



## **Candidate Conservation Program (CCP): A valuable landowner tool designed to benefit both species and landowners**

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The mission of the Candidate Conservation Program (CCP) is to prevent the need to list species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We do this by partnering with private landowners, non-profit organizations, States, Territories, and Commonwealths to develop and implement proactive conservation strategies aimed at removing or reducing threats to declining, non-listed, native species. The Pacific Islands are home to thousands of rare, beautiful plant and animal species. Many of these plants and animals are found on a single island, or even in a single valley, stream, or mountain top. More than 600 of these species are so imperiled that they have been listed as threatened or endangered. Our unique plants and animals are facing deleterious impacts from:

- Human overpopulation and the associated encroachment into our natural areas;
- Significant increase in global travel resulting in the introduction of harmful nonnative plants, animals, and diseases; and
- The myriad of threats slowly being revealed by climate change:
  - Sea-level rise
  - More frequent and severe droughts
  - Shifting, shrinking, and disappearing habitats



Invasive rat preying on a bird nest  
Photo credit: Jack Jeffery Photography

When species face even one of these negative impacts it can be devastating. Many of our native species face two or more of these negative impacts. The cumulative impact from all of these threats can make it very challenging for our native species to survive.

The Candidate Conservation Program works to protect our native species and the ecosystems upon which they depend. We strive to accomplish this task by working with species experts to identify declining native species early on, and then work with partners to reverse the downward trend. We hope to inspire the communities in which we serve to work together to conserve declining species by acting early to prevent the need to list them as threatened or endangered. We want our native species to thrive, not just survive, and we know this takes a collective effort.



Anianiau (*Hemignthus parvus*), a native forest bird endemic to Kuai

Photo credit: Jack Jeffery Photography

One of the most powerful conservation tools of the Candidate Conservation Program is Candidate Conservation Agreements. These purely voluntary agreements can include any non-listed, declining, native species and do not need to be officially designated candidate species. These voluntary agreements contain provisions that can be renewed, terminated, or transferred. Ideally, the motivation for enrollment in an agreement is based on a desire to benefit one or more of our native species.

There are two types of Candidate Conservation Agreements:

1. **Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA)**, are available for Federal and non-Federal landowners.
2. **Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAAs)** are available to non-Federal landowners only, and come with assurances to the participating landowner(s) that if the species covered in the agreement becomes listed in the future no additional conservation measures will be required outside of what is specified in the agreement. These landowner benefits provide landowners more predictability regarding how they use their land and manage their natural resources.

A Candidate Conservation Agreement is similar in nature to a Safe Harbor Agreement (SHA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). For more information on CCAAs or the Candidate Conservation Program visit our Web page at [www.fws.gov/pacificislands](http://www.fws.gov/pacificislands) or contact Carrie Harrington at [carrie\\_harrington@fws.gov](mailto:carrie_harrington@fws.gov).