



PACIFIC INVASIVES LEARNING NETWORK

SOUNDBITES – OCTOBER 2012

Pacific Invasives Learning Network
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The monthly electronic newsletter of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN)
– reporting on invasive news from PILN teams and the Pacific Invasives Partnership.
Past issues are available online: <http://www.sprep.org/piln>



Photo - Konrad Englberger ©

Merremia vine (Merremia peltata) is believed to be an old introduction to the Pacific from Asia. In recent years its presence has become dominant in many areas including forests and national parks. This is a big problem for many Pacific countries including Vanuatu, Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, FSM, Palau and more. The control methods include herbicides and physical removal. Efforts for biocontrol are still being explored. This was identified as one of the regions priority species for further work at their recent CABI Invasive Species Compendium training. More information on the PIER website. http://www.hear.org/pier/species/merremia_peltata.htm



Every Action Counts
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

PILN TEAMS AND COUNTRY UPDATES

Fiji Invasive Species Taskforce update

FIST meeting

The Fiji Invasive Species Taskforce met on 26 October to discuss invasive species issues for Fiji. Dr Gilianne Brodie of USP presented the results of a snail survey on Rotuma Island. Most concerning was the presence of the snail-eating flatworm (*Platydemus manokwari*) that will likely drive the endangered endemic snail fauna of Rotuma to extinction. Surveys of Viti-levu and other islands of Fiji was seen as of high importance and plans were made to action this.

Tuvereia Tuamoto of MareqetiViti (NatureFiji) provided an update of their work on invasive species – particularly focusing on the American Iguana, Brown Tree Snake and economic assessments of the impacts of mongoose. MareqetiViti are also developing biosecurity plans and would like these plans to be considered by the Government for adoption.

Updates from other partners included positive vegetation regrowth of some of the islands following the eradication of goats. BirdLife noted successful efforts by partners to include invasive species in the Pacific Forum Leaders meeting held in Cook Islands; invasive species was mentioned in the communiqué. SPREP/PILN noted the recent recruitment of the Invasive Species Advisor – David Moverley, who was not able to attend the FIST meeting as he had just arrived in Samoa. The CABI-Invasive Species Compendium that SPREP co-hosted with SPC concluded the day before and was attended by ten Pacific Island Countries. Biosecurity Authority Fiji continues to undertake risk analysis for species to be imported into the country. It continues to focus on the Giant African Snail – keeping it out of the country. Monitoring and surveillance continue to be important parts of BAF's responsibility. Forestry assists also with monitoring and surveillance of borders, especially around Suva wharf, forests, nurseries and plantations. Update from the Department of Environment included seeking clarification on the issue of biosafety under the Cartagena Protocol and whether FIST is able to include it under its activities.



Tuvereia Tuamoto updating FIST on MareqetiViti's activities

Biosecurity Authority of Fiji – trained in Pest Diagnostics

Nineteen officers, from Government agencies, Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) and Secretariat of Pacific Community (SPC) have been awarded with certificates for successfully completing four one week Pest and Diagnostic Training. The Training started in June this year, is part of a three-year NZAID project to strengthen Biosecurity in Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands. It includes developing diagnostic tools and a virtual collection of important plant pests and diseases relevant to Pacific Island Countries and conducting a series of in-country diagnostic training and attachments with MPI in NZ. *Read more on BAF site: www.biosecurityfiji.com.*



Participants identifying specimen during the Pest Diagnostic Training

Source: BAF

Fiji calls for more support on biosafety

The Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety addresses the safe transfer, handling and use of Living Modified Organisms that may have adverse effects on biodiversity taking into account human health, with a special focus on transboundary movements. For Fiji, the key concerns raised at the Biosafety meeting are building the capacity of the Pacific to strengthen their work in biosafety and additional financing opportunities outside of the Global Environment Facility.



Source: ENB

Palau update

Palau is the winner of the Future Policy Award 2012 in recognition of two outstanding marine policies – Palau’s Protected Areas Network Act and its Shark Haven Act.

Kiribati update (information provided by Craig Pritchard)

Cat clinic held on Kiritimati Island

A team of vets from New Zealand held a number of cat clinics on Kiritimati Island early this month. The team led by Craig Pritchard Manager for the NZ Centre for Conservation Medicine, Auckland Zoo worked with the Wildlife Conservation Unit and local partners to desex over 100 cats. The NZ team trained WCU staff on tom-cat castration. The equipment required to run the cat clinics has been left with the local team so that they can continue to control the cat population. Cats are one of the major predators for the seabird population on Kiritimati Island. While the focus of these clinics has been on domestic cats, efforts are also under-way to control feral cats and dogs. Funding for the clinics was provided by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund for Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot.



Images of the cat clinic held on Kiritimati Island.
Photos – Craig Pritchard

Kosrae update

Kosrae is the first member of the Federated States of Micronesia to establish shark protections in its waters. The unanimous vote by the legislature in Kosrae will contribute to the creation of the world’s first regional shark sanctuary – encompassing two-million square miles of ocean.

Vanuatu

Philemon Ala, the Assistant Herbarium Curator from the Forestry Department of Vanuatu attended the CABI – Invasive Species Training and took time out to talk about invasive species in Vanuatu. *Merremia* and *Mikania* (both straggling vines) are the two worst species adversely impacting the forests of Vanuatu. Fortunately, there are a number of high-profile projects working to control invasive species in Vanuatu including the GEF-PAS Invasive Species project being executed by SPREP, the European Commission funded project administered by Live and Learn, and the GTZ funded project to reduce threats to forests with a strong focus on *Merremia*. Philemon also deals with the mangrove project (MESCAL) that is coordinated by the IUCN-Oceania office. His role in these projects is to provide identification guidance to project personnel. He noted that Vanuatu has established a Technical Advisory Committee for invasive species management.



Philemon Ala (middle) talked about invasive species in Vanuatu

Pohnpei update (information provided by Konrad Englberger)

False sakau

- Five sites of false sakau were reported to the i-STOP members following a radio announcement. The sites were treated and those reporting the sites were rewarded. This strategy was deemed successful and the team is exploring the possibility of using it for ivy-gourd.

Mile-a-minute (Mikania)

- Work on mikania is continuing and a few issues were discussed including community outreach programmes, biocontrol, herbicides and incentives for community engagement.

Other invasive plants

- The team heard that most of the other invasive plants (Ivy Gourd, Bengal Trumpet Vine and the Octopus tree) are under control. The good news was that there are no more Octopus trees providing a source for spread.

CABI representative

- The team nominated Francisca Obispo to attend the CABI-Invasive Species Compendium training.

Hawaii

The Hawaii Dept of Land and Natural Resources declared axis deer (*Axis axis*) a threat to agriculture and human safety on the Big Island, thereby invoking a rule allowing hunters to take axis deer on public lands without regard to season or bag limit. This finally allows hunters to be a part of the solution to deer control on the Big Island.

A delegation from Hawaii travelled to the CBD Conference of the Parties 11 in Hyderabad, India, with William J. Aila, Jr, chair of the Hawaii Dept of Land and Natural Resources. The Hawaii Delegation, which included Chipper and Hau'oli Wichman of the National Tropical Botanical Garden and Jackie Kozak Thiel of the Hawaii Invasive Species Council, highlighted the urgency of natural resource loss on islands and discussed Hawaii's efforts to promote sustainable food and energy production. Similar concepts were presented at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Jeju in September, which included a delegation of over 40 people from Hawaii, including Lt Gov Brian Schatz.

Samoa

A group of conservationists and concerned individuals met early this month to explore the possibility of establishing a non-governmental organisation for the conservation of Samoa's native fauna and flora. The group is concerned by the threats especially to threatened endemic birds of Samoa- the Giant Forest Honey-eater (Mao), the Tooth-billed pigeon (Manumea) and other species. Invasive species remain one of the leading causes of bird loss in Samoa so this group will be an important partner to existing groups and initiatives in Samoa.

GIASIPartnership launched

The Global Invasive Alien Species Information Partnership (GIASIPartnership) was launched at the 11th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Hyderabad, India. Founding Partners include CABI International (CABI), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), IUCN - Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG), the Natural History Museum - London, the Natural History Museum, Paris, Young Naturalists Network (India), and Anatrack, Ltd. Those wishing to learn more about the GIASIPartnership can "like" the GIASIPartnership Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/GIASIPartnership?fref=ts>) and follow GIASIP on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/GIASIP>). The Operational Plan for the GIASIPartnership can be found at: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/cop/cop-11/information/cop-11-inf-34-en.pdf>

Organizations which provide information and/or information tools relevant to the prevention, control, and eradication of invasive alien species are invited to join the Partnership by signing a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity. Contact Dr. Jamie K. Reaser (CBD Consultant) at ecos@nelsoncable.com.

CABI Invasive Species Compendium Training completed



Ten Pacific Island countries were trained on the use of the CABI - Invasive Species Compendium in Suva, Fiji (Oct. 23-25).

The regional training was co-hosted by the Land and Resources Division of SPC and SPREP. Two trainers from the main CABI office in UK, and the Asia-Pacific regional office in Malaysia provided the training on the compendium. The training was made possible through a grant from the European Commission to encourage more contributions and use of the compendium in Africa, Caribbean and Pacific regions. The Pacific region had the lowest access and use of the Compendium (0.05%). It is hoped that by the end of the three-year project that this percentage will increase to 1%. The compendium contains information for most invasive species throughout the world. The idea is that the compendium will become a one-stop shop for invasive species managers to get information about species, distribution, images, biology and ecology, impacts, management and published reports. The regional participants brought priority species lists from their countries, which were then used to develop a regional priority list for further development. Many of the species identified by the countries had datasheets already prepared. However, 97 species identified by the participants need datasheets. Of the priority species for datasheet development include *Cassytha filiformis*, *Clerodendrum chinense*, *Merremia peltata*, *Pennisetum purpureum*, and *Schefflera actinophylla*. The participants noted that the list heavily favoured plants; other taxonomic groups, especially invertebrates and vertebrates were not well represented. Individual action plans were prepared by participants to work on so that they are able to report progress in two years time. *For more information about this training please contact the PILN Coordinator.*



Participants of the CABI Invasive Species Compendium Training

IUCN – Red List from the Pacific Update

New information for the Pacific Island freshwater fishes, land snails and reptiles is part of the latest update of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species released 18 Oct by IUCN. The data indicate that 32% of these species are threatened with extinctions. *Read more on <http://ow.ly/exaBl> or contact Helen.Pippard@iucn.org*

SPREP update



A couple of key positions at SPREP will ensure continuity and support for invasive species management in the Pacific. At the recent SPREP Annual General Meeting the Director General – Dr David Sheppard was reappointed for another three years. David has been a strong champion and supporter of the invasive species management team. Congratulations to David Sheppard and we look forward to your continued support.



Another David – this time David Moverley joined SPREP taking the helm from Dr Alan Tye as the Invasive Species Advisor. David M comes from the sub-tropical climes of the North Island of New Zealand. He looks forward to working with all our partners and invasive battlers throughout the Pacific. Congratulations also to David Moverley.

VACANCY AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Systematic Botanist (Research Botanist)

A full-time research for a systematic botanist for a four-year term. The starting salary of \$74,872. U.S. citizenship is required. See announcement number 13A-JW-297816-DEU-NMNH at www.sih.si.edu or www.usajobs.gov for details about the application process for this position. Applications must be received online by November 15, 2012 and must reference the announcement number. Applicants will be notified by email when their applications are received.

Director of Habitat Markets

Environment Defense Fund is seeking a visionary leader to develop and implement its strategy for increasing habitat conservation and restoration through performance and incentive-based approaches. The Director, Habitat Markets will guide EDF's work on both traditional mitigation banking systems as well as more novel recovery credit trading systems such as those recently piloted at Fort Hood in Texas. The Director will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the program, managing a 6-person team and a \$2 million budget. This position will also be responsible for establishing and maintaining relationships with EDF's key government, industry, and NGO partners. The successful candidate will have deep experience in building programs to implement transformative conservation initiatives. The position remains open until filled.

SPC – Biosecurity and Trade Facilitation Officer

SPC is looking for the above mentioned position. The closing date is 8 November 2012. You can apply online – <http://www.spc.int/job.html> - contact Sally for further information (sallyh@spc.int).

Ramsar Secretariat – Intern/Assistant Advisor for the Americas

Ramsar is looking for a young (under 30 years) professional for a 12-month posting in Switzerland. This person to start in mid-January 2013. Closing date for this is 7 November 2012. Please see the following website for more details: <https://hrms.iucn.org/iresy/index.cfm?event=vac.show&vacId=440>

SPREP – 2 posts: Systems Developer and Analyst; Information Management Officer

SPREP is looking to fill the above-mentioned posts. The Systems Develop and Analyst is to design, develop and administer all SPREP –wide corporate applications. Appointment is for a 3-year term with possible renewal. Closing date is 9 November 2012. Send application to recruitment@sprep.org or contact SPREP's Assistant HR Officer – jolynn@sprep.org

The Information Management Officer will assist in the provision of quality library and information services for staff and stakeholders. Closing date for applications is 9 November 2012. Contact jolynn@sprep.org for more information or send your application to recruitment@sprep.org.

East-West Centre – Asia-Pacific Leadership Program

Applications for the Asia-Pacific Leadership Program are called for. Deadline is December 1, 2012. See the website: www.eastwestcentre.org/aplp for more information.

INVASIVE NEWS GLOBAL

Bio-fuel protests from scientists

More than 200 scientists from around America have sent a letter of protest to the Obama administration urging for invasion risk assessment for species, including hybrids, varieties, genetically modified organisms and cultivars earmarked for the bio-energy feed-stocks. Scientists requested that species with a risk of becoming invasives should not be federal funded.

Global Network on Animal Disease Research

You may be interested in the new Global Network on Animal Disease Research (STAR-IDAS, <http://www.star-idaz.net/>), a Global Strategic Alliances for the Coordination of Research on the Major Infectious Diseases of Animals and Zoonoses. The website has information on and links to:

- the objectives and activities of the organization
- calls for research proposals
- proceedings of past events, such as the 23rd International Conference of the World Association for the Advancement of Veterinary Parasitology, held in Buenos Aires, Argentina from 21-25 August, 2011
- research networks, such as the Global Foot & Mouth Research Alliance (GFRA, <http://www.ars.usda.gov/gfra/>) and Animal Influenza Network (OFFLU, <http://www.offlu.net/>)
- databases.

Gaps in border controls are related to alien insect invasions in Europe

European countries with gaps in border security surrounding agricultural imports have been invaded by the largest number of exotic insect pests, according to research published Oct 24 in the open access journal PLOS ONE by Steven Bacon and colleagues from the Swiss Federal Research Station Agroscope ART and the University of Fribourg, Switzerland.

Invasive Lionfish: A guide to control and management

A new book has just been released on the invasive lionfish impacting the Atlantic and Caribbean seas. The introduction of lionfish into the Atlantic Ocean is now recognized as one of the major ecological disasters of the last two decades. Today lionfish are found in nearly all marine-habitat types along the Southeast United States, Gulf of Mexico, and Caribbean. Densities of lionfish have surpassed some native reef fish in many locations. The ecological impacts of this invasion are far-reaching — from disruptions to the structure and function of reef communities to impacts on commercial fishing and the tourism industry. *Invasive Lionfish: A Guide to Control and Management* provides best practices for lionfish control and management, including control strategies, outreach and education, research, monitoring, legal considerations, and ideas for securing resources and partnerships. By following these best practices, resource managers can reduce the local impacts of invasive lionfish in marine protected areas and other places of ecological and economic importance. The project was supported by NOAA, REEF, ICRI, UNEP, Caribbean Environment Programme, SPAW-RAC and over 40 participants of the 2010 Regional Lionfish Workshop.

Thames - a river of invasive species

Almost 100 freshwater species not native to the UK have invaded the River Thames catchment making it one of the most highly invaded freshwater systems in the world, according to scientists at Queen Mary, University of London. Read more on *Biological invasions 2012*: DOI 10.1007/s1053-012-0343-5.



Alien squirrels trade banned in the EU

The international trade of three invasive species of squirrels - namely *Callosciurus erythraeus*, *Sciurus carolinensis* and *Sciurus niger* - is now suspended in the EU as they constitute an ecological threat to EU biodiversity. This regulation is binding to all EU member states.



Fight against Siam Weed achieving success

The support of the local community on Cocos (Keeling) islands is leading to success on the fight against Siam-weed (*Chromolaena odorata*), one of the world's worst tropical weeds.

Brad Rayner, a senior technician with the Western Australia's Department of Agriculture's Invasive Species program, said Siam weed had been significantly reduced under the program funded by the Commonwealth.

"Most of the mature seed-producing Siam weed plants on Home Island have been killed since the program began," Mr Rayner said.

"Because of this success, we have been able to move to the next phase in the control program, which is now targeting juvenile Siam weed plants to prevent them from maturing and producing seeds.

"The successful progress of the Siam weed program to date is particularly pleasing as it has only been running since October 2010.

"A lot of credit must go to the local community, who has strongly supported the department with a local Siam weed team continuing surveillance and eradication efforts between visits by department officers."

"Members of the Cocos community are also uprooting young Siam weed plants on sight, which is contributing greatly to the overall control program."

INVASIVE SPECIES PUBLICATIONS

A number of essential Springer journal contents - among which those from Biological Invasions - are now free. Springer invites you to read a selection of highly cited Springer journals free of charge now through November 30! See <http://www.springer.com/?SGWID=0-0-1500-1983301-0> and here is the link to the journal Biological Invasions http://link.springer.com/journal/10530?utm_campaign=FTA2012-SEM17846&utm_medium=Newsletter&utm_source=email&wt_mc=email.Newsletter.FTA2012-SEM17846&cm_mmc=AD- -Journal- -SEM17846_V1- -0

Scientific articles

Vilizzi, L. and Copp, G. H. (2012), Application of FISK, an Invasiveness Screening Tool for Non-Native Freshwater Fishes, in the Murray-Darling Basin (Southeastern Australia). Risk Analysis. doi: 10.1111/j.1539-6924.2012.01860.x

Clewley, G. D., Eschen, R., Shaw, R. H., Wright, D. J. (2012), The effectiveness of classical biological control of invasive plants. Journal of Applied Ecology. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2664.2012.02209.x

Birnbaum, C., Barrett, L. G., Thrall, P. H. and Leishman, M. R. (2012), Mutualisms are not constraining cross-continental invasion success of Acacia species within Australia. Diversity and Distributions, 18: 962-976. doi: 10.1111/j.1472-4642.2012.00920.x

Dane Panetta, F. (2012), Evaluating the performance of weed containment programmes. *Diversity and Distributions*, 18: 1024–1032. doi: 10.1111/j.1472-4642.2012.00932.x

R. Baohanta • J. Thioulouse • H. Ramanankierana • Y. Prin • R. Rasolomampianina • E. Baudoin • N. Rakotoarimanga • A. Galiana • H. Randriambanona • M. Lebrun • R. Duponnois. Restoring native forest ecosystems after exotic tree plantation in Madagascar: combination of the local ectotrophic species *Leptolena bojeriana* and *Uapaca bojeri* mitigates the negative influence of the exotic species *Eucalyptus camaldulensis* and *Pinus patula*. *Biol Invasions* DOI 10.1007/s10530-012-0238-5

Other publications

Asia-Pacific Forest Invasive Species Network’s September-October 2012 Newsletter is now available. Issues covered include the threat caused by the *Ageratina adenophora* (Crofton weed); Ecologically-based invasive plant management – a new model, and a range of scientific publications and upcoming events. *Contact PILN Coordinator for a copy.*

Messing, R.H., Pike, K.S., Footitt, R.G. 2012. *Invasive aphids in Hawaii*. College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources. University of Hawaii at Manoa. 266

Te-Ipukarea Society Newsletter for September is out. Some of the articles highlighted include TIS meets with the Big Ocean Network, TIS Motion on Seabed Mining Passed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress, Ana Tiraa voted in as an IUCN Global Councillor, Invasive Species highlighted at the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting and the visit of Prof. Sylvia Earle to the Cook Islands. More information about this can be obtained from Te.Ipukarea.Society.Inc@gmail.com or website: <http://ipukarea.blogspot.com>

UPCOMING EVENTS

November	Event	Participating partner & Notes
8-11 Nov	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.
12-16 Nov	42 nd Meeting of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations, Noumea, New Caledonia	SPC
26-28 Nov	Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council Meeting, Majuro, RMI	RISC, SPC, SPREP, PILN Contact Henry Capelle (RISC Chair) or Diane Vice
27-30 Nov	Pacific GIS/Remote Sensing Conference, Holiday Inn, Suva, Fiji	SPC (SOPAC)
29-30 Nov	Micronesia Chief Executives Summit Majuro, RMI	RISC
December	Event	Participating partner Notes
12-13 Dec	International Bio-Conference and Event, Hyderabad, Andhrapredesh, India	
14-15 Dec	Strategic Planning Approaches to improve biodiversity conservation, Sydney, NSW, Australia	
29-30 Dec	2012 – International Conference on Biodiversity & Climate Change, Hong Kong, China	
2013	Event	Participating partner Notes
12-15 Feb	Capacity Building for Conservation – an international exchange of opportunity and best practice. Humboldt Institute, Villa de Leyva, Colombia (http://www.ert-conservation.co.uk/Conf_Aims2.htm)	
March	11 th Applied Environmental Economics Conference, London, UK	

4-8 March	4 th International Symposium on Biological Control of Arthropods, Pucon, Chile	
25-30 March	World Teak Conference, Bangkok, Thailand	
13-19 April	Final CEPF Meeting. Suva, Fiji	PIP, CI, CEPF Final meeting for the CEPF Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot
8-11 April	Freshwater Invasives – Networking for Strategy (FINS), Galway Bay Hotel and Conference Centre, Salthill, Galway, Ireland (www.finsconference.ie) – call for abstracts till 14 th Dec. 2012	
21-25 April	18 th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species, Ontario, Canada	
8-12 July	12 th Pacific Science Inter-Congress (www.psi2013.usp.ac.fj). Science for Human Security and Sustainable Development in the Pacific Islands and Rim. USP, Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji	USP
22-25 Oct	24 th Conference of Asian-Pacific Weed Science Society. The role of weed science in supporting food security by 2020. Padjadjaran University Convention Hall, Bandung, Indonesia.	
November	9 th Pacific Island Conference on Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. Natural Solutions: building resilience for a changing Pacific. Suva, Fiji	SPREP, IUCN-Oceania, USP, Fiji Government, PIP

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