



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>

WELCOME TO YOUR PILN SOUNDBITES

Dear Invasive Battlers and Friends. We are pleased to share with you the April edition of your PILN Soundbites. Another busy month for many of our teams working daily to keep our islands secure from harm caused by invasive species. The spread of diseases throughout our islands with the unfortunate loss of life, highlights the vulnerability of our people to existing and emerging diseases. It also highlights that one of the key pathways for introductions of invasive species and diseases is through people movement. We must remain vigilant when we are travelling to ensure that we are not carrying unwanted species with us that will spread and cause harm to our communities. Important also is the need to work together against invasive species. American Samoa provides a good example of how important it is to build a strong team and utilise one of the best assets we have - our youth, to care for our environment and our island. Thank you to all the contributors for this edition and may you all have a great month of May. Keep up the good work.

PILN TEAMS AND COUNTRY UPDATES

American Samoa - a strong team works hard and wins



The invasive battlers from American Samoa show they can cut across the sea with ease as they do through the thick vegetation of the hills and mountains of Tutuila island. Tavita Togia, the invasive species coordinator for the American Samoa Invasive Species Team, led his team of invasive battlers to victory during a recent outrigger canoe competition. He relates the importance of working together as a team and that the traditional sport of the Polynesian people - voyaging on outrigger canoes - is a natural and logical way of building a strong invasive species team. The outrigger canoe has six paddlers and each one contributes to the overall effort and achievement of the team. This principle is applicable to all situations, whether you are in an office or working in the field. All of his paddlers are the young men that he trains to control *Albizia*, *Adenanthera* and other invasive trees found in American Samoa's National Parks. Tavita adds that ultimately, managing invasives is about working with people. Not only do we need to work with our communities so that they see the value in what we do, but we also need to work with our team so they are motivated every day to do the tough job of climbing steep hills, in very hot and humid conditions so that we can save our native species and keep our culture and traditions strong. The backbone and inspiration for our community is nature and our environment. A healthy environment means healthy people that are able to cope and adapt to changes. [Photos © T. Togia]



Cook Islands - new \$1million invasive species project



Cocklebur (*Xanthium purgens*)
©CINHP/G. McCormack

A five-year project funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Partnership Fund is looking at natural enemies or biological control for some of Cook Islands worst invasive weeds. The NZD\$1 million project sees a collaboration among researchers and scientists from Landcare Research New Zealand, the Cook Islands Ministry of Agriculture and Rhodes University in South Africa. Invasive weeds including mile-a-minute, cockle-burr, grand balloon vine, giant reed and strawberry guava will be targeted for control with natural enemies. Another two invasive plants, the African tulip tree and the red passionfruit, will also be targeted, however, scientists have yet to identify natural enemies that are effective against these invasives. The broad-leaf vine or *Merremia peltata* will also be part of the research, identifying its origin and possible impacts to the ecosystems. Dr Quentin Paynter from Landcare Research NZ was in Rarotonga meeting with the Technical Advisory group who will be overseeing the biocontrol programme.

Guam update to host the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan meeting

Guam will be hosting the review and consultation of the Micronesia Biosecurity Plan and the Strategic Implementation Plan from 19-21 May.



Guam is gearing up to battle against the little fire ant. Julie Duay, the Wildlife Biologist from the Guam Agriculture's Division of Aquatic and Wildlife Resources, will be training in Hilo, HI with the Hawaii Ant Lab (HAL) in early June. She will learn techniques used in Hawaii for LFA control and participate in all the happenings at the HAL. Upon her return to Guam a pilot study for LFA site-eradication will begin.

Everyone in the resource agencies within the Marianas and Hawaii will be busy reviewing and commenting on the Supplemental EIS for the relocation of marines to Guam. Comments are due in June.

Guam is conducting a review on the economic impacts of establishing the fee associated with incoming sea containers that will fund the Biosecurity Division to protect Guam's borders from invasive species. This is a much needed development to support compliance to the legislation. [Photo © C.Vanderwoude HawaiiAntLab]

Palau - celebrating Earth Day



Palau celebrated the international Earth Day with 300 elementary and high school students learning about invasive species and wetlands. Posters and stickers were given to the students. Quarantine officials also participated in the event.



During the week of April 14-18, staff of the Forestry Unit of the Bureau of Agriculture, with officers of the Koror State Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement (DCLE), conducted an assessment of the status of the invasive tree *Adenanthera pavonina* (red bead tree) at three locations in Palau's World Heritage Site, the Rock Islands Southern Lagoon Conservation Area. The purpose of the assessment is twofold: to determine the extent of the infestation; and to determine whether or not eradication is feasible. Data are being analyzed and a report will be submitted to the Department of Conservation and Law Enforcement. [Photos © J.Miles]

Papua New Guinea - Ballast water management training for Melanesian countries



A two-day national training workshop on compliance, monitoring and enforcement of the Ballast Water Management Convention was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (PNG) recently. Other workshops in this series were held in Honiara, Solomon Islands and Port Vila, Vanuatu. These training workshops were funded by the International Maritime Organisation's Integrated Technical Cooperation Programme, and organised by SPREP in collaboration with the GloBallast Partnerships and the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA). The Maritime Affairs section of the Vanuatu Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (MIPU), the Environment and Conservation Division of the Solomon Islands Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Disaster Management & Meteorology and the PNG National Maritime Safety Authority were the co-organisers of each event. The workshops were delivered by officers from SPREP, Mr. Anthony Talouli and Dr. Posa Skelton and an officer from AMSA, Ms. Annalisse Sly. The activities are another example of AMSAs support of the IMOs ITCP activities and of the

importance IMO, AMSA, SPREP and the countries of the region attach to pollution prevention in the Pacific Ocean. For more information, please contact Anthony Talouli (anthonyt@sprep.org). [Photos © PILN/SPREP]

PACIFIC INVASIVES PARTNERSHIP (PIP) – REGIONAL NEWS

GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project update

The mid-term review of the GEF-PAS Invasive Species Project continues with the reviewer recently completing a country visit to Tonga.

Tonga will be visited shortly by a team to review and develop a plan to restore the Toloa rainforest. The feasibility study and implementation plan for Late Island are completed.



David Moverley and David Butler attended and assisted with the development of the Vanuatu's National Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan. The little fire ant, which is one of the problematic invasive species in Vanuatu, will also be assessed, and an expert will be recruited to assist with this. Whilst there, the team visited Vathe Conservation Area where efforts to control the Merremia vine are ongoing. The Vathe community is keen to expand the work from Merremia to include other invasive species such as feral pigs and rats.

The GEF-PAS Coordinator continues to provide mentoring support to the Invasive Species Coordinator from Samoa on reporting requirements for the project and encourages the implementation of the agreed workplan for Samoa.

A new SPREP officer has recently been appointed who will be based in Majuro, Marshall Islands. This will provide an opportunity to speed up the implementation of the GEF-PAS Invasive Species project in Marshall Islands. [Photo © J.Miles]

CABI - Invasive Species Compendium



The Invasive Species Compendium is an encyclopaedic resource that brings together scientific information on all aspects of invasive species. It comprises detailed datasheets that have been sourced from experts, edited by CABI's scientific staff, peer-reviewed, enhanced with data from specialists organisations, and with images and maps, and linked to a bibliographic database. Some recently completed datasheets include the black rat (*Rattus rattus*), honeyweed (*Leonurus japonicus*) and sensitive partridge pea (*Chamaecrista nictitans*). These three invasives are found in most of the islands in the Pacific. Honeyweed has been recorded from the Cook Islands, French Polynesia, New Caledonia, Niue, Palau and Tonga. Sensitive partridge pea has been recorded from Fiji, Guam, Kiribati, FSM, New Caledonia, Niue, Northern

Mariana Islands, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Wallis & Futuna.

CABI releases new video: The Green Invasion - Destroying Livelihoods in Africa

CABI and Tmax Productions have produced a video: 'Green Invasion – Destroying Livelihoods in Africa'. The 7 minute film showed how invasive weeds are impacting on the lives of rural communities in East Africa. Although a large number of non-native species have become invasive in the region, the film focuses on four of the most problematic species: *Chromolaena odorata*, *Parthenium hysterophorus*, *Prosopis juliflora* and *Opuntia stricta*. The film provides excellent footage of the extent of these weed infestations together with accounts from community members as to how these invasive plants are destroying the natural resource base on which so many of them depend. Based on these accounts it is obvious that invasive plants are destroying traditions, cultures and a way of life for millions of people on the continent. In conclusion it is noted that all is not lost; if effective management programmes are implemented, including biological control, we can make a difference in the lives of so many people.

The film should interest anyone who cares about people and the planet but is targeted mainly at donors and governments who need to take note of the impending crisis and provide support for initiatives to manage this scourge – one of the biggest threats to economic development on the planet. See the video on Youtube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggqseLRvlfY>

Mosquito-borne diseases alert for the Pacific



While many islands and communities are recovering from flooding and cyclone damages for this wet season, another equally important battle goes on-land with the influx of disease outbreaks. Samoa is recovering from an epidemic of pink-eye (conjunctivitis), which has spread to neighbouring American Samoa. Fiji is recuperating from a dengue outbreak. The Cook Islands are also recovering from dengue and Zika virus outbreaks. Tonga is now on alert and suffering from the Chikungunya disease outbreak. Twenty-positive cases for Chikungunya have been made in Tonga and authorities suspect that it may be linked to two fatalities.

Other confirmed cases of the Chikungunya virus are in FSM and PNG. Dengue cases have been confirmed from Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Fiji, Vanuatu, New Caledonia and French Polynesia. Zika cases are confirmed from French Polynesia, Cook Islands and New Caledonia. The World Health Organisation and ECDC are concerned by the spread of the Chikungunya, Dengue and Zika viruses in the region, which will have enormous socio-economic costs to our small island nations. Anyone with prolonged fever (more than 3 days) should seek medical attention immediately. Any help with reducing breeding sites of mosquitoes will also contribute to controlling these outbreaks.

Pacific Invasives Partnership become a SIDS partnership



The Pacific Invasives Partnership is now an official part of the 3rd United Nations Conference for Small Island Developing States scheduled to be held from Sept. 1-4, 2014 in Apia, Samoa. The SIDS Conference will focus the world's attention on a group of countries that remain a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. The overarching theme of the Conference is 'sustainable development of small island developing states through genuine and durable partnerships'. The Pacific Invasives Partnership reflects the spirit of the theme of the Conference, with over 30 agencies and invasive species specialists with a genuine interest in helping Pacific island countries manage invasive species and conserve habitats and species. The Pacific Invasives Partnership is a working group of the Pacific Roundtable for Nature Conservation and Protected Areas. It is coordinated by SPREP and currently chaired by SPC.

VACANCY AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

The Rapid Response Facility (RRF)

Invites small grant applications for UNESCO inscribed natural World Heritage sites, and tentative sites facing emergency threats to their biodiversity. The RRF is a unique small grant programme jointly operated by Fauna & Flora International and UNESCO World Heritage Centre. With a target processing time for grant applications of just 8 working days, the RRF provides rapid support to enable conservation practitioners to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies in some of the world's most important sites for biodiversity. For more information visit – www.rapid-response.org

Craig S. Harrison Conservation Grants – Pacific Seabird Group

The objective of the Conservation Fund is to advance the conservation of seabirds by providing funds or supplies to individuals from developing countries as well as those from elsewhere working in those developing countries primarily in or bordering the Pacific Ocean, (1) for conservation and restoration activities that benefit seabirds in the Pacific Ocean; and (2) to help develop within-country seabird expertise in developing countries within or bordering the Pacific Ocean. Send an email to Verena Gill (verena.gill@gmail.com) and Craig Harrison (charrison@hunton.com), briefly explaining what you want to propose and where you want to do the work. That way, you can get a rapid determination from them of whether your proposal is eligible for consideration for funding. If they determine that your study is eligible, then fill out and send the application form, the proposal/budget, and the letter of reference, as described below, to Verena Gill and Craig Harrison. Please note that applications/proposals may be submitted at any time—there is no fixed deadline for submission. All applications / proposals will be evaluated as they are submitted.

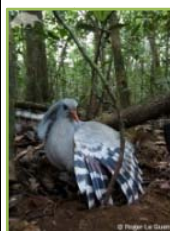
SPREP (Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme)

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

SPC (Secretariat of the Pacific Community)

SPC has vacancies and consultancy opportunities. Please check out the SPC's website for further information. www.spc.int/job.html - or contact Christine Croombes (recruit@spc.int).

INVASIVE NEWS GLOBAL



Saving the world's most extraordinary species

EDGE - Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered a programme under the Zoological Society of London recently launched an EDGE birds conservation programme listing 100 of the world's most endangered bird species. A number of Pacific birds are listed including the Samoa tooth-billed pigeon, the New Caledonian crow honeyeater, owl-nightjar and kagu, Pacific friendly ground-dove and the New Zealand kiwi, kakapo, kaka, kokako, storm-petrel, shore plover, and the South Island wren.

European invasive species specialist identifies top 20 issues

Participants at the FINS conference held in 2013 identified the top 20 invasive species issues for Europe. The 20 issues include biosecurity, legislative framework, resources, technology, early warning systems, risk assessments, economic analysis, rapid response, knowledge transfer, outreach, communication and coordination.



Japanese knot-weed drove man to kill and suicide

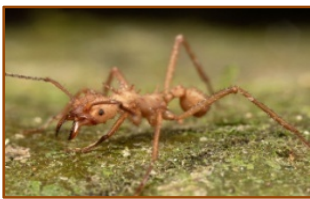
Kenneth McRae from West Midlands, England bashed his wife with a perfume bottle and then killed himself after becoming convinced their home was being invaded by the Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*). In a suicide note found by his body he wrote that fear over the damage the plant could cause the toe value of his mortgage-free property had convinced him he had no option but to take his life. He added that he had decided to kill his wife because he did not want to leave her a widow without an income. [source: [The Telegraph](#) - 14 April 14]

Cane toads continue to spread poison in WA



Protected areas and national parks are no longer safe from the spread of the toxic cane toads. Many residents of the world heritage-listed national parks such as the Purnululu National Park, home to Western Australia's famed Bungle Bungles are being wiped out by the cane toads. In less than a year, cane toads have affected quolls, reptiles and king brown snakes. Introduced to Queensland in 1935, they began spreading to the Northern Territory before invading northern Western Australia in 2009, advancing at a rate of about 50km/year.

Bolivian villagers use fire ants on thieves



Two motorcycle thieves were fortunate not to be killed by venomous ants (*Pseudomyrmex triplarinus*), after villagers tied them to a tree swarming with the insects. One man is in intensive care, while the other is on a dialysis machine due to kidney failure. The venomous ants have a symbiotic relationship with the tree (*Triplaris*) protecting it from other animals. The men were freed by relatives after paying USD\$3,700 as compensation for the motorcycles.

UN issues banana disease warning



The United Nations food organisation is warning that if countries that grow bananas do not act decisively to combat a deadly fungal disease, the world's eighth most important food crop could face massive destruction. It says fusarium wilt TR4 is not only threatening bananas, but the livelihoods of those who grow bananas too. The wilt has recently spread from Asia to Africa and the Middle East, and the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is urging countries that grow bananas to step up their monitoring. FAO plant pathologist Fazil Dusunceli says the wilt is a fungal disease that lives in the soil and affects plants through their roots, colonising the stem and preventing the transportation of water and nutrients throughout the plant. He says there are two big problems, firstly that the main banana cultivar Cavendish is highly susceptible. The second most important aspect is that the disease spreads physically through the transmission of infected plant materials or soil particles. And there may be a number of means for that spread: shoes, vehicles, tyres, or boxes, tools, anything that you can think of that may facilitate this physical movement of these infected particles.

Opuntoid cacti pose risk to agriculture in WA



A situation report on the invasive cactus (opuntia) in Western Australia has just been released. Invasive cactus is spreading in the State affecting agricultural and pasture-land. Sixteen different cactus species and varieties are documented. Cactus is easily spread by seed or stem segments that attach to vehicles, animals and people. Cactus plants were mostly introduced as ornamentals for old homesteads and settlements. Deliberate movement of the plants via garden nurseries, markets and garage sales is contributing to its spread.

New IUCN App for marine invasive species in Mediterranean marine protected areas

IUCN-Med has developed an application to assist with the identification of marine invasive species and support monitoring programmes to eradicate and control their spread. The IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation has released today a new app for smart phones, and an online tool to help managers of marine protected areas (MPAs) control the spread of invasive species in the Mediterranean Sea. The new application aims to facilitate the

identification of marine invasive species in Mediterranean marine protected areas so that monitoring and control programmes can be put in place before they damage native marine species. Further improvements to the App will be considered during the marine experts workshop in the order to increase its applicability and potentiality for marine protected areas. The Smartphone's application is free. You can download it from: <http://www.iucn-medmis.org>

USDA empowers citizens with the knowledge to prevent invasive pests

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) proclaimed April as the Invasive Plant Pest and Disease Awareness month. It is the month where efforts to raise awareness of the public on the risks that invasive plant pests, diseases and harmful weeds pose to crops and forests—and how the public can help prevent their spread. These non-native, destructive species can seriously harm the economy, environment, or even human health.

INVASIVE SPECIES PUBLICATIONS

Spatz, et al. 2014. The Biogeography of Globally Threatened Seabirds and Island Conservation Opportunities. *Conservation Biology*, in press. doi: 10.1111/cobi.12279

Brown, P., & Daigneault, A. 2014. Cost-benefit analysis of managing the invasive African tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*) in the Pacific. *Environmental Science & Policy* 39(2014): 65-76.

Wanger, TC., Darras, D., Bumrungsri, S., Tschardtke, T., Klein, A-M. 2014. Bat pest control contributes to food security in Thailand. *Biological Conservation* 171: 220-223.

The Micronesia Challenge Newsletter is now available: No. 29, April, 2014. articles include: Yela conservation easement blazes new trail in Micronesia | Environmental issues of the Marianas part of University of Hawaii forum.

Hoffman, BD, Auina, S., Stanley, MC. 2014. Targeted research to improve invasive species management: yellow crazy ant *Anoplolepis gracilipes* in Samoa. *PLoS ONE* 9(4): e95301. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0095301.

UPCOMING EVENTS

2014	Event	Participating Partner
May		
11-12 May	World Migratory Bird Day	BirdLife International
19-21 May	Micronesia Biosecurity Plan - Strategic Implementation Plan Meeting, Guam	RISC, SPC
22 May	International Day for Biological Diversity: Island Biodiversity	
24 May	World Fish Migration Day: Connecting Fish, Rivers, People	
26-30 May	SPREP's mission to Wallis & Futuna (invasive species, wetlands and NBSAP)	SPREP, PILN
June		
5 Jun.	World Environment Day	SPREP
8 Jun.	World Oceans Day	SPREP
23-28 Jun.	CBD SBSTTA 18, Montreal, Canada	SPREP
25 Jun.	Day of the Seafarer	SPC
July		
28 Jul - 1 Aug	Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting, Palau	RISC, SPREP, NISC, PII, PILN
August		
11-15 Aug.	Joint Preparatory meeting for CBD, Ramsar and CMS, Nadi, Fiji	SPREP, IUCN-ISSG, PILN
12 Aug.	International Youth Day	SPREP
25-29 Aug.	3rd SIDS Meeting preparatory meetings	
September		
1-4 Sep.	UN 3rd SIDS Conference, Apia, Samoa	SPREP, SPC, GLISPA
1-6 Sep.	World Water Week	SPC
20 Sep.	International Coastal Cleanup Day	
23-27 Sep.	World Maritime Day: IMO Conventions: Effective implementation	SPREP, IMO
25 Sep.	Noumea Convention Conference of Parties, Majuro, Marshall Islds	SPREP
26 Sep.	Waigani Convention Conference of Parties, Majuro, Marshall Islds	SPREP
29 Sep.	Pacific Environment Forum, Majuro, Marshall Islands	SPREP
29 Sep - 3 Oct	7th COP for the Catagena Protocol on Biosafety (Pyeongchang, Korea)	SPREP
30 Sep - 2 Oct	SPREP Meeting, Majuro, Marshall Islands	SPREP

October		
2 Oct.	Environment Ministerial Meeting, Majuro, Marshall Islands	SPREP
6-17 Oct.	12th CBD COP (Pyeongchnag, Korea)	SPREP
20-21 Oct.	BirdLife International - Pacific Programme - TAG Meeting, Noumea, New Caledonia	BirdLife Pacific
27-31 Oct.	16th International Conference on Harmful Algae (Wellington, NZ)	
November		
12-19 Nov.	World Parks Congress (Sydney, Australia)	

Disclaimer: Articles contained within this or other PILN Soundbites do not necessarily reflect the views of PILN teams, SPREP or the Pacific Invasives Partnership. Contact the PILN Coordinator for further information (posas@sprep.org).