



Be Aware of the Brown Tree Snake

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service



Program Aid No. 1709
Issued March 2002

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Accidentally introduced to Guam in the late 1940s or early 1950s, the brown tree snake (BTS) has caused extensive economic and ecological damage to the island. In just half a century, the snake has exterminated most of Guam's native forest birds and greatly reduced its population of fruit bats and native lizards.

Unlike regions where the BTS is indigenous, Guam has no natural means to keep the species' population in check. An abundant food supply and the lack of local competitors and

predators have allowed the BTS to reach a population density among the highest ever recorded for any snake. The BTS population on Guam has grown so large that snakes coming into contact with power lines have caused more than 1,000 electrical outages, costing taxpayers millions of dollars and inconveniencing residents.

The problems caused by the BTS could spread to other Pacific islands and the U.S. mainland if the species gets established elsewhere. These snakes have already been captured in Hawaii and on the



mainland. They are believed to have arrived along with cargo transported from ships and planes originating in Guam.

When leaving Guam, you can help ensure that the BTS does not leave with you by carefully inspecting your belongings, particularly outdoor goods. For more information about the BTS, visit <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ws/statereports.guam.html> on the Web or call (617) 635-4400 in Guam and (808) 861-8576 in Hawaii to speak with a Federal wildlife biologist.