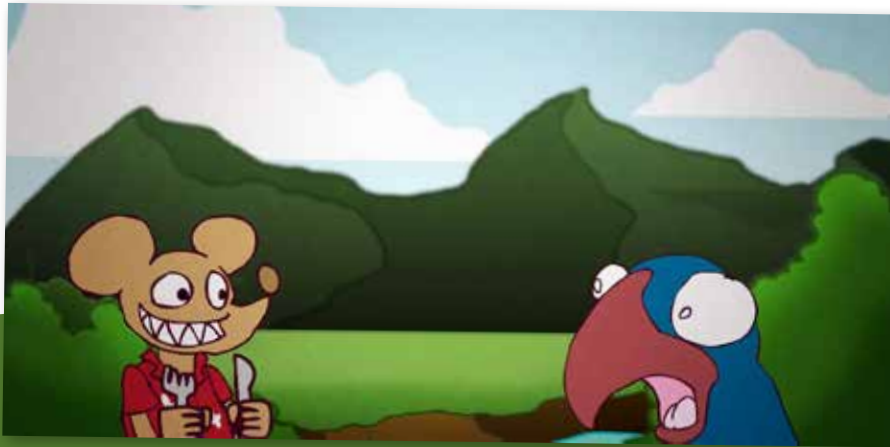


Learn more about Invasive Species!

Invasive Species Schools Resource Kit Factsheet 01

At the back of this factsheet is a glossary defining the words in bold



Every living thing in our Pacific islands environment is called **biodiversity**. Trees, fish, birds, mushrooms, forests and mangroves are all part of biodiversity.

Did you know the Pacific islands make up one of the world's **biodiversity hotspots**, with high levels of **endemic species**? This means that there are many plants and animals species in the Pacific islands that are only found here and nowhere else in the world.

Our islands form many different **ecosystems** where all the living things in a given area interact closely with each other and their environment. For example in a coastal ecosystem the fish uses mangroves as a nursery area for their young, or in a forest ecosystem the birds eat the forest fruits and spread the seeds to help trees to grow.

One of the dangers to our Pacific islands environment is **Invasive Species**.



What is an Invasive Species?

An invasive species is a species that has a **negative impact** on the environment, economy or human health. Invasive species can be an insect, bird, animal, fungus or seaweed. It can be something that you can see easily, or something that is very small and hard to see.

Invasive species are introduced and do not occur naturally in a country however it is important to know that a native species can have the same negative impacts as an invasive species such as the crown-of-thorns starfish which feed on other corals.

Introduced species can arrive naturally on islands such as being carried by the sea, or by the wind. Some arrive assisted by humans such as attaching themselves to shoes, clothing or equipment used in the field. If these species survive and find soil where they can start to grow, they may become problems for the community to deal with.

If an invasive species arrives into a new country it often doesn't have a natural **predator** which can keep it under control. This allows the invasive species to spread and reproduce very fast, often faster than the naturally occurring species. Invasive species are usually **highly adaptable** to their environment and can cause considerable damage if not managed properly.

Some examples of invasive species that you may have seen include rats, mongoose, ants, giant African snails, myna birds, sargassum (seaweed), Honolulu rose, or the crown-of-thorns starfish

Glossary

Adaptable – the ability of a species to live and successfully reproduce in many different environments, species that survive and reproduce in a short time are often referred to as being highly adaptable

Biodiversity - the variety of life that includes the genes that make up a species, the various species and their environment

Biodiversity hotspot – is a region or an area that has a high number and variety of species which are found only in that region, or, in that region and a few other places

Ecosystems - are the habitats, the environment and the all the species and their interaction with each other. All the living and non-living matters are considered to be important parts of an ecosystem

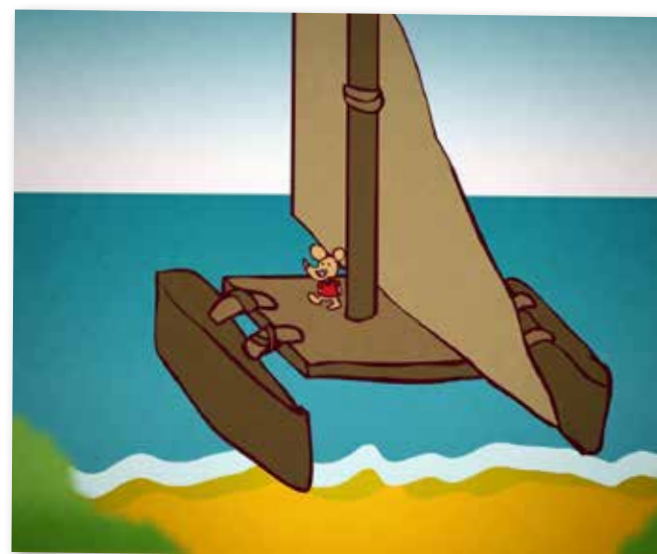
Endemic species – a species that it is not found anywhere else but to a particular site, area or region

Highly adaptable – the strong ability of a species to survive and thrive in a short period of time in a variety of different environments, also see **Adaptable** above

Invasive Species - an organism (plant, animal, fungus or bacterium) that is usually introduced and has negative effects on our economy, our environment, or our health. Not all introduced species are invasive, as some local species can become invasives when there is a change to its environment

Negative impact – A bad, unpleasant, harmful or undesirable effect

Predator - an animal that preys on another, for example a cat is a predator of the rats



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