

PILN SOUNDBITES - JUNE 2011



Pacific Invasives
Learning Network.

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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 - Updates:

Greetings fellow Invasive Battlers. I'm pleased to advise that we have secured funding to allow for our 3rd PILN Network meeting to go ahead. We are currently looking at having our meeting on Kiritimati Atoll in Kiribati and discussion with the Kiribati government is progressing well. Could you please mark on your calendar these tentative dates for the meeting: November 30 – December 7th. The dates coincide with the flights to and from Kiritimati. Further information will be provided in due course.

American Samoa

National Park Service assists with invasive plant management course

Tavita Togia from the National Park Service of American Samoa joined a team of experts from the Pacific Invasives Initiative, the NZ Department of Conservation and the National Trust of Fiji to assist in strengthening the capacity of Fiji to manage invasive species threats. The training was attended by eight participants. Tavita commented on how useful the PII weed training course for American Samoa when it was offered last year. He noted of the need for continuous mentoring and having adequate resources to strengthen and enhance the training. Participants were encouraged to apply their knowledge to their work.

The possibility of forming a sister partner between the National Park Service of American Samoa and the National Trust of Fiji was mentioned, which will allow for stronger collaboration and exchange of staff for capacity building. One of the functions of the National Park Service is to promote and encourage its science and service to other nations. This will allow NPS to advance its international leadership.

Seeking opportunities for twinning

The American Samoa Invasive Plant Species and Forest Stewardship programme is interested in training opportunities in the Pacific region focusing on building capacity in the areas of invasive species, forest resources, soil conservation and environmental issues. Please contact Toepo Leiataua (leiatauastowers@yahoo.com) for further information.

Guam

Predatory mite will help save agricultural crops in Guam



A Western Pacific Tropical Research Centre scientist was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the US Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services, to introduce predatory mites to control plant-feeding mites in Guam. Dr Gadi Reddy, a chemical ecologist and entomologist at the University of Guam has been given the green light to introduce a predatory mite to control mites that are feeding on crops such as eggplant, tomato, okra and other vegetables. Read more: [Saipan Tribune](#)

Guam invasive species council hold its first meeting



Hot on the heels of last month's announcement of Guam's Invasive Species legislation where it recommends the establishment of a Guam Invasive Species Council, a meeting held on 22 June in Guam allowed for the formation of this Council. The Department of Agriculture is taking the lead in this and will be assisted by the Customs, the Port Authority, Parks and Recreation, the Guam International Airport Authority and Homeland Security.

The Council was created by Public Law 31-45, signed by Governor Eddie Calvo. The next meeting of the Council will take place on July 7 at the Department of Homeland Security. Under Guam law, the Council is required to meet no less than once a quarter. (source: Kuam News - <http://www.kuam.com/story/14960981/2011/06/23/invasive-species-council-holds-first-meeting>)

Guam held a public workshop on response to invasive species

The general public was invited to attend the Response to Invasive Species: First Detector Training Workshop on Saturday, June 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon in the University of Guam CLASS Lecture Hall. The workshop was co-sponsored by the University of Guam Cooperative Extension Service and the Western Plant Diagnostics Network (WPDN). The workshop allowed participants to learn about what to do when they encounter a plant, animal, insect or microorganism which they suspect is new to Guam. Rapid detection and implementation of an emergency response plan will reduce economic and environmental damage caused by invasive species. Participants were also given the opportunity to be certified as 'First Detectors' by the WPDN upon the completion of the workshop. Topics include the Brown Tree Snake, The Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle, invasive frogs, and fungi and viruses causing disease of Coconut trees as well as other topics. Experts were on hand to answer your questions.

Hawaii

Hawaii officials looking for stinging caterpillar



The stinging nettle caterpillar, *Darna pallivitta*, was found in a Panaewa, Hawaii nursery in September 2001. It occurs in Southeast Asia and is known to feed on coconut and other palms and grasses. The caterpillar is covered with spines that produce a burning sensation when it touches the skin. Infestations were found in 10 acres of potted areca palms. Even though the nettle caterpillar was never described as a pest, an eradication attempt was initiated immediately because coconut was a possible host. Despite numerous spray applications of various pesticides by the grower under the guidance of Hawaii Department of Agriculture and University of Hawaii staff, the attempt failed due to the constant (almost daily) rains that plagued the area during that period. Surveys were quickly established to determine the impact of this new pest to Hawaii. Currently, the nettle caterpillar has been recorded to attack over 35 different plants in the Hilo area, including various palms, ti, dracaena, banana, gardenia, mamaki, Hilo grass, mondo grass, coffee, and wiliwili. Surveys have also shown that a *Trichogramma* sp. egg parasite attacks the eggs of the nettle caterpillar, although not to the extent needed to control this pest. A biological control project has been established for this pest and collaborators have been contacted in Taiwan, Thailand, and Indonesia. Recently, Taiwan researchers have indicated that the best time for parasitoid emergence in their country is in the spring. The adult stage is a moth. Like all moths, the pest primarily spreads by the movement of the adults, which are attracted by light. It could also move on host plants, or as a hitch-hiker on pots, other plants, in vehicles, or by other means.

The nettle caterpillar is primarily an agricultural pest but could also cause serious damage to our environment and losses to our economy. It attacks many different nursery plants as well as those found commonly in existing landscapes. It also attacks coconut which symbolizes our "Paradise of the Pacific" image and could impact tourism. The caterpillar also feeds on a couple of native plants. As populations grow, more native plants are sure to be reported as hosts for this new pest.

Big Island: Nettle caterpillars have been caught in pheromone traps in very low numbers up to Volcano and north to Ninole (trapping did not extend beyond these areas). Most of lower Puna and all of South Hilo district are infested. Nettle caterpillars occur in Kailua, at the Keahole Agriculture Park and north in landscaped areas. For more information contact the Hawaii Invasive Species Council - dlnr.hisc@hawaii.gov or Joshua Atwood (Joshua.p.atwood@hawaii.gov).

Marshall Islands

Agencies and Marshall Islands ministries are currently assisting with the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan and have held a number of meetings with the US Department of Defence. Another major activity that Marshall Islands are looking forward to is the implementation of the GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project. Marshall Islands is one of ten Pacific Island countries participating in this program.

New Caledonia

Endemic reptiles in New Caledonia have been assessed for the first time under the IUCN Red Listing and two-thirds of species are at risk of extinction. Many of these reptiles are threatened by ongoing habitat loss and fragmentation as New Caledonia's nickel mining industry continues to expand. This is compounded by the effects of introduced species; for example, deer and pigs damage remaining available habitat, and fire ants, which are invasive alien species, decimate lizard populations, leading to localized extinctions.

Pacific Invasives Partnership News:



The Pacific Invasives Partnership held its annual meeting in Suva, Fiji from 14-16 June. The meeting brought together key partners working on invasive species in the Pacific to discuss the 2010-2011 workplan and to develop a new work-plan for 2012. It also allowed for the partners to reflect on past activities and achievements, discuss on-going issues and gaps requiring further work. The Communication Strategy was seen as an important area that needs to be developed and a small working group was agreed to move this forward. A number of new members attended the meeting including the Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council. The meeting was kindly hosted by IUCN-Oceania and Birdlife International, and facilitated by Dr Jill Key. The Pacific Invasives Partnership was also unveiled at the meeting (<http://www.sprep.org/pip>). For further information about the meeting or PIP – please contact the PIP Chair – Dr Souad Boudjelas (s.boudjelas@auckland.ac.nz).

BioNET International

Global programme comes to an end:

The Chairman of the BioNET Board, Christopher Lyal recently announced the end of the BioNET global programme and with it the disbanding of the Secretariat by the end of August. Despite the recent positive evaluation of BioNET showing the success of the Network over the past few years, the lack of funding has led to this situation. Some of the functions of the Secretariat will be continued by CABI. The Pacific arm of BioNET – the Pacific Islands Network for Taxonomy (PACINET), which is a collaborative arrangement amongst the CROP agencies (SPREP, SPC and USP) is likely to continue its role in coordinating and assisting with building taxonomic capacity in the region. Further information on PACINET can be obtained from the PACINET Chair – Prof. Randy Thaman (Thaman_r@usp.ac.fj).

Birdlife International

BirdLife International launched the 2011 IUCN Red List for birds: (more information please contact Jez Bird – jez@birdlifepacific.org.fj) <http://www.birdlife.org/community/2011/06/big-birds-lose-out-in-a-crowded-world/>.

As is the case every year, this follows an online consultation process where the latest information that has led to a suggested Red List change is presented and experts are invited to comment on the proposal. For more information on this process visit <http://www.birdlife.org/globally-threatened-bird-forums/>. The revised list includes two changes to birds in the Pacific region. Please follow the links to the full species accounts. In summary:

- Collared Petrel (*Pterodroma brevipes*) has been uplisted from Near Threatened to Vulnerable

<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=3890>. **Threats:** The main threat to the species is thought to be predation by introduced mammals, especially the mongoose *Herpestes auropunctatus*, but also pigs, cats, dogs and rats. Habitat degradation by goats is also believed to be a problem. Local communities in the Banks Islands are reported to have heavily exploited petrels and especially shearwaters for many generations until the 19th century, but in recent years they have apparently only been infrequently harvested at most. On Tanna, small numbers of young birds have been killed as part of a ritual. On Kadavu, agricultural encroachment into forested areas has increased, particularly around Nabukulevu. **Conservation measures underway:** None is known. **Conservation measures proposed:** Conduct surveys during the breeding season to determine its status on all islands where it is known or suspected to have occurred. **Clarify taxonomy:** Assess breeding success and predation levels on Gau. Consider controlling introduced mammals.

- Samoan Flycatcher (*Myiagra albiventris*) has been downlisted from Vulnerable to Near Threatened

IUCN Red List: still listed as Vulnerable <http://www.iucnredlist.org/apps/redlist/details/147009/0>

Major Threat(s): It was apparently affected by the severe cyclones of 1990 and 1991, when canopy cover was reduced from 100% to 27%, and does not appear to have recovered. It is also threatened by deforestation for agriculture and by the reduction of forest quality owing to the invasion of highly aggressive non-native trees, whose spread is aided by hurricanes. **Conservation Actions:** ? **Conservation actions underway:** It has been recorded from the proposed conservation areas at Sataoa-Sa'anapu and Uafato on `Upolu. **Conservation actions proposed:** Conduct surveys to update information on density and distribution. Identify important sites in native forest. Study the home-range size to determine the size of forest patches needed for long-term viability. **BirdLife datasheet updated to Near Threatened:**

<http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/speciesfactsheet.php?id=6135>

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund and Conservation International – Pacific Islands

Mid-term Evaluation Conference Highlights Successes and Shares Lessons Learned



The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) held a mid-term review meeting earlier this month in Suva for its \$7 million investment in the Polynesia-Micronesia biodiversity hotspot. The investment is designed to conserve the region's threatened terrestrial species. CEPF is a joint program of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. The investment in the region supports conservation projects by community-based organisations and has funded 58 projects in 11 countries in Polynesia and Micronesia, providing \$4.3 million USD to 37 different grantees. The mid-term evaluation conference of 27 grantee organisations was coordinated by the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership, to share lessons learned and project experiences and to build grantee capacity. The meeting was opened by the Minister of Local Government, Urban Development, Housing and Environment, Mr Samuela Saumataua, who thanked the partners for their contributions to conservation in Fiji and across the Pacific region. The Minister noted that all fourteen CEPF funded projects in Fiji address issues covered in Fiji's National Biodiversity Strategy. For more information contact James Atherton (j.atherton@conservation.org)

IUCN – SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group

1000 is the magic number!

Alien-List has just signed up its 1000th member. Congratulations to Shyama and her team for a great service to our region and the world. There's now a Facebook page of the ISSG to post update of activities (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Invasive-Species-Specialist-Group-ISSG/208314625853141>).

A reminder again about the IUCN-SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group

The IUCN/SSC Invasive Species Specialist Group-ISSG, Information Services is based at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. This office serves as the Regional Pacific Office of the ISSG and the Invasive Species focal point for IUCN Oceania in Suva.

The ISSG promotes and facilitates the exchange of invasive species information and knowledge across the globe and ensures the linkage between knowledge, practice and policy so that decision making is informed. The Regional Pacific Office runs a referral service to assist with any information needs related to invasive species issues and linkages with experts. The ISSG has an active list serve with over a 1000 global members called Aliens-L. This service provides you a forum to ask your peers questions and share the work you do. Details of the list are available at <https://list.auckland.ac.nz/mailman/listinfo/aliens-l>. We also manage the Global Invasive Species Database (www.issg.org/database) and are keen to receive information on the work you do in managing this threat so we can feature it on the database as part of the distribution records on species profile sheets. The GISD features 846 invasive species profiles with a good coverage of species that are a threat to Pacific native biodiversity and ecosystems. Please check the species of your interest, click on the country in the distribution page and view the record. Please send us or point us to any new information that needs to be included. You can write to issg@auckland.ac.nz or to s.pagad@auckland.ac.nz We feature both English and French language content.

Check this record of the green iguana in Fiji that we have recently received new information and are updating http://www.issg.org/database/species/distribution_detail.asp?si=1022&di=53063&sts=&lang=EN

To recognise the International Year of Forests the ISSG is featuring an invasive pest/pathogen of forest ecosystems on our 'Invasive Species of the Week button'. You can view this on the home page of the ISSG website. This week we feature *Leucaena leucocephala*. You can feature this button on your website if you like with the insertion of only one line of script, and the change of the species happens automatically every week. You can also nominate a species that you would like featured. ISSG is on Facebook and we would like to invite you to participate and contribute to this page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Invasive-Species-Specialist-Group-ISSG/208314625853141>

ISSG Updates

We will soon have extensive Chinese language content on the GISD (both Traditional and Simplified Chinese) in addition to French language content. The GISD is undergoing a major upgrade. Areas being upgraded include interoperability with other major related information sources, a more useful query system, better presentation of data and information for analysis and download and enhancement of terminology in listing pathways of introduction, impacts including on ecosystem services. Work has begun on creating an invasive species information portal on the ISSG website that will take into account the cross-sectoral nature of the issue The thematic database on islands Beta version is almost ready for comments. We will provide the link soon.

The University of the South Pacific

Kou-leaf worming its way through Nanumea kanava (Cordia subcordata)



Images – top left showing a healthy kanava tree (Randy Thaman). Middle – the kou-leaf worm (caterpillar) that is responsible for the devastation (Forest & Kim Starr). Top right: the aftermath of the kou-leaf worm on Nanumea atoll (Randy Thaman).

Scientists from the University of the South Pacific (USP) are scrambling to find a cure to assist the island of Nanumea in Tuvalu whose coastal trees – the kanava (*Cordia subcordata*) – are being stripped by the kou-leaf worm. According to Professor Randy Thaman, “the loss of kanava constitutes a cultural and environmental disaster and a serious threat to the livelihoods and resilience of atoll and small-island communities to climate and environmental change”. A visit by Kilifi O’Brien, a USP postgraduate student to Nanumea witnessed the devastation caused by the kou-leaf worm. According to the people of Nanumea, the infestation appeared on the atoll shortly after a visit by a small tourist ship in September 2010. By May 2011 – well over 100 trees on the atoll appeared to be affected.

Professor Thaman added: “We must strengthen awareness of the seriousness of the threat of invasive species to small island ecosystems and to some of our most common but most ecologically and culturally important coastal trees, such as *Cordia*. The conservation of our coastal littoral trees must be given much higher priority. They are perhaps our most threatened trees, as well as the first and most important line of defense of atolls has against climate change, extreme events and global changes beyond their control.”

SPREP

Message from SPREP on the International Day of the Seafarer



On Wednesday 15 June 2011, seven traditional double-hulled vaka (sailing canoes) arrived safely in the warm harbours of the Big Island of Hawaii after 59 days of sailing some 6,500 nautical miles from Aotearoa (New Zealand) via Tahiti and the Marquesas. These Pacific Voyagers bring messages of urgency regarding the plight of the ocean and the need to take strong measures to reduce species loss, maintain fish stocks and minimise impacts of ocean acidification.

Even as we recognise the great efforts of these 120 individuals, we at the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) wish to also pay tribute to all seafarers everywhere, in recognition of International Day of the Seafarer, being observed on 25 June. It is also an opportunity to remind us of the role of the seafarer as stewards of the ocean. Ships have the potential to contribute to great swathes of pollution in the ocean – garbage, sewage, ballast water and oil could all easily make their way into the ocean with huge negative consequences for marine species and the economies and health of our small islands. Seafarers must adhere to conventions and protocols established to guide good practice in waste disposal and dealing with crises resulting in oil spills. Read more: www.sprep.org

SPREP and BirdLife International to collaborate on conservation

SPREP recently signed a memorandum of understand (MoU) with the BirdLife International Pacific Partnership to strengthen the two organisations’ efforts to work on joint conservation objectives across the region. The MoU acknowledges that the Pacific region has more threatened bird species per unit of land area or per person than any other region in the world, and the most extinctions. The MoU seeks to enhance co-operation between Birdlife and SPREP to achieve the following joint objectives:

- Collaborate on delivering conservation action to improve the status of the globally threatened species and the status of Important Bird Areas within the Pacific region.
- Collaborate in the implementation of the “Invasive Species Management Guidelines for the Pacific”.
- Extend to each other standing invitations to be represented by observers at appropriate meetings, including the annual SPREP Meeting and the biannual BirdLife Pacific Partnership Meetings and to co-sponsor relevant meetings.
- Keep respective memberships informed of co-operative activities undertaken pursuant to the MOU.

Convention on Biological Diversity

Secretariat requests information on international regulatory framework on IAS

The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is inviting reports on parties' progress in raising issues related to gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework on invasive alien species (IAS) to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO). In accordance with COP Decisions IX/4 and X/38, the CBD COP has invited organizations to expand their coverage and address gaps and inconsistencies in the international regulatory framework with regard to international standards covering IAS, including animals that are not pests of plants under the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), nor diseases that are listed by OIE. In addition, the COP encouraged parties to raise these issues formally through their national delegations to OIE, FAO and WTO. Submission of reports on these issues is invited by 25 July 2011. More information on: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/notifications/2011/ntf-2011-120-ias-en.pdf>

Secretariat invites collaboration to address Invasive Alien Species on Islands

As part of the in-depth review of the programme of work on island biodiversity (IBPoW), the CBD Secretariat is inviting interested parties to participate in a collaborative effort to address the issue of invasive alien species on islands. The in-depth review will be conducted by the 16th meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA 16) in May 2012, and the Conference of the Parties will consider the review at its 11th meeting (CBD COP 11), in 2012. The review was launched officially at an event organized by the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) at CBD COP 10. In the notification, the CBD Secretariat says that the IBPoW is "arguably the best opportunity over the next two years for island Parties and Parties with islands to highlight progress and challenges on issues of most concern to them." Islands are home to a disproportionate number of endangered species, which are threatened by IAS. Addressing the issue is a major objective of the IBPoW. The CBD process for the in-depth review is being supported by a GLISPA working group.

[*The Pacific Invasives Partnership has submitted a contribution towards the in-depth review – contact – posas@sprep.org for further information*].

Vacancies, Scholarships & Consultancies:

Island Conservation: Pacific Regional Director. IC seeks a new regional director to grow and manage conservation program in the Pacific Islands. Please refer to website: http://www.ceaconulting.com/what/position_details.aspx?client=CEA&jobId=150

Island Conservation: Director of Global Affairs. IC is looking for an exceptional individual to serve as the Director of Global Affairs. This position will design a strategy to engage bilateral and multilateral organizations in the financing of a global campaign to prevent extinctions on islands. The Director of Global Affairs will serve as a spokesperson for the campaign to these key partners while simultaneously shepherding complex, large-scale funding proposals from development to fruition. For more information, please visit www.islandconservation.org

Live and Learn Environmental Education – Vanuatu: Live and Learn Environmental Education is currently seeking for a Project Coordinator (Invasive Species) to coordinate the management of the project: Testing & modelling preventative measures to limit the spread and ecological impact of invasive species in Small Island Developing States. This is a five-year project

2012-2013 Fulbright Scholar: The Fulbright Scholar Program and Humphrey Fellowship Program are administered by the Institute of International Education's Department of Scholar and Professional Programs, which includes the Council for International Exchange of Scholars and Humphrey divisions. The competition for 2012-13 Fulbright Scholar grants is now open. The application deadline for most programs is August 1, 2011. U.S. scholars and professionals can learn how to present their credentials at www.iese.org/cies.

Information Technology Manager – SPREP: SPREP is seeking a suitably qualified and motivated person for this role. The ITM will be the key information technology adviser to the Executive Management team and will provide strategic leadership and management of the Secretariat's IT section. Full details of the ITM responsibilities, requirements, remuneration and lodging of application can be got from the Employment section of the website: www.sprep.org or by contacting Luana (luanac@sprep.org). Deadline for this appointment is 22 July 2011.

Development Director – Seacology: Seacology is currently seeking a Development Director whose main responsibility will be raising funds for Seacology. Please contact Seacology (jobs@seacology.org) for more information.

Marine Species Officer – SPREP: Applications are invited for the Marine Species Officer (MSO) post based in Apia, Samoa. The MSO will oversee and facilitate the implementation of SPREP's regional policies and programmes related to marine species, including the Regional Marine Species Conservation programme for dugongs, marine turtles, whales and dolphins. Full details, responsibilities, requirements, remuneration package can be obtained from the Employment section of the website – www.sprep.org or from Personnel Officer (luanac@sprep.org).

Biosecurity Officer – SPC: The Secretariat of the Pacific Community invites applications for the position of Biosecurity Officer under the Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade (IACT) project in its Land Resources Division. The closing date for applications is 25 July 2011. Contact spc@spc.int for further information – or their website: <http://www.spc.int/job.html>

PestNet Alert Snippets:

The PestNet has been particularly active for the month of June. Topics of interest to PILN teams include the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles, the attacked on *Cordia cordata* in Tuvalu and nematodes as a biocontrol for invasive snails.

Discussion on the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetles focuses on control methods (biological, sanitation and pheromones) and a request for information on chemical or other control methods. Experience from around the Pacific was shared including the use of pathogens of Rhinoceros Beetles (Heidenreich's disease) to control the beetles in Samoa. The use of sawdust impregnated with DDT was also a practice undertaken in Samoa. Biocontrol was used in the Philippines with good success.

The kou-leaf worm believed to have been introduced to the northern –most atoll of Tuvalu has devastated the population of *Cordia cordata* since September 2010. The situation is severe and help is desperately needed to safeguard this important tree species.

Researchers in Australia are currently trialling a biocontrol for introduced snails. Laboratory testing appears to be successful but the challenge now is to field test. The aim is for the biocontrol to be commercialized if all goes well. A word of caution from some of the Pacific citizens in not wanting this or any other biocontrol to have a negative impact on native snails.

Meeting, conference and training announcements:

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

06-08th July – NZ Biosecurity Institute Conference (Takapuna, Auckland, New Zealand)

18-21st July – 16th NSW Weeds Conference (Coffs Harbour, Australia)

19-21st July – Pacific Environment Minister Meeting (Apia, Samoa)

25-26th July – Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council Meeting (Pohnpei, FSM)

25-29th July – Roundtable for Nature Conservation meeting (Pacific Harbour, Fiji)

27-29th July – Micronesia Chief Executive Summit (Pohnpei, FSM)

29 Jul – 4 Aug – 2011 International Biodiversity Conference (Banos, Ecuador)

Funding opportunities:

Save our Species



The first call for proposals for [Save Our Species \(SOS\)](#) is open as of June 24, 2011. Save Our Species (SOS) is a global initiative to support threatened species and their habitats which has been founded by IUCN together with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Save Our Species provides grants (between \$25,000 USD to \$800,000 USD) for conservation action on the ground, focusing on specific threatened species and their habitats. You are welcome to apply for an SOS grant in one of its 3 strategic directions in this round:

- Threatened Asian and African mammals
- Threatened amphibians
- Critically Endangered birds

To apply for an SOS grant, please see the website: http://www.sospecies.org/grants/apply_grant/ where you will find more detailed information, for example on eligibility for application.

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>.

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.

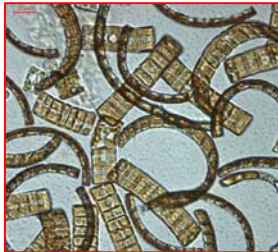
Invasive news and interesting links and websites

Invasive crab arrived by ship in Iceland's waters



A new invasive species of crab is regularly being caught all around western Iceland, a decade or less after it first arrived in Icelandic waters. The Atlantic rock crab is thought to have arrived in Iceland in the ballast water of ships. The crab grows quite big and is omnivorous. Little is known about how the species may continue to spread around Iceland or how it will interact with native flora and fauna. The crabs being caught in Hvalfjörður fjord are, however, said to be the same size as those caught in their native habitat off the east coast of North America. The Atlantic rock crab is not yet found anywhere else in Europe. Read more - <http://www.icenews.is/index.php/2011/06/27/24620/>

Microscopic plant drifts to North Atlantic via melting Arctic



A microscopic plant that has been absent from northern Atlantic for some 800,000 years has reappeared in a survey done in 2009. *Neodenticula seminae* is thought to have drifted to the Atlantic via a pocket of warm Pacific water through the melting Arctic ice. If this is the case, then other organisms are likely to be making the trip, if they haven't already. What is worrying, according to the researchers is that these species could displace or disrupt the Atlantic food web. A consortium of 17 marine institutes in 10 European countries is now monitoring the migrations, an effort known as Climate Change and European Marine Ecosystem Research. Read more: <http://marineconservationblog.blogspot.com/2011/06/pacific-plankton-crosses-to.html>

MV Aquila sails to restore islands

A truly international partnership will see MV Aquila set sail to Palmyra Atoll (USA), then to Phoenix Islands Protected Area (Kiribati) and finally to Henderson Island (UK) to remove rat and save crucial seabird habitats. This partnership will help maximise the use of resources and enable technical knowledge to be shared between the three sites.

The additional conservation benefits of this joint-voyage will be enormous: Palmyra Atoll Restoration Project, which is being led by Island Conservation in partnership with the US Fish & Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy, will help conserve an atoll which is home to one million nesting seabirds, including the world's second largest colony of red-footed boobies. The Phoenix Island Protected Area Management Committee and Eco-Oceania Pty Ltd. will subsequently restore two islands within PIPA: Enderbury and Birnie. These islands are located within the world's largest World Heritage Site, and provide important nesting habitat for a large variety of seabird species. (source: Henderson Island News)

Scientists looking for another black rat

Another species of black rat is running around Australia, with its estimated date of arrival around the same time as other invasive rodents. The Asiatic species (*Rattus tanezumi*) is similar to the black rat (*Rattus rattus*) requiring a specialist to tell the difference or DNA. Scientists from the South Australian Museum and University of Adelaide are looking for some tissue samples of this rat. If you can help provide the samples please contact Steve Donnellan (steven.donnellan@sa.gov.au).

Deadly frog disease spreads in Panama

Scientists from the Smithsonian institute have confirmed that chytridiomycosis, a disease of frogs, has reached a site near Panama's Darien region. This was the last area in the entire mountainous neotropics to be free of the disease. This is troubling news for the Panama Amphibian Rescue and Conservation project, a consortium of nine US and Panamanian institutions that aims to rescue 20 species of frogs in imminent danger of extinction. The disease is linked to dramatic population declines and even extinctions of amphibian species worldwide. Within five months of arriving at el Cope in western Panama, chytridiomycosis extirpated 50 per cent of the frog species and 80 per cent of individuals...Read more: <http://amphibianrescue.org>

Papua New Guinea – mega biodiversity

New Guinea is a mega-biodiverse country in the world. In a recent report released by World Wide Fund for Nature, found more than 1,000 new species including a frog with fangs, a blind snake and a round-headed dolphin. Scientists made the astounding discoveries, which included a river shark and dozens of butterflies, at a rate of two a week from 1998 to 2008.

"This report shows that New Guinea's forests and rivers are among the richest and most biodiverse in the world," WWF Western Melanesia programme representative Neil Stronach said.

PNG's rainforests are the third-biggest in the world after the Amazon and the Congo, and, while the island covers just 0.5% of Earth's land mass, it contains up to 8% of the world's species, according to WWF. The 1,060 species confirmed by scientists as new discoveries are believed to have only scratched the surface of PNG's dazzling ecosystems.

"Such is the extent of New Guinea's biodiversity that new discoveries are commonplace even today," WWF said in its report, titled Final Frontier: Newly Discovered Species of New Guinea.

One of the most notable finds documented in the WWF report was a round-headed and snub-finned dolphin, which swims in protected, shallow coastal waters near rivers and creek mouths. Discovered in 2005 in PNG, it was the first new dolphin species recorded anywhere in the world in three decades, and is now known to exist in Australia, WWF said. Another of the 12 mammals found over the decade was an anteater named in honour of British naturalist David Attenborough, Sir David's long-beaked echidna or, scientifically, *Zaglossus attenboroughi*. One of the 134 frogs discovered was dubbed *Litoria sauroni* because its striking red and black spotted eyes reminded scientists of the evil character Sauron in the Lord of the Rings movies. Another new frog was notable because of its size - just 1cm in length - and one had vampire-like fangs. Nine snail species were among the 580 new invertebrates discovered. Among the other new invertebrates was a brightly coloured apricot crayfish, part of the yabby family, which was 9-12 cm long. Discoveries of new fish totalled 71, with a kaleidoscope of colours, including one in the coral reefs of Milne Bay that thrilled scientists with its dazzling blue hue. WWF said the most extraordinary freshwater discovery was a 2.5 m river shark found in PNG that has since been located in northern Australia. Of the 43 reptiles discovered, one could claim to be the most innocuous snake in the world. It was just 12-14 cm long, could not bite, had no venom and had scales over its eyes so it could not see. But WWF said the excitement of all the new discoveries had been tempered by the fact that, as in the Amazon and Borneo rainforests, human actions were destroying Papua New Guinea's natural habitat at an "alarming rate.

An introduced seagrass receives mixed support



The Japanese eelgrass believed to have been accidentally introduced in the Americas in the early 1900s as part of an aquaculture initiative is in the spotlight due to their positive and negative trades. Clam and Oyster growers in Willapa Bay, Washington are finding the seagrass taking over their farming beds and are therefore advocating adding the species on the Washington Noxious Weed, which will then allow them to use herbicides or mow the invader. Advocates for the seagrass argue that in many parts of the world, this seagrass is protected, providing food for waterfowls, habitat for small creatures and help stabilise eroding beaches. Read more at: <http://www.kplu.org/post/invasive-eelgrass-doesnt-follow-usual-invaders-script>

New snail biocontrol weapon soon to be trialled

Field trials of a new biological agent to control snails are expected to begin in the southern cropping region of Australia later this year. Sufficient quantities of the nematode-based control are being developed to enable trials to be undertaken in South Australia and Victoria. The Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC) and Charles Sturt University (CSU) are aiming towards commercialization of the biological control agent next year, should field trials prove successful. Professor Gavin Ash and his team at CSU's EH Graham Centre have achieved mortality rates of up to 90 percent in adult round and conical snails in about a week using nematodes isolated from Australian cropping soils. The native nematodes, and the associated suite of bacteria thought to be integral to the process, are yet to be tested in the field but Dr Ash is optimistic about the biocontrol's potential following successful field simulation trials. Read more: <http://www.grdc.com.au/>

US heralds new rules to halt imports of suspected pest plants

Federal inspectors will gain expanded power to quickly halt imports of plants suspected of being invasive species or carrying noxious pests under a new Department of Agriculture regulation. The regulation allows USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to stop imports of suspected problem plants until risk assessments are done and protective measures are put into place.

Current regulations require APHIS to post Federal Register notices of risk assessments on suspected invasive species and proposals to halt imports. The process requires public comment periods, which can take more than a year, and allows imports of suspicious plants to continue through that time.

The regulation is aimed at curbing the spread of noxious species. California spends more than \$84 million annually on controlling invasive plants. And in Hawaii, a single invasive ornamental tree species, the velvet tree, has caused billions of dollars in native species loss, soil erosion, runoff and control efforts.

Invasive Exotics on YouTube

A short Dutch made film is available on You-Tube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ps6c4tGxnHM>). The film was made specifically for the Dutch public. This is the first animation film about the subject in the Netherlands. The film is made by Merel & Mirte Fellingier of Trick Design (<http://www.trickdesign.eu>) for the platform Stop invasieve exoten (Dutch association for prevention of introduction and spread of invasive exotics). If you are interested in the production of other animation films about invasive exotics, you can contact Wilfred Reinhold (info@invasieve-exoten.nl)

Request for measurements of alien rats (*Rattus spp.*) and mice (*Mus musculus*) from Pacific islands

We are compiling body size data (weight, head-body length) of *Rattus rattus*, *R. exulans*, and *Mus musculus* in order to determine the factors that best predictor rodent morphology. We are limiting our study to islands/archipelagos from all latitudes within the Pacific Ocean. We would appreciate you sending any publications, reports, or unpublished data that includes body size data for *R. rattus*, *R. exulans*, and/or *M. musculus*. These data can be mean sizes for adults (please include sample sizes and standard error or standard deviations) or raw data. Specifically, for each island, we are hoping to get some or all of the following information (though #1 and #5 are most critical):

- 1) Island name and location,
- 2) elevation of captures,
- 3) type of habitat captured in (e.g., forest, grassland, intertidal, etc),
- 4) number and type of rodent species and predators that coexist at the capture site,
- 5) body size measures (body mass is most critical, but body length is also helpful) with associated sample size for each rodent species for which data is available.

Also, if you know of colleagues that may have such data, please pass their contact information on to us and/or forward this email to them. Currently there are many tropical and mid-latitude islands for which we do not have any body size data. Please send this information, and/or further inquiries, to Aaron Shiels (Aaron.B.Shiels@aphis.usda.gov).

New Publications:

Scientific

- Peacock D, Christensen P, Williams B. 2011. Historical accounts of toxicity to introduced carnivores consuming bronzewing pigeons (*Phaps chalcoptera* and *P. elegans*) and other vertebrate fauna in south-west Western Australia. *Australian Zoologist* **35**: 826-842.
- Brooke, M. de L., Cuthbert, R. J., Mateo, R., Taggart, M. A. 2011. An experimental test of the toxicity of cereal pellets containing brodifacoum to the snails of Henderson Island, South Pacific. *Wildlife Research* **38**(1): 2011. 34-38
- Paul J. de Tores A B I, Duncan R. Sutherland B C, Judy R. Clarke A D, Robert F. Hill B, Sean W. Garretson A B, Lenny Bloomfield B E, Lauren Strümpher B F, Alistair S. Glen B G and Jennyffer Cruz B H. 2011. Assessment of risks to non-target species from an encapsulated toxin in a bait proposed for control of feral cats. *Wildlife Research* **38**(1) 39-50 doi:10.1071/WR10105.
- Schlaepfer, M.A., Sad, D.F., Olden, J.D. 2011. The potential conservation value of non-native species. *Conservation Biology* **25**(3): 428-437.
- Rice, K.G., Waddle, J.H., Miller, M.W., Crockett, M.E., Mazzotti, F.J., & Percival, H.F. 2011. Recovery of native treefrogs after removal of non-indigenous Cuban treefrogs, *Osteopilus septentrionalis*. *Herpetologica* **67**(2): 105-117.

- Lindgre, C.J. 2011. Biosecurity policy and the use of geospatial predictive tools to address invasive plants: updating the risk analysis toolbox. *Risk Analysis* **31**: no. doi: 10.1111/j.15396924.2011.01643.x
- Betancur-R., R., Hines, A., Acero, A., Orti, G., Wilbur, A.E., Freshwater, D.W. 2011. Reconstructing the lionfish invasion: insights into Greater Caribbean biogeography. *Journal of Biogeography* **38**(7): published online 31 March, 2011.
- Gallo, T., & Waitt, D. 2011. Creating a successful citizen science model to detect and report invasive species. *BioScience* **61**(6): 459–465
- Crossland, M., Brown, G., Shine, R. 2011. The enduring toxicity of road-killed cane toads (*Rhinella marina*). *Biological Invasions* DOI 10.1007/s10530-011-00031-x
- Chong, K.Y., Corlett, R.T., Yeo, D.C.J., & Tan, H.T.W. 2011. Towards a global database of weed risk assessments: a test of transferability for the tropics. *Biological Invasions* **13**(7): 1571-1577.

Books & Newsletters

- Chromolaena odorata Newsletter (May, 2011 – No. 18) is now out. The Newsletter is published irregularly. Please contact C. Zachariades (zachariades@arc.agric.za) for more information.
- Henderson Island News – Issue 4, June 2011. Newsletter is now out – stories include: Henderson Island to be restored in August 2011; Ground-Breaking Pacific Partnership; Exclusive prints off Henderson’s endemic birds. More information contact: jonathan.hall@rspb.org.uk
- The Newsletter of the Asisa-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network Vol. 30 March-April is now available. Issues covered in the latest edition include the threat by *Rubus ellipticus* (commonly known as the Himalayan raspberry) introduced for ornamental trade and edible fruits; a study linking the number of chromosomes of a plant to its affinity to become either rare or invasive – useful for risk assessment; new publications, books and future events. Contact Patrick Durst (Patrick.durst@fao.org) or K.V. Sankaran (sankaran@kfri.org) for your copy or for further information.
- Feral Herald – Newsletter of the Invasive Species Council, Australia – Issue 27, June 2011. This newsletter is now available for your reading pleasure. Issues covered in this edition: Myrtle rust outbreak; overseas incubators; Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation bites the bullet; Deer damage in our sights; Encyclopaedia of biological invasions; Asian honeybees – a national biosecurity risk; European honeybees spread disease; Down the rabbit hole and many more.

Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW) Newsletter No. 3. June 2011 is now out. Issue covers SPAW Workplan 2010-2011; update of the Caribbean Challenge, the Lurching of two SPAW working groups; CABI Insular Caribbean IAS Strategy; Update on the Lifeweb Project and more. Visit the website: <http://www.car-spaw-rac.org/?No3-June-2011.248> for more details.

The Pacific Invasives Initiative News – June 2011 is now out. Issues in the News include staff changes at PII, good news with funding support from NZ-Government, Pacific Subject Matter Experts, PII Resource Kit for rodent and cat eradication, CEPF Investment in Invasive Species Management, Project updates and many more. Please contact Natasha Doherty (n.doherty@auckland.ac.nz) for your own copy or further information.

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