

Suwarrow Blog 15 - A flotilla on the lagoon and Moon?s future decided

Title

The latest blog from wildlife filmmaker Nick Hayward as he joins a team from BirdLife and Te Ipukarea Society (BirdLife in the Cook Islands) eradicating rats from Suwarrow – a seabird mecca in the South Pacific. Today the team hope the weather won't be against them again as they eye their impending departure date with a new crew member. *“Since Saturday there’s only been one significant shower. With unexpected bad luck it came early on Thursday morning after our baiting of Anchorage on Wednesday. Although brief there was 18mm of rain in the gauge - enough to damage the bait. The hope is that the bait wasn’t completely destroyed and that it’s still doing its job. The Marumaru Atua, the Vaka (traditional boat) on which we will return to Rarotonga, has made good speed in the strong South Easterly trade winds and arrived at 6:30PM this evening. Her departure will need to be delayed to fit in the second baiting of Anchorage. Our late return has eaten into the preparation time for the BirdLife World Congress in Canada, completing the Suwarrow film in time for the Congress on the 17th will be a big challenge now. Today the team applied the second baiting on Motu Tou and Motu Kena. The forecast is for clear settled weather but the showers are still passing through. Again, we’re crossing our fingers for the weather we desperately need. Moon, the cat, is making its presence felt. No longer lurking in the shadows he’s taken to joining us for dinner by prowling under the benches and table while meowing loudly for titbits. With the rats gone (hopefully) there is concern as to what Moon will eat. So it’s been decided we’ll take Moon to an animal shelter in Rarotonga, either with us on the Vaka or with Harry on his return later in November. We now have three yachts (and the Vaka) anchored in the lagoon. Apart from being head ranger Harry also looks after immigration, customs health and biosecurity - a big responsibility.*

Image not found

Harry checks all visiting vessels - an important role in ensuring the islands remain rat-free.
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Biosecurity is crucial to prevent introduced pests and predators such as rats establishing on Suwarrow. Harry checks all visiting vessels - an important role in ensuring the islands remain rat-free - but he’s only here between June and November. Harry’s concern is for the half of the year there’s no ranger on Suwarrow. As the Cook Islands only National Park he believes it warrants a ranger’s presence year round”.

Nick Hayward – Suvarrow Atoll, Cook Islands. *** You can follow Nick's posts by subscribing to emails at <http://birdlife-pacific.wildiaries.com/> or through BirdLife's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages. **The BirdLife Invasive Alien Species Programme urgently needs your support to tackle more sites and save more species. To support our work and make a donation today, please go to www.justgiving.com/BirdLife-invasive-species where every penny**
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counts. Thank you. Image not found The expedition to remove rats from Suvarrow
http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/JG_donate_visa_button.gif

National Park is a joint project between BirdLife International, Te Ipukarea Society (BirdLife Partner in the Cook Islands) and the Cook Island National Environment Service. The project is being kindly supported by the European Community, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, SPREP, GEF and Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, and forms part of the BirdLife Invasive Alien Species Programme which is tackling this greatest of threats to wildlife around the world. BirdLife wishes to thank the efforts of many who are supporting the programme including Pacific Invasive Initiative, Pacific Invasive Learning Network, New Zealand Department of Conservation the University of the South Pacific, Landcare Research New Zealand, Island Conservation, Wildiaries and Nick Hayward.