



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>.

Eradication success in Kiribati

A CEPF-funded expedition to the Phoenix Island Protected Area (PIPA) in December last year carried out surveillance on McKean (for Asian rats) and Rawaki (for rabbits). The survey determined that the pest eradication work of May-June 2008, funded by NZAID and managed by NZDOC with support from PII, was a success with no sign of Asian rats on McKean Island or European rabbits on Rawaki.

The terrestrial habitats of the Phoenix Islands and their globally important bird populations are being restored as part of the Government of Kiribati's management plan for the PIPA.

These invasive species had been causing catastrophic damage to vegetation and animals of the two islands but, 18 months after the eradications, the biota of both islands are showing signs of recovery. The vegetation response is particularly striking with the islands supporting more luxuriant and diverse plant growth.

Several species of birds are also responding positively with increased breeding success on McKean and more extensive nesting areas on Rawaki due to the improved vegetation cover on these islands.

This expedition was another step forward in the restoration of the PIPA islands which has involved the Government of Kiribati and many individuals, agencies and donors across the Pacific since 2004. Congratulations to all involved!

A final report with dramatic before and after photographs will soon be available on the PII website.

- adapted from: Ray Pierce, EcoOceania Pty Ltd

Invasive plant project management training workshop in American Samoa

As a result of successful workshops in Palau and Pohnpei, PII was asked to deliver a training workshop for the Forestry Programme of the Community and Natural Resources Division of the American Samoa Community College.

The design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of priority invasive plant management projects in American Samoa were covered at the American Samoa Community College on Tutuila from 25 January to 4 February, 2010.

Participants worked in teams to plan their priority projects. The workshop was based on active

learning principles and gave attendees the skills necessary to collect and manage data for project planning, implementation and accountability for successful project management. An efficient and effective data collection and management system that is easy to use and maintain and adaptable to other invasive species projects across the Pacific was further developed.

Participant evaluations of the workshop gave scores of 100% to questions about the workshop meeting their expectations and whether the methods used in the workshop would help them in their work. Comments offered included "*The workshop presented way more than I expected. It is the best weed training I have taken over the last 12 years.*" and "*The workshop offered a practical approach to weed management.*".

Reports from the workshop will soon be available on the PII website.

Invasive species management training course

As the PII Resource Kit for rodent and cat eradication nears completion, a training course is being developed to help users improve their knowledge and skills in selecting, planning, implementing and evaluating projects and get the best out of the Kit. This course will augment PII's training portfolio which includes courses in invasive plant project management and island biosecurity.

Incursion response in Samoa

A male mongoose was caught in less than 24 hours after traps were laid in Samoa, however the nation is not relaxing the effort yet as this may not be the only one.

The first report of a mongoose was in the Aleipata District in December 2009, when a conservation team, fortunately, happened to see a mongoose crossing the road. However, after consultation with villagers it appeared that a mongoose had been sighted as far back as 2008.

This prompted the Samoa National Invasives Task Team (SNITT), the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) and partners to establish an eradication project for the mongoose.

PII helped SNITT and MNRE purchase 30 traps, designed in New Zealand for stoats, ferrets and

similar animals (DOC250) and tested with good results on mongoose in Hawaii, which were put around the Aleipata wharf area on 10 February. Although a mongoose was caught within 24 hours, trapping will continue for at least a year. Tissue samples were prepared which will be sent for further investigation and DNA analysis to help determine the animal's exact origin.

IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) has listed the mongoose as one of the '100 Worst' invasive species because of the impact it has on native birds and animals. In Fiji it is considered the main cause behind the extinction of several bird species on Viti Levu, the largest island.

Despite the good fortune and the rapid trapping of a mongoose, the late discovery of the animal in Samoa is cause for concern. It took over a year for the animal to be officially reported and, this was only a result of a chance observation by the MNRE team.

- adapted from Kate Brown,
Global Island Partnership Coordinator, IUCN

Island Invasives - Eradication and Management Conference

The Conference held at University of Auckland from 8 - 12 February 2010 was a resounding success. It brought together over 240 leading invasive species management researchers and practitioners from all around the world. It provided a great networking opportunity for people with a common interest to meet and share ideas and experiences.

Presentations covered topics such as social aspects of invasive species eradications, the benefits to native island species and ecosystems, importance of good planning, biosecurity, community consultation and capacity building.

Out of the 96 oral and poster presentations, 31 were from the Pacific Islands region, both north and south Pacific. This demonstrates the growing support in the Pacific region for invasive species management as an efficient tool for biodiversity conservation and sustainability of livelihoods.

Thumbs up to the organisers for a job well done! Given the increasing support for, and advances in, invasive species management, it may be timely to ask: should we wait for another 10 years to have the next conference?

List of oral presentations from the Pacific region - Abstracts can be downloaded from: http://www.issg.org/pdf/abstracts_book.pdf and the proceedings will be published in about a year.

Cranwell, S.; E Seniloli, J Baudat-Franceschi, L Faulquier, and A. L. Isechal. Developing national eradication capacity for the restoration of globally important seabird islands in the Pacific.

Baudat-Franceschi, J.; S. Cranwell, P. Cromarty, C. Golding, J. Le Breton, J. P. Butin, and S. Boudjelas. Introduced rodent eradication to restore island

ecosystems and protect tropical Pacific seabird breeding grounds: the importance of baseline biological surveys and feasibility studies.

Brodie, Gilliane D. and G. Barker. Introduced land snails and slugs in Fiji: are there risks involved?

Russell, James C.; L. Faulquier, and M. A. Tonione. Introduced rat over-invasion of Tetiaroa, French Polynesia.

Meyer, Jean-Yves; L. Loope, and A. Goarant. Strategy to control the invasive alien tree *Miconia calvescens* in Pacific Islands: eradication or containment?

Nico, Leo G. and S. J. Walsh. Nonindigenous fishes in freshwater habitats of islands in the Pacific region: their diversity, distribution, management and eradication.

Kessler, Curt. Mariana Islands and ungulate removal: update on Sarigan's recovery, lessons from Anatahan.

Courchamp, Franck; E. Angulo, E. Bonnaud, K. Bourgeois, S. Caut, X. Cerda, and Y. Watari. Surprise effects on Surprise Island: was the rat eradication a success?

Watari, Yuya; E. Bonnaud, K. Bourgeois, S. Caut, and F. Courchamp. Recovery of an ecosystem freed from introduced rats.

Rauzon, Mark J.; D. J. Forsell, E. N. Flint, and J. Gove. Howland, Baker and Jarvis Islands 25 years after cat eradication: recovery in biogeographical context.

Peters, Darren; L. Wilson, S. Mosher, J. Rohrer, J. Hanley, A. Nadig, and M. Silbernagle. Small Indian mongoose (*Herpestes auro-punctatus*) – eradication and management using DOC 250 kill traps, first lessons from Hawaii.

Wegmann, Alex; S. Buckelew, G. Howald, J. Helm, and K. Swinnerton. Rodent eradication campaigns on tropical islands: novel challenges and possible solutions.

Butler, David J.; A. Tye, M. Wylie, and T. Tipamaa. Eradicating Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*) from Nu'utele and Nu'ulua Islands, Samoa – the challenges of operating in the South Pacific.

Side Event: US Department of Defence (DoD) realignment in the Pacific: Biosecurity Risks and Regional Opportunities. Lisa Fiedler, Environmental Director, ASN (I&E), Joint Guam Program Office, and Phil Andreozzi, US National Invasive Species Council will lead this discussion to solicit input and identify collaborative opportunities.

A timely reminder of the reason for invasive species management



The United Nations has declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity. It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives.

Visit the International Year of Biodiversity website <http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/> to find out: The important role biodiversity plays in our lives and what is happening to it; What people are doing around the world to combat biodiversity loss; How people are celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity; Some of the resources available to assist you in your celebrations.

**Take Action in 2010 and beyond because -
Biodiversity is life
Biodiversity is our life**