

Partnership to tackle Pacific pests

Title

BirdLife Pacific and Island Conservation have signed an agreement in Fiji this week to help protect the native birds and biodiversity of Pacific islands from invasive species. Rats, feral cats and mongoose are among many introduced species responsible for the decline and extinction of numerous Pacific Island birds and other wildlife, such as Fiji's unique native iguanas. The two NGOs bring enormous experience to the task. The BirdLife Pacific Partnership has been working to address this problem by eradicating introduced predators from islands in Fiji, New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Palau. Island Conservation has completed pest eradications from over fifty islands across the globe and has recently expanded its operations in the Pacific. "This is good news for the Pacific Island countries for it strengthens our ability to address the threats that invasive species pose to native birds throughout the region, many of whom are facing extinction," said Don Stewart - Regional Director of BirdLife International. Dr. Ray Nias, Island Conservation's Pacific Regional Director, added that: "although islands only occupy five per cent of the world's land surface, they have seen 80 per cent of the world's extinctions and are home to 40 per cent of all critically endangered animals. It is therefore a privilege for us to join forces with Birdlife International to help prevent the extinction of Pacific island species threatened by invasive pests." Island Conservation is a California-based non-government organisation that has focused its operations on small islands around the world to protect native animals from extinction by the removal of invasive pest species.