



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>.

PII to support CEPF grant holders with invasive species management projects

PII has received funding from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) to assist their grant holding agencies working on Pacific invasive species management projects.

PII can help strengthen invasive species management capacity by providing relevant, up-to-date technical advice and training:

Information - we have close links with organisations and specialists giving us access to up to date information and research on invasive species and their management.

Planning Assistance - we can assist with all the stages of project planning from proposals through to monitoring and evaluation.

Technical Support and Advice – we have expertise in a number of areas as well as access to people with a range of specialist knowledge and skills.

Specialist assistance - through our networks, we have close links with specialists in most areas of invasive species management.

Peer Review - we can, or can arrange for, review of project documents such as proposals, feasibility studies, project design documents and operational plans, prior to application for funding or project implementation.

Training & Skill Sharing - we can offer or facilitate specific opportunities for training in the field or through training workshops and we encourage cross-country skill sharing.

Pacific Invasives Partnership (PIP)

The first meeting of PIP, after its formation in November last year, held in Suva in July formally merged the combined Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) and Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN) partnership with the Invasive Species Working Group of the Roundtable for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands.

PIP now acts as the single coordinating body for invasive species action in the Pacific. It will provide continued guidance and support to PII and PILN, whose programmes remain pillars of the group, as well as to other invasive species programmes in the region. PIP remains a working group of the Roundtable for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands, reporting back annually.

PIP members, ably facilitated by Michele Franks, agreed on the roles, functions, structure and operation of the group, which will be included in a PIP Charter. The Charter is currently being finalized and will soon be available for circulation.

During the PIP meeting, members developed an Action Plan to support implementation of the *Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific* (see below). Based on a review of the objectives in the *Guidelines* and a compilation of actions already under way in the Pacific, especially those of PIP member organizations, the meeting undertook a gap analysis to determine priority actions for PIP for 2009–2010.

Climate change and invasives, country engagement, a capacity needs analysis, communications and awareness, and reporting and coordination, were identified as key activities for groups of PIP partners to take forward in the coming year.

Guidelines for Invasive Species Management in the Pacific

The recently published *Guidelines* were launched at the PIP meeting and were adopted by PIP as its guiding framework. PIP members agreed on mechanisms to ensure that their organizations' programmes reflect the priorities of Pacific island countries and territories. The *Guidelines*, NBSAPs and national/territorial Invasive Species Action Plans will be used for guidance by PIP members. Copies of the *Guidelines* are available free to anyone working on invasive species in the region, by writing to irc@sprep.org. The whole document is also on the SPREP web site at:

<http://www.sprep.org/att/publication/000699_RIS_SFinalLR.pdf>.

Palau controls tilapia

In June, members of the Palau National Invasive Species Committee (NISC) treated a pond in Malakal with rotenone to eradicate the invasive *Tilapia* fish from the pond. The pond had been treated in 2004 and 2007, but each time some fish survived. The small stream which drains the pond was found to contain tiny (1-2 cm. long) immature tilapia, which could possibly swim back upstream into the pond following treatment and re-infest it.

Tilapia is widely considered to be one of the worst aquatic invasive species and has caused serious

economic and environmental damage to streams, rivers, and lakes in many tropical countries. *Tilapia* can also survive and breed in brackish water, such as in mangrove ecosystems, and has even been shown to survive and breed in seawater. Fortunately, *Tilapia* has been found only in enclosed bodies of water in Palau; if it ever gets into streams and/or mangroves, it will be impossible to remove. The purpose of the eradication treatment was to make sure that this does not happen.

It was not possible to count all the *Tilapia* killed by the treatment, but the estimate was well over 1,000. The largest fish were approximately 15 cm long, and there were hundreds of fish between 5 and 10 cm. The most numerous were less than 3 cm long, and their number could not be estimated. Palau NISC will continue to monitor and if *Tilapia* are again detected will treat the pond again. (See http://www.issg.org/database/species/distribution_detail.asp?si=131&di=34247&sts=sss&lang=EN)

Work continues on the Phoenix Islands Protected Area project

The May-June visit focused on helping MELAD's Wildlife Conservation Unit (WCU) and Division of Agriculture/Quarantine with their strategic work programmes, including Kiritimati and Phoenix Islands biosecurity, small motu biosecurity, rat eradication on small motu, black rat monitoring and assistance with management planning.

WCU was assisted to plan and implement eradication of Pacific rats and cats on 23 motu totalling more than 40 ha in area in the central lagoons area. If successful, these eradications will have more than doubled the previous "safe" nesting area for many sensitive and threatened seabirds on the island including petrels, storm-petrels, shearwaters, terns and noddies.

The serious problem of rats and other pests present on inter-island freighters was also addressed and Quarantine has begun implementing rodent control on these ships. Biosecurity issues on the Kiritimati mainland were also addressed and a specific *Rattus rattus* monitoring plan was developed with WCU. A report will be available on PII and PIPA websites.

IUCN Director pledges support for invasive species management

Staff of PII and members of ISSG had the pleasure of meeting with Ms Julia Marton-Lefevre, Director-General of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), in June at the Tamaki Campus of The University of Auckland. Discussions were held on invasive species management, New Zealand's world-leading role in the field and the work of the IUCN.

Prior to her visit to Tamaki Campus, Ms Lefevre had visited sanctuaries at Karori in Wellington and

Tiritiri Matangi in Auckland where NZDOC staff showed her the conservation benefits arising from invasive species management.

As a result of her experiences in New Zealand and discussions with ISSG and PII staff, the Director-General acknowledged the importance of invasive species management in both biodiversity and livelihood areas and pledged IUCN support for the programmes at Tamaki and invasive species management initiatives in Oceania.

One Hundred Questions of Importance to the Conservation of Global Biological Diversity

The editors of the Conservation Biology journal have decided to provide open access to the above article so that it can be downloaded from the website without having a subscription.

Invasive species are only mentioned once, but the paper presents the results of a global consultation, which included 761 individuals from academia, governments, civil society and the private sector. The objective was to identify 100 scientific questions that, if answered, would have the greatest impact on conservation practice and policy. The article is expected to catalyze new initiatives in conservation science and guide the investment priorities of donors. Get it at - <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122351358/PDFSTART>

What's in a word?

Or in this case two – capacity development (or capacity building). Capacity development is the core business of PII, but the term means different things to different people. PII uses the following definition as part of our capacity development strategy –

"PII understands capacity building to be any kind of activity that builds the capacity of individuals, a coalition, organisation, or region to achieve its mission. More specifically, it is "a process of developing and strengthening skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organisations and communities need to survive, adapt and thrive in a fast changing world." (Adapted from Ann Philbin, 1999)

We are keen to hear other definitions, so let us know what capacity development means to you.

Contributions welcome

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep people in the PII network and around the world informed about invasive species activities/information in the Pacific. Your contribution is welcomed. Just send a brief summary (or we can edit a longer article) to – PII@auckland.ac.nz