Suwarrow Blog Four ? A very Pacific voyage

Title

The third of many blogs 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. In this blog the team load their boat with supplies and learn about the traditional canoe which will bring them back…

"Rarotonga turned on another beautiful Pacific Island day it was almost perfect. The one disappointment was that our boat - the Southern Cross - still wasn't quite ready for the planned Monday departure. This afternoon with great excitement we loaded on our supplies for a month on Suwarrow, ready to depart tomorrow morning. So we have one extra last night on a comfortable bed. However, I am looking forward to seeing the stars shining brightly in a sky unpolluted by lights and feeling the fresh cool Pacific Ocean wind on my face. Nearby to the Southern Cross is our return Vaka – a traditional Pacific canoe - the Marumaru Atua. She's currently being prepared for sea by the team from the Cook Island Voyaging Society . We are all hoping the work progresses well and she is back in the water in time to pick us up from Suwarrow. After a month away we shall all be missing our family and friends.

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http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Marumaru-Atua-low.jpg
The Marumaru Atua is part of the revival of traditional Pacific voyaging and will be bring the tean
The Marumaru Atua is part of the revival of traditional Pacific voyaging and will bring the team back from Suwarrow.

Despite being only 4 years old the Marumaru Atua is a veteran sailor. She's sailed throughout the Pacific on many voyages to destinations as diverse as New Zealand, the Marquesas in French Polynesia, Fiji, Hawaii the Galapagos and North America. We can be very comfortable with her seaworthiness and the competence of the crew. The Marumaru Atua is part of the revival of traditional Cook Island voyaging. Navigators are trained to use the stars sea swell and other natural signs to navigate across the ocean. Modern navigation tools are kept hidden onboard purely as a safety measure. I'm a little wary of taking my turn on the tu oe or steering oar. My experience of sailing on a dark cloudy night is with the assistance of the faint glow of a compass. When clouds block the stars how will I steer straight using only the wind and waves to guide me?" Nick Hayward – Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 23rd April 2013 . 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-speciewhere every penny counts. Thank you.**

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http://www.birdlife.org/community/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/JG_donate_visa_button

The expedition to remove rats from Suwarrow 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.