

PILN SOUNDBITES - AUGUST 2011



Pacific Invasives Learning Network.

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

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PILN Teams:

American Samoa

Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Fiji

French Polynesia

Guam

Hawaii

Kiribati

Kosrae

Marshall Islands

New Caledonia

Niue

Palau

Pohnpei

Samoa

Yap

Pacific Invasives Learning Network

Network News

PILN SOUNDBITES is the monthly newsletter of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network: a participant-driven island network, reporting on news of PILN Teams and the Pacific Invasives Partnership. Past issues are available from the webpage: www.sprep.org/piln. Send comments, feedback or contributions to the PILN Coordinator: posas@sprep.org.

PILN Teams and Country Updates:

New Caledonia

Inventory of invasive alien plants in New Caledonia (Botanical Laboratory, IRD; 2009)

In 2009, The State, the Northern Province and the Southern Province commissioned a study by the IRD (Institute of Research for Development) to inventory, prioritize and characterize the distribution of invasive alien plants in New Caledonia. The study highlighted more than 200 invasive or potentially invasive species.

The species were classified into two lists:

A priority list of 99 species with a major risk to the environment and contributing to the erosion of the Caledonian biodiversity. These species were then ranked according to a protocol recommended by NatureServe (Morse, Randall et al. 2004; Randall, Morse et al. 2008)

A secondary list of 122 species considered to be of significant invasive. These species have lower risk than species listed on the priority list but they should be monitored.

The distribution of the priority listed risk species was also mapped.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS "invasive species" 2010 (Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea)

Thanks to the financial support of MEDDM, 4 control projects are underway or will begin in New Caledonia:

WWF (World Wildlife Fund): Pilot operation to control the invasive shrub *Flemingia strobilifera* in rural tribal areas. The objective is to stop the progression of *Flemingia strobilifera* into a high biodiversity forest - the Aoupinié. This project involves the tribal population concerned and will promote the fight against plant pests.

ASNNC (Association for the Conservation of New Caledonian Nature): SOS « Rivière Salée » mangrove forest. The purpose is to rehabilitate the Rivière salée mangrove forest located in Noumea in order to restore and preserve the original fauna and flora. This project will involve ten local youths and will educate the local population. The project includes a control operation of the red-eared slider (*Trachemys scripta elegans*).

Dayu Biik, SCO (Caledonian Society of Ornithology): Fight against feral pigs (*Sus scrofa*) on "Panié" tribes, OUAÏEME and TIWA. The objective is to limit the impacts of feral pigs on food crops and forest regeneration. Control action by the trapping is in progress. This project involves the local population and will strengthen local capacity in the fight against feral pigs.

SCO (Caledonian Society of Ornithology): Control of introduced predators to avoid the extinction of the Island Thrush (*Turdus poliocephalus xanthopus*) in New Caledonia. The goal is to save the last population of the endemic subspecies of the island Thrush from extinction. This project will build local capacity in the fight against introduced rodents and educate the local population.

The traveling exhibition "Stop the invasion" still in circulation ; an accompanying booklet to help teacher

In 2010, the GEE (Invasive Species Group) produced a traveling exhibition on invasive plants and invasive animals in New Caledonia. The purpose was to educate and inform professionals and the public on invasive species present in the area and on the threats they pose.

It presents the history of invasions and an overview of the affected habitats. It also presents the 14 most invasive species present on New Caledonia. It details their impact on the environment, the economy and health and gives advice on how to stop the invasion.

The travelling exhibition was built so that it can be used in the three provinces and was made available to school groups, libraries, fairs, shows, and other public events.

An accompanying booklet is being developed by the CIE (Center for Environmental Education) to help teachers and other education staff understand invasive species. It could also be used as support during the exhibition "Stop the invasion."

The booklet is divided into two parts: A theoretical part with the general characteristics and threats of invasive species and a second part with interactive and fun educational activities.

Successful rodent removal on three islands rich in marine birds in the region of Koumac

In September 2008, as part of the project Packard conducted in collaboration with Birdlife International, the SCO (Caledonian Society of Ornithology) began the eradication of black rats (*Rattus rattus*) on Table island (14 acres) and the Pacific Rat (*Rattus exulans*) on Double island (6 acres) and Tiam'bouène island (17 acres). A mission conducted in July 2011 has confirmed the absence of rodents on these three islands.

The objective was to provide Nereis Sterne (*Sternula nereis exsul*) nesting sites free of rats. Nereis Sterne (IUCN: VU) is threatened in New Caledonia and the majority of the population breeds on this Important Bird Area (70 to 90 pairs for a population of approximately 130 Caledonian nesting pairs).

In 2010, the species (*Sternula nereis exsul*) nested for the first time on Table island. In 2011, the Tiam'bouène island hosted a colony of 28 active nests.

Another encouraging result is the presence of a Tahiti Petrel (*Pseudobulweria rostrata trouessarti*) occupying a burrow on the Table island. This species had never been seen on this site. Only empty burrows were located before. The species seem to be in active phase of colonization of the island following the elimination of the Black Rat.

This mission is definitely a success because new bird populations, absent before the eradications, have been established on each island and various signs of the response of the ecosystem.

For more information you can consult the SCO 's blog: <http://sco.over-blog.org/>

The development of a guide "invasive plants for natural habitats of New Caledonia"

An identification guide to invasive plants of natural habitats in New Caledonia will be available by the end of 2011. The development of this work is supported by the APICAN (Agency for the Prevention and Compensation for Agricultural Disasters and Natural) and GEE (Invasive Species Group).

It aims to identify the main invasive plant species of the natural environment in New Caledonia, to know the issues related to invasive plants, and implement techniques to control them. This guide is for technical services of common land and natural reserves, farmers, green spaces professionals and Caledonian citizen. For each species, it gives the description, the biology, the distribution and the control method.

New Caledonia needs to improve regulation on invasive species

The Northern Province and the Southern Province have each a list of invasive plant and animal species regulated. It is forbidden to hold, to transport or to trade these species. Provincial services want to improve this regulation as species listed are not prioritized or categorized according to the threat they pose. The GEE are planning to make an assessment of invasive species existing laws in the world and then review its regulations.

New Caledonia would like to know if any of you have such experience in this issue.

Establishment of a monitoring and early detection unit

The GEE has set up a monitoring and early detection unit of invasive plant and animal species, headed by Julie Goxe. She coordinates the various actions ranging from the detection of an invasion to the establishment of an appropriate response. A monitoring network is being developed (Forestry technicians, environmental agents, SIVAP agents (food, plant and veterinary inspection service), associations, user site).

A protocol for early detection of invasive plant involving the monitoring of 31 sites in New Caledonia. This protocol was defined by the IRD and validated by the GEE. Those 31 sites are divided into two major categories: risk sites and ecological interest sites. A list of priority plant species was established for the monitoring. It includes non-present species in NC (New Caledonia), potentially invasive species in NC, and invasive species in NC. The person in charge must inventore the data from monitoring sites and from the different actors involved. Report forms were also developed to centralize reporting throughout the year.

For more information you can contact Julie Goxe: cellule.veille @ iac.nc

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Kiribati

Learning Exchange - Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Training Course



Aana Teetan from Kiribati attended the environmental compliance and enforcement training with support from SPREP and PILN's through it's Learning Exchange programme. The training was held at the Suva Campus of the University of the South Pacific (USP) from 11 to 20 July. The training objectives were to build skills and confidence of environmental enforcement officers, promote best practice in investigative skills and emphasise the importance of environmental enforcement to protect our natural resources, amongst others. Attended by participants from selected Pacific island countries the course was delivered by legal experts from the IUCN office and the Australian Centre for Environmental Compliances. According to Aana she found the course very useful and recommended it to all environmental inspectors.

Expedition update for Phoenix Islands Protected Area

The 2011 expedition to the Phoenix Islands Protected Area began in Apia, Samoa on July 11th. This is the continuation of restoring islands in the Phoenix Group, by eradicating rats using baits. Pest off 20R Brodifacoum bait in 25 kg bags were imported from New Zealand to Apia and then loaded on to the MV Aquila bound for the Phoenix Islands. Each container had fourteen pellets with forty 25 kg bags. Therefore this eradication involved about 28 tons of Brodifacoum rat bait. Birnie Island (50 hectare) and Enderbury Island (600 hectare) were targeted during this trip. Two different applications of baits were given for each island. In between the application, the crew visited others islands including the Phoenix Island (Rawaki) to evaluate and assess the eradication of rabbits. Sydney (Manra) Island was surveyed for the first time. The trip took 16 days until completion. Having helicopters on board meant going ashore was safe and efficient.

Birnie Island was visited on the 15th of July. The baiting took about four hours to cover the whole island. Approximately 500 kg bait was dropped during the application. The Island was mostly covered with *Portulaca*, *Sesuvium*, grass and few re-growth of *Sida*. The island lacked tall trees and it harbored up to seven different species of seabirds including the masked boobies as the dominant species, Brown boobies, Frigate birds, white terns, crested terns, Sooty terns and Brown Noddy. There were signs of turtle tracks on the beach, 6 old nests and 2 Bristle thigh curlews (endangered species) were also sighted on the island. One poster was placed at the landing site to inform visitors of the poisons on the island. Five rats were caught and tail removed for DNA analysis.

The team arrived at Enderbury Island on the 16th of July. Targeted rats were found to be more concentrated around areas of piled up stones and some were taken for DNA analysis. *Boerhavia* plants covered most of the island, other plants such as *Sesuvium*, *Ipomoea*, tall trees such as *Scaevola*, *Sida*, *Heliotrope*, *Cordia*, *Pisonia* and coconuts were also found on the island. During the fly over, burrowing nesters such as Audubon Shearwater, Wedge Tailed Shearwater and Blue Grey Noddy were observed to be seriously affected by rat predations. The team headed to Kanton (administration center), which was the only inhabited island in the Phoenix Group to do consultation for future plan in restoring Kanton Island. The outcome of consultation emphasized the positive support from the community, confirming with them sites of important birds for their information and negative impacts on birds from the bait application.

The team then headed to Rawaki Island that was colonized by 17 different bird species. This was to check the rabbit eradication work done two years earlier. Areas which were occupied by rabbits were now colonized by birds such as the Phoenix Petrel, Christmas Shearwater and Audubon Shearwaters. Vegetation and re-growth of plants were observed especially *Sida*.

The second bait application on Birnie Island was done on the 20th July. There were plenty of dead rats seen but there were also quite a few still running around. Five rats were caught at night with others confirmed to be dying. Enderbury Island second bait application was done the following day and there were lots of dead rats seen. In the evening, spot lightning was carried out to observe areas with high density of living rats on Enderbury Island.

On the 22nd of July in the afternoon, the team headed to Manra Island. This island was once settled by Kiribati people and evidence such as house foundations, concrete buildings with asbestos roofing's and a crashed US Army plane. Masked Boobies with eggs and juveniles, colonies of Sooty Terns, Grey Backed Tern, Brown Noddies and White Tern were seen. White Tailed tropic bird was observed flying around the island. Cats and rats are the main predators but cats struggle to survive in the hot and dry island. The island was covered by tall trees, such as coconut trees, pandanus, salt bush, beach morning glory, ipomoea, and *Portulaca*.

Hawaii

Big Island Invasive Species Committee to meet

The draft agenda for the BIISC Committee meeting has been circulated for April 7th. The meeting will be held at the DOFAH conference room in Hilo.

BIISC Committee Meeting DRAFT AGENDA, September 7th 2011

9:00 AM Welcome and Introductions
9:10 Update from BIISC Partners and discussions about current and future priorities for incipient and established pests on Hawai'i Island.
9:35 Hawai'i's Early Detection Forest Pests (Linda Burnhams)
9:45 Hawai'i Ant Lab update (Michelle Montgomery and Cas Vanderwoude)
10:00 BIISC Programmatic Update: Ho'ala Ika Maka (Jan Schipper)
10:15 Axis Deer update (Jake Muise)
BIISC Project Updates:
10:45 Moving from early detection to rapid response (Jimmy Parker and Bobby Parsons)
11:00 Ongoing efforts with established pests: Miconia and Rauvolfia (Jean Franklin)
11:15 Outreach update, ramping up for 2012 (Page Else and Donna Lemann)
11:30 Vertebrate program, inception and next steps? (Raymond McGuire)
11:45 Discussion and public comment
12:00 noon Conclusion
Optional Afternoon Training
1:00 – 3:00 Invasive Insects to Watch for in Hawaii's Urban Forest (Aileen Yeh and Linda Larish)
Aloha – Jan Schipper, Ph.D.
Manager, Big Island Invasive Species Committee (BIISC)
23 East Kawili Street, Hilo, Hawaii 96720
office: (808) 933-3340, cell: (808) 333-0262
fax: (808) 933-3326, www.bigislandisc.org
email: jan.schipper@hawaii.edu

Pacific Invasives Partnership News:

Biosecurity New Zealand



The NZ Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) must consult with interested parties before issuing or amending (other than of minor nature) import health standards (IHSs) in accordance with Section 22 of the Biosecurity Act (1993) and MAF's consultation policy. An IHS specifies import requirements that must be carried out, either in the country of origin or of export, during transit, or in a biosecurity facility, before biosecurity clearance can be given for the commodity to enter NZ. MAF must also ensure that these requirements are justified and provide an appropriate level of biosecurity management.

In December 2010, MAF sought feedback for a 3 month period ending in March 2011 from external stakeholders on expanding the scope of the existing Import Health Standard for Scrap Metal from All Countries (2007). The IHS was revised and expanded as the draft IHS for Inorganic Risk Materials. This IHS was intended to cover other similar categories of inorganic imported materials that could present a biosecurity risk unless managed under the requirements of an IHS. The additional categories of materials included in this new IHS were (but were not limited to):-

- cullet (broken or whole glass bottles, jars etc for recycling);
- inorganic materials permitted to enter NZ for destruction or disposal (for example, asbestos);
- scrap metal for re-cycling;
- used batteries from vehicles; and
- other miscellaneous used risk parts

No objections to the IHS were received at the end of the 3 month period and in this regard, the Import Health Standard for Importation of Inorganic Risk Materials (MAF-STD-IRM) will be implemented as of today (17 August 2011). This IHS revokes, replaces and extends the scope of "BNZ-STD-SCRAPMETAL: Import Health Standard for Scrap Metal from All Countries (2007). It also incorporates and revokes MAF IHS - Containerised Used Asbestos Imported for Disposal or Destruction (2010).

The IHS can be found on the MAF website: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz/imports/non-organic/standards/>

Yours sincerely

Paul Hallett
Manager, Biosecurity Operational Standards and Systems
New Zealand Standards Directorate
Standards Branch
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
PO Box 2526
Wellington
Email: standards@maf.govt.nz

Biosecurity New Zealand – *Limicolaria flammea* an African snail on the radar

In the light of the apparent invasion of Singapore, by the African snail, *Limicolaria flammea* and the fear of invasion of adjacent South East Asian land masses, (and possibly Pacific Islands) I have been asked to prepare an intelligence assessment covering the current state of its range, how it is spreading and the chance of it establishing in the warmer parts of New Zealand. MAF puts a lot of time and effort into preventing incursions of Giant African Snails, *Achatina fulica*, a related species, but there is not a lot of information about *L. flammea* regarding its climatic requirements to feed and breed, where it is established or threatening to establish, and how it is transported. I would greatly appreciate it if any list members with specialist knowledge would help me out with some information. My first impression is that this snail is more of an obligate tropical species than *A. fulica* but I don't have any facts to back up this impression.

Regards,

Grant Knight

Grant Knight | Tactical Intelligence Analyst
Verification | Risk and Support | Integrated Targeting Operations Centre (ITOC)
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry | Level 8, CustomHouse | 50 Anzac Avenue | Auckland 1010
PO Box 105-055 Auckland 1143 | New Zealand
Telephone: 64-9-909 3513 | Facsimile: 64-9-909 3729 | Mobile: 64 (0)29-909 3513
Email grant.knight@maf.govt.nz Web: <http://www.biosecurity.govt.nz>

IUCN – ISSG to showcase Biodiversity Toolkit at SPREP 22nd Meeting

A special side-event to showcase the Biodiversity Information Toolkit built by Shyama Pagad of the IUCN-Invasive Species Specialist Group will be held at the SPREP 22nd Members meeting. The side-event titled – Biodiversity Data and Information Management in the Pacific Region – will focus on a CEPF-funded toolkit aimed at making information on invasive species in the Pacific readily accessible. Shyama Pagad who will lead the side-event is eager to demonstrate this valuable tool to SPREP member countries and other interested participants. This is a much needed tool in support of countries National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans. The Side-Event is scheduled for Thursday 15th September 2011. All welcome. For more information please contact Shyama Pagad of IUCN-ISSG (s.pagad@auckland.ac.nz) or Dr Posa Skelton (posas@sprep.org).

Pacific Invasives Initiative – Pacific Invasive Plants Management Training Course



The Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) team, SPREP and PILN met recently in Auckland to discuss the development of Module 1 of the Pacific Invasive Plants Management training course. The meeting provided plenty of opportunities to discuss how the Module should be structured and how it could be delivered. Great progress was made and refinement in the coming months will ensure a great product for PILN teams and the Pacific wide audience. There is also aspiration for the course to be applicable to other regions and countries. The course will be offered in two modules targeting a range of weed management specialists. It was decided that a third Module, dealing with field skills, would be best developed by country agencies to suit their needs. Module 1 focuses on prioritisation and programmed development with high level managers as one of the target audiences and Module 2 focuses on project management. Once the scoping has been completed, training material will be developed by professional educators. The course was one of the priority issues highlighted at the last PILN meetings held in Moorea in 2007. For more information about the training course please contact Bill Nagles at: PII@auckland.ac.nz.

SPREP – Pacific Environment Forum to kick-start the 22nd SPREP Members Meeting



September is a busy month for SPREP members as they get organised for its annual general meeting from the 13-15th. The meeting will be preceded by the Pacific Environment Forum on Monday 12th at the Tanoa Tusitala Hotel, Apia, Samoa. The official opening for the meeting will be held on the evening of the 12th.

The theme for the Pacific Environment Forum will be Rio + 20 and Beyond – building resilience for a sustainable future. The forum aims to assist members in their preparations for the United Nations

Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) or Rio+20 which will be held in Rio de Janeiro Brazil in 2012. Selected topics for discussions include:

- Green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication;
- Environmental governance which is a broad topic that includes institutional frameworks for sustainable development;
- Adapting to climate change which continues to be one of the top priority issues for the Pacific

The Forum will feature key speakers who will present different perspectives on the above selected topics. Panel and break-out group discussions will be conducted to further articulate the main messages and issues that will arise out of the main discussions. These key messages will form the basis for an Outcome Statement to be presented to the 22nd SPREP meeting for consideration as input to the Rio+20 preparations and other regional and international processes.

Further information can be obtained from Ms Easter Galuvao (easterg@sprep.org) or Andrew Kennedy (andrewk@sprep.org)

SPREP – PEELing for Pacific Leaders



Dear Friends:

Please see an opportunity for young professionals to participate in an environment symposium in October. Note that this is open to individuals from a wide range of disciplines.

We would appreciate you distributing this widely. Deadline for receipt of applications in Monday 5 September.

If you would like to participate as a sponsor or other partner, please contact me directly at seemad@sprep.org or phone SPREP (685 21929 ext 306).

Warm regards

Seema

Education and Social Communications

SPREP

Vacancies, Scholarships & Consultancies:

Call for applications for a Masters bursary in Entomology at Rhodes University



A bursary for a Masters student in the Department of Zoology and Entomology at Rhodes University is available for 2012. The funding for the bursary has been provided by the Working for Water Programme of the Department of Water Affairs for research into the biological control of the alien invasive plant, *Pereskia aculeata* (Cactaceae).



The student will conduct research for the improvement of the biological control programme against *P. aculeata*. This may involve aspects of post release evaluation of the current biological control agent, *Phenrica guerini* (Chrysomelidae), and/or research towards the introduction of new biological control agents. The research may involve both laboratory and field work depending on the skills of the student.

The successful candidate will be registered as a full-time, in attendance student at Rhodes University, Grahamstown and will be funded for a second year if progress is satisfactory. The bursary will cover tuition/registration fees and R50 000 per annum for living expenses.

Candidates must have an Honours degree in either Entomology or Botany. Candidates should send their applications by email to L.Paterson@ru.ac.za. Applications should include a full CV, a copy of Honours Degree certificates, a letter of motivation and contact details of two referees.

Peer review of the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan and Development of a Strategic Implementation Plan – Request for Statement of Interest

Please see the following link to a request for statement of interest (RSOI) for "Peer Review of the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan and Development of a Strategic Implementation Plan for the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan." This effort would be conducted through the Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU) system and is funded by the Department of Defense. Proposals need to meet the requirements of the RSOI and CESU system to qualify. The RSOI

is detailed and should provide interested parties with background information. RSOI's need to be submitted no later than 14 September 2011 in Guam (that's 13 September in Hawaii and the Continental U.S.).
http://manoa.hawaii.edu/hpicesu/Projects_Files/DOD.htm.

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WWF - Vacancies



The WWF-South Pacific Office based in Fiji is looking for candidates to fill the following positions:

- Communications Officer
- Monitoring and Evaluation, Fundraising Officer
- Human Resource manager
- Conservation Director
- Western & Central Pacific Ocean Tuna Programme Officer

Applications must include a complete CV with full contact details of three referees. Please send applications to Roshni Mala at rmala@wwfpacific.org.fj by Friday, 30th September 2011 at 4:30 pm (FJT). Full job description can be found on www.wwfpacific.org.fj.

Call for Applications - On-the-Job Research Capacity Building for Sustainable Agriculture in Developing Countries (OJCB)

DEADLINE: 10 October 2011 to start from November 2011 <http://isp.unu.edu/news/2011/ojcb-application-guidelines.html>.

The United Nations University Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP) has the pleasure to announce Open Calls for On-the-Job Research Capacity Building for Sustainable Agriculture in Developing Countries (OJCB). This programme is funded by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan and coordinated by UNU-ISP.

For detailed information on the capacity building programme and application procedures, please visit the UNU-ISP website at: <http://isp.unu.edu/news/2011/ojcb-application-guidelines.html>.

Should you have any questions/inquiries, please feel free to contact Mr. Akira Nagata, Senior Programme Coordinator (nagata@unu.edu) of UNU-ISP.

Meeting, conference and training announcements:

These announcements are for activities taking place in September. More events can be found on our webpage:
<http://www.sprep.org/PILN/Calendar.htm>

Applications for Durrell Endangered Species Management (DESMAN) now being accepted

Durrell Endangered Species Management (DESMAN) course 6th February - 27th April 2012.

We are now accepting applications for the DESMAN 2012 course. This is a 12-week course designed to equip conservationists with the skills needed to manage species recovery. Accredited by the University of Kent, participants have the opportunity to work closely with Durrell staff and develop professional networks. In addition to learning from our expert staff at Durrell, guest lecturers from world class conservation organisations and learning institutions will contribute to the course. Application deadline: 16th September 2011

For further information and an application form, please email itc@durrell.org. For full details of all courses, or to download a course prospectus, visit www.durrell.org/training.

Conservation Conflict Resolution:

Transforming Conflict to Create Sustainable Solutions for People and Wildlife

4 Day HWCC Training – November 1-4, 2011, Hawai'i

Kilauea Military Camp, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, The Big Island

Cost: \$1200 per person

Deadlines: Early Registration: May 31st – Late Registration: Sept 30th

Visit: www.humanwildlifeconflict.org for more details about the course and registration or contact: Francine Madden at francine@humanwildlifeconflict.org Registration OPEN until September 30th.

Society for Conservation Biology Oceania – funding for 5 Pacific islands to attend the SCB conference in NZ

Dear friends and colleagues,

The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) Oceania has secured funds from NZAID to send up to 5 young Pacific islanders to the SCB conference in Auckland in December.

<http://www.conbio.org/Activities/Meetings/2011/about/about.cfm>. We need help to identify suitable participants who will benefit from attendance.

The criteria for selection are:

- Resident on a Pacific island
- Under 40
- Working or studying in environmental conservation or environmental management
- At least 2 years practical experience in conservation or environmental management
- Will apply experiences from the conference in their work/studies
- Will provide a short report to SCB on what they learnt at the conference and also present to their host institution

If you know someone suitable, please provide us details -eg CV or cover letter with name, gender, age, contact details, a summary of their current work or research interests and why they believe they should attend along with the expected benefits from attendance (no more than 400 words).

If you have already provided the names of nominees there is no need to do so again. We look forward to your response by Friday Sept 2, 2011 to this email address.

Thank you very much.

Soifua (good health),
James Atherton

On behalf of the SCB Oceania Board

- [4-9th September. 10th International NCCR Climate Summer School \(Grindelwald, Switzerland\)](http://www.nccr-climate.unibe.ch/summer_school/2011/). Details: http://www.nccr-climate.unibe.ch/summer_school/2011/
Young scientists are invited to join leading climate researchers in the Swiss Alpine for keynote lectures, workshops and poster sessions. Topics covered include – ecological implications of climate change, ecosystem services and climate change, food security and global land and water use in changing climate. Participation is highly competitive and is limited to 70 places. Registration fee is 1200 CHF includes half board accommodation, excursion and teaching material. Deadline for application is closed!
- [11-16th September. 13th International Symposium on Biological Control of Weeds \(Hawaii\)](http://uhhconferencecenter.com/xiii_isbcw.html). Location: Waiolua Beach Marriott Resort & Spa, Waikoloa on Hawaii's Big Island. Details: http://uhhconferencecenter.com/xiii_isbcw.html. The Symposium focuses on biological control of weeds. International cooperation is central to the practice of biocontrol, and this forum provides a critical opportunity for colleagues to reconnect, share experiences, and plan future collaborations. The meeting in Hawaii will provide a unique opportunity to take stock of a century of biocontrol in the Pacific and examine emerging issues, including climate change, that affect invasive plant management across the globe. The extraordinary cultural and natural diversity of Hawaii, and its long history in weed biocontrol, make these islands an ideal site for reflection and discourse on the past, present and future of this field.
- 14-16th September - 2nd Fiji Conservation Science Forum. Deadline for abstracts 1st July, 2011. Theme is Confronting the Climate-Biodiversity Crisis. Contact inf@wcsfiji.org (tel. +679 3315174)
- 19-25th September - 22nd SPREP Meeting (Samoa). Details: www.sprep.org
The meeting is for SPREP members only and invited observers. This year there will be a Pacific Environment Forum with UNEP Executive Director –Mr Achim Steiner.
- 22nd September - Car Free Day (Global)
- 23rd September - World Maritime Day (Global)
- 25-30th September - 23rd Asian-Pacific Weed Science Society Conference. The conference provides a forum in which results can be shared, information disseminated to agricultural researchers and cooperation encouraged.
- [26-30th September – 8th European Vertebrate Pest Management Conference. \(Berlin, Germany\)](http://www.evpmc.org). Details: www.evpmc.org
Phil Cowen, Landcare Research New Zealand will be convening a symposium on invasive vertebrates

focusing on impacts and management of European invasive vertebrates and comparisons between the European situation and other regions of the world. If you are interested in presenting at the symposium, please contact Phil by email – cowanp@landcaresresearch.co.nz

Funding opportunities:

CEPF – 5th call for proposals, and summary of investment strategy, eligibility criteria and application process Sept 1, 2011 – Oct 14 2011”

Dear colleagues and friends,

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) for terrestrial conservation projects in the Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot was launched in September 2008. Please find attached a summary of the investment strategy, criteria and application process for the current call for proposals (CFP) in English and French. This five year investment programme (2008-2013) is being managed by CEPF and CI Pacific with help of a number of partners.

The fifth funding window will be open from **Sept 1 to October 14, 2011**, and this is the final funding window for the five year investment period.

This fifth round of funding has specific targeted areas for support that are explained in the attached CFP document. All eligible stakeholders in the 14 eligible countries and territories of the Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot are invited to submit an application form called an LOI (Letter of Inquiry).

Please read the CFP document as applications must meet the criteria to be eligible.

The LOI application form in English and French or can be downloaded from

<http://www.cepf.net/grants/apply/Pages/default.aspx>

If you have any questions, or need further information regarding the CEPF investment for the Polynesia-Micronesia hotspot, kindly contact the CI-Pacific Regional Implementation Team at: cipacific@conservation.org or Leilani Duffy lduff@conservation.org

It is preferable that LOIs be submitted in English, but proposals in French are also accepted.

Conservation Leadership Programme

BP Conservation Leadership Programme. The Conservation Leadership Programme is offering Future Conservationist Awards of up to \$12,500 to high potential teams who aim to develop their skills through practical conservation projects. <http://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/FutureConservationistAward.asp>. **The deadline for proposal submission is November 14th and award winners will be announced in April 2012.**

SARP/COCA 2012 Funding Opportunity Information Session September 9th

The NOAA Sectoral Applications Research Program (SARP) and the Coastal and Ocean Climate Applications (COCA) Program will be holding an information call-in session regarding general proposal questions on September 9th from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Eastern time. The call in number is: 1-866-710-6541 code 5841149. As the general mechanics for the proposals are the same for both programs, the first 30-45 min will include an overview of the two programs, a discussion of questions we have been asked regarding this competition, and other general information. The remainder of the time will be available for participants to ask questions of the two program managers. This is for general information; we will not be answering project-specific questions at that time.

Finally, there will be no make-up session as this is for general information regarding proposal submission.

Please feel free to join us, however, we request that only ONE telephone line be used by all primary and secondary principal investigators for your proposed project as we are limited in the number of lines that can call in at once.

A few reminders: Full applications for both competitions must be received by 5:00 p.m.

Eastern Time, October 3, 2011. If you are new to the Grants system - you should begin to enter background information as soon as possible and may want to send a hard copy of the entire proposal to us before the deadline as insurance. Remember that the lines become slower as more people try to submit applications the last few hours. We are not allowed to accept late proposals - no matter the reason. For more information contact:

adrienne.antoine@noaa.gov

SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund

SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund. The Fund supports research in one of four areas: 1) Species research, 2) Animal rescue and rehabilitation, 3) Habitat protection, 4) Conservation education. It has no set minimum or maximum grant amount but in the past it has supported projects ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for a one-year term. See: <http://www.swbg-conservationfund.org/grantInfo.htm> No deadline - SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund Animal Crisis Grants. For more information see: <http://www.swbg-conservationfund.org/animalCrisisGrants.htm>.

UNESCO: Pacific Youth Visioning for Island Living 2010 Small Grants

Youth Visioning for Island Living is a capacity building initiative that aims to empower young people in small islands to make a difference. The UNESCO Office for the Pacific states encourages young people and or youth organizations from member countries to submit applications to support a wide range of projects. If you are a young person or a youth organisation and would like to take part in this opportunity, feel free to contact Natalia Pereira (n.pereira@unesco.org)

Rapid Response Facility

The Rapid Response Facility (RRF) is an emergency small grants programme jointly operated by Fauna & Flora International (FFI), UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and the United Nations Foundation. With a target processing time for grant applications of just 8 working days, the RRF provides rapid support to enable conservation practitioners to tackle emergencies in some of the World's most important sites for biodiversity. To date it has supported 16 rapid interventions in 14 UNESCO designated natural World Heritage sites, responding to the conservation impacts of a range of emergencies such as natural disaster, armed conflict and sudden increases in illegal activity within these protected areas. Those interested in approaching the RRF for emergency funding should see www.rapid-response.org, which provides details on application procedures, funding criteria, and case studies of past RRF grants.

Invasive news and interesting links and websites

Elimination via harvest is not remotely realistic. Even limited control is not realistic



Lionfish are now definitely entrenched in the Eastern Gulf of Mexico as well. While they are regularly found (<130 feet of water) at dive sites from the Middle Grounds southward in limited numbers (e.g., 2-3 specimens), for whatever reason they are thick as hell in deeper water, particularly in the southeastern portion of the Gulf. Back in February we saw them extremely abundant at every spot we splashed on - natural bottom and on shipwrecks - in 200-300 feet of water. To give you an idea of abundance, I am attaching two small images from this weekend taken on a dive in 250 feet of water approximately 100 nautical miles west of Naples, Florida. This site was an extremely small, broken down shipwreck. Not much habitat to speak of, but it was overrun with lionfish (and red snapper). And there is a lot of great real

estate for them to occupy in the Gulf. [source: Michale Barnett – NOAA]

Lionfish Spotted in Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

Several juvenile lionfish, normally native to the Indo-Pacific, were spotted recently in NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, located 70 to 115 miles off the coasts of Texas and Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico. This is the first instance of lionfish in the sanctuary since the species spread to U.S. East Coast waters in 2000.

Recreational divers reported seeing a lionfish at West Flower Garden Bank on July 20 and a second fish at Stetson Bank on July 27. A sanctuary researcher found a third lionfish on August 3 at West Flower Garden Bank. That fish was captured and is in a tank at the sanctuary's Galveston office. Another lionfish was observed at East Flower Garden Bank on August 8.

Lionfish consume important commercial fish and crustacean species in their juvenile stage – including snapper, grouper, and shrimp, as well as other reef fish. For this reason, sanctuary resource managers and scientists are concerned about the potential impact lionfish could have on the coral reef ecosystem, which supports the tourism and fishing industries. Lionfish also have venomous spines, placing divers and fishermen at risk from their painful stings.

As the sanctuary formulates a strategy to respond to this threat, the diving and fishing public is encouraged to report sightings and locations of lionfish to the sanctuary office. The information will be used to track the progress and impacts of the invasion, and enable responders to focus their removal efforts. The public can also help track the invasion by submitting reports to the Reef Environmental Education Foundation and the U.S. Geological Survey.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries is also tracking lionfish activity at Gray's Reef and Florida Keys national marine sanctuaries. NOAA's Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary is part of the National Marine Sanctuary System which includes 13 sanctuaries and one national marine monument. It protects 56 square miles of critical marine habitat in the northwestern Gulf of Mexico. The coral reefs and coral-sponge communities support a variety of recreationally and commercially important species, including snappers, groupers, sea turtles, manta rays, and sharks.

Seaweeds clogging up bays further south



Images showing brownish-red Sargassum seaweed at St Jame's Club, Mamora Bay, Antigua

Signs of global warming or erratic weather? We usually have seaweeds washing up on our east coast beaches but this is unusual. Its Sargassum seaweed usually found in the north central Atlantic but it's drifted more south. All the eastern Caribbean islands as far down as Barbados have this problem. Huge mass of bad smelling seaweed with all sorts of plastics trapped in it. Not good for swimming or boating. [source: Caribbean Invasive Alien Speices Threat Group]

Landholders urged to get busy on rabbit control



THE Victorian government is urging landholders to be vigilant in the fight against rabbits, as seasonal conditions lead to fears of an explosion in numbers this spring.

Minister for Agriculture and Food Security Peter Walsh said it was estimated rabbits cost Victorian agriculture \$31.4 million each year.

“The Mallee in particular is facing an increase in rabbit activity as the wet summer has led to a boom in breeding. Monitoring by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) shows rabbit numbers are recovering as the pests build a tolerance to calicivirus – a biological form of pest control.

“In the Mallee numbers have increased from less than one rabbit per hectare in the late 1990s to between two to six rabbits per hectare in the past two years.”

Mr Walsh said the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre was researching a new-generation biological control for rabbits but a definitive breakthrough was yet to be achieved.

“With the effectiveness of calicivirus diminishing, it is vital that landholders maintain their efforts to control rabbits through measures such as warren ripping and fumigation to ensure the gains we have made in recent years are not lost.

“Nobody wants to go back to the days before calicivirus when rabbits were out of control.”

Mr Walsh said the Victorian Coalition Government placed a high priority on pest control.

“The Coalition Government will spend \$21.2 million over the next four years to fight the incursion of weeds and pests on private land,” Mr Walsh said.

“Last year DPI conducted compliance programs in the Sea Lake and Waitchie areas to help protect the Lake Tyrell basin. Officers have inspected 137 individual private properties covering 39,375 hectares of land.

“A further 320 properties adjacent to Berriwillock, Manangatang and the area between the Wyperfeld National Park and Myall will be targeted this financial year.

“Rabbits are a threat to production and profitability. It’s in everyone’s best interests to ensure they are kept in check,” Mr Walsh said. [source: PestNet]

Record droughts in Florida fuel spread of invasive plant Melaleuca



The Australian plant *Melaleuca quinquenervia* is choking out native species, but it also has medical qualities worth exploiting.

South Florida has experienced record-setting droughts over the last 11 months, and that has allowed several invasive plants that thrive on dry weather to spread.

Chief among the threatening invasive species is *Melaleuca quinquenervia*, also known as punk trees or paperbark tea trees. Native to Australia, the trees can live in both dry and wet areas and

produce huge quantities of seeds which can grow into almost impenetrable monocultures, according to the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at the University of Florida. In places such as the Everglades, melaleuca has almost taken over, eliminating all other vegetation in many spots. This chokes out not only native plants but the wildlife that evolved to depend upon native Florida vegetation.

Melaleuca is listed as a federal noxious weed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was first brought to the U.S. in the early 1900s for use as ornamentation or for erosion control, according to the Department's National Invasive Species Information Center. [source: John Platt on Mother Nature Network]

Myrtle rust: how big a threat to native plants?



Myrtle rust - Angus Carnegie

What happens when a plant pathogen invades a new continent brimming with potential victims? Australia is set to find out, as myrtle rust spreads within the country's dominant plant family – the Myrtaceae.

In 1973, a rust disease killed swathes of young flooded gums (*Eucalyptus grandis*) in plantations and nurseries in Brazil. A few plant pathologists started worrying about what would happen if this fungus or its relatives reached Australia, home of the gum tree.

The infection was caused by guava rust (*Puccinia psidii*), so named because it was first described in Brazil in 1884 on guavas (*Psidium guajava*) – members of the same plant family

as eucalypts. Now also known as eucalyptus rust, it infects 28 Myrtaceae species native to South and Central America, usually with mild impacts.

The pathologists' foreboding was reinforced when the rust turned up in Florida in 1977, severely damaging broad-leaved paperbarks (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), an Australian tree that is weedy in that region. *Read more:*

<http://www.ecomagazine.com/paper/EC11019.htm>

Could tadpole weaponry be used against cane toads?



A chemical produced naturally by cane toad tadpoles may one day be used to help control the invasive species, according to new research published today. Cane toads are native to South America but have overrun Northern Australia since being introduced in 1935.

Efforts to control the outbreak have been stymied by the toad's impressive rate of reproduction; the warty amphibians lay up to 30,000 eggs at a time, crowding out native frogs, which produce only 3000 eggs per clutch.

However, a new ARC-funded study by scientists from the University of Sydney found that cane toad tadpoles produce a chemical that 'poisons'

competing cane toad tadpole eggs. They hope the chemical may one day be used in the battle against the invasive species.

"A toad is another toad's worst enemy. If you are a toad tadpole, you really love to get rid of the opposition by killing any eggs as soon as they are laid," said Rick Shine, Professor in Evolutionary Biology at University of Sydney and co-author of the study.

"What we discovered is that toad tadpoles have a very cunning chemical which has the effect of really substantially disturbing the development of eggs laid in the same pond."

The chemical, which the researchers are yet to isolate, identify or name, is emitted by tadpoles and causes competing cane toad eggs from another clutch to develop into tiny toads unlikely to survive.

It's chemical warfare in the pond," said Professor Shine.

The chemical has already likely helped control the cane toad population to some extent in nature, meaning Australia's cane toad problem could have been a lot worse.

If the chemical can be isolated, produced commercially and tested to ensure it doesn't also poison native species, it may one day be used to stop cane toad eggs developing into adults.

The researchers have published a paper on the study in the journal *Biology Letters*. [source: Sunanda Creagh, *The Conversation*]

New Publications:

Scientific

Ruffino L., Russel J.C., Pisanu B., Caut S. & Vidal E. (2011) Low individual-level diet plasticity in an island-invasive generalist forager. *Population Ecology*, 53: 535-548.

Abstract: The ability of invasive mammals to adjust their diet in response to new or variable resources is often proposed to explain their invasion success on islands with differing environmental conditions, especially islands with strong spatiotemporal changes in the nature and abundance of their resources. In this study, we investigated how habitat heterogeneity and seasonal fluctuation in resource quality affect dietary breadth and plasticity in an island invasive rodent, the black rat *Rattus rattus*. We tested for dietary plasticity of rats at both the individual and population levels by using traditional dietary and stable isotope analyses at successively increasing time scales, coupled with a long-term study of individual rats in three habitats of close proximity.

Dietary and movement analyses both indicated that *R. rattus* is able to exploit a wide range of resources and habitats. However, dietary plasticity and habitat breadth were far narrower at the individual level. Results revealed that rats exclusively used resources found in their local habitat, and very few individuals moved among adjacent habitats in pursuit of higher-quality resources, despite those resources being abundant in their immediate environment.

This counterintuitive finding suggests that intraspecific interactions must restrict rat mobility. Our results suggest that even on small islands, accessibility of patchy and high quality resources to individuals from the entire population is not systematic. This result has important implications when quantifying invasive rodent impacts on patchily distributed species, especially when studies use indirect methods such as dietary analyses as a substitute for direct observations of predatory behavior.

Meshaka, W.E., Jr. 2011. A Runaway Train in the Making: The Exotic Amphibians, Reptiles, Turtles, and Crocodilians of Florida. Monograph 1. *Herpetological Conservation and Biology* 6:1-101. Available (free) on-line at: http://herpconbio.org/Volume_6/Monograph_1/Meshaka_2011.pdf. Note: This is a fairly large file (7.9MB) due to all the distribution maps and color photographs of invading hordes. You can download this to your computer or print it out (but be aware of all the color photographs if you go that route).

Albins, M.A., & Hixon, M.A. 2011. Worst case scenario: potential long-term effects of invasive predatory lionfish (*Pterois volitans*) on Atlantic and Caribbean coral reef communities. *Environ. Biol. Fish.* DOI 10.1007/s10641-011-9895-1.

Ashcroft, M.B., Gollan, J.R., & Batley, M. 2011. Combining citizen science, bioclimatic envelope models and observed habitat preferences to determine the distribution of an inconspicuous, recently detected introduced bee (*Halictus smaragdulus* Vachal Hymenoptera: Halictidae) in Australia. *Biol Invasions* DOI 10.1007/s10530-011-0092-x. Online First™, 25 August 2011

Abstract: Introduced bees may compete with native fauna, spread parasites or pathogens to commercial bee hives, or increase the fecundity of introduced weeds. Therefore, the recent detection of *Halictus smaragdulus*, native to the western Palaearctic, in the Hunter Valley region of New South Wales (NSW, Australia) is cause for concern. However, it is currently difficult to justify control measures, as there is little known on its ecology, impacts and distribution. Determining the current distribution is fundamental to managing introduced species, yet this is difficult with inconspicuous species such as *H. smaragdulus*, especially as recent introductions are often found in low densities. We demonstrated how a combination of approaches could be used to improve the identification of occupied locations in NSW, including bioclimatic envelope models, proximity to known populations, and observed habitat preferences. Members of the public were also trained to collect specimens and improve overall survey efficiency. Bees were collected using pan traps and sweep netting. *H. smaragdulus* was detected at 44 new locations, extending the known distribution from ~1,250 to 46,800 km². While bioclimatic envelope models helped guide survey locations, species detectability was higher when observed habitat preferences and proximity to known populations were also considered. We also demonstrated that with training via the internet and appropriate procedures for returning specimens in the mail, members of the public could successfully collect this small and inconspicuous invertebrate, with potential applications for other similar species.

NeoBiota online now

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to inform you that the inaugural issue of [NeoBiota](#) was published few days ago. The associated press release Open minded and open access: NeoBiota, a new publishing platform for invasion biologists was already picked up by hundreds of science journalists and media.

The vision of the Editorial Board on the priority issues and future development of invasion biology, as well as on the focus, scope and policies of the journal, is presented in an Editorial co-authored by many leading specialists in biological invasions.

NeoBiota will be presented at the 11th EMAPI Conference on the Ecology and Management of Alien Plant Invasions in Szombathely, Hungary (30 Aug - 3 Sep 2011) and at all forthcoming international conferences in invasion biology. Please do not hesitate to discuss your innovative publishing projects with us!

Look around the inaugural issue, and particularly at the HTML versions of the papers, to see why NeoBiota is different. Please distribute this message through email lists of websites of fellow invasion biologists!

Best regards and welcome to NeoBiota!

Ingolf Kühn

Editor-in-Chief

Books & Newsletters



IslandNet Newsletter #7, August 2011 is now out. Items included in this edition include a focus on Macquarie island pest eradication, cat and fox eradication in Tasmania and Phoenix island restoration work. Some recent publications are also highlighted in the newsletter.

Te Ipukarea Society July Newsletter is out. News items include a visit by Sue Taei from Conservation International to discuss establishing large marine protected areas. The launch of the Cook Islands Whale and Wildlife Centre is also highlighted as well as the Seabird survey of the northern Cook Islands.

The Asia-Pacific Invasive Species Newsletter (May-June 2011) was recently released. Included in the newsletters is a highlight of the European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

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