

Suwarrow blog 16 - A day of rest

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 feast with the very welcome visitors to Suwarrow and celebrate some luck with the weather. "The curse of bait application bringing on rain is finally broken. Since baiting Motu Tou there's been only one heavy shower of 3mm - 10mm is considered the danger point for rain damaging the bait so it's well within the margin of error. Anchorage is also looking promising. Steve has been trapping rats and they have all been consuming the bait, so it's likely the bait remained in good condition despite the rain. The Vaka's (traditional boat) arrival has slowed our other work. Saturday was spent arranging a welcoming feast, with the Vaka's crew eagerly joining in catching the fish. Today is Sunday so we have had our morning service and now enjoying a day of rest. Though BirdLife's Steve and Sia are busy collating the bird survey results. It's back to work tomorrow. First we will be surveying Motu Manu, which is Maori for Bird Island. It has a large colony of frigatebirds and some noddies; the survey will reveal all the species using the Motu. Weather permitting, we hope to lay the second bait application for Anchorage on Tuesday, and depart on Wednesday. The Vaka has an electric motor only used for moving into or out of ports, so it's wind dependant. Being traditionally rigged she can't sail towards the wind because she needs the wind on her side or behind. The current wind direction is South Easterly which means if the wind direction doesn't change we can't sail directly to Rarotonga. So it's unsure how long the voyage may take, possibly somewhere between five and seven days. The Vaka crew are a hardy and cheerful crowd with some very experienced sailors among them. With their arrival our little family of Suwarrow expeditioners has doubled. It's quite a shock for an isolated team. We shall be getting to know the crew very well over the coming week as we voyage across the Pacific Ocean together.

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Blog 16 Ian Lowes community/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/BirdLife-invasive-species **lan led a short service for his nephew Haron**

Teremoana who passed away in a swimming accident on Suwarrow in 1994.

*After church, Ian led a short service for his nephew Haron Teremoana who passed away in a swimming accident on Suwarrow in 1994. Over the past couple of days he's been restoring the grave. It was a very moving ceremony". Nick Hayward – Suwarrow Atoll, Cook Islands. ****

You can follow Nick's posts by subscribing to emails at <http://birdlife-pacific.wilddiaries.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 counts. Thank you.**

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The expedition to remove rats from Suvarrow 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.