

BROWN TREESNAKES FOUND IN HAWAII

APRIL 1981: A live snake is found crawling in the customs area at the Honolulu Airport.

JULY 1981: A dead snake is found at Barbers Point Naval Air Station.

MAY 1986: A live snake is found on a post guide-wire at Hickam Air Force Base.

OCTOBER 1989: A dead snake is found next to a cargo jet at Hickam Air Force Base.

SEPTEMBER 1991: A dead snake is found on a runway at Honolulu Airport and a live snake is found under a cargo jet at Hickam Air Force Base.

DECEMBER 1994: A live snake is discovered in a warehouse on Schofield Barracks.

AUGUST 1998: A dead snake is found in the wheel well of a commercial aircraft being serviced at Honolulu Airport.

OTHER SNAKES FOUND IN HAWAII

Despite laws banning the importation or possession of snakes in Hawaii, they continue to be sighted, recovered, or turned in under the amnesty program.

HDOA records from a 10-year period between 1990 and 2000 show that there were 236 credible snake sightings reported in Hawaii.

Of these, 137 snakes were retrieved (either captured roaming free, confiscated, surrendered as illegal pets, or found dead), leaving 99 reported snakes unaccounted just from those 10 years.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE A SNAKE

1. **Call the Pest Hotline immediately: 643-PEST.** Monitor the snake until trained authorities arrive. If the snake is resting or hiding in an enclosed area, do not disturb it.
2. If it is moving and you are unable to contain it, track its location until authorities arrive.
3. If the snake attempts to flee, and it is safe to do so, kill it by striking the back of its head with a heavy object, or cut it in half with a machete or other implement.
4. If the snake is dead, put it in a plastic bag labeled with the location, date and time of capture. Store it in the freezer for pick up and examination by authorities.
5. If you have a pet snake, voluntarily turn it in by calling 643-PEST which offers immunity from prosecution.
6. Being caught with a snake could mean a fine of up to \$200,000 and three years in jail. Anyone with information or knowledge of snakes or other illegal animals should call 643-PEST (643-7378).



REPORT ALL SNAKE SIGHTINGS
TO

643-PEST (643-7378)

Dial direct from any island

HAWAII DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



**STOP
THE
BROWN
TREE-
SNAKE**

WHY BE CONCERNED ABOUT SNAKES?

The islands of Hawai'i have no native snakes. The law prohibits the entry or possession of snakes. Should a brown treesnake or other snake enter Hawai'i and establish a breeding population, our island economy, ecology, and way of life will be irretrievably altered.

Most of the information in this brochure focuses on brown treesnakes. Many other species of snakes would have the same impact if they were to arrive.

DEVASTATION ON GUAM and DANGER TO HAWAI'I

Like the islands of Hawai'i, the island of Guam is home to many unique plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth. These species flourished in isolation and the absence of predators.

For this reason they lack the mechanisms needed to protect themselves from predators, such as snakes, that are not naturally present on these islands.

The brown treesnake was inadvertently introduced to Guam shortly after WWII, probably as a stowaway aboard a cargo ship sailing from the Pacific New Guinea area where these snakes naturally occur.

Abundant food and a lack of competition or predators lead to ultra-high snake populations, as many as 40 snakes per acre in some forest areas during the 1970s and 1980s. Current populations average 20 snakes per acre.



Air and ship traffic and cargo from Guam to Hawai'i provide the opportunity for these snakes to arrive.

Economic Impacts

- Brown treesnakes on Guam climb power lines and have caused more than 1,200 small to island-wide power outages over the past 30 years, costing millions of dollars in repair costs, lost revenue and work productivity.
- Extrapolated findings of possible economic impacts to the energy, medical and tourism industries in Hawai'i are conservatively estimated at \$578 million annually.



Ecosystem Impacts

- On Guam it took less than 30 years for most native forest birds, seabirds, introduced bird species and several lizard species to vanish due to snake predation. As a result of the lack of birds, insect populations are abnormally high, which impacts agriculture production.
- Hawai'i has lost over half its native birds to extinction. If the brown treesnake established itself here, many more of the birds remaining in Hawai'i would be wiped out. Also at risk is our \$15 million poultry industry, and there would be additional costs to protect crops from insects.

Health and Quality of Life Impacts

- Hospitals on Guam treat about 150 victims of brown treesnake bites each year, the majority of which are infants and toddlers.
- Residents and visitors of Hawai'i benefit from a relatively benign and comfortable environment. Let's keep it that way!

HOW TO PREVENT SNAKES IN HAWAI'I

State and federal agencies work to reduce the possibility of snakes arriving and becoming established in Hawai'i.

Efforts focus on reducing the chances of snakes leaving Guam, intercepting snakes at ports of entry, and early detection and rapid response upon reported sightings.

- Snake-detection dog teams on Guam inspect commercial and military cargo and flights leaving Guam; however, rising cargo and traffic from Guam have left some departing cargo and craft uninspected.
- In HDOA's Detector Dog Program, almost 100% of incoming military and civilian flights from Guam are inspected to help ensure that snakes are not onboard.
- Construction of barriers help establish snake-free zones in Guam's air and sea ports and in key wildlife habitat areas.
- Researchers investigate development of chemical control methods to reduce the snake population on Guam.
- Education programs help train civilian and military air cargo personnel on snake behavior and inspection of preferred hiding places of the brown treesnake.
- The Hawai'i Brown Treesnake Response Protocol helps ensure organized quick response in the event of a snake sighting.
- Awareness promotes support for a snake-free Hawai'i. The public is asked to report snake sightings to **643-PEST**.