 2005c). A five-year status review was completed in 2007 for this species (USFWS 2007). A draft revised recovery plan for the Mariana fruit bat was completed in 2009 (USFWS 2009).

#### *Threats to the Mariana Fruit Bat and Conservation Needs*

Threats to the Mariana fruit bat include illegal hunting, loss and degradation of native forest, predation by the brown treesnake (on Guam), and increased extirpation risk to small populations due to chance environmental catastrophes and demographic shifts (USFWS 2009).

Habitat protection and enhancement on islands where bats occur now is needed to ensure that adequate resources for foraging and roosting are present to support growing bat numbers as the species recovers. Mariana fruit bats from Rota are believed to move episodically among the southern islands, and this island thus is considered to be important to the long-term stability of the species in the southern part of the Mariana archipelago and to the existence of the colony on Guam (Wiles and Glass 1990; Wiles *et al.* 1995; USFWS 2005c - recovery plan includes the genetic data on interisland movements). On Rota, Mariana fruit bat use primary and secondary limestone forest for roosting and foraging; (Glass and Taisacan 1988). Effective control of unlawful hunting throughout the archipelago through outreach, education, and enforcement measures is required, especially on Rota, which harbors a relatively large number of bats and where hunting pressure is high and chronic. In addition, continued research and monitoring is necessary to improve our knowledge of the Mariana fruit bat's biology, ecology, and population status and trends in response to threats and conservation actions.

#### **Brief Description of Anticipated Work:**

Proposals should address the long-term survival and recovery of the Mariana crow and the Mariana fruit bat. Proposals can focus on one or more recovery actions related to the Mariana crow and Mariana fruit bat. Proposed projects will target on-the-ground recovery actions (or steps needed to prepare for on-the-ground actions). These actions will strive to reverse recent declines in Mariana crow and Mariana fruit bat numbers on Rota to facilitate the recovery of these species.

The goals are to develop and implement projects aimed at:

- 1) Minimizing illegal hunting of Mariana fruit bats.
- 2) Eradicating or significantly reducing populations of ungulates in Management Areas.
- 3) Protecting and restoring native vegetation.
- 4) Increasing public awareness of threats to the species and conservation needs.
- 5) Improving monitoring methods and implementing monitoring plans. .
- 6) Predator management and removal (i.e. control of introduced animals such as rats, cats, and black drongos).
- 7) Detailed research into the relative importance of presumed important limiting factors (rats and human persecution) to the survival and reproduction of the crow on Rota.

- 8) Ecological and life history research to determine for example (i) the fruit bat's specific habitat requirements – habitat structure, composition, and habitat needs, (ii) refined estimates of rates of reproduction and survival, (iii) population-level impacts of illegal hunting and direct and indirect effects of typhoons, and (iv) the best means to reestablish self-sustaining numbers of Mariana fruit bats on Guam.
- 9) Socioeconomic research to shed light on the best methods for reducing illegal hunting of Mariana fruit bats (i.e., development of a conservation incentives program that can be implemented throughout the archipelago).
- 10) Other research and conservation actions as described and prioritized in the Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the Mariana Fruit Bat or Fanihi (USFWS 2009) and/or Draft revised recovery plan for the aga or Mariana crow, *Corvus kubaryi* (USFWS 2005a).

**Period of Performance:** The period of performance for this Cooperative Agreement will be dependent upon the final proposal selected, but is expected to be from 12-18 months from date of award.

**Required Qualifications:** The Principal Investigator and field staff shall have experience implementing complex projects; experience in the CNMI/Guam or other Pacific Islands; and familiarity with threatened and endangered species in the Pacific Islands. Specific experience with corvids and fruit bat populations is highly desired. In addition to the above, specific education requirements of the Principal Investigator and field staff include, at a minimum, a Master's degree, however proposals submitted at the Post-doctoral level are highly desired.

**Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:**

Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: [Andrew.Wall@fe.navy.mil](mailto:Andrew.Wall@fe.navy.mil)  
(Maximum length: 7 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).

1. Name, Organization and Contact Information
2. Project proposal to include timelines, roles and responsibilities of personnel, specific tasks to be conducted, and deliverables. Please be as specific as possible.
3. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
  - a. Biographical Sketch,
  - b. Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
  - c. Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
  - d. Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, field facilities, etc.).
4. Detailed budget of the costs to implement the proposed project (item 2).

**Note: We are intending to use fiscal year 2011 funds for this project. A detailed study proposal and proposed budget are requested at this time.**

**Review of Statements Received:** Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to prepare a full study proposal. Statements will be evaluated based on the qualifications of the project manager and technical staff, the soundness of the overall project approach and the use of any innovative techniques to accomplish the

objectives of the stated approach, and the reasonableness of the cost.

**Please send responses or direct questions to:**

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**Timeline for Review of Statements of Interest:** We intend to use fiscal year 2011 funds for this project. In order to be considered, Statements of Interest shall be submitted for no later than 0900 Chamorro standard time on September 12, 2011.