Title With nearly 150 applicants and only eight recipients, NatureFiji-MareqetiViti's Critically Endangered Fiji Petrel Project is proud to receive support from the prestigious Flagship Species Fund. Flagship species are those iconic, charismatic species that capture public admiration and may be used as figureheads to promote broader conservation action. Launched in 2001, the fund is a joint initiative between Fauna & Flora International and the UK Government?s Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. The grant from the Flagship Species Fund will co-finance this year?s Fiji Petrel programme together with a grant from the Pacific Development and Conservation Trust out of New Zealand. Last year was highly significant for the Fiji Petrel Project with its detector dogs, Bob and Tar finding nearly 50 nests. The majority of these are believed to be Collared Petrels, but there are still nearly 20 nests whose occupants are not known or are unfinished burrows. This year the project is focusing on managing these nests ? firstly addressing the feral cat issue which was found to be extremely serious last year; secondly, determining the occupants and monitoring the breeding attempts this year; and thirdly, providing hands on experience to community members in conservation management. In the meantime, Bob and Tar will continue their search for new nests and there is great anticipation that 2013 could be the year when the nest of a Fiji Petrel is found.

Burrow #65 after breeding in 2012 with "gate" of twigs erected to monitor movement in and out. #65 is now occupied by a Collared Petrel.

Poaso Qalo from Nukuloa, Gau is now managing the project on the island. He reported from the field last week with some good news as well as some bad. The good news is that three of the Delaisavu Collared Petrel colony nests are already occupied by sitting adults - nests P65, P59, P72. These were confirmed using the burrowscope which can extend 2 meters into burrows ? relaying back a picture of what it sees. The bad news is that 2 cat-killed Collared Petrel carcases have been found. Mark Fraser an experienced petrel biologist from New Zealand who was last on Gau in 2011, will be visiting the project again this month and providing some advice to Poasa and the community teams on how to manage the colony and deal with the feral cat problem. Later in the year NatureFiji-MareqetiViti staff will be discussing with the landowners from Navukailagi how to develop their wish of formally protecting the Delaisavu Collared Petrel Colony ? the only one of its kind known in the world, at this point in time.