

PACIFIC INVASIVES INITIATIVE

The News, October 2006



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. 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>.

Pacific rats eradicated from Vatu-i-Ra Island

In July 2006, Pacific rats were eradicated from Vatu-i-ra Island, Fiji. Two bait applications were carried out 14 days apart. Led by BirdLife International (Pacific), it involved baiting the whole island by hand. The island is owned by the Nagilogilo Clan who participated in the operation. The island is uninhabited but is home to an internationally important seabird colony, including more than 30,000 pairs of black noddies. Eradicating rats removed the threat of predation on the eggs and chicks of ground nesting birds. Monitoring of seabirds and surveillance for rodents continues.

Contact: James Millet, BirdLife Pacific
james@birdlifepacific.org.fj

Rats also being eradicated from Viwa Island

Extensive consultation with island residents and other stakeholders, and research into the endangered Fijian ground frog by staff and students from the University of the South Pacific (USP), resulted in an operation to eradicate dogs, cats and Pacific rats from Viwa Island, Fiji, in July 2006. Led by USP, this is a significant project because the eradication is being undertaken by island residents. Thirty-five villagers were trained in baiting, monitoring and other activities. More than 1,200 bait stations were used in the operation. Monitoring is now in place to confirm that eradication has indeed been achieved, and biosecurity measures are in place. The next step is to eradicate cane toads from Viwa – this will be a world-first!
Contact: Craig Morley, University of the South Pacific morley_c@usp.ac.fj

Myna eradication underway on Tokelau Fakaofu

A positive feasibility study, the enthusiasm of the implementers and the isolation of Fakaofu led to a decision to immediately start the eradication of a new jungle myna invasion. Cage and nestbox traps are being used and progress in the eradication will be reviewed in January 2007.

First round of CEPF investment completed

Between November 2005 and September 2006 PII was tasked with calling for proposals, developing projects and providing technical and scientific advice for project implementation in the first stage of investment by the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund in the Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot which targeted invasive species. The Australian Government Regional Natural Heritage Program allocated over \$AU1m to the investment.

Information on PII-supported Demonstration Projects is on our website.

2006 PII Steering Group Meeting

The third Annual Steering Group meeting (19-21 July) in Suva, Fiji was hosted jointly by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and the University of the South Pacific and chaired by Greg Sherley of NZDoC. The PII Coordinating Team was joined by PII partner organisations: Birdlife International, James Millett; Conservation International, James Atherton; Invasive Species Specialist Group (IUCN), Maj DePoorter; New Zealand's International

Aid and Development Agency, Tom Wilson; Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Warea Orapa and Inoke Ratukalou; Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, represented by Dave Butler; The Nature Conservancy, represented by Jill Key. PII advisers Annette Lees (Austral Foundation), Kevin Clark (M&E Consultant), and John Parkes (NZ Landcare) attended. Representatives from collaborators were: Jill Key, Coordinator of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network; Philippe Gerbeaux, Chief Technical Advisor from IUCN Oceania Office. Demonstration Project team members from the Fiji (Vatu-i-ra, Vilikesa Masibalavu, Elenoa Seniloli; Viwa Island, Craig Morley, Joape Kuruyawa) and Palau (Kayangel Atoll, Yalap Yalap) projects also attended. Thanks to Craig Morley (USP) and Warea Orapa (SPC) for organising the meeting.

Roundtable for Nature Conservation in the Pacific Islands

Souad Boudjelas (PII Programme Manager) and Bill Nagle (PII Project Coordinator) attended the 10th Roundtable for Nature Conservation (24-27 July) in Suva, Fiji. For the past 3 years Souad has represented PII at the RT and is a member of the Invasive Species Working Group. She finds the RT a great forum for networking, keeping members updated on the PII and its activities and how these may be contributing to the 'Action Strategy for Nature Conservation in the Pacific'. It was Bill's first attendance and he was particularly pleased that RT10 confirmed the need to consider livelihood as part of conservation work, as that reinforces PII's focus on sustainable livelihoods as well as biodiversity.

<http://sprep.org/roundtable/>

PII outreach

Our website is constantly being updated by Steven Bavin (PII Programme Support Officer). Keep an eye on it!

A seminar on the Tokelau and Mangaia myna projects was presented by Bill Nagle at the Centre for Biodiversity and Biosecurity at Auckland University in August. He highlighted the challenges in eradicating birds. Bill also gave a presentation on PII to the Pest Liaison Group of Auckland Regional Council. Alan Saunders (PII Director) was invited by the Galapagos National Park Service and the Charles Darwin Foundation to be part of a GEF-funded TAG reviewing invasive species management in the Galapagos.

What's in a word?

Agency, Community, Champion, Implementer, Expediter, Name, Proponent, Applicant, Implementing Agency, Partners, Institution, Organisation, . . . confused?

These are all terms used on application forms – and which are not helpful to Pacific communities. Karen Johns (PII Community Engagement Adviser) participated in a Suva meeting organised by the Roundtable for Nature Conservation and FSPI to discuss small grant processes and their effects on local communities. She found the meeting to be an excellent networking opportunity and identified many ways in which implementing agencies could utilise small grant funding and other kinds of support for capacity development, planning, and awareness raising in Demonstration Projects. All participants committed to simplifying the language in their application forms and PII is reviewing its forms.

2007 PII Steering Group Meeting

The 2007 PII Steering Group Meeting will be held at the University of Auckland, New Zealand from Tuesday 3 July to Friday 6 July. This will give one day for a field trip and three meeting days. Partner representatives should record these dates in their diaries. More information will follow, but if you have any items for the agenda, or comments, please email to PII@auckland.ac.nz.