



## SOUNDBITES – FEBRUARY 2013

Pacific Invasives Learning Network  
Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.  
PO Box 240, Apia Samoa. Tel. +685 21929. Fax. +685 20231.

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>

### Bonjour tout le monde



Little Fire Ants - imaged provided by Cas Vanderwoude

French Polynesia was the focus of February’s invasive species action. We kick-started the Little Fire Ants and Solid-Waste management project jointly funded by Fonds Pacifique, Mahina commune and SPREP. The project reminds us of the role waste sites play in harbouring invasive rats, insects, snails, birds and

many other nasties. To be effective in managing invasive species we do need to work across the various sectors including the waste management colleagues. Now would be a good time to examine waste management on your island as a nesting and breeding site for invasive animals and plants. Do share these with us and we can highlight them in a future edition of your Soundbites. Many thanks to all contributors for February’s Soundbites and here’s wishin you a great March month.



**9th PACIFIC ISLAND  
CONFERENCE ON  
NATURE CONSERVATION  
AND PROTECTED AREAS**

### PILN TEAMS AND COUNTRY UPDATES

#### French Polynesia

##### INVASIVE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT PROJECT BEGINS

The Invasive Species and the Waste Management teams from SPREP recently returned from a mission to Tahiti, French Polynesia where they met with various government agencies and non-governmental organisations on invasive species and waste management issues. The problem is that the Little Fire Ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*) is in Tahiti, with a small population on neighbouring Mo’orea island. The ant is spreading throughout Tahiti, with most of the municipalities on the island being afflicted. The green waste is one of the pathways for the spread of this invasive ant. The project, which is funded by Fonds Pacifique, Mahina municipality and SPREP, will explore options for managing waste in order to limit the spread of the ant. The key is protecting the other islands of French Polynesia from being contaminated by the ants. Other countries of the Pacific should also be on alert and ensure that good biosecurity measures (including early detection and rapid response plan) are in place. For more details on the project, please contact David Moverley ([davidm@sprep.org](mailto:davidm@sprep.org)).



Little Fire Ants (image courtesy Cas Vanderwoude) – a significant threat to biodiversity and economic activities. They can also cause blindness to pets.

## French Polynesia

### COORDINATING INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT IN FRENCH POLYNESIA



Staff of SOP-Manu raising awareness with teachers on conservation and invasive species

A recent mission to French Polynesia allowed SPREP's Invasive Species team to undertake a brief assessment of invasive species management in the country. The assessment was undertaken on behalf of the Direction de l'Environnement. Twelve-organisations (both government and non-governmental) met with the team, to discuss agencies' activities and issues relating to invasive species management. The mission provided the opportunity to meet up with many of the organisations and individuals that hosted and participated at the second PILN meeting that was held on Mo'orea in 2007. Some of the key findings of the mission include excellent

technical capacity and access to funding opportunities for many of the agencies in French Polynesia. Coordination appears to be one of the serious set-backs but this may be remedied by the appointment of a new invasive

species coordinator to start soon. For further information, please contact the PILN Coordinator ([piln@sprep.org](mailto:piln@sprep.org))

### French Polynesia – INVASIVE SPECIES MISSION - PHOTO LOG



Te Tairoto No Te Ui Tau – Association PGEM de Moorea (local association managing the lagoon)



Te Puti Atahia – local NGO focusing on education and awareness for schools in Tahiti and Moorea



Jean-Louis Maurer (Deputy Permanent Secretary for Pacific Affairs) and Bruno Peauceillier (International Relations Department) met with SPREP team



Meeting with the Tahiti Tourism Authority on invasive species and waste management to the tourism industry



Waste site at Mahina commune where little fire ants are found



Benôit Layrle (Direceur Général, Société Environnement Polynésien) on recycling in Tahiti





*Lantana camara* is one of the many invasive plants on Tahiti



The biocontrol causing harm to the invasive Miconia trees, but only at higher elevations



The hills are alive with Wedelia! another serious invader in Tahiti and Moorea



Dr Cas Vanderwoude inspecting a banana tree for invasive little fire ants, of which there was plenty



Dr Cas Vanderwoude showing the little fire ants – highlighting the differences between workers, male and the many queen ants living on a rotting tree



Dead shells of partulid snails probably predated on by other bigger invasives



The flatworm (*Platydemus manokwari*) is a serious threat to native snails of French Polynesia. This one found on a dead Giant African Snail



A public sign warning people of little fire ants. This has contributed to a drop in the market value of properties in affected areas.

## Hawaii

Hawaii Invasive Species Committee co-chairs William Aila (chair, DLNR) and Russell Kokubun (chair, HDOA) will be attending the National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) in Washington DC during the week of March 4. On Tuesday, March 5, the two co-chairs will be part of a forum titled “Invasive Species: Islands Offer Lessons to the World,” which will feature leaders of island nations and states from around the world and is hosted by the honorable Ronnie Jameau, Ambassador for Climate Change and SIDS Issues, Republic of the Seychelles.

Hawaii will have its first ever Hawaii Invasive Species Awareness Week (HISAW) from March 4-10. A ceremony at the State Capitol on March 4 will include an official proclamation of HISAW by Governor Abercrombie and the presentation of HISC Awards for those in the community who have contributed to protecting Hawaii from invasive species. The week

will include a number of invasive species volunteer events, including a statewide BioBlitz operated through Project Noah. Full details can be found at <http://hisaw2013.blogspot.com>

*Information supplied by Joshua Atwood*

### **Kosrae**

The Crops and Livestock Section of the Kosrae State Agriculture Division held community workshops from February 25<sup>th</sup> until the end of the month. The Invasive Species Program utilised this opportunity to piggyback with the team, to conduct awareness raising activities on the following issues: Whitefly, Giant African Snail, and the Citrus canker. The awareness raising program provides advice to communities on how to control and manage the problem species.

The Giant African Snail Control and Eradication Project will soon start in Kosrae. The project aims to control (if eradication is not possible) nine of the 18 known sites. The Invasive Species Program are calling for community groups to support by hand-collecting, containing and removing of the Giant African Snails.

*Information provided by Jason Jack. Many thanks Jason.*

### **Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council to meet**

The inter-summit meeting of the Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council (RISC) will be held on Guam from 11-15<sup>th</sup> March, 2013. The meeting discusses progress made since the last RISC meeting by the nine jurisdictions of Micronesia. It will also provide an opportunity to review the progress made on the RISC 5-year strategy. For further information please do not hesitate to contact the RISC Chairman – Henry Capelle ([kikurto@yahoo.com](mailto:kikurto@yahoo.com))

### **Palau**

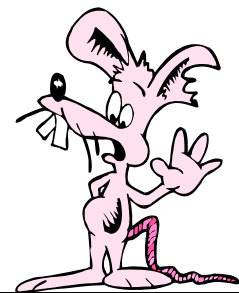
#### **INVASIVE SPECIES COORDINATION POSITION FILLED**

The Palau Bureau of Agriculture announced today that it has filled the position of Invasive Species Coordinator. This position has been vacant since October 2009, due to funding and other constraints. “I am very happy to finally have this position filled again,” said BOA Director Fred Sengebau. He added that it has not been possible for the BOA to undertake or continue a number of important activities to prevent and control invasive species in the absence of a Coordinator. The Coordinator is Dr. Joel Miles, who was in the position from 2006 to 2009. Dr. Miles said that he is looking forward to picking up where he left off in 2009. He said that his priorities include the ongoing project to remove monkeys from Anguar, eradication of tilapia, and revival of efforts to prevent invasive ants from establishing in Palau, as well as updating Palau’s strategic action plan for invasive species. Partial funding for the Coordinator position is being provided by the NGO Island Conservation and by a grant from the Global Environment Facility. Dr. Miles began working in December, at the BOA office in Nekken. You can contact him by telephone at 544-5804, or by email at [joelmiles52@gmail.com](mailto:joelmiles52@gmail.com)

*Congratulations Joel and Palau. We look forward to working with you. Best wishes from all your PILN and PIP friends*

## **PACIFIC INVASIVES PARTNERSHIP (PIP) – NEWS**

### **GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project Update**



#### **COOK ISLANDS**

Cook Islands have successfully launched the GEF-PAS invasive species project nationally late last year. Activities so far include raising awareness of key biodiversity stakeholders about the project. An agreement was made between the National Environment Service and the Ministry of Agriculture to re-establish a biological control laboratory for the Cook Islands. They are now planning their first field activity by targeting invasive rats on Suwarrow island. This to be carried out in May, 2013. An agreement has also been signed between the National Environment Service

and the Te Ipukarea Society (local non-governmental organization) to carry out the rat operation.

## Island Conservation update



**Island  
Conservation**

- IC's new office in Hawaii
- Palmyra rat eradication press release:  
<http://www.islandconservation.org/news/article.php?id=39>
  - Associated media links (below)
  - Surfbirds - <http://www.surfbirds.com/community-blogs/blog/2013/01/29/wildlife-boom-expected-after-eradication-of-30000-rats-on-pacific-island/>
  - American Bird Conservancy - <http://www.abcbirds.org/newsandreports/stories/130129.html>
  - Environmental News Service - <http://ens-newswire.com/2013/01/31/pacific-atoll-rat-free-for-the-first-time-since-wwii/>
- Pacific Islands Report - <http://pidp.eastwestcenter.org/pireport/2013/January/01-29-in.htm>
- Wildlife Extra News - <http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/news/palmyra-atoll.html#cr>

Introducing Heath Packard, Island Conservation's new Director of Communications. Heath brings a wealth of experience and talent to IC, having served in a variety of roles with the Washington State Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands, the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Refuge Association. Most importantly, he's a really great person and is keen to learn about conservation-focused information campaigns in the Pacific. Heath's contact details are as follows:

Heath Packard  
Director of Communications  
Island Conservation  
100 Shaffer Road, LML  
Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
831.359.4787 x 126 (desk)  
360.584.3051 (mobile)  
831.459.1476 (fax)  
Skype: heath.packard1

## BirdLife – Pacific Programme



Don't forgive to book-mark this in your Calendar.

The BirdLife International will be holding its next Congress in Ottawa, Canada in June, 2013. There will be a special session on invasive species, which the BirdLife Pacific Programme is coordinating. The objectives of the invasive species session are to build support for the need to address invasive species as a serious threat to birds, and to propose an invasive alien species programme to the partnership. For further information about this or wishing to contribute to the discussion, please contact Steve Cranwell ([steven.cranwell@birdlife.org](mailto:steven.cranwell@birdlife.org)).

## GLISPA Invasive Species Working Group held its 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting



The Invasive Species Working Group under GLISPA held its 2<sup>nd</sup> teleconference meeting on February 6. A range of topics were discussed including:

- the National Invasive Species Awareness Week organized by the US National Invasive Species Committee.
- The Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting
- SIDS Invasive Species Meeting
- Micronesia Chief Executives Summit

- Small Islands, Big Difference Campaign
- Micronesia Biosecurity Plan and Implementation Plan
- BirdLife's Invasive Species Programme
- 9<sup>th</sup> Pacific Conference on Nature Conservation in Fiji
- And more

Contact Phil Andreozzi (Phillip\_Andreozzi@ios.doi.gov) or Olivier Langrand ([olivier.langrand@islandconservation.org](mailto:olivier.langrand@islandconservation.org)) for further information

## VACANCY AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

### IUCN – Leaders wanted for Sixth World Parks Congress

Here is your chance as an institution, organisation or individual to take a major role in the 2014 World Parks Congress! IUCN and the National Organising Committee are pleased to announce that IUCN has opened the call for stream leaders for the sixth IUCN World Parks Congress. Please follow the link below to the media release, Stream Leadership Proposal Guidelines and the Stream Proposal Template. <http://www.iucn.org/?11787/Leaders-wanted-for-sixth-World-Parks-Congress> Due date 8 March, 2013.

### GEPP Executive Summer School on Global Environmental Policy -(University of Geneva in partnership with UNEP)

The Summer School is from 1-13<sup>th</sup> September, 2013. The Executive Summer School provides a special opportunity for participants from both the public and the private sectors to enlarge their competences in order to address complex environmental issues. Beyond enlarging the knowledge base of each participant, the modules of this trans-disciplinary programme bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and concrete decision-making, problem-solving and negotiation skills. The GEPP Executive Summer School aims to bring together not more than 25 selected participants with diverse origins and professional backgrounds, including decision makers from the public and private sectors, and non-governmental organisations. The closing date for applications is **31st March 2013**. More information about GEPP, including the programme of the Executive Summer School held in September 2012, can be consulted at: [www.unige.ch/gepp/ess](http://www.unige.ch/gepp/ess). Please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Jean Chamel, our Scientific Secretary ([jean.chamel@unige.ch](mailto:jean.chamel@unige.ch)) if you have questions.

### Pesticide training course on Maui

Charles Nagamine will be running his Pesticide Risk Reduction Education course in Maui from April 15-16, 2013. Please contact Charles for further information – check : <http://pestworld.stjohn.hawaii.edu/pat/schedule.html>

### SPREP

SPREP has a number of vacancies available. Please check out the SPREP vacancy page for further information. <http://www.sprep.org/Human-Resources/Job-Vacancy/>

Some of the vacancies include: Threatened and Migratory Species Advisor, Planning & Capacity Development Advisor, Project Accountant and Finance Assistant (the first three are international recruits, and the last one is for Samoan Nationals only).



### Native Species Expected to Rebound on Rat-free Palmyra Atoll

Palmyra Atoll is rat-free one year after a major effort to remove these invasive predators, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Island Conservation announced today.

Removing non-native rats was the top priority for the Palmyra Atoll Restoration Project, a multi-year effort to protect 10 nesting seabird species, migratory shorebirds, the rare coconut crab, and one of the largest remaining native *Pisonia grandis* forests (a rare flowering tree in the *Bougainvillea* family) in the tropical Pacific.

Palmyra Atoll, approximately 1,000 miles south of Honolulu, Hawai'i, is cooperatively managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy as a National Wildlife Refuge and a scientific research station. The area includes 25 islets covering 580 acres of land, and thousands of acres of healthy coral reefs. In 2009, the refuge and waters surrounding it were also included in the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument.

Non-native black rats were likely introduced to the atoll during World War II, and the population grew to as many 30,000 rats. The invasive rodents eat eggs and chicks of ground and tree-nesting birds, particularly sooty and white terns. Rats also eat land crabs and the seeds and seedlings of native tree species.

To reverse this trend, in June 2011, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and Island Conservation carefully and strategically implemented the removal of the destructive, non-native rats from Palmyra Atoll, using a rodenticide that had been successful in similar projects on other islands. The Palmyra project was the result of more than seven years of planning and research to ensure that native species were not harmed during the removal, and was the first step in a longer-term effort to restore the atoll's ecological balance.

Read more at: <http://www.islandconservation.org/news/article.php?id=39>

### Argentinean ant meets its match



Researchers from North Carolina State University have found that one of the most aggressive invasive ant species in the United States -- the Argentine ant -- appears to have met its match in the Asian needle ant. Specifically, the researchers have found that the Asian needle ant is successfully displacing Argentine ants in an urban environment, indicating that the Asian needle ant -- with its venomous sting -- may be the next invasive species to see a population boom.

In the world of invasive species, the Argentine ant (*Linepithema humile*) is a success story. Its aggressive, territorial behavior and ability to create huge "supercolonies" -- consisting of thousands of queens and millions of workers -- have enabled the Argentine ant to spread across the United States, displacing native species and changing ecosystems to suit its needs. No other ant species had been seen successfully pushing back -- until now.

In 2008, while watching a supercolony of Argentine ants in an urban environment, former NC State Ph.D. student Dr. Eleanor Spicer Rice noticed that Asian needle ants (*Pachycondyla chinensis*) were living and working in the area. This was surprising because Argentine ants normally do not tolerate any other ant species in their territory, so Spicer Rice decided to investigate further.

Over the next four years, Spicer Rice found that Argentine ants appeared to ignore Asian needle ants, and the Asian needle ants took advantage of the situation to displace a significant portion of the Argentine ant population.

## INVASIVE SPECIES PUBLICATIONS

Bonnington, C., Gaston, K. J., Evans, K. L. (2013), Fearing the feline: domestic cats reduce avian fecundity through trait-mediated indirect effects that increase nest predation by other species. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, 50: 15–24. doi: 10.1111/1365-2664.12025

Karahahe Kino / Vertebrate Pest Research Newsletter is now available for downloading.

[http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/55659/KarahaheKino21.pdf](http://www.landcareresearch.co.nz/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/55659/KarahaheKino21.pdf) Some articles of interest include:

- John Parkes - Eradicating invasive species on big inhabited islands.
- Mandy Barron - Pest control across boundaries.
- Penny Fisher – Scaling up pest animal control with aerial baiting – what’s your poison?
- Eru Nathan – Spillover and edge effects in pest control
- Al Glen – Can rabbit control reduce feral cat numbers at a regional scale?
- And much more

Seychelles Islands Foundation e-newsletter – now available. Contact the webmaster ([webmaster@sif.sc](mailto:webmaster@sif.sc)) for further information. Some of the articles include:

- EU invasive Alien Species Project Update: Aldabra.
- Takamak team launch emergency IAS work with support of UNESCO funding
- Assumption team back in action for second year of eradication
- Invasive Plants surveyed in Vallée de Mai
- Invasive Yellow Crazy Ants re-surveyed

Eleanor Spicer Rice, Jules Silverman. Propagule Pressure and Climate Contribute to the Displacement of *Linepithema humile* by *Pachycondyla chinensis*. *PLoS ONE*, 2013; 8 (2): e56281 DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0056281

Eleanor Spicer Rice, Jonathan Z. Shik, Jules Silverman. Effect of Scattered and Discrete *Hydramethylnon* Bait Placement on the Asian Needle Ant. *Journal of Economic Entomology*, 2012; 105 (5): 1751 DOI: 10.1603/EC12207

M. J. Godard, P. I. Davison, G. H. Copp and P. D. Stebbing (2013) Review of invasion pathways and provisional pathway management plan for non-native ponto-caspian species of potential invasion risk to Great Britain. Cefas contract report C5524 - Final, For Defra, Protected Species and Non-native Species Policy Group

NISC (National Invasive Species Council) Newsletter is now available. Some of the articles include: CBP catches Asian Gypsy Moths at Port of Tacoma; Invasive Species the US gave the world, including lobsters, racoons and bullfrogs; Invasive fish enters streams feeding Lake Michigan; and more. Contact NISC ([www.invasivespecies.gov](http://www.invasivespecies.gov)) for more information.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

2013	Event	Participating Partner	Comments
March			
3-8 March	United States : National Invasive Species Awareness Week, Washington, DC, USA	NISC	
8 March	International Women’s Day (United Nations)		
11-15 March	4 <sup>th</sup> Coral Triangle Initiative Regional Exchange on Marine Protected Areas. Solomon Islands.	USP, WWF	
11-15 March	Micronesia Regional Invasive Species Council Meeting	RISC	
18-21 March	Measuring the economic impacts of invasive alien species (GEF/UNEP/CABI Project). Port of Spain, Trinidad.		
20-23 March	ICES Working Group (ACOM) on introduction and transfers of marine organisms. Montreal, Canada.		



22 March	World Water Day (United Nations)		
25-29 March	Facilitation skills for conservation managers. Durrell Conservation Academy, Jersey, UK.	Durrell Institute	
26-28 Mar.	Palau – Strategic Action Planning	Palau Invasives Species Taskforce	By invitation only (contact Joel Miles)
27 Mar	Fiji Invasive Species Taskforce Meet	FIST	
29 Mar.	Good Friday – Public Holiday		
<b>April</b>			
1 April	Easter Monday – Public Holiday		
2-4 April	3 <sup>rd</sup> Conference on invasion biology, ecology and management. University of Kentucky, KY, USA.		
8-11 April	FINS 2013: Freshwater Invasives networking for Strategy. Galway, Ireland.		
8-11 Apr	2013 Imported Fire Ant Conference. Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel, 3501 Atlantic Avenue, Virginia Beach, VA 23451.	<a href="http://www.extension.org/pages/19257/imported-fire-ant-and-invasive-pest-ant-conference">http://www.extension.org/pages/19257/imported-fire-ant-and-invasive-pest-ant-conference</a>	
10-12 April	Pacific Invasives Partnership, Suva. Fiji	PIP	
15-19 Apr	CEPF Final Meeting, Suva, Fiji	PIP	
17-19 April	Brown-Tree Snake Technical Working Group meeting		
21-25 April	18 <sup>th</sup> International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species (Niagara Falls, Ontario)		
22 April	Earth Day	<a href="http://www.un.org/en/events/waterday/">http://www.un.org/en/events/waterday/</a>	
24-26 Apr.	Sustainable Development in Oceania – Towards a new ethic. Northern Province, New Caledonia		
28-30 April	11 <sup>th</sup> Session of IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IPHAB), Paris, France.		
<b>May</b>			
11-12 May	World Migratory Bird Day (UNEP/CMS)		
12-17 May	Impact of climate change on biological invasions and population distributions. Banff International Research Station, Banff, Alberta, Canada.		
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity 2013: Water and Biodiversity (CBD)		
22 May – 19 Jul.	International Ocean Institute – Training Programme: Ocean Governance, Policy Law, Management. Dalhousie University, Halifax. Nova Scotia.	<a href="http://internationaloceaninstitute.dal.ca/">http://internationaloceaninstitute.dal.ca/</a>	

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