

Invasive Species Task Force of Pohnpei (iSTOP)

iSTOP and its contributions towards
addressing invasive species in
Pohnpei State

iSTOP LOGO



iSTOP Vision and Mission

- **Vision**-----*Pohnpei will sustain biodiverse terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems for the environmental, social, cultural and economic well being of future generations.*
- **Mission**---*Invasive Species Taskforce of Pohnpei (iSTOP) strives to enhance and preserve the natural biodiversity of Pohnpei State through collaborative efforts at all levels of our society while cooperating with neighboring states and countries to identify, prevent, and eradicate or manage/control invasive species.*

Location Map-Pohnpei, FSM



Historical Background

- iSTOP has undergone name change for the past 10 plus years
- Initially formed and called the IST (Invasive Species Task Force) in year 2000 after detection of *Piper auritum*, False Kava in U Municipality of Pohnpei---USDA Weed Survey
- In 2002, IST became sub-committee of Pohnpei Resource Management Committee (PRMC). Consultations and additional surveys resulted in inclusion of other 'invasives' e.g., Chain of love-*Antigonon leptopus*, Ivy gourd-*Coccinia grandis*, Mile-a-minute-*Mikania micrantha*, Honolulu rose-*Clerodendrum chinense*

Historical Background

- 2004-IST participated in the Development of the Pohnpei State Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (BSAP)
- The BSAP Summit outcomes included “address the invasive species problem in Pohnpei State by strengthening the quarantine program and controlling/and or eradicating at least five selected species

Historical Background

- Given the dedication and commitment by group members, IST joined the other 8 PICs, in founding the Pacific Invasive Learning Network (PILN), and participated in its (PILN) First Meeting in Palau during mid 2006. The need to become more formalized, led IST to a name change, becoming PIST-Pohnpei Invasive Species Task Force. The new group completed its first Strategic Action Plan (SAP) in October of 2006 to guide activities through the end of 2008

Historical Background

- Since invasive species management activities began in 2000, the taskforce has been able to keep several potentially threatening, invasive weeds under control. Of the targeted species: Ivy Gourd, Chain-of-Love, Mile-a-Minute, False Sakau, Honolulu Rose, only Ivy Gourd was successfully controlled. While the other target species are not fully eradicated they have remained under continuous management and are now reduced to less than 10% of their original coverage area

Historical Background

- From June 29-July 1st 2010 the participating members of PIST convened to develop a new SAP to guide invasive species management work from July 2010-June 2013. A decision made during this meeting was to rename the group to the Invasive Species Taskforce Of Pohnpei (iSTOP). iSTOP reviewed and extended the list from the original five to the following ten species identified for eradication: False sakau, Mile-A-Minute, Chain of Love, Ivy Gourd, Honolulu Rose, Octopus Tree, Bengal Trumpet, Lolo pepper, Tree sparrow, and the Feral Pigeon. Further assessment will be done on the Kerosene Tree, Koster's curse, Tilapia, and catfish to determine their ecological and economic threat and possibility for eradication or management.

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Historical Background

- From July 9-10th and on August 1st. 2013, participating members of Invasive Species Taskforce Of Pohnpei, (iSTOP) convened to update their 2011-13 Strategic Action Plan (SAP) to guide invasive species management work from August 2013-July 2017. iSTOP reviewed the progress over that last 3 years and identified invasive species to eradicate and manage/control in future efforts. Outreach, training, capacity building and research efforts were also reviewed and updated.

Contributing Members/Partners

- Conservation Society of Pohnpei (CSP)
- College of Micronesia-FSM, Cooperative Research and Extension (COM-FSM/CES)
- FSM Resources & Development (FSM R&D)
- Micronesia Conservation Trust (MCT)
- Pacific Invasive Initiative (PII)
- Pacific Invasives Learning Network (PILN)
- Pohnpei State Attorney General Office (AGO)
- Pohnpei State Division of Forestry and Marine Conservation (DFMC)
- Pohnpei State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

Contributing Members/Partners

- Pohnpei State Office of Economic Affairs (OEA)
- Pohnpei State Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Pohnpei State Office of Fisheries and Aquaculture (OFA)
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC)
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services (USDA NRCS)

Threats and Challenges

As an evolving, young organization with meager or insufficient resources to begin with, iSTOP has faced and will continue to face threats and challenges while addressing 'invasives.' Nevertheless, iSTOP continues its efforts in controlling and/or eradicating species of concern (identified Pohnpei State priority invasive species), seeking support from local communities and partner agencies in country and abroad

Threats and Challenges

- The major challenge which has continued to plague the group is the unavailability of funding to carry out the activities highlighted in its SAP.
- During its initial stages of formation, another challenge was accessing private property; given the lack of awareness and understanding of invasive species and their impact/effects on the environment.
- The natural 'wet nature' of the island is another challenge. As the island rains a lot (average rainfall is approximately 4,800 mm and is evenly distributed over 300 days of the year (US NOAA, 1987), it sometimes hinders the application of control measures at invasive-infested sites.
- Another challenge for eradication efforts is the discovery of previously unknown sites.
- Human resources.
- Still, another challenge is having a good biosecurity system
- The major threat is the increase in traffic of aircrafts and vessels coming into country and the likely increase in imports of ornamentals.

Approaches and Responses Implemented

- Production of awareness materials (booklets, posters, leaflets, newsletters/articles)
- Community consultations with local community leaders and/or members
- Awareness raising through radio programs, seminars at schools, and through community/stakeholders meetings.
- Training of Community Conservation Officers (CCOs) and community residents.
- iSTOP has also worked through and garnered support of local traditional chiefs and local chief executives.
- Review of Biosecurity System (Laws/Legislations)
- Hiring/Recruitment of additional Biosecurity Officers

Impacts

- Through the initiatives and efforts set forth with work partners (e.g., both Government and Non-Governmental Organizations and others), some positive impacts/outcomes have been experienced over time. It is now understood that more members of the community at large have gained more understanding and awareness of invasive species. More community members are assisting in reporting of presence of 'invasives' on their land and/or property and taking part in control/eradication efforts.
- Funding from the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Funds (CEPF) to the Conservation Society of Pohnpei enable iSTOP partners to carry out its field activities from 2010-2013.
- In March of 2012 an Invasive Species Control Plan for Pohnpei State was signed into effect naming the Office of Economic Affairs (OEA) as lead agency with legal and statutory responsibility for administering and enforcing the regulatory requirements for the control/eradication of invasive species found in Pohnpei State
- Pohnpei State AG Office is currently assisting iSTOP in the review of laws relating to resource management and consevation/invasives

Stakeholder Involvement, Awareness and Communication

- Traditional community leaders. Local traditional leaders are now requesting the assistance of their local communities to assist the group (iSTOP) in the control or eradicating efforts. In some areas, e.g., Nan Madap, in Palikir, community folks are being trained in 'spray control' of invasive weed (Mile-a-minute- *Mikania micrantha*). The residents are helping out in the actual weed control measures (weeding, burning and spraying).
- Local residents. Local residents are assisting by allowing iSTOP members accessing their land/property and taking care of identified "invasives." For instance, allowing members to climb up their houses at night for taking care of the feral pigeon, etc.
- Chief Executives of the local government. The Mayor of Kolonia Town, has spearheaded the control and eradication of chain-of-love-*Antigonon leptopus* in Kolonia Town.
- The local Chief of Sokehs Municipality presently decreed his section chiefs to assist iSTOP members during one of the community/stakeholders consultation
- The Pohnpei Women Council has agreed to identify representatives to join iSTOP

Target Species for Eradication



False Sakau *Piper auritum*
Sakau Likamw



Chain of Love *Antigonon*
leptopus
Rohsenpoak Suwed



Honolulu Rose *Clerodendrum chinense*
Rohsen Onoluhlu

Target Species for Eradication



Bengal Trumpet Vine *Thunbergia grandiflora*
Iolen Pengkal



Ivy Gourd, *Coccinia grandis*
Aipikohrd



Feral Pigeon *Columba liviavar*
Mwuroi en wai

Target Species for Control/Management



Mile-a-Minute *Mikania
macrantha*



Koster's Curse *Clidemia hirta*
Riahpen Rot



African Tulip Tree *Spathodea
campanulata*
Dulip en Aprika

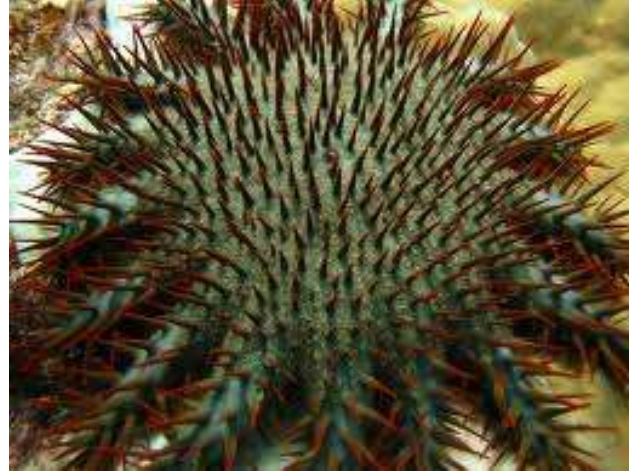


Tree Sparrow
Passer montanus

Target Species for Control/Management-Aquatic/Marine



Eel Catfish *Plotosus lineatus*



Crown of Thorns Starfish
Acanthaster planci



Milkfish *Chanos chanos*



Tilapia *Oreochromis mossambicus*

LESSONS LEARNED

- Given the small, knitted society like Pohnpei, it is important that we deal with such issues with patience. For instance, regarding the False Kava-*Piper auritum*, it took almost seven to eight years for owners of this invasive plant to give in and allow us to access their land and take care of the plant.
- As most invasive plants are found/or are being utilized by our women folks, iSTOP has learnt that it is important that we also involve the 'womens group' to be part of iSTOP, or as iSTOP members. At the recently held 1st Pohnpei Environment Symposium (Sept. 24-26, 2013), iSTOP has gained support of such group, and it was agreed that three or so women will be joining iSTOP as contributing members in the usual monthly meetings and iSTOP-related programs and activities.
- Networking is an important aspect of dealing with 'invasives'
- Important to identify and detect 'invasives' at the ports of entry.
- Prevention is far better than cure.

FUNDING

- Most of the activities are being done on a voluntary basis and as in-kind. iSTOP contributing members donated their time and resources (vehicles, sprayers, copiers, etc) and equipment for the control of invasives. iSTOP was able to secure an amount of \$180,00.00 + to carry out its activities from 2010-2013. This was mainly through hiring of a consultant, production of posters, invasive species booklet, purchasing of sprayers and chemicals, and training of residents and local community conservation officers, etc.

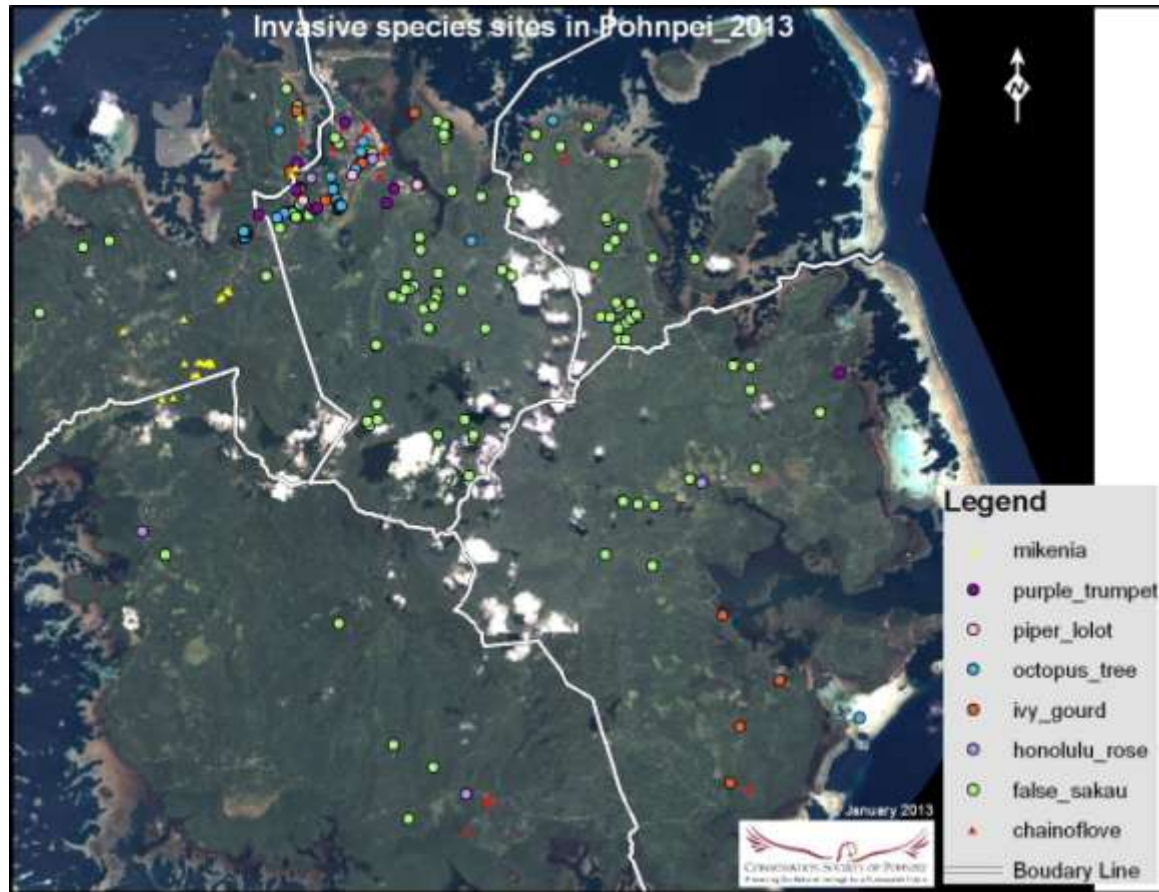
Invasive Species Information

- False kava—known to exist in 126 sites; 119 sites have been removed; 7 active sites at present
- Chain of love—known to exist in 33 sites; 32 sites have been removed; active sites 1
- Mile-a-minute—known to exist at 22 sites; 14 sites removed; active sites 8
- Ivy gourd—known sites, 15; 14 sites removed; active at 1 sites
- Octopus Tree—33 known sites; all sites removed
- Purple Trumpet—9 known sites; 8 sites removed; 1 active site
- Honolulu rose—7 known sites; all sites removed
- Piper lolat—3 known sites; no sites been worked on, active sites remain

Roles and Responsibilities of iSTOP as stipulated in the newly endorsed Control Plan

- Conduct risk assessments
- Draft *Response Plans*
- Provide advice to government on necessary actions and funding requirements
- Promote public awareness to community and ask for cooperation
- Mobilize teams for control/eradication work

Invasive Species Sites in Pohnpei



Invasive Species Outreach at Schools



Some Partners/Members of iSTOP



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

