

INVASIVE SEPCIES CONSULTATION REPORT- VAOALA



30TH JUNE, 2014

Terrestrial Conservation Section
Division of Environment and Conservation

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1. Introduction

Invasive species is one of the greatest threats to Samoa's biodiversity, it damages habitat for native plants and animals, loss of subsistence resources, economic loss especially the health of people. Invasive species could be anything that is introduced to a certain area, thus cause negative impacts to the environment as whole.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment through the Division of Environment and Conservation adheres the carrying out of consultation programs to promote the importance of our biodiversity. A consultation was carried out on the 30th June 2014 at Vaoala upon requested by Tavu'i Annie Laumea regarding invasive species.

1.1 AIM

To enlighten the community about invasive species and its impacts socially, economically and environmentally.

1.2 OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To inform the community about invasive species and its impact to the environment and people.
- ❖ To inform the community on the available methodologies to deal with myna birds, albizias, rubber trees, and the African tulip tree.
- ❖ To strengthen working collaboratively with the local communities in controlling and eradication of invasive species from Samoa.

1.3 PRESENTERS

Opening Remarks - Mr. Fialelei Enoka

1 st Presenter	-	Ms. Faafou Wynette Leaupepe (Terrestrial Officer) [Myna Bird]
2 nd Presenter	-	Mr. Fialelei Enoka (Parks & Reserves Officer) [Mt. Vaea Restoration and Ecological]
3 rd Presenter	-	Mr. Joe Te'o (Terrestrial Officer) [Water Lettuce]

2. Consultation Progress

The consultation brought together members of Vaoala Community; representatives from different groups within the village participated and were eager to learn and widen their understanding about invasive species and possible ways to control or eradicate them. Initially, a welcoming remarks was presented by our team leader, Mr. Enoka to start the program. The first presentation was based on myna birds. A brief description and background was provided for the community to fully understand of where, when, how and why myna birds came into the country, also, the work done by the Ministry in trying to eradicate and control myna birds as it is rapidly growing in numbers and have caused severe impacts to Samoa's fauna and flora.

The second presenter elaborated on Mt. Vaea Restoration Project and mainly focused on invasive plants/trees, such as African Tulip (faapasi), African Rubber tree (pulu vao) and others, that have dominant the mountain, resulting in a decrease of native plants. Also, showcase the method used to destroy invasive plants, as well as ongoing programs led by the Ministry to indicate various activities to conserve and preserve our environment for today and the nearer future.

Finally, our last presenter discussed a newly invasive plant known as *Water Lettuce*. Water lettuce is native to South Africa and has invaded many countries including Samoa. This weed is found only in swampy areas, and are found in the villages of Vaivase-uta, Vaigaga, Vailoa, Vaisigano and Tamaligi. The presenter emphasizes the impacts of this weed to the environment as well as possible methods used to control and clear this weed from the current sites and the whole of Samoa. On the other hand, photographs of *mongoose* were given to the community for awareness, as the recent report of mongoose sighting was from a resident of Vaoala three weeks ago from the consultation day.

At last, the floor was opened to the community for questions and comments regarding the presentations.

3. Feedback

Questions and comments provided by the community were focused on the three invasive work discussed during each presentation.

Discussion 1:

The community questioned the usage of DRC1339 as mentioned in the presentation, regarding its effect on other birds and people that might accidentally consume the poison bait as well as selecting target areas for feeding. Lastly, the community wanted the Ministry to distribute the chemical to the public, in doing so; they could kill as many myna birds they could to help with the project. In spite of this, the team briefly explained on the areas suggested by the community.

Discussion 2:

Most participants questioned invasive plants, especially *'tamaligi'*, on any advantage, due to the fact, tamaligi are used for firewood's. In addition, one of the participants commented on the importance of pulu vao for making Samoan cricket balls in the past.

Other than that, the community thanked the Ministry for their continuous support and prompt reply to their request.

4. Recommendation

- ❖ The Government to support communities of any tasks carried out especially upgrading the price for one dead myna bird, e.g. \$10 per myna
- ❖ The Ministry to distribute chemicals and other resources used to kill and eradicate invasive species to the community for them to implement such activities.
- ❖ Enhance partnership with the Ministry in working together to control invasive species, such as: giving funds to the community to kill invasive plants and to eradicate myna birds.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, participants of the community appreciated the Ministry for the work well done in informing the public of invasive species in the country and methods used to eradicate and destroy them. The consultation has enlightened the community about invasive species, such as, myna birds, water lettuce and invasive plants/trees, also, emphasize ways for the two parties (community and MNRE) to work collaboratively in such ways.

Appendix

Questions & Comments- Presentation 1

1. Why are we killing myna birds, in fact, it is God's creation?
2. Is the MNRE working collaboratively with the MOH regarding the chemical used to kill myna birds?
3. Why can't the Ministry increase the .20c bonus to \$10 per myna, in that way, the public is eager and keen to catch the myna birds themselves and report to the Ministry?
4. Can the Ministry provide funds to families with affected roofs resulting from myna birds?
5. Are the photo shown actual myna birds caught in Samoa or photos from the internet and other sources?

Comments

- A member of the community suggested one way of killing myna birds that he witnessed and it's very successful.

Questions & Comments- Presentation 2

1. Is there any importance of the tamaligi tree to the environment? (E.g. holds the soil etc.)
2. Can the Ministry distribute the resources/materials used to kill invasive plants/trees to the public?

Comments

- In the past, tamaligi trees were used to build huge boxes of bananas for exportation and construction of canoes, definitely it can be good in one way or another.
- Pulu mamoe is another invasive tree but it's useful to make cricket balls.

Questions & Comments- Presentation 3

1. Has the Ministry carried out research of any possible way that this plant (water lettuce) is good for consumption?
2. Are there any regulation regarding the importation of water lettuce and other plants?



Participants involved in the consultation

