

This summary of recent activities by people and agencies involved in the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) is collated and circulated by the PII Coordinating Team (PII CT). Feedback is welcomed – contact either the people directly involved in projects, or the PII Team PII@auckland.ac.nz. For further information visit our website <http://www.issg.org/cii/PII>.

In Memoriam:

It is with sadness that PII records the passing of Tae Kami, daughter of PII Partner Taholo Kami, Director of IUCN Oceania. Tae battled cancer for three years and was an inspiration with her writing, her music (<http://www.taekamifund.org/>) and her incredibly strong and positive attitude. Our condolences are extended to Taholo and his family, friends and colleagues.

PII also records with sadness the passing of Falani Aukuso, Deputy Director-General of SPC. Falani was from Tokelau, was a good friend of PII and was instrumental in getting the PII-supported projects in Tokelau under way. Our condolences are extended to his family, friends and colleagues.

PII staff changes

Dr Souad Boudjelas has been appointed as 'Programme Leader' of PII following Alan Saunders' resignation in June.

Capacity building activities

Four major capacity development events have been undertaken so far this year, resulting in 26 Pacific invasive species management practitioners (Palau (8), Yap (2), Kiribati (11), Fiji (1), New Caledonia (1), French Polynesia (1), Samoa (2)) increasing their invasive species management knowledge and skills. Three of the events were described in the May PII News.

PII engaged more than 20 invasive species specialists to present various parts of the training for the events. Feedback received from participants showed a high level of satisfaction with the content, organisation and applicability to their work of all events. PII will follow up the training with Pacific participants and continue to provide technical support as requested.

Aerial eradication training: New Zealand, 30 June – 12 July

PII and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB-UK) took advantage of planned aerial eradications in NZ and organised an event for practitioners from Pacific and Atlantic islands.

The programme was designed to; develop skills, see/practice some island biosecurity measures, get an understanding of the potential to exclude pests from mainland areas and improve basic ecological knowledge. It provided opportunities to see how good-practice systems work and to network with some NZ specialists in areas of expertise like seabirds, rats, and biosecurity.

Many organizations, both government and private, contributed to the programme and good interaction between participants, specialists and volunteers was a feature of the training. Unfortunately, the weather was adverse for the duration of the event and scheduled aerial eradications were delayed. The cold weather also provided difficulties for tropical islanders.

Participants gave the training a score of 75% satisfaction in terms of meeting their expectations. Comments included "*I learned a great deal – especially about underpinning theory, and results of eradications*" and "*Really valuable as a capacity building exercise*". Key messages taken from the event included "*The fundamental importance of planning & good project management*" and "*The importance of working with stakeholders and communities*". PII will follow-up as requested.

Project progress

Kiribati: The Phoenix Islands Restoration Project managed by NZDOC (in consultation with the Government of Kiribati), supported by PII and contracted to Pacific Expeditions, has finished the second part of the project. More information and some planning documents are on the PII website. The eradication team returned safely to their homes around the Pacific after completing a rabbit eradication operation on Rawaki and a rat eradication operation on McKean. Unfortunately, dangerous sea conditions prevented a landing on Birnie. Further training of two of the Kiribati training workshop attendees (Government of Kiribati staff from Environment (Wildlife) and Agriculture (Quarantine) Divisions) was also completed.

The team is confident about their work and we look forward to the Government of Kiribati declaring the eradications successful.

Fiji: BirdLife Fiji, supported by PII, has baited Mabalau Island (hand broadcast) and islands in the Ringgold group (aerial application) as part of

BirdLife Pacific's project to remove rats from important seabird islands in the Pacific (funded by the David and Lucille Packard Foundation).

P11 has been working with the Birdlife Fiji team since 2005 to develop capacity for invasive species management work. The operations were the culmination of many months of technical planning, including dialogue with island landowners in building understanding and support for the campaign.

The need to prevent future reintroductions was inherent in this support and although keeping the islands rat-free will remain a challenge, providing information on how to do this (including public information and signage) and the support of government agencies will help achieve this.

Future initiatives that build the sustainability of benefits and strengthen the value of these islands to their traditional communities will continue to be pursued by Birdlife.

New Caledonia: BirdLife Pacific's partner (Ornithological Society of New Caledonia), supported by P11, is in the process of hand-baiting three lagoon islets to the North of Grande Terre (Cap Bayes Channel and Great Reef of Koumac).

Important conferences for invasive species management

Two international conferences to be held in 2010 in New Zealand will continue, and expand on, the theme of the very successful island ecosystem management conferences held in 1989 (*Ecological Restoration of New Zealand Islands*) and 2001 (*Eradication of Island Invasives and Ecology of Insular Biotas*).

The conferences are intended to bring together people from around the world and activities and discussions which help these people to share their knowledge, experiences, and future work will be encouraged. Satellite meetings before and after the conference will be encouraged; field trips will be arranged as part of the conference plans.

This early notice is intended to give authors time to prepare papers and participants time to plan travel. There will be a call for abstracts in March 2009 (closing date 31 August 2009). Registration will open in June 2009.

1. Ecology of Insular Biotas II - Wellington, New Zealand, 1-5 February 2010. The conference will focus on ecological patterns and processes of particular importance to isolated biotas, including true islands, natural habitat islands (e.g., ponds), and artificial habitat islands (e.g., reserves).

Visit www.victoria.ac.nz/islandconference.

Email: islandconference@vuw.ac.nz

2. Island Invasives: Eradication and Management - Centre for Biodiversity and Biosecurity (University of Auckland and Landcare Research), in collaboration with the IUCN/SSC

Invasive Species Specialist Group, Tamaki Campus, University of Auckland, New Zealand, 8-12 February 2010.

"Islands" and "Eradication of invasive species" will continue to be the focus, with emphasis on the work done and results or learning achieved. Note: *The term 'eradication' includes complete removal of an invasive species; work to remove invasive species where complete eradication is some time away but the methods used are achieving positive results; or providing a significant learning experience. The term 'island' includes true islands, natural habitat islands (eg ponds), remnant and artificial habitat islands (eg reserves), or new invasions of natural ecosystems where eradication is deemed feasible.*

If you wish to be put on the email list for direct information about the Island Invasives conference please contact Dick Veitch, email dveitch@kiwilink.co.nz and advise him whether you wish to be a presenter or participant. This announcement, future notices, and conference registration, will be available via the CBB website <http://www.cbb.org.nz>

Invasive species events at the IUCN World Conservation Congress Barcelona, 5-9 October, 2008

P11, ISSG and other agencies will have invasive species events and several P11 Partners will have conservation events at the World Conservation Forum part of the Congress in October. Please encourage anyone who is going to attend these events. The Forum is a grand public gathering hosted by the world's conservation community, bringing together people from all over the world to discuss share and learn. Information is at – http://cms.iucn.org/news_events/events/congress/about/forum/index.cfm

P11 Steering Group Meeting

The 2008 SGM will be held in November in Fiji and will combine with the Annual Meeting of PILN Partners. The P11 Steering Group consists of a representative from each of the 8 P11 Partners - BirdLife International (BI), Conservation International (CI), IUCN's Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG), IUCN's Oceania Programme, New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID), Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC).

P11 website

Don't forget to check new additions to the P11 website <http://www.issg.org/cii/P11>. Email P11@auckland.ac.nz.