

European Union Improving Pacific Livelihoods by Tackling Invasive Species

Title At a special launch event in Fiji today the European Union formally announced its backing for regional efforts to address the threats posed by invasive species for peoples' livelihoods across the Pacific. 'Pacific communities are facing numerous threats from invasive species, which are having major effects on food security, health and wellbeing, and are seriously damaging the region's natural heritage', said Mr Alistair MacDonald - Acting Head of Delegation of the European Union for the Pacific. In response, the European Union formally announced its support to the BirdLife Pacific Partnership for a four-year Euro 1,498,816 regional invasive species programme. 'We are delighted to support the BirdLife Pacific Partnership in their efforts to reduce the spread and impact of invasive alien species', said Mr MacDonald. 'The programme will include the management of rodents, American Iguana, Mongoose and Brown tree snake through eradication, control and biosecurity actions across the region'. BirdLife International is a global Partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. 'We thank the European Union for recognising the importance of tackling invasive species which cost the global economy an estimated US\$ 1.3 trillion each year', announced Mr Don Stewart - Director of the BirdLife Pacific Partnership. 'As the largest network of conservation organisations, BirdLife will work with our partners in Fiji, Cook Islands, Samoa, French Polynesia, Palau and New Caledonia to address this most urgent of problems to people's livelihoods', said Mr Stewart. In Fiji, BirdLife are working with NatureFiji-MareqetiViti and Biosecurity Authority Fiji to address the invasion of the American Iguana - introduced to Qamea Island in 2000 - which is a threat to rural Fijian communities, the tourism industry and native wildlife.