

Suwarrow Blog Eight ? Land ahoy!

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 they land on Suwarrow and are welcomed by swarms of seabirds, sharks and crabs...

“As the distance counted down to our destination everybody was on deck searching for the first sight of Suwarrow. Peering above the horizon we first saw the trees of Motu Oneone. As we approached the lagoon entrance we spied Lesser Frigatebirds swarming like bees over their globally important colony.. A flock of Black Noddies streamed in low over the water as the frigates pounced, pirating their food,. A huge tropical downpour briefly obscured the view, a good omen for a successful expedition.

As we lined up the entrance the rain cleared revealing a magnificent sky over our new home Anchorage Island.

The Southern Cross doesn't have a dingy so the bravest team members swam ashore to retrieve the caretaker's boat. Shortly afterwards a patrol of Black-tipped Reef-sharks circled the yacht. Luckily they are not man eaters.

Early next morning everybody helped to unload the stores, fuel and bait. It was hot and heavy work loading the dingy then stowing all the equipment carefully ashore.

The hard work didn't finish there. After lunch we began the work of preparing the tracks for the rat baiting. The vegetation on Anchorage is thicker than expected so it's hard slow work cutting through dense coconut and scrub thickets.

Suwarrow, apart from being a bird paradise, is also a land of crabs. Everywhere you look there's scurrying little creatures. All sorts of crabs from small hermits to the large coconut crabs.

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Blog 8 coconut crab & Ben A large bright blue coconut crab watched over Ben as he cut tracks.

After our first full day ashore, we were treated thanks to the fishermen and lan to the most magnificent fresh fish and coconut curry”.

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.

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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.