



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](mailto:PII@auckland.ac.nz). For further information visit our website <http://www.issg.org/cii/PII>.

### Eradication declared!

*Vatu-i-Ra (Fiji)*: Congratulations to PII partner, Birdlife International Pacific, which has just declared Vatu-i-Ra Island rat free!!! This is great news and shows the value of PII-supported Demonstration Projects. Good science, good planning, technical support, regular follow up and commitment from all those involved has resulted in a successful eradication.

The baiting was done in July 2006 and the recent third surveillance and monitoring trip did not find any sign of rats. PII is proud to have worked with Birdlife and the Nagilogilo Clan and facilitated the expertise of New Zealand Department of Conservation on this project and is delighted that the eradication was successful and that biosecurity has also been successful so far. Vatu-i-Ra is Birdlife's first successful eradication in Fiji and the lessons from that project are now being applied to others. PII is supporting Birdlife's Pacific partners with the David & Lucille Packard Foundation funded projects in Fiji, French Polynesia and New Caledonia by providing technical support and advice, facilitating access to expertise, reviewing project documents, collating and disseminating lessons learned.

### Invasive species information

The Invasive Species Specialist Group (IUCN/SSC/ISSG), a PII Partner, manages the Global Invasive Species Database (GISD) that is a primary source of invasive species ecology, impact and management information. Visit the database at - <http://www.issg.org/database/welcome/>

### Project progress

#### Rats

*Phoenix Islands (Kiribati)*: PII is working with the Government of Kiribati and Pacific Expeditions on a New Zealand Department

of Conservation terrestrial eradication project in the Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA), the largest marine protected area in the world. Planning is almost completed and a training workshop in April will be followed by the eradication in May.

*Viwa Island (Fiji)*: The people of Viwa have, on their own initiative, spread the rat bait they had left around Telau (one of their adjacent islands – about 2 ha) and say the rats are gone.

*French Polynesia*: Following a request from MANU, PII provided support for a research trip to Vahanga Atoll to address some fundamental issues raised during the planning process. These included determining and mapping the distribution and relative rat abundance, determining which crab species are present on the atoll and their densities and using the findings to review suggested bait sowing rates. PII support included arranging the participation of two rodent eradication experts (NZDOC staff and private consultant).

The methodology used on Vahanga Atoll to determine crab densities and bait sowing rates was communicated to the Ornithological Society of New Caledonia (SCO) to use/adapt during their feasibility study of predator eradication in two lagoon Important Bird Areas in New Caledonia. Also, this information is being included in the rat/crab/bait review undertaken by Island Conservation Canada for PII.

*Land crab interference with rat baits*: A draft of the PII-initiated review of rat/crab bait-take interactions has been completed by IC Canada and is now being reviewed. It will shortly be available on the PII website.

#### Birds

*Tokelau*: The Fakaofu team has been able to destroy nests and eggs and reports that the myna population is now down to two birds. (**N.B.** An *invasive bird conference* is being planned for December in Australia.)

#### Weeds

*Madang (Papua New Guinea)*: The draft Project Design Document for the *Mimosa pigra* project prepared at the Madang workshop with PNG partners, is ready for

final input and budgeting. When it is finalised, donors will be approached for support.

*Weed data management system:* Funding for the pilot workshop in Palau has been finalised. PII, TNC, Palau BoA, Palau OERC and PILN have all contributed and practitioners from Palau and Yap will attend the pilot workshop in mid-April.

### Micronesia prioritisation

The Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT) will shortly call for invasive mammal eradication project proposals from regional conservation partners. MCT supports locally driven invasive mammal eradication efforts as a step in developing Micronesia's approach to biodiversity preservation.

To provide information, Island Conservation (IC) carried out a Micronesia Invasive Mammal Eradication Prioritisation exercise for MCT. IC worked with NGOs and government agencies to compile a region-wide database of biodiversity, invasive species, island geophysical and socio-cultural values pertinent to invasive mammal eradication programmes.

The objectives of the Prioritisation are two-fold: 1) to inform the conservation community about the feasibility of, and opportunity for, invasive mammal eradications throughout Micronesia; 2) to identify, from all potential projects in Republic of Palau (Palau), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the top 20 invasive mammal eradication opportunities that combine large biodiversity gain with high feasibility, social benefit, local support, and regional capacity building.

1,402 potential eradication projects were scored on 25 criteria (reduced to 6 primary factors) and ranked by model that emphasizes criteria scores directly related to biodiversity and eradication feasibility.

This project produced: 1) a list of the regional top 20 invasive mammal eradication projects and, 2) country specific invasive mammal eradication Prioritisation packets that will facilitate subsequent project building and fundraising actions. The top 20 projects include island groups in the RMI, FSM (Yap, Pohnpei), and Palau.

PII has assisted with reviewing the application form and is a member of the MCT science committee that will review

project proposals and allocate funds to approved projects. Both PII and PILN will be able to assist agencies to prepare proposals to submit to MCT.

### Other PII activities

#### Kiribati

PII and SPREP supported a survey of bokikokiko, seabirds and invasive pests in Kiritimati, Line Islands, Republic of Kiribati for the Wildlife Conservation Unit (WCU), Kiritimati, Republic of Kiribati. Work was focused at two levels – strategic (prioritisation of conservation tasks and locations) and practical (determining different management approaches and training of WCU staff).

Training included field work for bird and pest survey, quarantine methods, and database work for recording results of field work. The survey team emphasised the need for action to protect the Line Islands. Key recommendations of the report include a focus on biosecurity, poaching and eradication of rats from selected motu.

#### Website

*Equipment list:* Equipment useful in invasive species management work is available on the PII website. Prepared by PII and PILN, it has received a lot of positive comment already. The information is supplied by practitioners and the list is meant to be a 'living' document, so all contributions are welcomed (thanks to those practitioners who have already contributed).

*DNA sampling guidelines:* A sampling protocol for determination of rat genetics for eradication and reinvasion work developed by PII and the Faculty of Science at The University of Auckland is now available on the PII website.

### PII Coordinating Team changes

Juliet Wang has taken over as PII Programme Support Officer from Corinne Ebisu who temporarily stepped into the breach. Juliet, who has an MBA, is a key person for PII and deals with finance, administration and liaison issues relating to The University of Auckland, as well as programme and project matters.

For contact of a general nature, please email [PII@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:PII@auckland.ac.nz).