Title

A tropical rodent eradication review has been launched to develop recommendations for improving the success rates of eradications. More than 30 experts in island rodent eradications, island ecology, rodent ecology, and toxicology came together at a meeting at the University of Auckland, New Zealand, to review historical data, analyze successful and unsuccessful projects, and discuss new ideas and approaches to increase the success rates of rodent eradications on tropical islands.

“Eradicating invasive alien species from islands is a tool proven to protect biodiversity and help restore ecosystem processes”, said Steve Cranwell, BirdLife's Pacific Seabird Programme Manager.

Worldwide, there have been more than 400 successful eradications of invasive rodents from islands and about 50 unsuccessful attempts. Analysis of historical eradications reveals that efforts to eradicate rodents from tropical islands have been less successful than projects in higher latitudes.

“There is increasing demand for eradications to help counteract the growing extinction crisis, particularly in tropical areas where biodiversity is greatest", said Bill Waldman, CEO for Island Conservation. “This review will improve the rate of success by ensuring that the island restoration community has the best eradication advice from the world’s experts.”

The tropical rodent eradication review is being led by a consortium of groups including Island Conservation, Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), BirdLife International, Conservacion de Islas, New Zealand Department of Conservation and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The first stage in the review included an analysis of completed rodent eradications to evaluate the lessons of past projects. The review is expected to conclude this year with publication of recommended best practice guidelines for tropical rodent eradications that will also be made available through the PII Resource Kit.

The Société d'Ornithologie de Polynésie (SOP-Manu) and BirdLife International are seeking to restore up to 6 islands and Atolls in the Acteon and Gambier groups of French Polynesia. The islands support a number of globally threatened birds including Polynesian Ground-dove, Tuamotu Sandpiper, Murphy’s Petrel and White-throated Storm-petrel. Preparations are underway to eradicate introduced rats, cats, goats and rabbits all of which are instrumental in the decline of these birds and other biodiversity native to the islands. The Tropical Islands Review has contributed to the planning preparations for these operations as is the expertise of organisations that participated in the review including the Pacific Invasives Initiative, Island Conservation and the NZ Department of Conservation.