

**Brown Tree Snake Awareness and Prevention Plan for  
Diego Garcia**

**DGREGCOORDINST 5090.13**



# DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

U.S. NAVY SUPPORT FACILITY DIEGO GARCIA  
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## DIEGO GARCIA REGIONAL COORDINATOR INSTRUCTION 5090.13

Subj: BROWN TREE SNAKE AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PLAN FOR DIEGO GARCIA

Ref: (a) Executive Order 13112  
(b) Environmental and Natural Resources Management Planning Board Meeting of 21 Nov 2001  
(c) COMNAVMARIANAS Instruction 5090.10

Encl: (1) Brown Tree Snake Awareness and Prevention Plan  
(2) Brown Tree Snake Inspection Checklist  
(3) Diego Garcia Snake Sighting Response Protocol  
(4) Pest Alert Flyer

1. Purpose. Implement Brown Tree Snake (BTS) Awareness and Prevention Plan to prevent introduction of BTS on Diego Garcia.

2. Background. Reference (a) mandates Federal agencies to prevent the introduction of invasive species, to provide for their control and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species may cause. Per reference (b), the host country, through the authority of the British Representative, formally requested U.S. Forces on Diego Garcia develop and implement a program to prevent introduction of BTS on Diego Garcia via inadvertent transportation by air or sea vessels from Guam and other areas in the Mariana's Islands, where BTS is known to have caused extreme damages to an island ecosystem. Reference (c) discusses USDA control measures and inspection procedures of cargoes leaving COMNAVMARIANAS, Andersen AFB and Guam commercial ports.

3. Discussion. Enclosure (1) assigns responsibilities and provides guidance to prevent the introduction of BTS and establishes procedures on how to capture or kill a BTS when sighted. Personnel that inspect cargoes and vessels arriving on the island shall use enclosure (2). Enclosure (3) contains the snake sighting response protocol developed for Diego Garcia. Enclosure (4) is the Pest Alert poster that will be posted in strategic locations for personnel awareness.

4. Applicability. This instruction applies to all U.S. Navy Support Facility (NAVSUPPFAC) departments, tenant commands, contractors and transient units on board Diego Garcia.

5. Action. All NAVSUPPFAC departments, tenant commands, contractors and transient units involved in air and sea vessels operations, port customs and cargo operations shall implement and comply with the provisions of enclosure (1) as appropriate.

6. Reviews. Enclosure (1) will be reviewed annually with the host command, host country and applicable tenant commands to evaluate if there are "lessons learned" and new techniques that may be adopted to enhance the program. Personnel responsible for contract preparation and execution shall ensure that

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appropriate clauses are included in contract documents and that contractor performance conforms to this instruction.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert M. Hibbert", with a stylized, cursive script.

ROBERT M. HIBBERT

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Lists I, II, III & IV

BROWN TREESNAKE  
AWARENESS AND PREVENTION PLAN

I. Introduction

a. Purpose.

(1) The primary objective of this plan is to increase personnel awareness and implement controlled measures to prevent the introduction of BTS to the snake-free island of Diego Garcia. Specifically, this plan is developed to disseminate procedures to resident and transient units, and to emphasize the threat and need to prevent BTS movement from Guam to Diego Garcia. These preventative practices are particularly crucial during cargo off-loads.

(2) BTS is a native species of Indonesia, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Australia that was inadvertently introduced in Guam sometime between the mid-1940s and the early 1950's. Since its introduction, the population of BTS has expanded to encompass the entire island's rural and urban areas. The BTS has caused or has been a major factor in the extirpation of Guam's native terrestrial vertebrates including fruit bats, lizards, and virtually all of the islands endemic forest and water birds. In addition, the BTS has caused more than a thousand power outages, preyed on poultry and household pets, and has bitten numerous children.

(3) High densities of snakes occur throughout Guam where cargoes are loaded for transport by air and sea. The potential spread of BTS from Guam via cargo movements is a serious concern due to Guam's role as a trans-Pacific shipping hub and the delicate environments of islands that receive the cargo, e.g. Diego Garcia. BTS sightings have been recorded on islands in Hawaii, or Tinian, Rota, and Saipan, Okinawa, Wake Island and in the southern United States. No sightings of BTS on Diego Garcia have been recorded.

2. Direction. In an effort to prevent the introduction of BTS on Diego Garcia, the Environmental and Natural Resources Program Management Board discussed the establishment of a Brown Tree Snake Awareness and Prevention Plan. This is because of high susceptibility of the island to inadvertent introduction of BTS due to regular receipt of cargoes from Guam via the supply shuttle ship. This condition is aggravated when forward deployed contingency forces offload, at a more frequent rate, cargoes and pieces of equipment brought in via air or water vessels from Guam.

3. BTS Actions on Diego Garcia

a. In October 2000, NAVSUPFAC Diego Garcia conducted BTS Awareness Training to representatives from various departments, tenant commands and the BOS contractors who are involved in mobilizations, port customs and cargo operations. The training defined their responsibilities relative to BTS control and discussed the significance of knowing the BTS biology, its potential impacts or damage to the island's ecosystem and its effects on the island personnel's quality of life.

b. Similarly, all civilian and military personnel involved in the forward deployment mobilizations; port customs and cargo operations will be briefed on BTS. They will be trained periodically on how to report and respond to BTS sightings. The videotape "The Silent Invader" will be shown as part of the



training. BTS posters will be displayed in buildings for general awareness purposes.

4. Responsibilities

a. The following categorized responsibilities provide a foundation for actions required for units or personnel involved in mobility, cargo and personnel deployment and for personnel in charge of receiving and handling cargoes from off island:

(1) NAVSUPPFAC Diego Garcia - As host command, ensure that all military and civilian personnel on Diego Garcia comply with the requirements of this plan.

(2) Air Force Commanders - Implement enclosure (2) for all cargoes, supplies and equipment that arrive on Diego Garcia. Identify and submit in writing the specific staging areas for vehicles, cargo pallets and containers, and other equipment that come in from Guam. Additionally, designate in writing the key personnel responsible for cargo staging, handling and inspection to the Commanding Officer, U.S. Navy Support Facility (NSF CO) via the Public Works Department (PWD) Environmental Office.

b. NSF Supply and BOS Contractor

(1) Ensure that all military and BOS contractor personnel involved in the regular cargo receipts and offloads undergo the annual BTS awareness training conducted by the PWD Environmental Office.

(2) Implement enclosure (2) for all cargoes, supplies and equipment that arrive on Diego Garcia, especially those coming in from Guam.

(3) Identify and submit in writing the specific staging areas for vehicles, cargo pallets and containers, and other equipment that come in from Guam. Additionally, designate in writing the key personnel responsible for cargo staging, handling and inspection to the NSF CO via the PWD Environmental Office.

c. NSF Weapons

(1) Implement enclosure (2) for all cargoes, supplies and equipment that arrive on Diego Garcia.

(2) Identify and submit in writing the specific staging areas for cargo pallets and containers, and other supplies that come in from Guam. Additionally, designate in writing the key personnel responsible for cargo staging, handling and inspection to the NSF CO via the PWD Environmental Office.

d. PWD Environmental

(1) Shall be responsible in the overall implementation of the BTS awareness and preventive program.

(2) Ensure that annual BTS awareness training is provided to all personnel involved in the receipt, offloading and handling of cargoes and equipment.

(3) Publish and distribute the Snake Sighting Response Protocol (enclosure (3)). Prominently display emergency phone numbers to report suspected BTS sightings and informational posters (enclosure (4)) or bulletins in appropriate areas especially at the designated cargo and equipment staging areas.

5. Temporary Staging or Quarantine Areas. Once the staging/quarantining area for cargo offload (e.g., materials and pieces of equipment from air or water vessels) is officially identified or designated, the staging/quarantining area will be monitored by nighttime spotlighting and placing snake traps around periphery. This is in addition to the regular visual inspection during offloads.

6. Guidelines for BTS Sightings. The emergency response procedure in flow chart form is provided in enclosure (3). The local television stations and weekly bulletins will also post the BTS announcements on a regular basis.

(a) Immediate Action

(1) Make every attempt to kill or capture the snake. **Do not delay.** The cost and difficulty of trying to locate an escaped BTS, coupled with the potentially significant ecological impacts of each snake, justify the killing or capturing of the snake immediately.

- Pinning it down with one's boot heel, a stick or anything heavy can capture a BTS. A sharp blow to the snake's head with the boot heel or any heavy object should be fatal.
- A bucket or heavy box can be used to capture a snake on a flat surface. Place the container over the head of the snake leaving enough space for the snake to crawl completely underneath the container. Then weight it down to confine the BTS. If bagging a stunned or pinned-down snake, grab it directly behind its head.
- Keep any dead or captured snake available for positive identification by the Environmental Office.

Note: If not sure what type of snake it is and afraid to immobilize or kill it, don't lost sight. Contact the snake-alert telephone numbers immediately.

(2) Exercise caution. When threatened, the BTS will coil back into a strike position, flatten its head, and lunge to bite. Small grooved fangs located in the rear of the mouth enable the mild venom to trickle into the bite while the snake constricts. A normal defensive strike from a BTS will not allow the rear fangs to penetrate the skin and will usually result in minor punctures similar to pinpricks. When wearing battle dress uniforms (BDU), denims and field boots or safety shoes, a bite from a BTS will not penetrate clothing or footwear.

(b) Notifications for suspected BTS Sightings.

(1) When a suspected BTS is sighted, the immediate action is to kill or immobilize the snake so that it cannot escape. The person involved will then collect information of the incident that will describe the circumstances

of the sighting, and remain on scene to act as primary POC to responders. BIOT Environmental, NSF Security, or PWD Environmental may call upon the person who discovered the snake to collect additional information.

(2) When a suspected BTS is sighted, killed, captured or a BTS is assumed to be in a specific area, immediately contact the Snake Alert phone numbers listed below. The caller will provide the following information on suspected BTS presence and will be given instructions regarding follow-on action:

- \* Name of Caller
- \* Organization
- \* Sighting Location
- \* Status (snake killed/captured/contained/loose)
- \* Date and Time of Sighting
- \* Initial Response Action at the Scene

(3) The Snake Alert telephone numbers to call are:

After 1600H and during weekends

- \* 112 - TROUBLE DESK
- \* 116 - NSF SECURITY
- \* 110 - BIOT POLICE

NOTE: Trouble desk, NSF Security and BIOT Police are on call 24 hours a day. They will immediately notify the Pest Control Shop and NSF/BIOT Environmental personnel.

During work hours

- \* 370-4834/4722 - PEST CONTROL SHOP
- \* 370-4546/4542 - PWD ENVIRONMENTAL
- \* 370-2938/2939 - BIOT ENVIRONMENTAL

(4) Once notified of a sighting and circumstances, personnel will respond (i.e. Pest Controllers, BIOT and NSF Security and Environmental personnel) and provide assistance needed to locate and capture the reported snake.



**BROWN TREE SNAKE INSPECTION CHECKLIST**

Please fill-out the form and provide a copy to NSF PWD Environmental Office.

For Incoming Vessel:

1. Name of Vessel: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Voyage or Flight Number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date/Time Arrived: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \*Was the aircraft inspected by USDA prior to departure from Guam?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

For Incoming Weapons/Ammunitions:

1. Cargo ID: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date/Time of Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date/Time of Off-load: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \*Were the weapons/ammunitions inspected by USDA prior to departure from Guam? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Was there any visual inspections conducted on Diego Garcia prior to or during off-load? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

For Incoming Vehicles and Military Equipment:

1. Mode of Transport: By ship? \_\_\_\_\_ By Aircraft? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date/Time of Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Date/Time of Off-load: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \*Were the vehicles/equipment inspected by USDA prior to departure from Guam? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
5. Was there any visual inspections conducted on Diego Garcia prior to or during off-load? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

For Other Cargoes, Supplies and Equipment:

1. Date/Time of Arrival: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Date/Time of Off-load: \_\_\_\_\_
3. \*Were the cargoes/supplies/equipment inspected by USDA prior to departure from Guam? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



4. Was there any visual inspections conducted on Diego Garcia prior to or during off-load? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

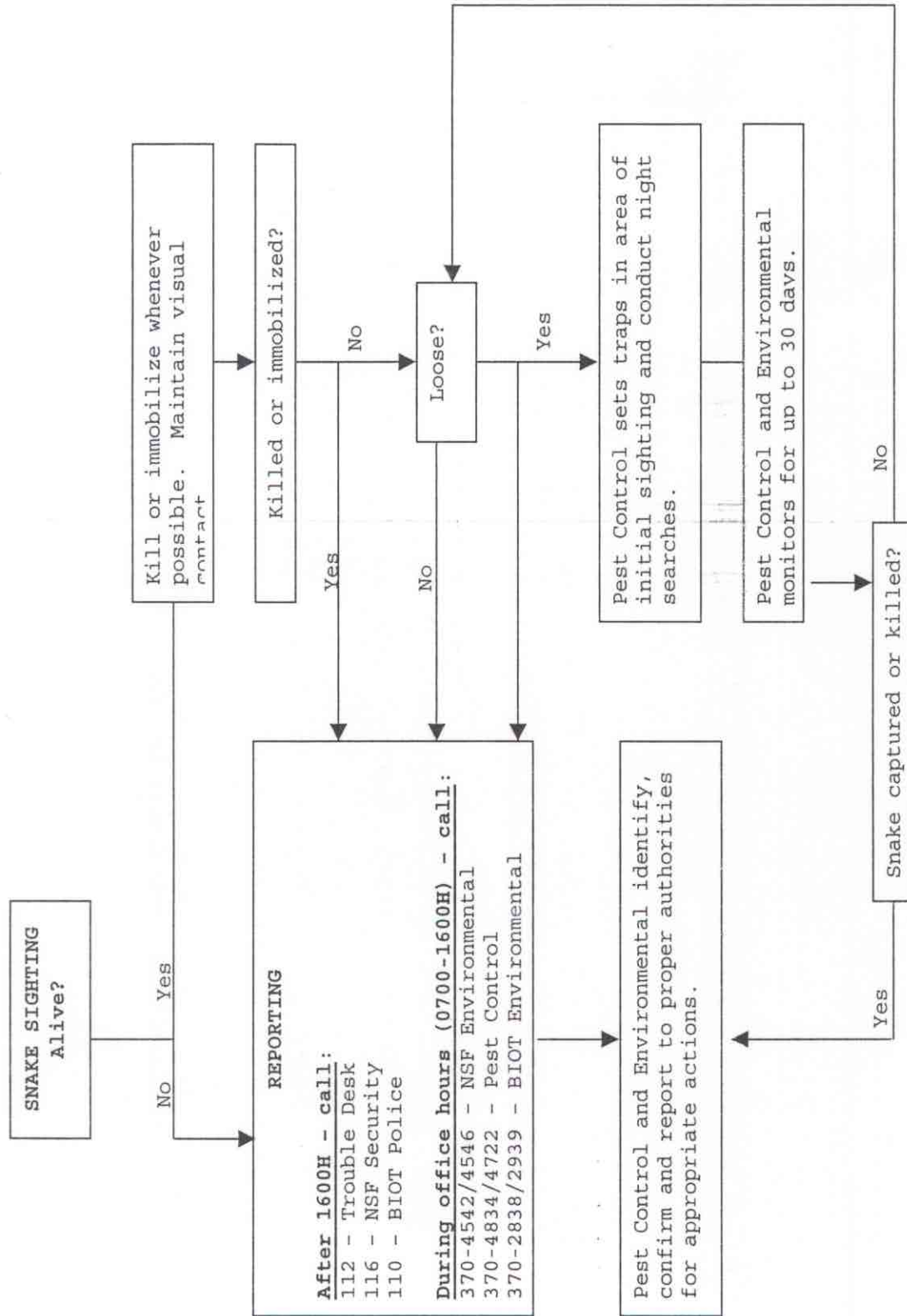
\* Verifications maybe obtained by calling any of the following USDA WS numbers in Guam:

1. Andersen AF Base Office: 366-3822
2. COMNAVMARIANAS Office: 472-7101
3. Barrigada Main Office: 635-4400

NAME/SIGNATURE OF INSPECTOR: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMAND/DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

DIEGO GARCIA SNAKE SIGHTING RESPONSE PROTOCOL



# ALERT

## PREVENT THE INTRODUCTION OF BROWN TREE SNAKE ON DIEGO GARCIA



### DESCRIPTION

**ORIGIN:** Guam, Indonesia, New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, and Australia

**COLOR:** Brown to yellow brown, may have faint banding

**LENGTH:** Typically 2 to 3 feet but can reach more than 10 ft

**HABITS:** Lives in trees and shrubs.

**NOCTURNAL:** Seldom seen during the day. Moves out of the trees while foraging for food. Has grooved, venom-conducting teeth at the rear of the mouth.

### WHAT TO DO

**Immobilize the snake.**

**Make every attempt to kill or capture the snake.**

**Keep any dead or captured snake for positive identification.**

**CALL any of these phone numbers:**

**112- Trouble Desk**

**116- Base Security**

**370-4834 - Pest Control Shop**

**370-4546 - NSF Environmental Office**

**370-2838 - BIOT Environmental**