



Puna Orama – Island Futures Division

People of the Cook Islands value, respect and nurture their surrounding environment and all its wealth

Kia ngakauparau, akangateitei

e kia utuutu tatou i to tatou ipukarea e tona au ki katoa

Tu'anga Turamarama - Effective Information, Education and Communications Programmes

2014 Education Awareness Campaign

- NES in collaboration with the Integrated Island Biodiversity (IIB) Project and the Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Project launched the theme for our 2014 campaign – ***E Tango Maori te Ao Ora Natura: Our Islands, Our Biodiversity, Our Future*** - in January via TV interview, newspaper article and advertisement.



- The theme itself is linked to the International Year of Small Island Developing States as well as the Year of Island Biodiversity and was developed to recognise the link biodiversity on each of the islands has to our past and present and its importance to our future. The aim is to promote different aspects of Cook Islands biodiversity to our people, including by highlighting threats such as invasive species and promoting unique features of our species and ecosystems.

Summary of Education Awareness activities Jan – Jun 2014

| Education Awareness Activities | Total Number | Theme of material |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Newspaper advertorials (full page) | 4 | 2014 Year of Biodiversity Campaign Launch World Wetlands Day Biodiversity Day 22 nd May National Environment Week (3-6 th June) |
| Newspaper Ads | 20 | Biodiversity – Did you know Biodiversity Photo Competition (x4) |
| Radio ads | Matariki FM - 720 88FM – 924 Radio CI - 60 Total = 1704 | 4 R's, Love Your Coast, Wetlands, Raii, Overfishing, Environment Best Practises |
| Television Ads | CITV - 55 ads Vaka TV - 94 ads | 4 R's, Love Your Coast, Wetlands, Raii, Overfishing, Environment Best Practises |

| | Total = 149 | |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Education Activities/Events | 14 | Biodiversity - Cross Island and TCA Walk x 6 Punanganui Replanting Biodiversity Speech Competitions x 4 Biodiversity Challenge Biodiversity Photo Competition and Exhibition Environment Quiz Night |
| School Visits | 3 | Avarua Teacher Training – Biodiversity Takitumu school – Biodiversity Rutaki School - IIB visit |
| Media Releases produced | 14 | ODS, Basel workshop, SOE, Mauke Red Passionfruit Cross Island Trek x4 Biodiversity Photo Competition x3 Biodiversity Speech Competition x 2 Rutaki School IIB visit x 1 |
| Articles in the newspaper | CI News - 7 CI Herald – 10 Total = 17 | Invasive Species/Oriental Fruitfly Biodiversity events including Cross Island walks |
| Articles posted on Facebook | 5 | Cross Island Walks and Biodiversity Speech Competitions |
| Articles posted to Website | 0 | In the process of being updated |

Avarua School Activities

- Avarua Primary School participated in the Live and Learn Teacher training held in 2013 and proactively carried out many biodiversity activities last year following this training, including teaching biodiversity modules which culminated with classes creating Biodiversity Displays as well as holding a Biodiversity Parade for the school. Both events were significantly covered by our officers as well as the media.
- Avarua School has continued through the remaining modules of the Live and Learn Resource material in the 2014 school year. As part of the NES 2014 campaign further presentations were made to Avarua School teachers on specific biodiversity modules that will be used this year, including on threats to biodiversity.
- NES and the IAS/IIB project were also requested by the school to facilitate hands on biodiversity teaching through a fieldtrip for their senior students - the Cross Island Walk (further information below) which in turn led to other schools requesting the same for their students.
- Following the Cross Island Walk, students were required to write stories and poems about what they learned which were published in the weekend newspapers.
- Avarua School also took the opportunity to combine all that had been seen and taught on biodiversity and hold a number of speech competitions on Biodiversity for the different grades within their school. These speeches were in both English and Cook Islands Maori and followed different

Biodiversity themes including 'Taking action to help our biodiversity' and 'Ways of protecting our Biodiversity from Invasive Alien species or threats'.

- NES staff and the IIB/IAS coordinators were part of the judging panel and prepared media releases/articles on the competition and winners. The projects are considering possibly having short snippets of these speeches redone and filmed as ads by the students for TV and radio.

Punanga Nui Beautification – Tree Planting Program

- The National Environment Service is supporting the development of the Punanga Nui reclaimed area, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Infrastructure Cook Islands and participated in the launch of this activity on 20th March. NES and the IIB Project were involved in sourcing native trees from the Pa Enea that were planted along the coastal edge of the reclamation site for coastal protection as well as to promote our valuable native biodiversity.

Cross Island Biodiversity Trek

- The NES Education Unit and the IAS & IIB Projects collaborated to develop and co-ordinate a Cross Island Trek to the Needle at the request of Avarua Primary School. The school has actively carried out classroom biodiversity activities based on the Live and Learn Biodiversity teachers training under the IIB Project. The purpose of the trek was to reinforce these lessons and help Form 2 students in identifying live specimens of Invasive, Native and Endemic plant species that inhabit the Rarotonga mountainside.
- In order to achieve this, staff from NES underwent a Train the Trainers activity to enable non- IAS/IIB staff to take part as educators. This activity was considered quite successful and a second trek for Avarua School Form 1 students was also completed.
- Media releases were disseminated after this activity through our local newspaper and TV news. Other schools heard of this activity and also requested to have this educational trip for their schools as well. So far Avarua School, Takitumu School and Arorangi School have been completed with more schools planned later on in the year.



Form one Avarua School students, parents, and NES staff gather for a group photo after a physical cross island trek to give the kids a "hands on" session on biodiversity. NES Senior Biodiversity Officer Elizabeth Munro led the group of more than 50 students as well as volunteers from the Rescue Fire Service, teachers and parents and six NES staff across the island on Wednesday. The educational trek falls in line with NES 2014 theme being, "Our Islands, Our Biodiversity, Our Future" with a focus on all variations of biodiversity. [Full story, another picture – page 18.](#)

- Rescue Fire Service staff were instrumental in assisting in this activity to ensure the safety of all students and educators. Parents also participated with their children in this activity, allowing NES staff to also take the opportunity to educate adults.
- As a follow up to this activity, schools also included in their lesson plans for students to produce short stories or articles and poems from this fieldtrip which have been published in the newspaper. Schools also used the lessons learned on the fieldtrip as the basis for student speech competitions (see above for Avarua School).

Takitumu Conservation Area (TCA)

- Following the further requests from schools to participate in the Cross Island Walk, it was decided that a less strenuous alternative would be sought for younger students. NES and IAS/IIB were able to utilize the Takitumu Conservation Area as this alternative.
- A familiarization trip was conducted with staff from the TCA for the NES presenters/educators and a fact sheet compiled.
- Two schools have taken part so far in the TCA trek which was the first for many to witness the endemic *Kakerori* and the *Puaneinei* in full bloom. It is likely that more schools will request the Cross Island or TCA Walk once school resumes and after the winter period.

Did you know! (Kua kite ainei koe)

- As part of the 2014 campaign, NES with IIB and IAS Project developed weekly newspaper adverts. The 'Did You Know!' colour ads highlight interesting facts about Cook Islands biodiversity and environment, including unique snippets about endemic, native and invasive species with photos (see examples below). This campaign commenced on 3rd February and is expected to continue throughout the year.

Ei! Kua kite ainei koe...

MILE-A-MINUTE WEED
is an invasive weed that has medicinal use.

eTango Maori
te Ao Ora Natura

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COOK ISLANDS

Our Islands, Our Biodiversity, Our Future

Ei! Kua kite ainei koe...

..ko Rarotonga e Atiu ua te nga enua e kitena ia ana te manu
KUKUPA

eTango Maori
te Ao Ora Natura

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Our Islands, Our Biodiversity, Our Future

Mauke Island specific awareness

- The IIB Project activity on the eradication of Red passionfruit is being implemented by the Mauke Environment Officer, who in addition to running the eradication and monitoring program is also conducting awareness raising activities to support this activity. During the month of March the Mauke officer was able to conduct awareness raising activities on Mauke radio and TV on invasive species. He continues to go on Radio once a week to promote the eradication program and the risks of invasive alien species, as well as other environment issues.
- An awareness poster has been developed for the eradication of red passionfruit on Mauke and was distributed to support the Mauke officer's activities.
- The Mauke Environment Officer had also previously worked with the Cook Islands Turtle Project on identifying and protecting turtle nesting sites on the island. A new nesting site has since been discovered and the IIB Project was able to develop Public Notice signs in English and Maori for the sites. These have only just been completed and will be sent to Mauke for installation in the next few weeks.

Tree Planting Program

- In 2013, NES worked with Apii Rakei Toa on a replanting program of native trees with assistance from the local community in supplying seedlings (*Tamanu* & *Miro*).
- For 2014, the IIB Project is continuing this native tree planting program with the assistance of the Ministry of Agriculture who are growing the seedlings. These are trees that are hard to find here on Rarotonga (*Miro*, *Tou*, *Menemene Taatai* and *Tamanu*). The Ministry of Agriculture now has a program to grow these trees and the IIB project has supported this activity by purchasing planter bags for the trees.
- Titikaveka College and Rutaki School has taken on this program, with NES/IIB providing educational support in raising awareness on the importance trees are to our environment and working with the schools to plant their seedlings and will continue to take care of these trees throughout the year. It is expected that other schools also be taking up this program in the coming school term.

Oriental Fruitfly Outbreak Awareness

- NES and the IAS project also assisted the Ministry of Agriculture during the Oriental Fruitfly outbreak late 2013/early 2014 on Rarotonga and Aitutaki by funding the awareness program on TV. NES and IAS Project Staff also participated in the successful eradication program which ended when no further fruitflies were found.
- A second eradication program was run in May when a few specimens were found in traps in another village and the IAS Project again funded the TV ads for until the completion of the eradication program.

- The major event of that week was the open air Biodiversity Exhibition and Day + Night Market that was held Wed 5th June at the central town park and organized in collaboration with Business Trade and Investment Board (BTIB). The idea was to have an exhibition of the photos submitted for the Biodiversity Photo Competition, from which visitors could vote for their pick for the ‘People’s Choice’ prize followed by judging of the three categories.



NES deputy director Joseph Brider and TIS technical director Kelvin Passfield cast their eyes over the 25 images entered into the NES biodiversity photo competition. 14060512

- Alongside the exhibition, a Day + Night Market of local food and craft was held to help attract people to the display. NES also organized for live classes throughout the day for coconut frond weaving with one of the local experts brought in to teach those that were interested in learning, while also displaying the various things that could be made from coconut leaves.
- This combination of Exhibition and Market was very successful for NES and BTIB, with many people visiting the displays and taking the time to closely analyze all photos in voting for their ‘People’s Choice’. Both the event of the day as well as the photo competition received much media attention with TV and Newspaper interviews given.
- As another way to commemorate this year’s N.E.W, NES with support from IIB/IAS held an Environment Quiz Night as an opportunity for teams to show off their environment knowledge, culture and heritage. Following our 2014 campaign, question rounds including naming of local species and biodiversity facts (some based on the Did You Know weekly ads which many participants indicated as the source of their answers).
- Proceeds from the evening were then donated to the NGO of the winning team’s choice and the Aitutaki Conservation Trust was the lucky recipient. ACT was very grateful to receive these funds and will be using them to further education and awareness activities in Aitutaki.

Poster Series: Invasive Species

- The IAS Project developed a series of posters on invasive species in the Cook Islands. This work produced 5 different posters that can be printed in both English and Maori and were displayed at the Biodiversity Exhibition and Market as well as at Lagoon Day (see below) with copies of posters given to classes that attended.
- Further posters will be printed and distributed to schools including those in the Pa Enea.

Lagoon Day – 17th and 18th July

- Lagoon Day is a major day for education and awareness activities on Rarotonga. Over 1000 students from primary and secondary schools on Rarotonga attend the two day Lagoon Day event every year as well as members of the community. This event is held in July to allow students from the Pa Enea to be included in Lagoon Day as it coincides with their trips to Rarotonga for Careers Expo.
- Posters and displays were assembled for Lagoon Day highlighting various environment issues, including waste, water, protected areas, climate change, sanitation, artificial reefs etc. NES had two booths this year - one titled 'Our Island Biodiversity' following the IIB Projects work on biodiversity in general as well as endemics, native species and protected areas, and a second booth titled 'Threats to our biodiversity' following the IAS Projects work on Invasive species in particular.
- Students, teachers, visitors and members of our community were treated to 13 different educational presentations on the various subjects, usually involving interactive displays or games. For students that attend, this is backed up with a Quiz sheet that they all have to answer based on the presentations given. A Quiz specifically for adults (with Prizes) is also advertised and run during Lagoon Day as well to encourage them to come along to and learn something about their environment.

Control of *Cuscutta* on Rarotonga –

- The Arorangi Boys Brigade has been contracted by the IAS Project to carry out the control of *Cuscutta* on Rarotonga. This contract will involve the Boys Brigade developing education and awareness materials and giving presentations to their community and interviews through the media on *Cuscutta* and their control program for the plant.
- NES Education Unit and the IAS Project will both be involved in training the Boys Brigade on how to create and deliver TV and radio awareness programs as well as community outreach.



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