

# International Seabird Fellowship for Fiji staff

## Title

Sialasi (Sia) Rasalato from the Birdlife International Fiji Programme is the 2012 'Josephine Daneman Herz International Seabird Fellowship Fund' recipient. As a result, Sia will soon visit a number of American islands over the course of the summer and participate in various restoration programs - some just starting and others that are 30-year success stories.

Sia Rasalato is a young conservationist employed by Birdlife International Fiji Programme. As a Conservation Officer, he supports the implementation of restoration and land protection activities for these restored sites, including eradication feasibility assessments, operational planning, island biosecurity surveys and monitoring of restored islands.

Sia will soon start his internship at Audubon's (BirdLife in the US) Hog Island Environmental Education Center where he will take part in an intensive four-day orientation program with approximately twenty-summer interns actively managing seabird nesting islands throughout the Gulf of Maine. Instructors for the training program include biologists from Audubon's Seabird Restoration Program which focuses on:

- State of the world's seabirds: an overview of conservation issues on terrestrial and marine habitats
- Ecology of the Gulf of Maine, including geologic, oceanographic, biotic and human impacts affecting seabirds
- Identification and nesting ecology of Gulf of Maine seabirds
- Foraging ecology of Gulf of Maine seabirds
- Evaluating species for restoration and selection of appropriate management techniques
- The role of predation, disease and food as limiting factors
- Rationale and techniques for managing island predators
- Techniques for conducting tern feeding studies, census methods and measures of productivity
- Field techniques: fire arm safety training; outboard boat operation and safety; first aid and use of radios and solar technology at remote sites

After this orientation training, Sia will begin the field part of the program. This will take place on Audubon's system of managed seabird nesting islands along the Maine coast. There he will receive supervision and additional training from a resident Island Supervisor as well as on-site training and supervision from The Seabird Restoration Program's Director, Dr Stephen W. Kress.

The Seabird Restoration Program of the National Audubon Society is an internationally recognised program that restores seabirds to historic nesting islands through the use of innovative techniques based on seabird behaviour and ecology. For 30 years, the program has restored populations of rare and endangered seabirds to islands in the Gulf of Maine using techniques such as models, mirrors, sound recordings, translocation of young seabirds and habitat management. These techniques have great potential to help rare species, as nearly all seabirds share biological traits such as colonial nesting habits, tendencies to return to hatching places and attraction to others of their species by sight and sound.

Techniques developed at Audubon's Maine Coast Seabird Sanctuaries have helped rare seabirds in the Galapagos Islands, Hawaiian Islands, Japan, New Zealand, California and Washington where seabirds were decimated due to human actions. **Subscribe to The BirdLife Pacific Quarterly E-Newsletter**