

Cooperative Agreement Between the
United States Department of Commerce
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
National Marine Fisheries Service
and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Department of Lands and Natural Resources
Division of Fish and Wildlife
for the Conservation of Threatened and Endangered Species

This cooperative agreement is entered into pursuant to section 6(c)(1) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (hereinafter referred to as “the Act”), and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Fish, Game and Endangered Species Act, P.L. 2-51, as amended (hereinafter referred to as “CNMI Act”), between the United States Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Division of Fish and Wildlife, acting by and through its Department of Lands and Natural Resources. Hereinafter, the parties shall be referred to as NMFS, DFW, and DLNR, respectively. All terms contained herein shall be given the same meaning as defined at 50 C.F.R. section 222.102.

Whereas, the Act authorizes the Secretary of Commerce (hereinafter referred to as “the Secretary”) to enter into cooperative agreements in accordance with section 6 with states and territories that establish and maintain adequate and active programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species;

Whereas, the CNMI Act authorizes the DFW to carry out programs authorized by statute with respect to aquatic life, wildlife, and land plants;

Whereas, the CNMI has established adequate and active conservation programs consistent with the purposes and polices of the Act for the following species of fish and wildlife occurring in the region which have been deemed by the Secretary to be endangered or threatened and under the jurisdiction of NMFS:

Endangered Species

Hawksbill sea turtle, *Eretmochelys imbricata*

Threatened Species

Green sea turtle, *Chelonia mydas*

Whereas, the purposes of the Act are to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of the treaties and conventions set forth in subsection 2(a) of the Act;

Whereas, the Secretary has delegated to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS the authority to enter into cooperative agreements with states and territories for the purpose of supporting programs for endangered and threatened species conservation;

Whereas, the Act requires the Secretary to determine that: (1) the acting agency is authorized to establish conservation programs, including the acquisition of land or aquatic habitat, or interests therein, for all resident species of fish and wildlife listed in this agreement; (2) the acting agency is authorized to conduct investigations to determine the status and requirements of survival of resident species of fish and wildlife; (3) the acting agency has made provision for public participation in designating resident species of fish and wildlife as

endangered or threatened; and (4) the species listed in this agreement will be given immediate attention, as NMFS and DFW agree that those species are the most urgently in need of conservation programs;

Whereas, NMFS hereby determines that DFW satisfies the Act's legal requirements for such cooperative agreements as specified in the immediately preceding paragraph;

Whereas, the parties to this agreement are in accord that the programs administered in the CNMI are designed to conserve resident endangered and threatened species, and that it is the mutual desire of DFW and NMFS to cooperate for the common purpose of planning, developing, and conducting programs to protect, manage, and enhance populations of all resident endangered and threatened species covered by this agreement within the CNMI;

Whereas, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS has the administrative authority to establish programs for the conservation of endangered and threatened species; to provide periodic review of the program at no greater than annual intervals; to provide funding for the development of endangered and threatened species conservation programs or to assist in monitoring candidate and recovered species as such funding is available and in accordance with the terms of the Act; to provide coordination among the programs of various states and territories; and to exchange such biological data or other information that may result in the continued conservation of endangered or threatened species;

Whereas, the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS authorizes the Pacific Islands Regional Administrator of NMFS to monitor the implementation of this cooperative agreement;

Therefore the parties agree as follows:

1. Consistent with section 6(d) of the Act, NMFS may provide financial assistance to DFW to assist in the development of endangered and threatened species conservation programs or to assist in monitoring candidate and recovered species. Such projects shall be approved by NMFS in accordance with the Act.
2. NMFS and DFW shall carry out the cooperative program for the conservation of endangered and threatened species, which may involve law enforcement, research, management, and public information and education activities conducted for the benefit of resident endangered and threatened species in the CNMI.
3. Pursuant to section 6(c)(1)(E)(ii) of the Act, entry into this agreement shall in no way affect the applicability of the prohibitions set forth in or authorized pursuant to section 4(d) and section 9 of the Act with respect to the taking of any resident endangered or threatened species of fish or wildlife.

4. Effective Date and Renewal

(a) This agreement shall become effective when signed by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS, the Secretary of the DLNR, and the Director of DFW and may be renewed in the following manner: Not later than June 30th each year, DFW shall submit to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS the following: (1) the current list of the CNMI listed resident endangered and threatened fish and wildlife within the jurisdiction of NMFS and a description of all changes to such list or the listing processes since the date of the previous submission of the list to NMFS; (2) a certification of any amendments in DFW's legal authority

or regulatory programs for endangered and threatened fish and wildlife that were made since the date of the previous submission of the program to NMFS; (3) a list of all changes in the endangered and threatened species conservation programs since the date of the previous submission of the program to NMFS; (4) a report on the status of all projects funded pursuant to paragraph 1 of this agreement; and (5) any additional information requested by the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS that pertains to DFW's program for conservation of endangered and threatened fish and wildlife;

(b) The Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS will, on or before October 1st of each year, notify DFW in writing whether the cooperative agreement is renewed effective October 1st of that year, or that the program or authorities are no longer in compliance with the criteria of section 6(c) of the Act, and unless appropriate changes are made by June 30th of the following year, this agreement shall be terminated. If DFW has not received notification concerning renewal of this agreement by October 1st of each year, the agreement shall continue in force and effect as if it had been renewed.


5. Amendment

This agreement may be amended at any time within the written concurrence of the signatories.

6. Termination

This agreement may be terminated: (a) by mutual agreement; (b) by DFW upon 60 days written notice to the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS; or (c) notwithstanding the renewal provisions in section 4(b) of this cooperative agreement, by NMFS upon 60 days notice

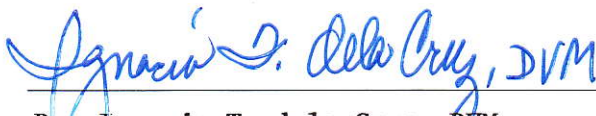
to DFW from the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS, stating reasons why the CNMI's conservation program for endangered and threatened species is no longer in compliance with the criteria in section 6(c) of the Act, or that the CNMI has otherwise violated provisions of this agreement. DFW may submit a written request for review to the Secretary within 30 days of the receipt of the termination notice. The Secretary shall consider all evidence submitted by DFW in its request for review and either reaffirm the termination of agreement at the end of the 60 day notification period, or reverse the determination of the Assistant Administrator for Fisheries of NMFS and revoke the notice of termination. Any Federal funds that have been awarded pursuant to this agreement to DFW, but not expended by DFW, as of the date of termination of this agreement or final reaffirmation thereof shall be returned to NMFS for reallocation pursuant to section 6(d).



James W. Balsiger, Ph.D.
Acting Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Marine Fisheries Service

11/20/09

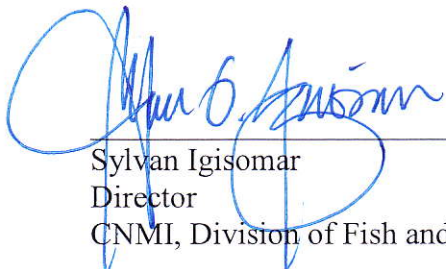
Date



Dr. Ignacio T. dela Cruz, DVM
Secretary
CNMI, Department of Lands and Natural Resources

12/03/09

Date



Sylvan Igisomar
Director
CNMI, Division of Fish and Wildlife

11/30/09

Date