



PACIFIC INVASIVES LEARNING NETWORK

SOUNDBITES – SEPTEMBER 2012

Pacific Invasives Learning Network
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The monthly electronic newsletter of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN)
– reporting on invasive news from PILN teams and the Pacific Invasives Partnership.
Past issues are available online: <http://www.sprep.org/piln>



The Honolulu Rose (*Clerodendrum chinense*) is native to southern China and northern Viet Nam. It was introduced to many Pacific Islands quickly becoming an invasive shrub. It spreads asexually – mainly via the root system. Physical control will help slow the spread – but ensure that the root system is disrupted to be effective. Screening for effective herbicides remains to be done. Possible biocontrol is possible using a chrysomelid beetle (*Phyllocharis undulata*) but more



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research needed. See the Pacific Island Ecosystems at Risk website for more information:

http://www.hear.org/pier/species/clerodendrum_chinense.htm

PILN teams and country updates

FIST member heading to Brussels for a World Customs Organisation fellowship

A member of the Fiji Invasive Species Taskforce, Josevata Qalubau will be heading to Brussels on a Fellowship programme. He will also be seconded to the Japanese Customs for two weeks to study the review of policy and procedures and environmental compliance. The Fellowship programme is designed for World Customs Organisation member countries, and Fiji has been fortunate to be selected to take this opportunity. Jo is looking forward to this opportunity and hopes to communicate with the rest of the Pacific during his tenure abroad.

FIST to meet in October

The Fiji Invasive Species Taskforce will hold its meeting during the week of October 22-26. The delay in having of a meeting is due to an extremely busy calendar for key stakeholders and partners. Some of the proposed agenda items include an update on the invasive American Iguana and an economic analysis survey of some of the invasive animals in Fiji. For more information contact Ilaisa Dakaica, of Biosecurity Authority of Fiji and the Chair of FIST.

A day out with NatureFiji on saving endemic palms

On a typical soggy Suva day, MareqetiViti (NatureFiji) and its local partners set off on a mission to save two of Fiji's endemic palms – the Sago palm (*Metroxylon vitiense*) and the Navua palm (*Heterospatha phillipsi*). Joining the mission, were two regional visitors – Thomas Duval the Project Manager from the Société Calédonienne d'Ornithologie (New Caledonia), and Posa Skelton (PILN Coordinator). The promise of watching native birds was the key to locking in the interests of the visitors. Garrick Reserve was our destination, and once we passed the Navua town, it was a four-wheel drive road all the way. We stopped on top of the hill and gazed across an amazing scenery of an emerald lake surrounded by lush and undulating landscape. Dick Watling, one of the trustees of NatureFiji and our driver for the day, lamented that such a beauty should be shared by all Fijians. While the sentiment is



The 5-year old Sago palm (*Metroxylon vitiense*) grove that is looked after by NatureFiji and partners.

understandable one wonders whether this would be shared by the mass that would eventually flock here one day. Along the side of the road and various paths that we saw were littered with many invasive plants and weeds. Cattle grazing along the road-side no doubt help spread these unwanted plants. The grove of Sago palm, a palm that has largely been threatened by habitat loss and over-harvesting, is kept weed-free by NatureFiji and partners four-times a year. The Navua palm another threatened endemic palm is grown in a slightly elevated site opposite the Sago palm. The volunteers usually spend their day weeding around the base of the palms, and propping up the fence to keep cattle away. Cattle like to eat the young leaves of the palms, making the new palms vulnerable. It's been five-years since the planting took place, and the results are very encouraging. *For more information contact Kelera Macedru (kmacedru@naturefiji.org) of NatureFiji.*



Dick Watling, Steve Cranwell and Thomas Duval overlooking the lake at the Garick Reserve.

Kosrae

While August was the month to battle against the Giant African Snail, September saw the Kosrae Invasive Battlers battling against an outbreak of whitefly, a pest of tomatoes, eggplants, pepper or capsicum, kava and tobacco.

On August 29th an Emergency Response was declared by the Kosrae State Governor, Lyndon Jackson, to control the whitefly that was attacking important crops for Kosrae. An action plan was developed by the Department of Resources and Economic Affairs, led by the Plant Protection Program. In the plan, containment started on the 1st September, 2012. Progress since then included:

- delimiting survey completed;
- undertook two community outreach to gain support and to assist them with identification of the pest, and ways to control them;
- over 11 infestations treated; the rest of the infestations are controlled by landowners, using what was learnt during workshops and outreach;
- radio announcement asking people, especially women, to take extra precautions when doing transplanting activities, or when taking planting materials from place to place.
- released two batches of bio-control agents (*Delphastus pusillus*) now in breeding stage, and will monitor this development for four weeks before releasing them in the infested zones
- engaged with SPC (Mereseini) for further technical assistance;

The team hopes to continue with community outreach especially to the remaining municipalities before the end of October. While this battle is a new one, efforts from last month's Giant African Snail continues. Incentives are provided to the community to help with this. The Kosrae Invasive Species team hopes to continue this effort in the month of October. For more information about Invasive Species work in Kosrae, please contact Jason Jack (jhjack71@gmail.com).



White-fly is a serious pest of agricultural crops such as potatoes, eggplants, tomatoes, kava and many others. Photo by Gaucho.



This ladybeetle (Delphastus pusillus) is the biocontrol agent of the whitefly. Image from AgroPages.com

Kiribati

Bokikokiko sings in Washington

A recent survey conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Unit of MELAD of Washington and Fanning atolls confirmed the presence of the Kiritimati Warbler (or Bokikokiko, *Acrocephalus aequinoctialis*) on Washington. The Kiritimati Warbler is listed as endangered on the IUCN Red-List with a restricted range of a few atolls (Kiritimati and Washington) and extirpation recorded from Fanning atoll. The main threat to this bird is introduced predators and habitat degradation due to fires, clearing and settlement. Concerns over the population of this endangered species made it a priority for survey by WCU team under a CEPF funded project. Details of the survey will be made available soon. Contact Ratita Bebe (ratitab@environment.gov.ki) for further information.



The endangered Bokikokiko. Image by J.G. Keuleman.

French Polynesia

The Association Manu Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie has secured funding from BEST to protect and sustainably manage endangered birds and habitats in French Polynesia. Congratulations to SOP-Manu

Pacific Invasives Partnership (PIP) – news

BirdLife International – Pacific Invasive Species Programme

The BirdLife International – Pacific Invasive Species Programme held its Technical Advisory Group (TAG) meeting on the 24th and 25th of September at the Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji. The TAG is supported by expertise from the Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII), Landcare Research NZ, the University of the South Pacific, SPREP (PILN) and the BirdLife Pacific Secretariat. Project managers from the Te Ipukarea Society Inc. Cook Islands, Société Calédonienne d'Ornithologie New Caledonia, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (Fiji), the BirdLife Fiji Programme and the Palau Conservation Society provided updates on their projects, work with communities and challenges. Technical discussions dealt with the control of pigs and deer in New Caledonia forests, the eradication of rats and cats from Suvarrow and Kayangel Atolls and biosecurity needs for projects across all countries. A biosecurity training workshop proceeded from the 26th – 28th with the support of PII and the NZ Ministry for Primary Industries. This provided participants with training in risk assessment processes, incursion response and surveillance needs, communications and biosecurity planning primarily for rodents, Green Iguana, Brown-tree snake and mongoose. The opportunity to share information between participants which also included the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji, the Secretariat for the Pacific Community and the National Trust of Fiji was valued by all.



Participants of the Biosecurity Training during the BirdLife Pacific Invasive Species Programme. Image – P. Skelton

This is part of the four-year regional project on invasive species under the BirdLife Pacific Invasive Species Programme funded by the European Union. The objective of this programme is to reduce the spread and the environmental and socio-economic impact of invasive species through replicable models supporting eradication and control, and enhancing inter-island biosecurity. This will contribute to the Millennium Development Goals 1 (poverty alleviation), 7

(environmental sustainability) and 8 (global partnership for development). Further information about the BirdLife Pacific Invasive Species Programme, contact Steve Cranwell (steven.cranwell@birdlife.org) or Milly Ravuso (Miliana.ravuso@birdlife.org).

GEF-PAS Invasive Species Update

The first installments for the Marshall Islands and Palau GEF-PAS Invasive Species project were recently transmitted to the respective countries to allow for the projects to start. This brings to seven the total number of countries who have received their first installments. Three national coordinators have been appointed with Marshall Islands joining Tonga and the Cook Islands. The national coordinator for Tonga is Mr Viliami Hakaumotu who will be the key to the implementation of project activities for his country. GEF-PAS was also able to lead and present the project at a side-event held during the 23rd SPREP meeting. The side-event was well attended and supported by the Pacific Invasives Partnership and the New Caledonian Invasive Species Group.

23rd SPREP meeting – some highlights

The 23rd SPREP meeting concluded with some key highlights and recommendations. Here are some of the highlights:

- Ocean conservation and management – members supported the Oceanscape Framework and commended the Cook Islands government and New Caledonia for establishing new marine protected areas;
- Urged full participation and support of members for the 9th Pacific Islands Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in 2013;
- Renewable and alternative energy sources contributing to energy and economic security is vital to the region; members welcomed the announcement by New Zealand to co-host a Renewable Energy Summit with the European Union in April 2013;
- Endorsed the e-Waste Strategy and the marine spill contingency plan (PacPLAN), which will improve the management of wastes and pollution in the region;
- Welcomed the decision by the UK Government to join SPREP;
- Noted the decision by New Zealand Government to shift to a multi-year financing with a 3-year funding cycle to commence in 2013 to SPREP Secretariat;
- Recommended the placement of SPREP contracted technical desk officers in FSM and Marshall Islands for a one-year trial period;
- Recommended to explore partnership mechanisms with the Melanesian Spearhead Group to enhance coordination and delivery of services to south-west Pacific members.



Lui Bell, Marine Species Advisor of the Biodiversity & Ecosystems Management Division giving a presentation on the Regional Marine Species Action Plan at the 23rd SPREP Meeting. Photo – Penina Solomona

Further information and details of the SPREP meeting can be found on the SPREP website: <http://www.sprep.org>

NISC – impacts of invasive alien species and collaborative Pacific efforts to prevent them

Phil Andreozzi from the United States National Invasive Species Council presented a brief on IAS demonstrating the direct link between IAS and critical Pacific issues. The presentation focused on seeking the endorsement of the meeting of Resolution 7 from the 17th Micronesia Chief Executives' summit. Cook Islands supported the presentations noting the comments made by the Cook Islands Prime Minister on this issue as reflected in the 43rd Pacific Island Leaders communiqué. Members requested SPREP to consider integrating its invasive species work as much as possible in the areas of climate change adaptation, food security, threatened species conservation and other biodiversity areas and sustainable development. Further it encouraged SPREP to work closely with SPC to enhance efforts on invasive species

with relevant national, regional and international partners, such as the Pacific Invasives Partnership.

Further details can be obtained from the Phil Andreozzi (phillip_andreozzi@ios.doi.gov) or the SPREP Secretariat (sprep@sprep.org).

CABI Invasive Species Compendium



The Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI) with funding from the European Union, is partnering with SPREP (PILN) and SPC to host a regional training on the Invasive Species Compendium from 23-25th October.

The training will introduce the Pacific participants on the Invasive Species Compendium database, including the various parts of the database, such as exploring datasheets and reports, reviewing and authoring of datasheets, gap analysis, and the application of the compendium to participants work. It is hoped that participants will gain experience and confidence on how to use the Compendium, and importantly how to contribute information to make it a comprehensive database. For more information on this training, please contact the PILN Coordinator or Ana Tunabula-Buli (AnaT@spc.int)

BirdLife International

European Union improving Pacific livelihood by tackling invasive species

At a special launch event in Fiji last Friday, 28 September, the European Union formally announced its backing for regional efforts to address the threats posed by invasive species for peoples' livelihoods across the Pacific.

"Pacific communities are facing numerous threats from invasive species, which are having major effects on food security, health and wellbeing, and are seriously damaging the region's natural heritage", said Mr Alistair MacDonald – Acting Head of Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific.

In response, the European Union formally announced its support to the BirdLife Pacific Partnership for a four-year Euro 1,498,816 regional invasive species programme.

"We are delighted to support the BirdLife Pacific Partnership in their efforts to reduce the spread and impact of invasive alien species", said Mr MacDonald.

"The programme will include the management of rodents, American Iguana, Mongoose and Brown tree snake through eradication, control and biosecurity actions across the region".

BirdLife International is a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources.

"We thank the European Union for recognising the importance of tackling invasive species which cost the global economy an estimated US\$ 1.3 trillion each year", announced Mr Don Stewart – Director of the BirdLife Pacific Partnership.

"As the largest network of conservation organisations, BirdLife will work with our partners in Fiji, Cook Islands, Samoa, French Polynesia, Palau and New Caledonia to address this most urgent of problems to people's livelihoods", said Mr Stewart.



A baiting operation on Ringgold Island to remove rats. Photo: BirdLife International

In Fiji, BirdLife are working with NatureFiji-MareqetiViti and Biosecurity Authority Fiji to address the invasion of the American Iguana – introduced to Qamea Island in 2000 – which is a threat to rural Fijian communities, the tourism industry and native wildlife.

Invasive species Opportunities

Regional Advisor – Western Pacific Coastal and Marine Conservation

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation is looking for a Regional Advisor to support its Western Pacific Coastal and Marine Conservation subprogram. Closing date for this is 6 October 2012. For more information please contact Eileen Ashton (Eileen@ceaconsulting.com).

US Forest Service 2013 International Seminars and Workshops

The US Forest Service International Programs and our partners are pleased to announce four international seminars opportunities in 2013:

International Seminar on Watershed Management (4/15/13 - 5/3/13)

*Application Deadline: 1/15/13

International Seminar on Climate Change and Natural Resource Management (5/6/13 – 5/26/13)

*Application Deadline: 1/15/13

International Seminar on Protected Area Management (7/15/13 – 8/3/13)

*Application Deadline: 4/15/13

International Field Course on Wildlands and Protected Area Management (7/3/13 – 8/3/13)

*Application Deadline: 1/31/13

Our international seminars promote collaborative approaches to natural resource management and strengthen professional networks spanning the globe. The participatory, field-based workshops allow participants, who have diverse experience, expertise, perspectives and approaches, the opportunity to engage in meaningful deliberation, dialogue and problem solving.

Mid- and senior-level natural resource managers with their own funding for tuition and international travel expenses are encouraged to apply for these experiential workshops. More information on the seminars, the application process, and tuition fees can be found in the attached program brochure and at <http://www.fs.fed.us/global/is/welcome.htm>.

If you have any questions related to the seminars, please contact Rima Eid at 202-208-3785 or rimea@fs.fed.us.

2011 debris severely felt in 2012 budgets and patience!

The steady increase in marine debris arriving on Pacific shorelines as a result of the March 2011 tsunami in Japan is starting to tax state budgets as well as deepen concerns over invasive species.

Soccer balls, a Harley-Davidson and a 188-ton dock have already made landfall. En route is an armada of flotsam, from rooftop shingles to capsized fishing boats, spread across an area of ocean three times larger than the contiguous United States.

The tsunami towed an estimated five million tons of debris into the ocean. Thirty percent of that, or some 1.5 million tons, is said to remain afloat and to be arcing north of Hawaii toward the Pacific coastline. Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Hawaii and British Columbia are bracing to manage the debris, but strapped federal and state budgets could make that difficult. *Read more on [Green Blogs – NY Times](#).*



Major update to Europe's alien species catalogue

The key catalogue of information on 'alien' (non-native) species in Europe has undergone a major update. The DAISIE (Delivering Alien Invasive Species Inventory for Europe) database allows the public and policymakers to get a comprehensive overview of which alien species are present in Europe, their impacts and consequences for the environment and society.

Read more on the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology website:

http://www.ceh.ac.uk/news/news_archive/major-update-Europe-alien-species-catalogue_2012_48.html



DAISIE has helped with monitoring changes in the location of grey squirrels in southern Europe

Enslaved ants fight back

Ants that are kept as slaves by more powerful species aren't as helpless as they might appear. New research from Gutenberg University Mainz in Germany shows that enslaved ants conduct their own form of civil disobedience, by neglecting and killing the offspring of their oppressors. And by doing so, the ants may be preventing their comrades outside the nest from being enslaved themselves. Read the full article at the Evolutionary Ecology website.

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10682-012-9584-0?null>

Teamwork in the Tropics: Pollinators and Frugivores Are Less Choosy at the Equator

A recently published research highlighted that tropical species are less specialised on plant species than their temperate counterparts. This is good news for species survival in the Pacific Islands. The study suggests that ecosystem functions such as pollination and seed dispersal in the tropics have a higher tolerance against extirpations of individual species than in the temperate communities. *Read more on:*

http://www.senckenberg.de/root/index.php?page_id=5210&year=0&kid=2&iid=2429



Kula or the Fijian lorikeet feeds and helps pollinate many plants. Photo – P. Skelton

Snakes minus birds equals more spiders for Guam

In one of the first studies to examine how the loss of forest birds is effecting Guam's island ecosystem, biologists from Rice University, the University of Washington and the University of Guam found that the Pacific island's jungles have as many as 40 times more spiders than are found on nearby islands like Saipan. The results are some of the first to examine the indirect impact of the brown treesnake on Guam's ecosystem. The snake, which was accidentally introduced to the island in the 1940s, decimated the island's native bird species in one of the most infamous ecological disasters from an invasive species. By the 1980s, 10 of 12 native bird species had been wiped out, and the last two live only in small areas protected by intense snake-trapping.

Read more at http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2012-09/rusmb091312.php



Invasive Brown Tree Snake wiped out native birds of Guam. Photo – Isaac Chellman

Invasive species publications

Scientific articles

- Matthias Schleuning, Jochen Fründ, Alexandra-Maria Klein, Stefan Abrahamczyk, Ruben Alarcón, Matthias Albrecht, Georg K.S. Andersson, Simone Bazarian, Katrin Böhning-Gaese, Riccardo Bommarco, Bo Dalsgaard, D. Matthias Dehling, Ariella Gotlieb, Melanie Hagen, Thomas Hickler, Andrea Holzschuh, Christopher N. Kaiser-Bunbury, Holger Kreft, Rebecca J. Morris, Brody Sandel, William J. Sutherland, Jens-Christian Svenning, Teja Tschamntke, Stella Watts, Christiane N. Weiner, Michael Werner, Neal M. Williams, Camilla Winqvist, Carsten F. Dormann, Nico Blüthgen. Specialization of Mutualistic Interaction Networks Decreases toward Tropical Latitudes. *Current Biology*, 2012; DOI: [10.1016/j.cub.2012.08.015](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2012.08.015)
- Haldre Rogers, Janneke Hille Ris Lambers, Ross Miller, Joshua J. Tewksbury. 'Natural experiment' Demonstrates Top-Down Control of Spiders by Birds on a Landscape Level. *PLoS ONE*, 2012; 7 (9): e43446 DOI: [10.1371/journal.pone.0043446](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0043446)
- Ferreira, Rodrigo B., Callahan, Colin M., Poessel, Sharon A., and Beard, Karen H. (2012) Global assessment of establishment success for amphibian and reptile invaders. *Wildlife Research* 39, 637C640.

Upcoming Events

October	Event	Participating partner	Notes
8-11	18 th Australasian Weeds Conference 2012. The Sebel and Citigate Albert Park, Melbourne, Victoria.		The conference will showcase recent advances in weed science, extension and policy across Australian and international communities and landscapes.
8-19	11 th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity	SPREP, IUCN, PII, BirdLife, WWF, Island Conservation, GLISPA, PICs, CI, SPC, USP	Contact Easter Galuvao (easterg@sprep.org) for Pacific participation at COP 11

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