



Pacific Invasives Learning Network.

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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

SOUNDBITES

DECEMBER 2011

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 online: <http://www.sprep.org/piln>

QUESTION: Is it possible to visit London, Paris, Poland, Algeria, Tahiti and Cook Island on a single day?

Of course! These are places that you will be able to see and experience at our 3rd PILN Meeting on Kiritimati Atoll, Kiribati. You will see snow on the beach and be awestruck by the callings of the thousands of seabirds that take over the main road, land-locked islands and lagoons. Join us – for a unique and exhilarating experience!

PILN Network Meeting – March 21-28th 2012

@ Kiritimati Atoll, Kiribati

...be awestruck by nature's sight and sound...

PILN Teams and Country Updates

American Samoa

THE AMERICAN Samoa Community College-Community & Natural Resources Forestry Program are still in the process of controlling and eliminating invasive tree *Castilla elastica* from the target location. From a total of 32 acres in 2008, approximately 8 acres have been controlled by applying glyphosate Remuda to trees, seedlings and saplings. Unfortunately, due to steep slopes and changes in the weather, the control work on 24 acres remaining is being carried on to the next year.

Healthy Forests for Healthy reefs project update

INTACT FORESTS help stabilize nutrient run-off leading to less stress on our coral reefs. This is in essence the thinking behind this project. American Samoa forests have been under threat from invasive alien trees, such as the tamaligi or *Falcataria moluccana*, which is estimated to cover up to 400 acres of watershed at Matu'u and Faganeanea villages. Nitrogen level in coastal watersheds near where tamaligi grows was found to be very high; similar to results from surveys undertaken in Hawaii. The American Samoa Department of Commerce and the National Parks of American Samoa teamed up to recruit, train and undertake the field work with members from the Matu'u-Faganeanea villages. A combination of herbicide application and girdling were used for the project. A total of 754 large tamaligi trees were removed by the team with the majority having a width (diameter breast height) of around 26-75 cm. Unfortunately, most were matured trees bearing seeds, so there will be many seeds in the soil providing long-term work for the team.

Fiji

FIST submits to NEC

THE FIJI Invasive Species Taskforce made a submission to the Fiji National Environment Council for endorsement as a working group under the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The NEC is the premier body where all Permanent Secretaries from the different Government sectors meet to discuss issues relating to the environment. Endorsement from this group sends a positive message to tackling invasive species issues in Fiji. It also gives support to FIST members so that they are able to meet, plan and act to address invasive species in the country. Further information – please contact Ilaisa Dakaica of Biosecurity Authority Fiji or Sarah Tawaka of Department of Environment.

Update on the American Iguana in Fiji (extracted from Nature-Fiji – MareqetiViti Newsletter)

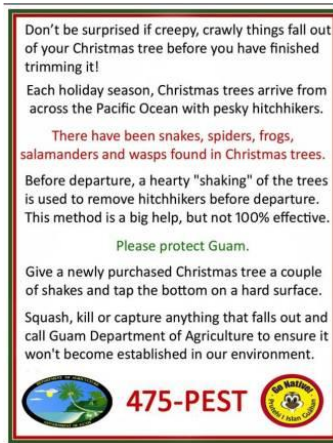
ABOUT 15 plants have been identified as food items for the American iguana (*Iguana iguana*). Researcher Rick Van Veen stated that damage by the American iguana in cultivation is at this time relatively low, because the iguana population is still very small and impacts on agricultural species may not be so apparent till the population reaches high densities.

Rick stated that it is impossible to estimate the size of an American iguana population, however its mortality rate in Fiji is far lower than within its natural range due to the lack of natural predators in Fiji. It is therefore likely that the population is growing at close to a maximal rate. In summary researcher Rick Van Veen reported that without heavy intervention in the next two years, American iguana will reach numbers in the tens of thousands and will rapidly expand their current distribution.

Guam

Christmas brings trees and bugs

CHRISTMAS TIME is certainly a period of sharing joy and presents with loved ones. However, buying a Christmas tree on Guam may result in you sharing more than what you bargained for.



Christmas trees shipped in from across the Pacific Ocean to Guam are sometimes littered with pesky hitchhikers. So don't be surprised if creepy, crawly things fall out of the Christmas tree before you finish trimming and decorating it. In the past snakes, spiders, frogs, salamanders and wasps have been found in Christmas trees. Trees are given a thorough shaking prior to shipment, but this method is not 100% effective. The public is asked to do their bit to help protect Guam as well as neighboring islands. When buying a tree, make sure

you give it a thorough shaking and tap the bottom on a hard surface. Squash, kill or capture anything that falls out and call the Guam Department of Agriculture to ensure it won't become established in the environment.

Hawaii

Hawaii Invasive Species Council update (Josh Atwood)

- Attended the 10/27 field hearing held by Senator Akaka regarding inspection capacity needs in Hawaii.
- Working with Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources staff to update the state's list of Injurious Wildlife and related policies regarding transport, release, and export
- Organized an invasive ant communication workshop with Hawaii Department of Agriculture staff, to create a public outreach strategy for invasive ant issues
- Planning a state legislature briefing on invasive species for early January

- Our Established Pests Working Group met to discuss the development of an axis deer management plan on Maui
- Cabinet members involved with HISC received a briefing on the Micronesian Biosecurity Plan from Phil Andreozzi
- HISC staff and co-chair Russell Kokubun visited Saipan and Guam to tour biosecurity programs and facilities with US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Department of Agriculture Wildlife Service, and Government of Guam.

Kiribati

Kiritimati Island gears up to host the 3rd PILN meeting



THE WILDLIFE Conservation Unit is getting itself ready to be the host of the 3rd PILN meeting planned for 21-28 March 2012. The team met with the PILN Coordinator to discuss the logistics of the meeting. There is so much happening in terms of invasive species management on the island and the team is keen to showcase this and share their experience with other Pacific islanders. The PILN meeting –

bringing together practitioners and on-the ground field personnel to share and learn from each other and to help guide the network on what its priorities should be for the next two years. PILN is made up of 15 country and island teams, and each team is comprised of various agencies and sectors.

A day in the life of a Kiritimati ranger



Aobure sweeping and covering car tracks on a closed road leading to bird nesting grounds

THE PILN Coordinator was fortunate to spend a week with the PILN team on Kiritimati Island to assist with organizing logistics for the upcoming 3rd PILN meeting. The opportunity to interact with the nine-staff of the Wildlife Conservation Unit (WCU) of the Ministry of Environment, Land and Development (MELAD) and to observe and participate in their daily duties was gold. To be out amongst the thousands of Sooty-terns or the enigmatic Phoenix petrels is a cherished and a humbling experience. Rangers sweeping the road for car tracks or examining disturbed vegetation looking for evidence of poachers reminded me of cat-and-mouse routine in big Safari parks in Africa. One of the biggest challenges for conservation on the island is to stop poachers from decimating the bird population. Feral cats and invasive rats have also taken their toll on some of the bird population, and considerable efforts by the WCU together with dedicated experts, such as Derek Brown and Ray Pierce (through projects funded by NZ Aid and CEPF)

have secured some of the land-locked islets from rats and cats, giving the birds a chance to survive. Many thanks to Ratita and Katareti, and their dedicated staff for the warm hospitality.

Kiritimati Wildlife Conservation Officer identifies key biodiversity areas



Ray Pierce working with WCU staff to identify key biodiversity areas

THE WILDLIFE Conservation Unit of the Ministry of Environment, Land and Development undertook a mapping exercise of some of the key conservation sites on Kiritimati island. The culmination of field visits over the last few years and with assistance from Dr Ray Pearce and Dr Derek Brown the team were able to identify sites, which are often isolated *motus*, that are important for the Phoenix petrel (locally known as *te ruru*), the Brown noddy (*te io*) and many other seabirds. The officers were able to identify high risk sites, for example poaching and sites where rats and cats baiting have taken place.

The mapping exercise will help with developing the monitoring work plan for the Kiritimati unit for the New Year.

Kiritimati Wildlife Conservation Unit receives bikes for monitoring



THREE BRAND new motorbikes were delivered to the Kiritimati Wildlife Conservation Unit in late October to assist the Wildlife Conservation rangers in patrolling key bird sites on the island. The motorbikes – two Honda CTX 200 Bushlander and a Honda 125 – were shipped from New Zealand under the CEPF funded project on restoration of the northern Line and Phoenix islands. Prior to this the rangers were using their only vehicle to cover a big area on often narrow and rough terrain. The motorbikes will allow at least three rangers to cover a bigger area in less time. The rangers are able to do this on a daily basis, focusing on areas where poachers are known to frequent, or where rats and cats are present. The staff expressed their thanks to Souad Boudjelas (PII) for assistance with the purchase of the motorbikes.

Kosrae

THE KOSRAE team will start 2012 with developing a Kosrae black list for invasive species – this will be a combined effort between DREA, KIRMA and FSM – Quarantine. They will also focus on a control and eradication project on Giant African Snail. The canker infestations will also be addressed in 2012, and efforts to control *Leucaena* and *Clerodendrum* sp will continue. Kosrae is pleased to report that approximately 60,000 plants have been removed. They also would like to hear from other teams on the crown-of-thorns starfish issue and how to best control them.

Marshall Islands

ALAN TYE led the GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project inception workshop for the Marshall Islands. Eight participants attended the workshop and all are members of the Marshall Islands Invasive Species Team (MIIST). The workshop covered issues such as management and reporting arrangements, the composition of the RMI project team and their roles and responsibilities, and the project planning document and procurement plan. The opportunity also allowed discussions with MIIST on options for further funding for invasives work in RMI from the Micronesia Challenge Trust and GEF5, and made plans for pursuing both sources. The group discussed the process for revising of the RMI's invasive species action plan in 2012, as well as Marshall Islands weeds management programme.

Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council

THE 16TH Micronesian Chief Executives' Summit occurred in Kosrae, December 10-12, 2011. There were no pre-summit committee meetings, however the Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) was on the agenda to present. The Kosrae team presented to the Chief Executives and reiterated the importance of all regional jurisdictions participating in the development of the Strategic Implementation Plan in support of the impending Micronesia Biosecurity Plan. The RISC also presented each of the Chief Executives with a 2012 RISC calendar. The next Summit meeting is tentatively planned for March 2012 in Guam.

Pohnpei

POHNPEI HELD their GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project inception workshop earlier this month, which was attended by participants from the Finance, Office of Environment and Emergency Management, and the Department of Resources and Development. The workshop allowed participants to understand the management and reporting arrangements of the GEF-PAS project, the composition of the FSM project team and their roles and responsibilities and to complete the project planning document and procurement plan. Other funding mechanisms options were also explored including the Micronesia Challenge Trust Fund and the GEF5 allocation. The invasive species team of Pohnpei (i-STOP) met also during the GEF-PAS workshop to discuss synergy between its current priorities and the GEF-PAS project activities.

Pacific Invasives Partnership News:

Birdlife International

Goats and rats have been removed from two Fijian islands in a joint operation conducted by BirdLife International's Fiji Programme and the National Trust of Fiji aimed at protecting unique wildlife on Monuriki and Kadomo. "This is a massive achievement which will provide benefits for the iguanas, birds, plants and people of these islands", said Sialesi Rasalato from BirdLife International.

The Mamanuca island chain is a well-known tourist destination and nationally important for some unique and threatened wildlife. The islands of Monuriki and Kadomo are among Fiji's most critical islands for burrowing seabirds and endemic iguana. Further details on <http://www.birdlife.org/community/2011/12/invasive-species-cast-away-in-fiji/>

Island Conservation publishes Annual Report



AS YOU will read in our 2010 Annual Report, Island Conservation and our partners are re-writing the future for native island species. As a result of our work together, the Critically Endangered San Nicolas Island Fox, in California's Channel Islands; the Threatened Higo Chumbo Cactus, on Puerto Rico's Desecheo Island; and the Leach's Storm-petrel, on Rat Island, in the Alaskan Aleutian Islands are thriving on islands now free from invasive predators. To date, Island Conservation, with support from our donors, partners, and friends, has protected 890 populations of 305 species on 48 islands across the world. Thank you for your dedication to saving island plants and animals!



SPC – Pacific community works to improve biosecurity



THE PACIFIC Plant Protection Organisation held its meeting at the Tanoa International Hotel in Nadi, Fiji. The meeting recognized trade as an important aspect of Pacific Island livelihoods. However, with increased trade there is always the issue of pest and disease invasion, which could seriously undermine trade. These comments were made by Acting Director of SPC's Land Resources Division (LRD) Mr Inoke Ratukalou, as he officially opened the three-day Pacific Plant Protection Organisation (PPPO) executive committee meeting in Nadi, Fiji. 'There is an increasing number of plant pests and other invasive alien species being recorded in the Pacific region. They have spread and will continue to spread throughout the region if we are not vigilant enough. 'The latest pest is the small fire ant recorded on Guam, but the establishment and spread of the cocoa pod borer, the giant African snail, the coconut rhinoceros beetle, papaya crown rot, *Parthenium* weed and *Meremia* vine should be of concern for the region,' he said. [Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) 1/12/11]

Island Conservation to host a BBQ during the Island Arks Symposium

THE ISLAND Arks Symposium II will be held in Canberra 7-9 Feb 2012 and registrations are still open. Registration forms, conference information and a draft program can be found at: <http://www.islandarks.com.au/islandarks/Symposium.html>

On the second day of the Island Arks Symposium (Tuesday 8th), Island Conservation will host a BBQ for Symposium delegates to celebrate the establishment of Island Conservation in Australia and launch its Southwest Pacific Regional Program. Further details can be obtained from Ray Nias (ray.nias@islandconservation.org).

Vacancies, Scholarships & Consultancies:

IDDRI (France) – Research Fellow (post doctorate 18 months)

IDDRI (France) is looking for a Research Fellow (post doctorate, 18 months) within the framework of a project (CapAdapt) on the assessment of adaptive capacity to climate change in low-lying coastal areas. Based in Paris, the post doc will be in charge of both theoretical aspects and fieldwork in Bangladesh (Indian Ocean) and Kiribati (Pacific Ocean). **The position will be open until filled, ideally in early 2012** and no later than September 1st, 2012. Interested candidates should send their CV, cover letter and at least one reference at their earliest convenience. Interviews will be conducted as applications arrive, and only short-listed candidates will receive a feedback on their application. Applications should be sent by email to: alexandre.magnan@iddri.org

US Fish and Wildlife Service – Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office

WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST – permanent Federal position to promote conservation of native flora and fauna in the Mariana Island Archipelago with particular emphasis on the island of Rota. Application closes 23 December, 2011. Please consult the following websites for further information. US Government Employment Status: <http://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/303983900> Public Non-status (as long as you are a US citizen or DEU) <http://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/304117900>

SPC Vacancy

- Project Manager – Enhanced Climate Change Resilience of Food Production Systems (USAID Project) (closing date 20 January, 2012)
- Fisheries Scientist – Climate Change (closing date 16 January, 2012)

Email spc@spc.int for further information.

UNCCD – Land for Life Award

THE UNCCD has recently launched the Land for Life Award to recognize efforts that promote soil health through sustainable land management. Three awards will be granted for 2012 from a total prize fund of up to USD 100,000. To apply – <http://www.unccd.int/land4life/menu.php>

Upcoming meeting, conference and training announcements:

These announcements are for activities taking place in 2012. If you would like to share an announcement with the Network, please send details to PILN Coordinator. More events can be found on our webpage:

<http://www.sprep.org/PILN/Calendar.htm>

2012 calendar

Late Jan-early Feb	GEF-IBPOW Project Inception Workshop
February	Island Arks Symposium II Symposium to be held in Canberra, Australia. The Island Arks Symposium will bring together practitioners in terrestrial and marine ecology, coastal engineering, fire ecology, invasive species management, waste management, communication and marketing, and environmental economics to identify, discuss and resolve management challenges; identifying pathways for long-term conservation of island ecosystems including sustainable use. Further details: www.islandarks.com.au/
21-28 March	Pacific Invasives Learning Network Meeting The meeting will be held on Kiritimati Atoll, Kiribati. This is the 3 rd PILN meeting, bringing together invasive species management practitioners from around the Pacific. The meeting provides the forum for celebrating invasive species management successes, as well as sharing of lessons learned, resolving some of the challenges faced by teams, and to plan strategically

	for the future. Further details from the PILN Coordinator.
28-29 March	PIP Teleconference
16-20 April	Birdlife Pacific Partnership Meeting – Mt Ruapehu, New Zealand
14-25 th May	Pacific Invasive Plant Management Training – Apia, Samoa
4-8 June	PIP Annual Meeting – tbc
26-28 June	Biological invasions during the first ISRivers Congress in Lyon (France)
18-20 July	NET2012 – Pests in our Diverse Landscapes: The pressure is on! NETS2012 is calling for papers for the upcoming conference. Whether you are involved in animal pests, weeds, biocontrol, marine biosecurity, insect invaders, community outreach or other biosecurity related issues, if you have something that you think would be of interest to others attending NETS2012, please submit your abstract. Abstracts for workshops also welcome. Closing date for abstract submissions is 16 February 2012. Please send abstracts to Carolyn Lewis, NETS2012 Conference Organiser, at carolyn.lewis@xtra.co.nz
6-15 Sept.	IUCN World Conservation Congress (Jeju, Korea)
8-9 Oct.	CBD COP 11 (Hyderabad, India) – http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-124-cop-en.pdf
8-11 Oct. 2012	8-11 October 2012. 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. The program will provide valuable information and networking opportunities for anyone with an interest in aspects of weed legislation and development of practical solutions to evolving weed problems.

Funding opportunities:

Sound Approach Bird Fund

THE SOUND Approach Bird Fund offers funding up to \$10,000 to bird conservation projects around the world. Projects must have a significant conservation benefit, making a real impact on the survival of threatened species. Research projects that aim to identify threats to bird populations; projects which aim to eradicate or minimise identified threats; practical projects to protect and assist endangered birds, such as safeguarding sites, habitat restoration, etc.; surveys and other investigative work to assess the status of threatened species and identify new species. The Sound Approach Bird Fund is looking for small, grassroots groups and projects which are difficult to raise funds for. There are no deadlines; applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. We aim to get a decision to you within 2 months of your application. For an application form please email birdfund@soundapproach.co.uk. If your project does not meet the criteria listed above, but you feel that it may be an exceptional case (e.g. you plan to study a newly described and probably threatened species), we suggest you send a summary of your project first.

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 that provides emergency funding of up to USD \$30,00 to address severe and time sensitive threats to endangered biodiversity, primarily within UNESCO natural World Heritage sites. The grants are 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. 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

Scientists completed drafting Kenya's Invasive Species Strategy

SCIENTISTS HAVE recently completed the drafting of Kenya's Invasive Species Strategy that will be launched in mid-2012. Invasive species have adversely affected some of Kenya's best known sites including the Nairobi National Park and the Maasai Mara National Reserve. The strategy seeks to identify mechanisms that respond to the invasive species challenge in Kenya's protected areas and will also foster collaborative ventures on control and management of invasives. The inventory of invasive plants as well as the maintenance, storage and accessibility of this information is another aspect of the Strategy. Community awareness and mobilising resources for the strategy implementation will ensure that the Strategy is useful in combating invasive species.

St John's worts spreading



YELLOW FEVER is spreading across the territory, as St John's wort consolidates its grip on Canberra's grasslands.

The yellow-flowering invasive weed is thriving in the capital due to the increased rainfall over the past two springs. Introduced from Europe and western Asia, St John's wort poses a high weed risk for native grasslands, grassy woodlands and grazing areas. It beats wildflowers for space, is poisonous to livestock, and may cause contact dermatitis in people, according to Territory and Municipal Services. The ACT Parks and

Conservation Service has responded by almost doubling its weed control program, to \$316,500 in 2011-12. There will also be about 710 ranger hours spent controlling St John's wort. [The Canberra Times – Michael Inman]

EFSA Adopts Enhanced Guidance on Risk Assessment of Plant Pests

THE EUROPEAN Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has adopted guidance on an enhanced methodology for assessing the environmental risks posed by harmful organisms that may enter, establish and spread in the EU. Developed by the EFSA Panel on Plant Health (PLH), the guidance document reviews existing methods and identifies gaps and limitations. It then presents a new methodology that aims to enhance the existing EFSA guidance on a harmonized framework for pest risk assessment and the identification of pest risk management options. The guidance includes: methods for assessing both the structural (biodiversity) and functional (ecosystem services) aspects of the environment; and a list of questions for assessors to evaluate the consequences for both aspects in the current areas of invasion and the risk assessment area. The methodology is complemented by: a rating system based on a probabilistic approach with an evaluation of the degree of

uncertainty; an overview of the available risk reduction options for pests in natural environments; a description of minimum data requirements; and a glossary to support the common understanding of the principles. EFSA Panel on Plant Health (PLH); Guidance on the environmental risk assessment of plant pests. EFSA Journal 2011;9(12):2460. [121 pp.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2011.2460.

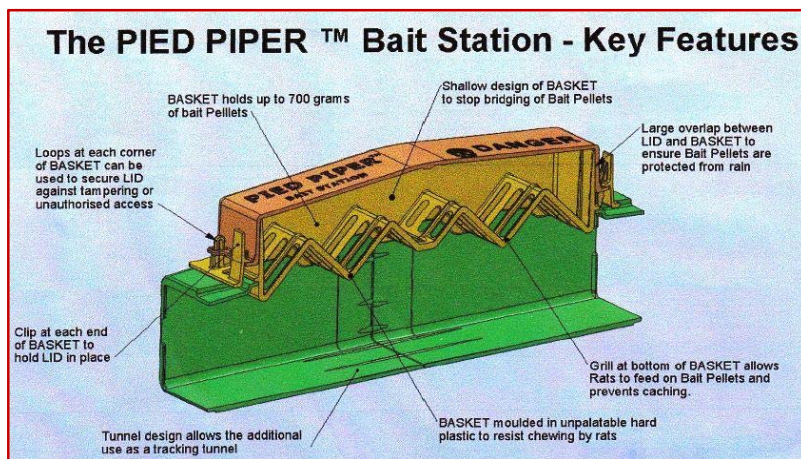
Biodiversity decline in Ireland – comparable to extinctions

POLLUTION, over-exploitation and the spread of non-native species are causing a decline in biodiversity in Ireland comparable to the major extinctions in history, a new report has found. “Biochange”, published by the Environmental Protection Agency yesterday, is the first comprehensive assessment of the impact of the changing environment on ecosystems in this country. It identifies four main drivers of biodiversity loss caused by human activity – habitat destruction and fragmentation, the spread of non-native invasive species, pollution and over-exploitation of natural resources. Read more in the [Irish Times](#)

Digital Diagnostics

A NEW system to identify exotic plant pests and diseases via the internet will strengthen Australia’s line of defence against incursions that could damage agriculture. Scientists at the Co-operative Research Centre for National Plant Biosecurity and colleagues have deployed the Remote Microscope Network at quarantine stations and government agricultural departments in Australia, New Zealand and Southeast Asia. The roughly 50 nodes have microscopes equipped with digital cameras. Users can upload images of diseased plants or suspected pests for rapid identification by taxonomists worldwide. Previously, samples had to be shipped to taxonomists, a lengthy process. Globalisation has raised the risk of incursions, team leader Gary Kong says. The system also coincides with attrition in local taxonomists.

Pied-Piper Bait stations now available



THE PIED Piper bait station is the latest tool available to remove pesky rats. The advantage of this new tool is cheaper – costing approximately \$4 per kg, compared to \$13 per kg (NZ Dollars). It also stops rats from taking the baits away through a specially designed gridded basket. The tool is easy to assemble and disassemble for transport. The Pied-Piper Bait Station was designed and manufactured

by Pacific Plastics Limited in Christchurch, New Zealand. Further information from Helen Lash of Pest Management Services Ltd – www.nopests.co.nz email – wendy@nopests.co.nz

Cycads under threat from insects

IN MAY 2008, Dr. Annu Rauf, Bogor Agricultural University and I visited Bogor Botanic Gardens to verify an earlier report that mentioned cycad collections in the garden were decimated by the Asian cycad scale or *Cycad aulacaspis* scale, *Aulacaspis yasumatsui*. Our visit proved that was not a correct report as we did not find the scale on cycads in the garden and cycads were healthy. However, in a recent trip, on November 7, 2011, we found *A. yasumatsui* on cycads in the Bogor Botanic Gardens and some tree were severely affected by it. The identity of this scale was facilitated by Dr. Gillian Watson and confirmed by Dr. Natalia von Ellenrieder, California Department of Food and Agriculture. Ten species of the genus *Cycas* are known to occur in Indonesia. Unless prompt action is taken, these species may be endangered by this scale insect. (Muni) Muniappan

Invasive ants retreats in NZ

The population of the introduced Argentine ants, *Linepithema humile*, appears to have declined since its introduction in the 1990s. Researchers found that of the 150 locations where ant populations were spotted between 1990 and 2008, only 30 were found to contain ants but in very low-density populations. The cause for this is not yet confirmed but researchers suspect that inbreeding may have left the ants vulnerable. [source: Science on MSNBC.com]

Lionfish resurface with friends in Florida

The Indo-Pacific lionfish's invasion of the Caribbean and Atlantic seas continues with recent reports of the fish in Florida waters. This time, not only the lionfish was spotted but three other Indo-Pacific tropical fish species – that are part of the aquarium trade. The panther grouper, spotted scat and yellow tang turned up off West Palm, Stuart and Pompany Beach after not having been seen since 2007. The US Geological Survey is hoping that the public will assist agencies by keeping an eye on what is native and non-native. [source: FloridaToday.com]

Rabbits are back putting bush under pressure

RABBITS ARE back – in increasing numbers, posing a major threat to Australia's recovering landscapes. When the biocontrol rabbit haemorrhagic disease (RHD) was released in the mid 1990s, its impact on rabbit populations was dramatic, particularly in the arid zone. As rabbits disappeared from the landscape, so too did their predators – foxes and cats. Small native animals recolonised areas they had been hunted out of for decades, and native trees and shrubs began to regenerate.

Agriculture also benefited, by an estimated \$400 million a year, through improved pasture production that flowed on: particularly into the wool and beef industries.

But while rabbits are still largely controlled in agricultural areas, thanks to a combination of biological control agents and traditional methods (such as poisoning, destroying warrens and fumigation), RHD's effectiveness in natural areas has waned in the past few years. Rabbit populations are once again on the increase, and they are having a dramatic impact on Australia's ecological assets. [source: [ECOS](#)]

New Publications:

Scientific Articles

- D.A., & Fisher, M.C. 2011. Multiple emergences of genetically diverse amphibian-infecting chytrids include a globalized hypervirulent recombinant lineage. *PNAS* 2011 ; published ahead of print November 2011,doi:10.1073/pnas.1111915108
- Bengsen, A., Butler, J., & Masters, P. 2011. Estimating and indexing feral cat population abundances using camera traps. *Wildlife Research* vol. 38(8).
- Moles, A. T., Flores-Moreno, H., Bonser, S. P., Warton, D. I., Helm, A., Warman, L., Eldridge, D. J., Jurado, E., Hemmings, F. A., Reich, P. B., Cavender-Bares, J., Seabloom, E. W., Mayfield, M. M., Sheil, D., Djietror, J. C., Peri, P. L., Enrico, L., Cabido, M. R., Setterfield, S. A., Lehmann, C. E. R. and Thomson, F. J. (2012), Invasions: the trail behind, the path ahead, and a test of a disturbing idea. *Journal of Ecology*, 100: 116–127. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2745.2011.01915.x
- McLeod, L. J., Saunders, G. R. and Miners, A. (2011), Can shooting be an effective management tool for foxes? Preliminary insights from a management programme. *Ecological Management & Restoration*, 12: 224–226. doi: 10.1111/j.1442-8903.2011.00613.x
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Books & Newsletters

- NatureFiji – MareqetiViti Newsletter – issue 11 is now out. NatureFiji-MareqetiViti’s mission is to enhance biodiversity and habitat conservation, endangered species protection and sustainable use of natural resources of the Fiji Islands through the promotion of collaborative conservation action, awareness raising, education, research and biodiversity information exchange. To sign up for their Newsletter, please contact support@naturefiji.org
- Froglog 99 – Regional Focus on Maritime Southeast Asia and Oceania – <http://www.amphibians.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/FrogLog99.pdf>
- Henderson Island News – Issue 5, December 2011. RSPB and the Pitcairn islands Government announced the restoration operation to restore Henderson Island from rats has started. The operation included aerial eradication from a ship and successful captive breeding of the Henderson rails. Read more in the Newsletter – contact Jonathan Hall (jonathan.hall@rspb.org.uk) for a copy.
- Veitch, C.R., Clout, M.N., & Towns, D.R. (eds). 2011. *Island Invasives: Eradication and management. Proceedings of the International Conference on island invasives*. Book can be ordered from Manaaki Whenua Press (<http://www.mwpress.co.nz/>).
- Pacific Invasives News: December 2011 edition. In this latest edition includes – climate change and invasive species; project updates from Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Palau and Samoa. Also the Birdlife Pacific Invasive Species Programme and CBD’s agreement with IUCN. Please contact Natasha Doherty (n.doherty@auckland.ac.nz) for a copy.
- Macquarie Island Pest Eradication Project Newsletter – Macquarie Dispatch – Issue 9 out now. Items include: Baiting the high risk areas; Letting the Hunting Begin; Recovery Underway. For a copy, please contact Viki Loring – viki.loring@parks.tas.gov.au
- Proceedings of the 2nd International Workshop on Invasive Plants in the Mediterranean Type Regions of the World 2010-08-02/06. Trabzon, Turkey. Available for downloading from EEEP website: http://archives.eppo.org/MEETINGS/2010_conferences/mediterranean_ias.htm

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