

## **Pacific Invasives Learning Network Network sound bites, May 2007**

Not all teams and their achievements are included here and for those missed out it just means I failed to catch up with you in time, so apologies.

### **Current activities**

#### All

The 2007 PILN annual meeting will take place in French Polynesia from 3 to 7 September 2007, in Moorea, hosted by the Ministry of Tourism and Environment.

#### Fiji

Birdlife International Pacific Division is planning a series of feasibility studies to be followed where appropriate by on-the-ground rat eradication projects on islands known to have or which have the potential to support important colonies of sea birds in Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Palau. These have started and are being implemented by local partners (SOP-MANU in French Polynesia, SCO in New Caledonia and PCS in Palau).

#### Kiribati

On 27 - 28 March Kiribati drafted their invasive alien species action plan as the first step towards the implementation of the Kiribati National Biodiversity Action Plan. The drafting group consisted of 16 people from 10 government agencies that include a representative from the Environment Youths Club for South Tarawa and Betio Town Council. They identified what they wanted the future (in 5-years time) to look like with regards invasive alien species, and defined 7 strategic goals. Objectives and actions were drafted for 4 of these goals during the workshop, and the drafting group is currently finalising the plan. A national invasive committee is under formulation led by Environment and Conservation Division of Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agriculture Development, where the Committee will be based.

#### Kosrae

In a workshop held from 25 – 26 April the Kosrae Invasive Species Taskforce (KIST) was established with a simple charter. The KIST strategic action plan was drafted and work plans were produced for 3 priority weed species, *Mikania*, *Leucocephala* (provisional identification) and *Ishaemum*. The workshop was facilitated by Lucille Apis-Overhof and Mae Adams of the TNC, and Jill Key of PILN.

#### Marshall Islands

In a workshop held from 3 – 4 May the Marshall Islands Invasive Species Taskforce (MIIST) was established. The MIIST strategic action plan was drafted and work plans were produced for 3 priority invasive species issues: ballast water and marine invasive species threats, a package of 3 weeds (*Chromolaena*, *Merremia* and *Mikania*) and red ants. The workshop was facilitated by Lucille Apis-Overhof and Mae Adams of the TNC, and Jill Key of PILN.

[\\*\\* I've put some photos from these 3 strategic action-planning workshops in Kodak Easy Share. If you'd like to see them let me know and I'll email you the link\\*\\*](#)

### New Caledonia

A Dry Forest restoration day was held in Ouen Toro, a protected area in Nouméa South Province, with 3 classes from Gustav Lods school and their teachers, as part of learning how to conserve biodiversity and fight invasive species (*Anredera cordifolia*, a vine). Children pulled up invasive weeds and planted native tree seedlings. Another day of plantation will be held on the 22th of May, the biodiversity day. This action is the result of the cooperation between the dry forest conservation programme, the IRD, the town of Nouméa and the south province.

### Samoa

- The latest monitoring visit for the rattan eradication was undertaken in April, when the team of 4 uprooted 10 small trees and 3771 seedlings at the Papassea site. The trees were mostly small and were missed before due to their small size and being hidden under other plants. Once again there were many seedlings in new areas. So, the next trip will include about 10 people walking a line about 5 metres apart and sweeping through the whole area.
- A sighting of a cane toad was reported to Quarantine by a member of the public on 26 April. Toads have not yet invaded Samoa and are considered a high priority risk, so Quarantine officials responded immediately by notifying SNITT and initiating day and night patrols, interviews with the public and general public awareness. Thanks to everyone in PILN who gave advice or information on toads to help the response. So far none have been found despite further rumours, and the search continues. SNITT is considering drafting an emergency action plan for cane toads to make future responses to incursions smooth and as effective as possible.

### Galapagos

A 10-day intensive examination of the introduced rat and mouse problem in Galapagos was organized by the Charles Darwin Foundation (CDF) and the Galapagos National Park Service (GNPS) from the 2nd to the 12th of April in Puerto Ayora, Santa Cruz Island. The workshop brought together local management authorities and scientists with participants from Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA; experts on invasive species control with extensive experience in the eradication of rodents on islands as well as the flora and fauna of Galapagos. Building on the recent success of Project Isabela, which achieved the eradication of goats, pigs, and donkeys from some of the larger islands, the next challenge will be the elimination of introduced rodents such as the black rat, *Rattus rattus* and the common house mouse *Mus musculus*, two of the most invasive and destructive invasive species that have arrived in Galapagos since the discovery of the islands in 1535.

## **Planned work**

### Guam

Eradication of rats and mice from Cocos Island, planned for the dry season 2008 (February). Meanwhile conducting further studies, such as:

- Radio telemetry of rodents to determine habitat use (radio collars will be loaned to us from Island Conservation)
- Crab density estimates
- Biosecurity implementation and evaluation

USDA's National Wildlife Research Center Hilo Station in Hawaii is still conducting toxicity trials for mice, Polynesian rats, ship/black/roof rats and Norway rats.

### New Caledonia

A feasibility study for restoration of Lepredour Island, South Province, is being planned together with the Pacific Invasive initiative. Leprédour Island is a protected area in the South Province (Boulouparis). Tropical dry sclerophyll forest is one of the most endangered major vegetation types in the New Caledonia biodiversity hot spot. Lepredour, a 740-ha island in St Vincent Bay, contains some key remnants of this forest type, but these are highly degraded and under severe threat from introduced weeds (*Passiflora suberosa*) and pests (rabbits, rodents, deer, Giant African snails). Preservation and restoration of these remnants through weed and pest control and/or eradication could therefore make potentially globally important contribution to conservation. Highlighting this, two individuals of a new tree species *Pittosporum taniaum*, were first discovered in 1988, but both died in 1992. Three more individuals were found in 2002, but no more since. Although some hundreds of seedlings have been propagated *ex situ*, this species will not persist in the wild on Lepredour without herbivore control. The objectives of the feasibility study are to design trials to determine the consequences (on other pests/weeds and on native vegetation recovery/restoration) of removing or controlling the suit of pests in different sequences or combinations on Lepredour Island and to assess the technical feasibility and costs of removing (or reducing) the impacts of introduced plants and animals in the order identified above on Lepredour Island.

### Samoa

Mt Vaea restoration project. Long-term project to restore Mt Vaea Forest Reserve of a variety of invasive and introduced plants and replant with native species. MNRE, Samoa / Conservation International, with input from ASIST. Funding is being sought. Expected implementation: 2008- 2012.

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