

PILN SOUNDBITES - JULY 2011

Pacific Invasives Learning Network



Pacific Invasives Learning Network.

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PILN Teams:

American Samoa

Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands

Fiji

French Polynesia

Guam

Hawaii

Kiribati

Kosrae

Marshall Islands

New Caledonia

Niue

Palau

Pohnpei

Samoa

Yap

Network News

PILN SOUNDBITES is the monthly newsletter of the Pacific Invasives Learning Network: a participant-driven island network, reporting on news of PILN Teams and the Pacific Invasives Partnership. Past issues are available from the webpage: www.sprep.org/piln. Send comments, feedback or contributions to the PILN Coordinator: posas@sprep.org.

PILN Teams and Country Updates:

American Samoa: Noxious Weeds top on the ASIST agenda

The American Samoa Invasive Species Team (ASIST) met on the 27th July at the Department of Agriculture office to discuss developing a Noxious Weeds List for American Samoa. The meeting was attended by 20 participants from the various local and federal government departments. This was ASIST first meeting for the year and the enthusiasm and support provided by all the participants augur well for the development of the noxious weeds list, as well as addressing invasive species issues in the territory. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the PILN Coordinator to update ASIST on PILN activities and invasive species development in the region. The participants agreed to a roadmap to develop the noxious weeds list, which will include reviewing existing legislation and amalgamating the various weed lists. This initiative may provide a framework that could be followed by other Pacific Island countries and territories who may wish to develop a noxious weeds list. Contributions and advice are welcome – please contact Tavita Togia (Tavita_togia@nps.gov) who is facilitating the process.

French Polynesia: New plant species uncovered



Photo: Steven Perlman.
Smithsonian Inst.

Recent botanical exploration efforts in the rugged Marquesas Islands (French Polynesia) have increased the known flora of the archipelago by an impressive 20 per cent. Field research and collecting in conjunction with the *Vascular Flora of the Marquesas Islands* and *Flore de la Polynésie française* projects have yielded 62 new species of ferns and flowering plants bringing the total native species to 360, of which 18 are newly described and illustrated in a special issue of *PhytoKeys*.

Guam: Budget battle could bite into brown tree snake eradication programme

The fight on Capitol Hill over spending this summer has taken a dire turn that could come back to bite the U.S. territory of Guam. Guam's congressional representative, Madeleine Bordallo, said this week that a Republican moratorium on federal earmarks in the House is threatening to defund the territory's high-dollar fight against its top pest, the brown tree snake.

The GOP House majority announced earlier this year that all earmarks will be banned from this year's spending bills and that would mean cutting the island's annual \$5 million program to interdict and eradicate the scaly blight, which is funded through earmark legislation, according to Bordallo.

The brown tree snake arrived on Guam sometime after World War II, most likely aboard a U.S. military cargo ship, and has been wreaking havoc on the environment and residents since. Nearly all the island's native bird species have been wiped out, the island is plagued with electrical blackouts caused by infested transformers and each year one in every 1,000 Guamanians is bitten by the snake, which often climbs into beds at night.

"Possible cuts to the brown tree snake program will have serious repercussions on the progress that has been made to eradicate the brown tree snake from Guam and to prevent snakes from being introduced to other jurisdictions," Bordallo said in a written statement shared with Stars and Stripes.

Hawaii and other areas of the Pacific are deeply worried that a planned military buildup on Guam could unleash the snake to other islands and caused millions – or even billions – of dollars in damage to economies and environments.

Guam's current program aims at securing ports and keeping the snake from leaving the island, though other more unconventional eradication measures have been recently tested. Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture attempted to poison snakes on Andersen Air Force Base by dropping frozen mice doped with acetaminophen from helicopters. According to department officials, the pilot program showed potential and may be expanded.

But for now, it is unclear if the effort in the House will affect the snake program. The fight over earmarks is still brewing in Congress, where the focus has fallen in recent days to the debate over raising the country's debt ceiling, and any final federal budget will have input from the Senate and must be approved by President Barack Obama. That political wrangling over snake eradication and many other earmarked projects across the country is likely to continue through the summer and into the fall. For more information contact Travis J. Tritten - trittent@pstripes.osd.mil

Hawaii: using native sea urchins in the battle against alien invasive algae

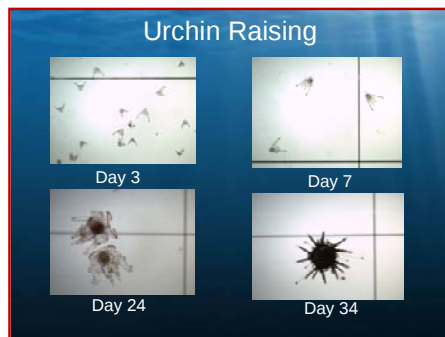


Figure 1 The various metamorphosis stages of *Tripneustes gratilla* before final settlement.

Biologists from the Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) Aquatic Invasive Species Team continue their efforts to control alien invasive algae and protect coral reefs in Kane'ohe Bay, Oahu with the use of native sea urchins.

With the help of a large underwater vacuum to remove the bulk of the algae, previous studies using the native sea urchin, *Tripneustes gratilla*, found great success to decrease the re-growth of the invasive algae, *Kappaphycus/Eucheuma* spp. DAR biologists are now expanding their efforts for full patch reef wide restoration. They will be examining the optimal stocking density of how many urchins are necessary per square meter in order to sufficiently control the algae, but also not create any other detrimental effects to the reef habitat.

DAR has built a sea urchin hatchery that has successfully raised the native sea urchin (Figure 1) and is now working to fine tune their methods to allow for a greater number of out-plantable urchins.

Kane'ohe Bay is a complex mix of estuarine and coral reef ecosystems with 12 freshwater streams emptying into the bay. Therefore, in addition to the use of sea urchins; DAR, The Nature Conservancy, and the University of Hawaii are examining the effects of terrestrial runoff and how the addition of increased nutrients may influence the growth of invasive algae in the bay. It's hoped that this program can be expanded to other areas of the state to help restore the health of other reefs that are suffering under significant alien algae invasion.

For further information, please contact Jono Blodgett at jb88@hawaii.edu.

Hawaii: Governor restores agricultural inspector posts

On July 8, 2011 Governor Abercrombie signed HB 1568 HD2 SD2 CD1 into law as Act 202(11), which directs the Hawaii Department of Transportation to:

Coordinate with the Hawaii Department of Agriculture (HDOA) to facilitate the inspection, consolidation, deconsolidation and treatment of imported and exported agriculture and other inspected commodities to meet the needs of each island and to facilitate the safe movement of enplaned and deplaned air cargo through the airports;

Provide space at commercial harbors for biosecurity and inspection facilities and to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of maritime cargo; and

Work with HDOA to plan, design, and construct biosecurity, inspection, consolidation, deconsolidation and treatment facilities for use by HDOA to enhance the efficient and safe movement of imported and exported marine cargo.

On a related note, the HDOA's Plant Quarantine Branch received authorization by Governor Abercrombie to fill a total of ten inspector positions that were restored by the State legislature. These actions will greatly enhance the Hawaii Biosecurity Program, and will provide HDOA with a much needed increase in inspectional capacity as well as facilities at air and sea ports statewide.

Hawaii - Two Hilo snakes latest in list of illegal reptiles in Hawaii

Two large snakes were turned into the Hilo Plant Quarantine facility on June 13, the latest reptiles to join a list of 12 illegal animals that have been surrendered since June 29th.

The Hawaii Department of Agriculture says a five foot, 9 inch Boa Constrictor (native to South and Central America) and an 8 foot, 8 inch albino burmese python (of south east Asia) were turned in under amnesty, which means the owners will not face any sort of punishment for owning the snakes. The DOA says the delivery was the result of a "Probable CrimeStoppers tip".

The two snakes join two other illegal snakes turned in on Oahu, and another 8 lizards, including two well publicized bearded dragons in Kona.

Hawaii – Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species to meet

The next meeting for the Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) will be held from 9 a.m.-noon on Monday, August 1, 2011, at the Hawaii Department of Agriculture Plant Quarantine conference room, 1849 Auiki St. CGAPS meetings are open to the public. The meeting brings together the public and the various agencies and groups working on invasive alien species in Hawaii.

Kiribati – Crucial seabird breeding colonies benefit from successful rodent removal

AN international expedition using the vessel RV Aquila returned to Apia, Samoa after a successful mission to restore the wildlife of two more islands in Kiribati's Phoenix Islands Protected Area through the removal of invasive rats. The islands of Birnie and Ederbury were rat-baited using two helicopters. The removal of rats will allow the seabird population to recover. The expedition – dubbed the 'rat-slayers' – is comprised of 19 persons from Kiribati, Australia, NZ, USA, South Africa, Cook Islands and Federated States of Micronesia. Restoration efforts for the islands within the Phoenix Islands Protected Area have taken place since 2008. Four of the eight islands will have been restored through removal of introduced pests. The other four will be the next focus of attention for the rat-slayers.

Kosrae: Crown-of-thorns starfish, marine invasives and invasive species eradication update

Kosrae is looking for some advice on how to control and remove crown-of-thorns starfish, and would also like to highlight the need for further attention on marine invasive species. In their planning for 2012 – they are targeting marine invasives as well as *Chromolaena odorata*.

In terms of invasive species management progress – work has focused on *Lueceana* or tanga-tanga and *Clerodendrum quadriloculare*. A total of 30 sites on the islands have been treated with an estimated 50,000 plants (including seedlings, saplings and trees) being removed.

New Caledonia – Anne-Claire moves on

Anne-Claire Goarant the PILN coordinator for New Caledonia will be moving on from her post with the Environment Directorate in the South Province. Her new post will allow her to focus on regional cooperation with other Pacific Island countries. She will be replaced by Julie Goxe.

We wish Anne-Claire all the best with her new post and look forward to continue our working partnership with her.

Samoa – Poster competition

The Quarantine Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Samoa is currently holding a poster competition to depict quarantine. The competition is opened to senior secondary school students (Years 12 and 13) or those attending tertiary institutions. Poster could be digital, vinyl print, drawing or painting and must be A5 size. The first prize is WST\$1000, 2nd prize WST\$700.00 and 3rd prize \$500. Contact the Quarantine Division for further details. Competition closes September 16th, 2011.

- SNITT will be holding its second meeting of the year on August 2nd.
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Vanuatu – on their way to battle invasive species

Vanuatu is in the process of managing invasive species at a grand-scale with two projects focussing on invasive species. Live & Learn – a non-government, non-profit organisation – is implementing a project titled – 'Testing and modelling preventative measures to limit the spread and ecological impact of invasive species in small islands developing states.' This will strengthen the GEF-PAS Invasive Species project in the process of being implemented by the Department of Environment – Government of Vanuatu. Both projects will look at critical issues such as community awareness, capacity building, policy and legislation, research, national coordination and monitoring.

Pacific Invasives Partnership News:

Birdlife International: Birdlife Pacific Partnership e-Bulletin out now

In this edition of the Birdlife e-newsletter, it brings you stories from around the Pacific region and abroad on efforts to stop the extinction crisis confronting many species. From actions to safeguard seabirds in Australia and New Zealand, tackling invasive alien species in Fiji, coordinating world-wide efforts to reduce albatross by-catch mortality in the fishery industry, searching for an elusive and highly-threatened bird on a mountaintop, and a beach nesting birds project that has won a national award, we show in this brief publication that people, acting together, can make a difference to the state of the world we live in. Other items include: New agreement gives hope for Pacific wildlife; Keeping islands rat-free for Pacific birds and people – with Elenoa Seniloli; Offshore islands yield a seabird surprise; Seabird scientists warn of flaws in New Zealand bycatch framework; Conserving biodiversity, respecting rights; When we were up we were up...; Community conservation project wins award; Global news: Longline fisheries continue to drive albatross declines; Global news: Big birds lose out in a crowded world; Global news: BirdLife renews its commitment to work for wetlands; Global news: Help for the world's Angriest Birds.

Birdlife Pacific announces EU funded regional invasive species programme

BL Pacific is delighted to announce the EU funded regional invasives programme is now underway. In leading this effort Deborah Sue (Deborah@birdlifepacific.org.fj) has been recruited to oversee the programme including setting up of the Technical Advisory Group. The Regional Invasives programme runs until December 2014 and will involve 6 BirdLife countries and partners who will implement a range of invasive species management actions including eradications (French Polynesia and Palau), pig and deer control (New Caledonia) and Biosecurity needs principally in Fiji around preventing the movement/responding to mongoose incursions, and addressing priority needs in preventing Brown Tree snake introductions (although there maybe some change to the BTS focus). Biosecurity needs will also be addressed for all other participating countries (including the Cook Islands and Samoa as relevant) in protecting important biodiversity areas (ie pest free islands). The programme action (IAS management) also needs to provide social benefits to landowners/local communities and there is a monitoring and research component to quantify the impact of the action on biodiversity and livelihoods. For more information please contact Steve Cranwell (Steve@birdlifepacific.org.fj)

IUCN-Oceania – Highlighting a champion teacher!

There's a saying – 'a good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others', which captures the spirit of Professor Randy Thaman. Professor Thaman is a true environmental and cultural champion, a teacher and a friend to many Pacific Islanders.

Nobody knows better the importance of shaping young minds to value their islands natural bounties than Professor Randy Thaman who has spent over 37 years teaching at the University of the South Pacific (USP), an IUCN Member. The university has served the region for 43 years and prides itself as the premier institution for higher level education. As one of the longest serving academics at USP, Prof Thaman was a co-founder of the Environmental Science Studies Programme which he has passionately taught under for a long time. As a teacher he believes that his most compelling project is to inspire. Read more about Professor Randy Thaman at the IUCN website (<http://www.iucn.org/>)

Pacific Invasives Initiative



The Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII) team is delighted to announce the launch of our new on-line Resource Kit for Rodent and Cat Eradication. The PII Resource Kit can be found at: www.pacificinvasivesinitiative.org/rk.



Many thanks to all those people and organisations who have contributed to the development of this important resource. The PII Resource Kit provides project managers with a systematic approach to planning and implementing rodent and cat eradication projects on islands in the Pacific. While focusing on rodents and cats and targeted at the Pacific, the process and many of the supporting tools are readily applicable to eradication of other invasive species and islands in other regions.

The need for the Resource Kit came from PII's experience working on invasive species capacity development with Pacific agencies. Because invasive species management is a relatively new tool for island restoration in the Pacific, a common constraint for agencies was access to an

authoritative and consistent process and a source of information to effectively address the complexity of invasive species management.

To address this need PII, in collaboration with world leading eradication experts, developed a stepwise process and supporting tools to provide project managers with access to current eradication best practice. Use of the Resource Kit will give Pacific agencies the ability to embark on their invasive species management projects with greater confidence of achieving their desired island restoration goals.

The Resource Kit was designed by combining PII's experience working with Pacific agencies with existing eradication best practice. PII have actively involved eradication experts and potential Pacific users throughout the development of the Resource Kit to ensure the content is both accurate and relevant.

PII has also developed an accompanying training course on 'How to eradicate Rodent and Cats on Islands'. The purpose of the course is to provide project managers with the knowledge and skills to carry out eradication projects and maximize the benefits of using the Resource Kit. For more information on the training course, please contact PII at: PII@auckland.ac.nz. The Resource Kit is freely available on the web. A CD-ROM version can be obtained from PII on request.

SPC – €11.4 climate resilience project will help nine Pacific small island states

Pacific small island states most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change will benefit from a new climate resilience project (worth €11.4 million) funded by the European Union (EU) and to be implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) over the next four years.

The project, entitled **Increasing Climate Resilience of Pacific Small Islands States** through the Global Climate Change Alliance, will support the governments of nine Pacific countries, namely Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tonga and Tuvalu, in their efforts to tackle the

adverse effects of climate change. These countries have been selected because of their particular vulnerability to these adverse effects due to their size and geophysical characteristics. [Read more on SPC website – www.spc.int](http://www.spc.int)

SPREP – Green growth in a Blue world



The UN Conference for Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) Pacific Subregional Preparatory Joint Ministerial Meeting convened in Apia, Samoa, from 21-22 July 2011. Over 80 participants, including 13 ministers, representatives from governments, UN bodies, and non-governmental and inter-governmental organizations attended the meeting.

The meeting provided the opportunity for Pacific environment and economic ministers to be informed on the preparations for UNCSD, and to jointly consider issues relevant to the Pacific region. During the meeting, participants discussed creating a green economy in a blue world, and the institutional framework for sustainable development (IFSD). [Read more on SPREP website – www.sprep.org](http://www.sprep.org)

Vacancies, Scholarships & Consultancies:

Island Conservation: Pacific Regional Director. IC seeks a new regional director to grow and manage conservation program in the Pacific Islands. Please refer to website:

http://www.ceiconsulting.com/what/position_details.aspx?client=CEA&jobId=150. Position will remain open until filled.

Island Conservation: Director of Global Affairs. IC is looking for an exceptional individual to serve as the Director of Global Affairs. This position will design a strategy to engage bilateral and multilateral organizations in the financing of a global campaign to prevent extinctions on islands. The Director of Global Affairs will serve as a spokesperson for the campaign to these key partners while simultaneously shepherding complex, large-scale funding proposals from development to fruition. For more information, please visit www.islandconservation.org. Position will remain open until filled.

Charles Darwin Foundation: Expert in Management of Introduced Species (invertebrates or plants). Full-time position to be based at the Galapagos Islands, Ecuador. Closing Date: August 15th, 2011. Position offers a 2-year contract with possibility of renewal depending on the performance evaluation and availability of funds. Salary range is US\$27-31,000 per annum. Apply via email to empleo@fcdarwin.org.ec.

PestNet Alert Snippets:

- A group in Kiribati is looking at importing cypress from Fiji. The Kiribati Agriculture Division is looking for information on pests and threats associated with cypress, including the invasive aphid – *Cinara cupressivora*. The need for working together between the Agriculture and Quarantine departments and the importing and exporting countries was clearly highlighted. Importing of live materials needs to be extremely careful especially if it involves fragile ecosystems, such as coral atolls.

For more information and other topics discussed in this month's PestNet – sign up on
<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/pestnet/>

Meeting, conference and training announcements:

These announcements are for activities taking place in August. More events can be found on our webpage:
<http://www.sprep.org/PILN/Calendar.htm>

2 – 4 Aug – 19th Annual Hawaii Conservation Conference (Honolulu, Hawaii). Island Ecosystems: The Year of the Forest. Hawaii Convention Centre, Honolulu. Details: http://hawaiiiconservation.org/activities/hawaii_conservation_conference

3 – 5 Aug – Brown Tree Snake Technical Committee Meeting (Guam). Details contact James Stanford (james_stanford@usgs.gov).

29 Jul – 4 Aug – 2011 International Biodiversity Conference (Banos, Ecuador). Details: <http://www.wsfbioconference.org/>. Conference covers ecological biodiversity research species, species specific research from around the world, biodiversity in a changing climate, biogeography projects and related research, physical impact of volcanism upon biodiversity, GIS and spatial ecology research, innovative environmental education, community programmes. Contact Dr Barry Barker (barker@wildspotsfoundation.org) for further information.

23 – 25 Aug – 7th International Conference of Marine Bioinvasions (Barcelona, Spain). Details: <http://www.icmb.info/>
Conference title – Advances and Gaps in understanding marine bioinvasions. The Conference will encompass themes such as: development and tests of invasion theory, drivers of invisibility, patterns of invasion and spread at local, regional and global scales, impact of bioinvasions on ecosystem structure and function including the biology and ecology of invasive species, new tools for identification, monitoring, risk assessment and management.

11th International conference on the ecology and management of alien plant invasions

29 Aug – Ecological Society Conference (Rotorua, NZ)

30 Aug – 3 Sept – 11th International Conference on the ecology and management of alien plant invasions (University of West Hungary, Szombathely, Hungary. Details: www.emapi.2011.org. Theme of the conference is bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and management practice.

Funding opportunities:

Save our Species



The first call for proposals for [Save Our Species \(SOS\)](http://www.sospecies.org) is open as of June 24, 2011. Save Our Species (SOS) is a global initiative to support threatened species and their habitats which has been founded by IUCN together with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). Save Our Species provides grants (between \$25,000 USD to \$800,000 USD) for conservation action on the ground, focusing on specific threatened species and their habitats. You are welcome to apply for an SOS grant in one of its 3 strategic directions in this round:

- Threatened Asian and African mammals
- Threatened amphibians
- Critically Endangered birds

To apply for an SOS grant, please see the website: http://www.sospecies.org/grants/apply_grant/ where you will find more detailed information, for example on eligibility for application. **The deadline for the submission of Threatened Species Grant is August 12.**

Conservation Leadership Programme

BP Conservation Leadership Programme. The Conservation Leadership Programme is offering Future Conservationist Awards of up to \$12,500 to high potential teams who aim to develop their skills through practical conservation projects. <http://www.conservationleadershipprogramme.org/FutureConservationistAward.asp>. **The deadline for proposal submission is November 14th and award winners will be announced in April 2012.**

2011 SEED Awards Now Open

Social and environmental entrepreneurs who can demonstrate innovation, leadership and sustainability have the chance to win expert assistance and support for their sustainable development initiatives in the 2011 SEED Awards. The SEED Initiative - hosted by the UN Environment Programme's World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) - is a global partnership for action on the Green Economy. The annual SEED Awards help to develop the most promising social and environmental start-ups in emerging economies and developing countries.

As in previous years, entrepreneurs in developing and emerging economies across the globe can apply for a SEED award. In addition, as part of an EU funded project, specific awards will be made available to initiatives in seven pilot countries in Africa: Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa. This year, one special SEED Gender Equality Award will also be made available to initiatives that are women-led or owned, and prioritise gender equality or women's empowerment as a core objective.

The full list of available 2011 SEED Awards is as follows:

- up to 14 awards for initiatives in South Africa;
- up to 20 awards for initiatives in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal;
- and up to 5 awards, including the 2011 Gender Equality Award, for initiatives in other countries (except countries that are OECD members).

The deadline for applications is 22nd August 2011. Applications can be filled in online at the SEED Initiative website www.seedinit.org or the application form can be downloaded and emailed to seedawards2011@seedinit.org. Applicants may also contact the SEED Initiative by email or phone (+49 30 89 00 068 99) in case they are not able to submit their application electronically. For more information please contact: Constance Hybsier, Email: constance.hybsier@seedinit.org or Mellab Shiluli, Tel: +254 721 546 406. E-mail: mellab.shilluli@unep.org

SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund

SeaWorld Busch Gardens Conservation Fund. The Fund supports research in one of four areas: 1) Species research, 2) Animal rescue and rehabilitation, 3) Habitat protection, 4) Conservation education. It has no set minimum or maximum grant amount but in the past it has supported projects ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 for a one-year term. See: <http://www.swbg-conservationfund.org/grantInfo.htm> No deadline - SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund Animal Crisis Grants. For more information see: <http://www.swbg-conservationfund.org/animalCrisisGrants.htm>.

UNESCO: Pacific Youth Visioning for Island Living 2010 Small Grants

Youth Visioning for Island Living is a capacity building initiative that aims to empower young people in small islands to make a difference. The UNESCO Office for the Pacific states encourages young people and or youth organizations

from member countries to submit applications to support a wide range of projects. If you are a young person or a youth organisation and would like to take part in this opportunity, feel free to contact Natalia Pereira (n.pereira@unesco.org)

Rapid Response Facility

The Rapid Response Facility (RRF) is an emergency small grants programme jointly operated by Fauna & Flora International (FFI), UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and the United Nations Foundation. With a target processing time for grant applications of just 8 working days, the RRF provides rapid support to enable conservation practitioners to tackle emergencies in some of the World's most important sites for biodiversity. To date it has supported 16 rapid interventions in 14 UNESCO designated natural World Heritage sites, responding to the conservation impacts of a range of emergencies such as natural disaster, armed conflict and sudden increases in illegal activity within these protected areas. Those interested in approaching the RRF for emergency funding should see www.rapid-response.org, which provides details on application procedures, funding criteria, and case studies of past RRF grants.

Invasive news and interesting links and websites

Red Imported Fire Ants spreading in Queensland, Australia



Image by Scott Bauer - Wikipedia

Red Imported Fire Ants have been found in 42 new sites in South-east Queensland. Biosecurity Queensland has treated the sites. The ants are now found across 98,000 hectare area. Bites from Fire Ants can cause serious injury and even death. Their nests can damage farmland. Biosecurity Queensland estimated damage of around \$43 billion to the economy over the next 30 years if nothing is being done about it. They have also expanded the areas where there are restrictions to the movement of soil, turf and mulch. Authorities are warning that illegally moving soils from restricted zones could spread the infestation leading to land devaluations.

'If it continues, it could be a disaster for Queensland. Ignoring or forgetting to check movement restrictions threatens to unravel years of hard work in eradicating fire ants', says Queensland Primary Industries Minister, Tim Mulherin.

Lionfish Invasion in the Wider Caribbean – ICRI response



Picture - John E. Randall

The International Coral Reef Initiative urges immediate action to address the Lionfish Invasion in the Wider Caribbean. Invasive lionfish (*Pterois miles* and *P. volitans*) pose a serious threat to coral reef ecosystems and associated biodiversity in the western Atlantic Ocean from South America to the northern Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and southeastern United States. Lionfish, native to the Indo-Pacific oceans, have no known native predators in the western Atlantic and Caribbean. Invasive lionfish populations can reach high densities and cause extreme disruption to native fish communities.

A growing body of scientific work has demonstrated that, in some areas where they have become established, invasive lionfish have reduced the biodiversity and resiliency of coral reefs. The expanding invasion may cause declines in ecologically important species and hinder stock-rebuilding efforts for economically important fish species. The invasion has the potential for negative economic impact on local fishing and tourism industries. In addition, lionfish have venomous spines on their fins that can inflict a serious sting to humans; medical attention is recommended following a lionfish sting.

In recognition of the severity of the lionfish invasion and its impact on coral reefs and local communities, ICRI urges that immediate action be taken to control the lionfish invasion in collaboration with relevant international and regional partners and initiatives.

Groping for answers - the Caribbean invasion by the Indo-Pacific lionfish

Suggestions that the absence of groupers – possible predator of the invasive Indo-Pacific lionfish may be contributing to its widespread. The overfishing of these fishes may be contributing to serious outbreak of invasive and opportunistic species, including seaweeds.

Palmyra Atoll latest Ramsar site

The Ramsar Secretariat is very pleased to announce that the United States has named the Palmyra Atoll National Wildlife Refuge (204,127 hectares, 05°52'N 162°06'W) as its 30th Ramsar Site, comprising coral reefs, permanent shallow marine waters, and intertidal forested wetlands of the atoll and submerged lands and associated waters out to 12 nautical miles from it, in the equatorial Pacific 960 miles south of Honolulu, Hawaii. A National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) since 2001, the site supports a variety of species with different conservation status under the National Endangered Species Act and IUCN Red List, such as the Hawaiian monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*), Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*), and Green Sea Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). It is also an important feeding and nesting ground for seabirds like the Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*), with the third largest colony in the world, and it sustains approximately 5% of the total population of the Bristle-thighed Curlew (*Numenius tahitiensis*). As a National Wildlife

Refuge, the site is closed to public use without a permit issued by the manager, but scientific research and CEPA activities are coordinated between the US Fish and Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy along with the Palmyra Atoll Research Consortium. Threats include the presence of invasive species like the scale (*Pulvinaria urbicola*), which is responsible for the recent decline in the *Pisonia grandis* forest coverage. A conservation plan is under development and expected to be completed in 2012.

Alien weed invades Maasai Mara, threatens wildebeest migration



Image of Parthenium by Nirmal Roberts

KENYA'S WORLD famous Maasai Mara is under threat from the noxious weed parthenium. And so are the country's other national parks, reserves and farmlands. Being the season of the famous wildebeest migration (June-October), tall stalks of golden grass cover the savanna plains of the Mara. More than a million animals will cross the crocodile infested Mara river to reach the grasslands, where they will fatten up and return to the Serengeti in time to give birth to the next generation of wildebeest who will repeat the migration cycle.

But in the tall and lush grass lurks a danger that threatens to choke the grasslands that makes the Mara-Serengeti one of the greatest wildlife habitat on earth. Parthenium (*Parthenium hysterophorus*) is a noxious weed from Central America now widespread in the Mara and threatening the Serengeti-Mara ecosystem. Researchers from Nairobi-based CABI Africa, discovered the weed last November growing along parts of the Mara River and other areas in the national reserve. Subsequent surveys have found that the weed has invaded grasslands and woodlands across the country.

Pretty butterfly but not welcome



Image by Dora Valdez

A pretty small, black and white chequered butterfly was snapped in Dora Valdez's garden in the Cayman island. The snapped image was featured as the photo of the week on the Caymanian Compass website. When Stuart Mailer, field officer for the National Trust of the Cayman Islands, saw the butterfly, he identified it as a species never before been seen in these islands, and hopefully would not become a resident. Ms Valdez's photograph was actually the first record of a *Papilio demoleus*, or Common Lime Butterfly, in the Cayman Islands.

Though this little lepidopteran may seem harmless and even beautiful, it has proven to be a highly adaptable invasive species with the capability of becoming a major threat to citrus crops, native trees and the endemic Cayman Swallowtail. The Common Lime Butterfly is not native to the Caribbean, but it has spread across the region with intensity.

'*Papilio demoleus* arriving in the Cayman Islands is potentially bad news for us, because it is an invasive species from the Old World,' said Ann Stafford, a local butterfly expert.

The Common Lime Butterfly's original range is Southern Asia and the Middle East where it is a major pest of trees in the Rutaceae family, which includes most citrus plants. The first recorded sighting of the butterfly in the Caribbean was in the Dominican Republic in 2004. Since then, it has been sighted in Jamaica, Puerto Rico and, now, Grand Cayman. Citrus groves in the Dominican Republic are ravaged year-round by these butterflies.

'The larvae feed on citrus, particularly lime and they have so many broods a year that they can become a menace of citrus crops,' Mrs. Stafford said.

Anyone who believes they have encountered a Chequered Swallowtail is encouraged to call either the Department of Agriculture or the Department of Environment.

Marine Biosecurity Porthole



The New Zealand Marine Pest Porthole has been developed to allow biosecurity managers, researchers and members of the public access to information on unwanted marine pests and other non-indigenous marine organisms that have been recorded from waters. It houses data from the national series of Port Biological Baseline Surveys, Marine High Risk Site Surveillance, the Marine Invasives Taxonomic Service and other verified observations of non-indigenous species in. The New Zealand Marine Pest Porthole features:

- a web-mapping application showing sites surveyed for non-indigenous marine organisms and distribution records for individual species;
 - access to information on important marine pests;
 - a metadata catalogue allowing search and download of information and reports
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America's Cup threatens by invasive alien seaweed concerns



John Upton/The Bay Citizens

An underwater invader is taking the wind out of the sails of the America's Cup. Regulators have refused to issue permits necessary for the sailing regatta to move forward until organizers can prove the event won't significantly spread invasive seaweed through San Francisco Bay.

Concerns over exotic seaweed, including *Undaria pinnatifida*, a fast-growing Asian species that reaches 10 feet and poses dangers to native kelp species, prompted the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board on Friday to reject a permit application filed late last month by the Port of San Francisco. The seaweed has taken root beneath some piers in San Francisco and could spread on the hulls of spectator boats as they enter and move around the bay. To reduce those risks, the Port had proposed an educational campaign that would alert boaters to the dangers of the seaweed and of the importance of keeping hulls clean of plants. But that proposal was not enough to satisfy the state. Source: [The Bay Citizen](http://s.tt/12UYD) (<http://s.tt/12UYD>)

New Publications:

Scientific

Cory, F., Wilson, A., Priddel, D., Carlile, N., & Klomp, N. 2011. Eradication of the House Mouse (*Mus musculus*) from Montague Island, New South Wales. *Ecological Management & Restoration*. Vol. 12 (2): 102-109.

Algar, D., Hilmer, S., Nickels, D., & Nickels, A. 2011. Successful domestic cat neutering: first step towards eradicating cats on Christmas Island for wildlife protection. *Ecological Management & Restoration*. Vol. 12 (2): 93-101.

Canning, G. 2011. Eradication of the invasive common myna, *Acridotheres tristis*, from Fregate Island, Seychelles. *Phelsum* 19(2011): 43-53.

Medina, F.M., Bonnaud, E., Vidal, E., Tershy, B.R., Zavaleta, E.S., Josh-Donlan, C., Keitt, B.S., Le Corre, M., Horwath, S.V., & Nogales, M. 2011. A global review of the impacts of invasive cats on island endangered vertebrates. *Global Change Biology* 17: n/a. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2486.2011.02464.x

Bonnaud, E., Medina, F.M., Vidal, E., Nogales, M., Tershy, B., Zavaleta, E., Donlan, C.J., Keitt, B., Le Corre, M., Horwath, S.V., 2011. The diet of feral cats on islands: a review and a call for more studies. *Biological Invasions* 2011. 13: 581-603 doi 10.1007/s10530-010-9851-3

Oppel, S., Bevan, B.M., Bolton, M., Vickery, J., & Bodey, T.W. 2011. Eradication of invasive mammals on islands inhabited by humans and domestic animals. *Conservation Biology* Vol. 25 (2): 232-240.

Lopez-Torres, A.LI, Claudio-Hernandez, H.J., Rodriguez-Gomez, C.A., Longo, A.V., & Joglar, R.L. 2011. Green iguanas (*Iguana iguana*) in Puerto Rico: is it time for management? *Biological Invasion* doi 10.1007/s10530-011-0057-0.

Books & Newsletters

The CEPF E-News update for June/July 2011 is now out. Issues covered in the e-newsletter including the Polynesia-Micronesia grantees mid-term assessment held in Suva in June, lessons learned and some new resources. Please contact the PILN Coordinator for further information on this newsletter.

Joint Nature Conservation Committee's 3rd News Bulletin is now available. In the news are Environmental Impact Assessments and Masters scholarship discussed; 8 people from 6 overseas territories and crown dependencies funded to attend training courses; JNCC contributing to a PhD on the lionfish in the Caribbean and much more. Contact john.hensonwebb@jncc.gov.uk for further information or to subscribe to their mailing list.

World Commission on Protected Areas – Oceania. Newsletter No. 4, 2011 is now out. In the news: WCPA Oceania update; International News; Australian news; New Zealand News; Pacific Island and PNG News; and Upcoming events. Contact Louise O'Flynn for further information or to contribute a news item.

The Weed's News Digest (<http://weedsnews.monash.edu.au>) – is now available online. Items in the latest edition include – challenges for weed management in African rice systems; rapid evolution of herbicide resistance by low herbicide dosage; impact of herbivory on performance of *Vincetoxicum* spp., invasive weeds in north America; Glyphosate resistant barnyard grass in WA's top end...and much more.

SAPIA News (Southern African Plant Invaders Atlas) July 2011 No. 20 edition is now out. Issues covered – invasive berry-producing Solanaceae; declared weeds – *Cestrum* species, declared weeds – *Solanum* species; proposed declared weeds and emerging species. Further information – please email SAPIA editor and coordinator – Lesley Henderson (l.henderson@sanbi.org.za).

PEIN (Pacific Environment Information Network Newsfeed 16 is now available for reading. Issues include – Palau unveils Lady of the Sea carving at SPREP; Pacific discussions towards a green economy begins; Pacific leaders define green priorities, and much more...Contact Miranet Williams (miranetaw@sprep.org) for more information or to subscribe to this Pacific resource.

Te Ipukarea Society Newsletter is now available. The June 2011 edition covers activities of the Society including attendance of the CEPF Mid-term Review, Radio New Zealand interview, Cook Islands Seabird Survey and Important Bird Areas and Key Biodiversity Areas of the Cook Islands. For more information contact te.ipukarea.society.inc@gmail.com or their website: <http://ipukarea.blogspot.com>

CEPF Mid-term Review Conference for the Polynesia-Micronesia Hotspot – Conference Proceedings 6th-8th June, 2011. Novotel Hotel Lami, Suva, Fiji. Conservation International, Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, Birdlife International. 95 pages.

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