



Pacific Regional Invasive Species Management Support Service

Invasive species are the leading driver of biodiversity loss in the Pacific. They have a significant impact on ecosystem resilience leading to a loss of ecosystem services and a reduced ability to adapt to climate change.

PRISMSS aims to assist the Pacific in stepping up on-the-ground management of invasive species.

Visit PRISMSS Webpage



PRISMSS Update

PRISMSS hosted the 4th Battler Lounge session on 27th May 2022, focusing on the Natural Enemies Natural Solutions (NENS) Programme: Weeds or Resilience – restoring nature's services. The session highlights the impact of invasive weeds on nature and how natural solutions can build climate resilience. You can view the session [here](#).

Moreover, PRISMSS has completed the regional component of its

Mainstreaming Strategy, a marketing tool aimed at increasing investment in invasives species management to restore ecosystem resilience in the Pacific. The strategy will guide the development of National Mainstreaming Plans and tools for Pacific Island countries.



Battler Lounge

27 May 2022
2:00pm - 3:00pm
Apia standard time (GMT+13)

SPREP PROE
NEW ZEALAND TRADE AND ENTERPRISE
PRISMSS
Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research

Battler Lounge-Weed or Resilience: Restoring Nature's Services



Protect Our Islands

"National and inter-island biosecurity and EDRR"

The programme continues to collect and develop resources to prevent invasive species from establishing and causing harm on islands in the Pacific.

Despite the importance of oceans and lagoons, marine biosecurity was not a primary focus until recently. Launching SPREP's [Pacific Marine Biosecurity Toolkit](#) and [Battler Guide – Manage marine biosecurity in the Pacific](#) is a step change for biosecurity.

Pacific Biosecurity is putting together an [Early Detection and Rapid Response Toolkit](#), and you can see it being built! We welcome feedback on what you would like to see there. Contact [Monica](#) with comments.

New Zealand Department of Conservation's draft interisland biosecurity guidelines are being revised after review by Pacific invasive species management practitioners and PRISMSS partners.

With European Union funding support, the Pacific Community (SPC) is working on [Safe Agriculture Trade Facilitation in the](#)

[Pacific \(SAFE Pacific\)](#) , which aims to increase export capacity and improve economic growth and includes strengthening biosecurity.

Now that travel is becoming possible, and we can meet in person to develop skills and plan and implement projects. Contact [PRISMSS](#) you want to be involved in Protect Our Islands activities.



[Sun Cup Coral](#)—image credit Alexandre Ornella from ICMBio.



Predator Free Pacific

"Removal of invasive mammalian predators from Islands"

As had been hoped, 2022 provided the Predator Free Pacific Programme with the chance to pick up where it left off. So far this year, invasive rats have been removed from islands in RMI, Palau, French Polynesia and the Cook Islands. These projects will leave a legacy of improving conditions for local communities and native biodiversity. The benefits are multi-faceted, enhancing fishing for seabird population recovery or decreasing the risk of mosquito-borne illnesses.

The second half of 2022 is expected to be as productive with ongoing initiatives occurring in Wallis and Futuna and elsewhere. Scoping and planning for 2023 and 2024 are underway in Samoa, Palau, RMI, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati and the Cook Islands.



Seabird population recovery in RMI



War On Weeds

"Management of high priority weeds"

On the 1st of August, the Technical Lead for the [War on Weeds Programme](#) will arrive in the Kingdom of Tonga to deliver training on the Safe Use of Agrichemicals for managing invasive species in the Pacific. The training will kick off eradication programmes for three species of invasive plants.

SPREP is the technical lead partner for the PRISMSS War on Weeds Programme. The training programme has recently been updated to align with the [battler series](#) publication, "[Manage low-incidence priority weeds to conserve Pacific biodiversity](#)". A new battler series focused on the use of agrichemicals is due for publication before the end of the year. This training will be delivered in Niue, Tuvalu, and the Marshall Islands.





Natural Enemies - Natural Solutions

"Biological control of widespread weeds"

Work is gathering speed to bolster the region's use of natural enemies to combat the invasive [African tulip tree \(*Spathodea campanulata* \)](#).

The first natural enemy to be deployed, the [gall mite \(*Colomerus spathodeae* \)](#), was first released in the Cook Islands in 2016 on Rarotonga. The mite is now well established there, and a recent monitoring trip found it has made its way to the outer islands of Aitutaki and Atiu. Although in the early days, the [leaf-mining beetle \(*Paradibolia coerulea* \)](#), also appear to be establishing on Rarotonga.

Mass rearing of the gall mite is now underway in Tonga, with field releases expected to begin soon. The gall mite was delivered to Vanuatu by the NENS team in mid-July and is being mass-reared there by the Biosecurity Vanuatu team. The introduction of natural enemies was recently determined to be a priority for Fiji, and work is underway to make this possible.



[African tulip tree gall mite \(*Colomerus spathodeae* \)](#) . on Aitutaki (Cook Islands)



Resilient Ecosystems - Resilient Communities

"Priority area ecological restoration"

Research focused on understanding human and invasive species relationships to better build resilient communities in the Pacific will begin community consultations and social surveys on Apolima Island, Samoa in late August 2022. The social survey will help to understand how invasive species management can be strengthened in local communities, considering aspects of Pacific communities such as social diversity and inclusivity.

Prior to the Apolima community consultations, several discussions have focused on refining the research methodologies and approaches to best suit Pacific island contexts. The scholarly input from the University of Newcastle from both schools of Natural Sciences and Humanities will greatly benefit the progression of vātalanoa, the new approach that will be used.

A significant output of the research will be the development of protocols and tools to guide the work of National Invasive Species Coordinators in managing high-valued Pacific community-based sites. The initial research will also be conducted in Niue and Tonga.

Vātalanoa as a methodological approach

Household surveys

- Vātalanoa will be used with a questionnaire
- Quantitative and Qualitative data collection
- Findings inform the follow up focus group and interview schedules.

Focus Group Discussion

For both these activities Vātalanoa is adapted into a mobile activity where participants move around instead of being seated and interviewed. In this style both the researcher and participants are co-constructing stories and learning from one another in their environment(s). This comes to what (Enari and Faleolo, 2020) described talanoa to be, where there is shared transparency, authenticity and cultural appropriateness.

William Young

*William Young's research presentation on:
[Vātalanoa and Invasive Species management](#)*



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