

**Pacific Invasives Learning Network
Network Soundbites, May 2008**

PILN is now ready - the pilot programme ends

As many of you are aware, the very successful PILN pilot programme ends on 31 May 2008, two years after the official launch in Palau. Here is a quick summary of some of the activities and achievements you have all been involved in over the past 2 years:

- Network membership has expanded from 6 initial founding teams to 14 (13 active), and information is being shared among over 260 people in and around the region;
- Invasive species strategic action planning process has been initiated in 7 of the 22 countries/states/territories of the region;
- National coordination mechanisms have been established in 4 countries/states;
- Marine invasive species have been recognised as a priority issue for the region and are being actively addressed;
- Active sharing of skills and knowledge among invasive species workers in a range of sectors and islands has been achieved in the priority areas of social marketing, rat management, weed management and bio-security;
- The Global Invasive Species Database has been recognised as one of the regional depositories for information, and network participants are contributing to its content;
- Two network meetings have been held: Palau in May 2006 (the launch) and French Polynesia in September 2007;
- 9 workshops and 14 exchanges and training events have been supported
- 45 visits to 16 countries have been made by the coordinator (hurray!)
- All the original project benchmarks have been achieved – except the one that says that PILN teams will get more funding through being network members. So this is one of the priorities for the next phase of the network.

An external review is currently underway to evaluate the networks achievements, lessons learned and guide the further growth and implementation of the network. In the meantime I will be taking 2 months unpaid leave over June and July 2008. **All PILN matters will be handled in my absence by Alan Tye, SPREP Invasive Species Officer alant@sprep.org, so please address any queries to him while I'm away.**

While I'm away, keep up the good work and I look forward to seeing you all again very soon!

Jill
PILN Coordinator

Current activities

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

Looking for equipment suppliers? Check out the PII / PILN **Equipment Catalogue** at: <http://www.issg.org/cii/pii/>. Add your supplier to the catalogue.

Training event in rat eradication

The Pacific Invasives Initiative, jointly with BirdLife, organised and participated in a capacity building exercise in rat eradication for 4 BirdLife pacific partners: Elenoa Seniloli from Fiji, Lukes Isechal and Yalap Yalap from Palau, Lucie Faulquier from French Polynesia and Julien Baudat-Franceschi from New Caledonia. Ibeatabu Katebanin from the Wildlife Conservation Unit on

Kiritimati, Kiribati also participated. The purpose of the exercise was to enhance knowledge and understanding of island rodent eradications, in particular the planning process, and took place over 9 days in Wellington and Auckland. The exercise consisted of taking part in a 2-day meeting of the DOC's Island Eradication Advisory Group during which 1 whole day was dedicated to peer-reviewing the Pacific projects, a further 1-day was spent on a planning workshop and a series of islands site visits was made – to islands where rats have been eradicated (Kapiti and Somes), where rat eradication is being planned (Rangitoto and Motutapu), where rat control is being done (Cascades and Bethells beach), and a mainland island (Karori). There was also an opportunity to witness the release of 60 translocated endemic stitchbirds in the Cascades, and to spend an evening assisting in a long-term petrel research and management project at Bethells beach. The group found the experience extremely valuable in helping them to plan their island eradications.

Fiji

The second coordination meeting for invasive species workers in Fiji was held on 2 May, chaired by Manasa Sovaki of the Department of Environment with thanks to Birdlife for the lunch. A total of 14 people from 8 local agencies met to check progress from the last meeting and identify the next steps. One conclusion of the meeting was to develop an invasive species strategic action plan for Fiji, and this is scheduled for the last quarter of 2008.

Kiribati – Kiritimati Island

The Kiritimati Island folks have been very active in invasive species work over the last few weeks.

As part of the preparation for an NZODA funded project between the Kiribati government, NZDOC and PII to eradicate rats from three of the Phoenix Islands, Ray Pierce and Derek Brown of Pacific Expeditions ran a workshop from 15 to 23 April on eradication techniques (principles and field techniques for pest – specifically rats – eradications) and monitoring of native animals and plants. The workshop also included effective biosecurity to ensure pest-free status of restored islands. 12 people from 5 local and 1 national agency participated.

The following week PILN and SPREP facilitated a multi-agency workshop to draft an invasive species strategic action plan for the Line Islands. A 2-day workshop was held, defining the 5-year vision, 3 priority objectives and year 1 activities for the Line Islands. A total of 15 people from 9 local and 1 national agency participated. This action plan forms part of the Kiribati national invasive species strategy, which is now ready for finalization and submission to cabinet for endorsement.

Samoa

Rattan eradication: one site continues to show seedlings and has been subject to monitoring visits since May 2006, when the parent plants were removed. On Friday 18th April Manu, Ulise and Tama from MNRE and James Atherton and Ewan Cameron from CI returned to the site and uprooted 126 small seedlings in 2 hrs. Unfortunately they could not find the small tree that they'd found on the previous trip (a task for next time!). The team walked around the perimeter of the site with a GPS so we now have a more accurate map of the area.

As noted before the number of live rattan plants continues to drop as in December 2007 (on 2 trips) the team pulled 5 trees and 602 seedlings, while in June 2007 they pulled 980 seedlings and 7 small trees, while in April 2007 they removed 10 small trees and 3,771 seedlings. The next visit will take place in July 2008.

News from the Cook Islands

News from http://www.osnz.org.nz/Media/regnews/auckland_july06.pdf. "Volunteers invited to Rarotonga for Kakerori census".

The Kakerori (*Pomarea dimidiata*) is a small (22g) insectivorous bird endemic to the Cook Islands. In 1989, it was one of the 10 rarest birds in the world, with a declining population of 29 individuals.

Recently, the Ornithological Society of New Zealand invited members to volunteer for the Kakerori census survey that is held each August on Rarotonga. Kakerori were confined to three steep forested valleys in the southern part of Rarotonga. Since 1989, rats and cats have been poisoned within the 155 ha Takitumu Conservation Area. The breeding success of Kakerori improved, and their survival increased markedly. Despite naturally low annual productivity of 1-2 clutches of 1-2 eggs, the population grew rapidly, reaching 255 birds by August 2001. Since then, the emphasis of management has shifted from the 'recovery' of Kakerori to a programme aimed at 'sustaining' the population at 250-300 individuals on Rarotonga, and establishing an 'insurance' population on Atiu. The Kakerori population on Rarotonga has remained at over 250, despite five tropical cyclones battering the island during February-March 2005. The cyclones caused the mortality rate to double, with young adults (<3 years old) and very old birds (>20 years old) being especially affected. These storms highlighted the vulnerability of single island endemics, and underlined the value of establishing a second population on Atiu, where a minimum of 15 of the 30 birds transferred in 2001-03 plus two paired island-bred birds were found in the 2005/06 breeding season.

Congratulations Cook Islands and the OSNZ!

Planned work

Let me have details of any worked you are planning and would like to include.

Kiribati

Eradication of rats (2 species) from the Phoenix Islands, Kiribati. Planned for May – July 2008.

Guam

Eradication of rats and mice from Cocos Island, Guam. Planned for the dry season 2009.

New Caledonia

Restoration of Lepredour Island, South Province, together with the Pacific Invasive initiative.

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