

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	BirdLife International
Project Title:	Managing Invasive Species at Key Biodiversity Areas in Palau and Fiji
Date of Report:	December 2013
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CEPF Region: Polynesia-Micronesia

Strategic Direction: 1. Prevent, control, and eradicate invasive species in key biodiversity areas

Grant Amount: \$ 194,350.00

Project Dates: Apr 1, 2012-Oct 31, 2013

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each Partner):

BirdLife Pacific Secretariat

The Pacific Secretariat is BirdLife International's youngest regional office, based in Suva, Fiji and its role is to provide support to its network of seven national organizations in the Pacific. The BirdLife Secretariat supervised the project which was led by the Regional Seabird Programme Manager Steve Cranwell, and Invasive Species Programme Coordinator Milana Ravuso, providing project management, financial and technical support to the two implementing Partners; the Palau Conservation Society and NatureFiji-MareqetiViti. The Secretariat also coordinated the financial and technical reporting.

Palau Conservation Society (PCS)

PCS is the BirdLife Partner in Palau and has implemented projects addressing a range of biodiversity priority setting, site protection, invasive species and community conservation needs. Project activities in Palau were led by a Project Coordinator Anu Gupta until 2012 and subsequently by Lolita Gibbons-Decherong through to the project's completion. The coordinator was supported by a number of PCS staff (particularly during the eradication operation), but primarily the Education Officer, Yalap Yalap, Conservation Officer Heather Ketebengang, and Finance Manager Mingrang Kloulechad (and subsequently Shalom Etpison).

NatureFiji-MareqetiViti (NFMV)

The project was initially led by the BirdLife Fiji Programme, but as an interim solution to a national civil society conservation organisation BirdLife, has actively supported the development of NatureFiji-MareqetiViti. Through this partnership NFMV gradually assumed responsibility for all BirdLife projects implemented in Fiji, culminating in the merging of BirdLife's Fiji Country Programme and transition of its staff to NFMV in November 2012. These staff included Elenoa Seniloli, and Tuverea Tuamoto both of whom continued to lead the projects implementation until its completion by NFMV. The BL Pacific Secretariat provided ongoing management and technical support in an effort to ensure continuity and progress of the planned project actions.

NFMV became a BirdLife Affiliate (the first phase of BirdLife's three tiered partnership status) in June 2013.

Local Provincial Offices/Councils

In Fiji, working with the local Provincial Offices is paramount to any projects, seeking to engage with indigenous communities. The three Provincial Offices of Cakaudrove, Ra and Tailevu have been key project partners and involved from the project beginning. The respective *Roko Tuis* or Heads were regularly updated on project plans, activity timeframes and challenges facing the Ringgold Islands (Cakaudrove Province), Vatu-i-Ra (Ra Province) and Mabualau (Tailevu Province) communities. Project presentations have been made at District and Provincial Council Meetings and to the *Roko Tuis*. The Heads and/or their Assistants (*Roko Veivuke*) helped facilitate workshops, officiated at meetings and assisted project staff by providing advice on managing community conflicts and issues. Advice and support was also sought from the respective Provincial Councils on appropriate protection measures for the restored and pest-free seabird islands.

Fijian Government Agencies

This project required collaboration with some key Government agencies. The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) is working with NFMV to deliver biosecurity training programs for communities in Taveuni in light of the American Iguana incursion; and these include the landowning communities of the 7 islands in the Ringgolds. Some members of the communities have been recruited as Temporary Biosecurity Officers (TBOs), whose role is to monitor and report any sightings of incursion on Taveuni. The training is a capacity building initiative for the communities and one that will ensure ownership of the project and help sustain project outcomes. The Ministry of Tourism provided technical advice for the scoping and feasibility study of ecotourism options in Vatu-i-Ra and Mabualau Island. The Ministry of Provincial Development provided support and guidance to the endorsement of the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape, a large marine conservation area which includes Vatu-i-Ra Island.

Site Support Groups (SSGs)

SSGs are local conservation groups and include members of landowning communities who, on a largely voluntary basis promote the protection and wise use of natural resources within their communities. The SSGs of Vatu-i-Ra, Mabualau and Ringgolds have supported and in some instances led socioeconomic and environmental monitoring, and awareness activities. NFMV & BirdLife have built the capacity of SSGs in monitoring & surveillance, biosecurity checks on boats, and environmental awareness through surveys, visits and workshops.

Pacific Invasive Initiative (PII)

Collaboration with PII provided technical advice including peer review of operational and monitoring plans for Kayangel, Ringgolds, Mabualau and Vatu-i-Ra. PII have also assisted with the dissemination of project outputs and results including case studies of community-based approaches to eradication, biosecurity and monitoring.

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

The project has supported the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile in the following ways:

In Palau the protection of the globally endangered Micronesian megapode has been enhanced through:

- the removal of invasive rodents and feral cats;
- community-based protected area management planning securing legal protection for Ngeriungs Important Bird Area (IBA), a critical megapode habitat with the highest breeding density in Palau and
- the community is more aware of the special and globally threatened status of the Megapode resulting in an increased commitment to protect the bird. This has led to greater reporting of Megapode sightings and behaviours;
- Since the project beginning monitoring has detected a 60% increase in Megapodes on Kayangel (the main island)

An increase in biodiversity protected areas of 212,800ha of marine and 41.3ha of terrestrial habitat.

- In Palau the project has protected 188,200ha of marine and 39ha of terrestrial habitat (25% of the total land area) for Kayangel Atoll
- In Fiji the project has protected the 2.3ha island of Vatuira (an Important Bird and Key Biodiversity Area) and approximately 24,600ha of the surrounding marine environment. The marine protected area uses existing markers to designate the boundaries which are yet to be surveyed.
- Kayangel residents expressed an 11% increase in support for protected areas

The project supported the development of resource management plans for two island groups in Fiji (Vatu-i-ra and the Ringgolds) and Kayangel Atoll. Management structures supporting the implementation of management plans are established for Kayangel and Vatu-i-ra and developing for the Ringgolds. The two community-managed conservation areas (Kayangel and Vatu-i-ra) are being managed by Site Support Groups (local conservation groups), in collaboration with provincial (or State) authorities.

The project has enhanced the livelihoods of local communities in Fiji and Palau. In Palau, the acceptance of the Kayangel protected areas to the National Protected Areas Network has resulted in sustainable financing from the Network fund employing conservation officers to implement the Kayangel management plan. The management plan has also provided a framework for sustainable tourism, and the receipt of associated incomes from local handicrafts, homestay, and fees for activities. The projects contribution to the development of a virgin coconut oil enterprise has given the community an opportunity to benefit from this venture.

In Fiji, the development of nature tourism based income sources were supported for the Vatuira and Mabualau communities. Completion of a scoping exercise for Vatu-i-ra identified both opportunities and issues to be overcome in progressing nature tourism. One of these challenges remains agreement between landowners and their community over entitlements and benefit sharing. On Mabualau, the landowners (represented by the Site Support Group) and the nearby resort (main source of visitors) are negotiating activities to be supported on the island, the role of landowners and compensation.

The project has built local capacity in a number of ways. Both in Fiji and Palau the involvement of local communities in conservation work developed their skills and knowledge of eradication operations, invasive species assessments (particularly rodents), biodiversity monitoring (megapodes and seabirds) and biosecurity. These skills continue to be applied by the Kayangel

conservation rangers and community Site Support Groups in Fiji, who monitor the biological condition of sites and maintain biosecurity controls. The Kayangel State Youth Association and Vatu-i-ra community were trained in basic business planning and financial projections. This supported a range of small business ventures for Nagilogilo (Vatuiria community) including bee-keeping, pig farming, and shops stocking basic supplies. The PCS protected area site manager and conservation staff have been engaged in a capacity building and training cohort that focuses on managing protected areas from project designing, adaptive management, and developing work plans to report and administer funds.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

Project Approach (500 words)

The approach taken by this project has been to ensure local people (community) are front and center in planning activities their implementation, monitoring, and management. Keeping the community informed and closely engaged strengthened understanding, relationships and avoided misinformation. Local protocols were applied to communications and decision making including the formation and functioning of local community groups (SSGs) supporting the project. The advice of community leaders supported surveys and rodent baiting within areas of cultural significance and ensured livelihood activities addressed priorities.

BirdLife International, the Fiji Programme (subsequently NatureFiji-MareqetiViti) and PCS supported the project through direct expertise and together with the input of wider partners (the Pacific Invasives Initiative, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the NZ Department of Conservation Eradication Advisory Group) supported training, information and advice, the implementation of activities and sharing lessons learned.

This locally led approach helped ensure the project was relevant, took account of community concerns and empowered local people to protect their islands and biodiversity

Link to CEPF Investment Strategy

The project links to CEPF Strategic Direction 1: *Prevent, control and eradicate invasive species in key biodiversity areas*. It has contributed to the removal of rats and cats from three of the four islands of Kayangel atoll (Palau), and prevented the reintroduction of rodents and cats to four IBAs/KBAs (1 in Palau, 3 in Fiji). The project has provided training in invasive species management techniques (identification, treatment and biosecurity), especially to local people living on or using the islands. In doing so it has addressed Investment Priorities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3;

- 1.1. Strengthen defences against the introduction and spread of invasive species and pathogens that threaten biodiversity
- 1.2. Control or eradicate invasive species in key biodiversity areas, particularly where they threaten native species with extinction
- 1.3. Perform research, provide training in management techniques, and develop rapid response capacity against particularly serious invasive species

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

The long-term objective is to halt the decline of native birds (including the Endangered *Megapodius laperouse*) and other biodiversity from the Important Bird Areas of Kayangel atoll (Palau), Mabualau, Vatu-I-Ra and the Ringgold islands (7) (Fiji). The project will secure sustainable protection for these IBAs through the development of local resource management capacities and compatible livelihoods. In this way this project contributes to the strategic objectives of the CEPF Polynesia-Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot Ecosystem Profile/CEPF investment; to the implementation of the Fijian and Palauan Governments National Environment Strategy and NBSAP's, and the National Invasive Species Strategy for Palau; to the Palauan National Programme for Monitoring Forest and Conservation Birds (Executive Order No.280);

and to the implementation of the BirdLife International Regional Pacific Programme 2009-2012, and the MoU between BirdLife and the Government of Fiji.

Actual Progress Towards Long-term Impacts at Completion:

The monitoring of biodiversity indicators and threatened species (Micronesian Megapode) indicate Megapodes have increased by up to 68% on islands where rats and cats have been eradicated (or substantially reduced). Seabird populations across the Fiji sites show some response with species not previously known establishing breeding colonies at some sites (Bridled tern), but with stable to slightly increasing populations generally. Upward trends in number and diversity are expected to continue as habitats and species recover in the sustained absence of introduced mammalian predators, other disturbances (cyclones, fire, food availability etc) and the effects of the current seabird recruitment techniques assert themselves.

The establishment of 5 new protected areas in Kayangel Palau, and for Vatuiria in Fiji has secured protection for two KBAs and progress continues to be made toward adopting further sites in Fiji. Nationally endorsed resource management plans for the Kayangel Protected Areas Network and Vatuiria Marine Protected Area provides a foundation for sustainably managing and sharing benefits from these indigenous owned resources. The acceptance by Fiji Government of the Ringgold islands and Vatu-i-ra as proposed RAMSAR sites has through their nomination to the RAMSAR secretariat further enhanced their importance as sites of international importance for biodiversity protection. The establishment of a locally managed coconut mill on Kayangel and eco-tourism ventures in Fiji continue to advance and will provide a direct return to landowners and local communities

The eradications and protection of biodiversity and globally important conservation sites has directly contributed to the fulfillment of strategic objectives 1 & 2 of the CEPF Polynesia-Micronesia Biodiversity Hotspot, the implementation of NBSAPs for Fiji and Palau and CBD commitments.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

The short-term impacts of this project include the eradication of alien predators from Kayangel Atoll and establishing biosecurity capacity to prevent invasive alien species establishing. The project will also develop 4 community-based management plans for the 14 islands identifying Protected Areas and the establishment of at least two community-managed and community monitored protected areas, where the local people living in and around these areas will benefit equitably from the restored islands and income-generating activities that are compatible with the projects long term conservation aims.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

Three out of the four islands of Kayangel atoll are free of rodents and cats including the KBA Ngeriungs which is the primary breeding habitat on Kayangel (and in Palau) for Megapode. The Kayangel State Youth Association (SSG) supported field research aimed at informing the removal of rats and cats from the Atoll, and the planning and implementation of the eradication operations. They have been trained in biological monitoring and biosecurity procedures both of which they (and others in the community) continue to lead. A draft biosecurity plan for the Atoll has been submitted to the Kayangel State which subject to review will be endorsed and is supported by the Kayangel Protected Areas Management Plan which PCS also prepared. The management plan has been endorsed by the Kayangel State and National Protected Areas Network (September 2012). Protected Areas funding has been allocated to the state for the implementation of the management plan which is being led by the newly formed Kayangel Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Services. Two local Conservation Rangers have been employed and among various tasks lead the implementation of biosecurity. The Management Plan identified sustainable livelihoods that could be supported on the Atoll including the development of a coconut mill which the project has helped establish. To assist with the sharing of benefits from the Mill and other (future) business developments training in 'Basic Business Planning and Financial

Projections' has been provided by the Small Business Development Centre (SBDC), to the community including the Kayangel State Youth Association (SSG). One output from the workshop was a Business Plan for the Coconut Mill.

In Fiji, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ra Provincial Office and the Nagilogilo Clan for the protection of Vatu-i-Ra Island for 20 years and the MOU is now with the Ra Provincial Office. Communities are now working with Government and non-Government agencies to implement the Vatu-i-Ra Community Resource Management Plan. Feasibility studies have been conducted for Vatu-i-Ra and Mabualau Islands to determine the viability of ecotourism as a livelihood project and recommendations from both reports suggest that issues around the sharing of benefits need to be resolved by the community. The Provincial Offices have agreed to help support this dialogue and seek a resolution between the landowners and community. Letters of support for the protection of the Ringgold Islands have been submitted by landowning communities to the District and Provincial Councils and this is awaiting approval and endorsement. Nevertheless, a Ringgolds Resource Management Plan has been developed and communities have undergone training in the development of some income-generating projects such as handicraft. Limited marketing of these products has meant this investment has not realized its potential and the SSG and NFMV will be working with the Provincial Council in helping the community access resorts and other market outlets in the area.

Together with local communities BirdLife Fiji/NFMV have developed biosecurity plans for all predator free islands. The communities have been trained in their implementation with SSGs forming the 'champions' and 'gate-keepers' for ensuring biosecurity is supported. Monitoring of the 11 predator free islands (by NFMV and SSGs) confirm they continue to remain free of rats and cats. For most of these islands it's now over 5 years since these predators were successfully removed.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected:

Palau

Marine

- Kayangel Territorial Waters, Est. 2012; Size: 1,685km², IUCN Cat: VI-C
- Ngkesol Marine Protected Area, Est. 2012; Size: 163km², IUCN Cat: IV-C
- Ngeruangel Marine Reserve, Est. 1996; Size: 34km², IUCN Cat: IV-A. Whilst the protected area was created prior to the project its management needs have been identified in the Kayangel Protected Areas Management plan produced by the project

Terrestrial

- Ngeriungs Bird Sanctuary, Est. 2012; Size: 0.34km², IUCN Cat: IV-C
- Chermall Sacred Site & Atoll Forest Preserve, Est. 2012; Size: 0.003186km², IUCN Cat: Ib-A
- Ngerusebek Sacred Site & Atoll Forest Preserve, Est.2012; Size:0.003404km², IUCN Cat: Ib-A

Fiji

Marine

- Vatu-i-ra marine protected area (Tabu) 24,600 ha

Terrestrial

- Vatu-i-ra Island 3 ha

Species Conserved: Micronesian Megapode (Endangered)
Green Turtle (Endangered)
Hawksbill Turtle (Critically Endangered)
11 native seabirds (including 2 nationally threatened) and 5 native landbirds

Corridors Created:

Seabirds and megapodes move between islands and these predator free islands (in Fiji and Palau) provide source populations for other islands. These islands providing a 'corridor effect' enabling birds to repopulate islands (where conditions are favourable) and genetic movement throughout the population.

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The successful eradication of rats and cats from three of Kayangel's four islands is a significant achievement. Led by PCS in consultation with the community this operation has developed understanding of native biodiversity, its value and mechanisms that threaten the sustainability of native birds and other wildlife particularly invasive species. The involvement of both PCS and the community in the operation to remove rats and cats has not only built their knowledge of the process but critically developed ownership for the results which the community (SSG) continue to measure. The community is sustaining the pest free status and restoration through biosecurity and the management of the newly developed protected areas. The development of the management plan and its integration and support by the national Protected Areas framework creating direct employment opportunities and a foundation from which other sustainable livelihoods including the project supported coconut mill can be developed. While the eradication failed for one island the benefits witnessed to crops and peoples day to day lives with rats no longer damaging food supplies has become a major incentive for the community in seeing the eradication successfully completed. The project has provided proof of concept (in Palau) that the eradication of invasive species does benefit wildlife and livelihood values and PCS (and other partners) remain committed to achieving this outcome for the entire Atoll.

The 58 mile boat trip between Kayangel and the PCS office presented a number of challenges to the projects operations with rough seas and unseasonal weather conditions often requiring plans to be rescheduled. But good dialogue with the community which required a greater number of trips than originally anticipated ensured expectations were met and the project was well supported. The additional boat running and fuel costs were high but with the assistance of local project partners this was made possible.

Finalising the biosecurity plan for Kayangel has proven difficult to the project manager as Palau does not yet have a national biosecurity policy or expertise in the area. A draft has been produced and reviewed by the National Invasive Species Council and input is being sought from regional partners. It is expected a final draft will be submitted to the Kayangel State in early February 2014.

The successes in achieving both long term and short term objectives of the project is also attributed to working collaboratively with other partners including the Belau National Museum who assisted PCS with field training for monitoring. The partnership with the Kayangel State Government has provided PCS with support at community meetings, consultations, assisting in logistical arrangements, information dissemination, endorsements of effort, talking to landowners, and providing advice. Most important has been the community support and their openness and trust in what PCS were proposing. This was demonstrated time and time again by their interest in participating in meetings, volunteering, bringing their concerns to us one on one and offering their thoughts, even giving up their lands willingly for the coconut mill factory and for protecting megapode habitats.

A success of the Fiji component has been the implementation of biosecurity for all 11 predator free islands by the landowning communities. The approach of taking the technical elements of preventing invasive species invasions and putting this into a context that local people can identify with has been central to developing this understanding and increasingly biosecurity culture. There have been many aspects to localizing this knowledge from identifying the pathways, key threats, risks and management solutions including communicating a biosecurity message that fits within the local (mostly village) environment. This community led approach while time-consuming has resulted in the identification of champions and people willing to sustain this effort most of whom

also form the Site Support Group. Importantly all eleven islands remain free of mammalian predators.

Establishing a biodiversity protection interest for indigenous owned lands is often a lengthy and challenging process. All of the project islands are communally owned by landowning units (*'mataqalis'*), and while at the outset these groups had either requested or expressed support for protection the subsequent consultations had to resolve a range of landownership, compensation, authority to represent, protection type, term and management issues. Provincial Offices were a key partner in this process providing advice, and authority through which to progress. The development of community based management plans for Vatu-i-ra and the Ringgold islands provided the foundation for respective community and biodiversity needs for a site. Management plan actions were fulfilled in varying ways across sites, the scoping of nature tourism as a sustainable livelihood identified good opportunity for Vatu-i-ra particularly in linking with existing tourism structures and similarly for Mabualau. Some progress has been made in support of both, but agreement over resource allocation for the Vatuiria community is needed before significant progress can be made. For Mabualau formalizing services (guiding, transport) and compensation to the community by the nearby resort is currently being negotiated. Protection through a traditional *'Tabu'* has been established for Vatuiria and the surrounding marine area. The protection of the marine environment has prevented illegal use of the island by fishermen and eliminated the clearing of forest areas, bird and egg harvesting and lighting of fires as occurred previously creating a secure environment for the thousands of resident seabirds. Protection agreements continue to progress for the other sites and *tabu* areas expect to be designated for the Ringolds and Mabualau.

The development of community based Site Support Groups for each of the project islands has been a key mechanism in establishing a conduit to the community, understanding and targeting capacity needs and sustaining the biosecurity and protection aims. While activities prior to this project had worked with individuals interested in the conservation activities the project actively sought to formalize this relationship into four SSGs, two representing the three communities of the 7 Ringgold islands, and one each for Mabualau and Vatu-i-ra. In establishing governance structures for the SSGs, BirdLife and NFMV reviewed the motivations, incentives and challenges that remote resource owners face (ie the seabird islands in this project) in protecting biodiversity in comparison with communities of the large islands and resident in large forest areas, a relationship that BirdLife has considerable previous experience with in Fiji. A Terms of Reference (TOR) for the SSGs was developed to reflect the needs and capacity of the 'remote' project sites and their communities. Following this, a workshop was held for all 6 national SSGs which addressed the roles and responsibilities of local conservation groups (SSGs). The inclusion of SSGs from all IBAs/KBAs enabled lessons to be shared and the development of partnerships between formative and established groups. The workshop showcased the successes & lessons learned from the Sisi Initiative SSG in Natewa Tunuloa Peninsula which won the UN Equator Initiative Award for its achievements in sustainable resource management. The workshop catalyzed a lot of interest among the SSGs who have gone on to lead biodiversity monitoring, biosecurity, and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities for their sites. Workshops such as this and site exchanges between SSGs are a successful mechanism for local representatives to discuss issues, challenges and solutions for their sites and communities.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Palau and particularly Kayangel suffered two super typhoons within a period of just 11 months. Typhoon Bopha in December 2012 destroyed a few megapode nests, some vegetation and trees and caused some coastal erosion, but had minimal impact on people's homes and livelihoods. Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013 completely decimated the Atoll, all trees and vegetation, homes (except one), and most public buildings including the newly built coconut mill factory were destroyed. PCS are working with the state government and the CBO to replace the factory roof and damaged structure. The mill itself is undamaged. Between 40 and 75% of the four islands were previously occupied by coconuts current estimates put this at between 10-15% remaining however, it is hoped many more will recover in coming weeks. A biological assessment will be

carried out in February 2014 to assess the impact on megapodes and other wildlife and the status of coconut palms in informing further actions needed.

The project also contributed to the CMS with eight of the project sites (Vatuiria and the Ringgold Islands) having been put forward as potential Ramsar sites. BirdLife compiled information in support of their nomination and submitted this to the government and regional contacts for endorsement and subsequently put forward to the Ramsar Secretariat

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned:

Rodents and cats are eradicated from Kayangel Atoll (Palau)

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

At the end of project three of the four islands of Kayangel are confirmed to be rat and cat free. Rats were detected on the fourth island four months following the operation and responded to. No further detections were made for six months where they were again sighted in the village. An assessment found them to be widespread to the extent the entire island would require re-treatment. A review of the operation has been conducted and will form the basis of a future attempt the planning phase for which will begin in 2014.

Monitoring during and immediately following the baiting operation confirmed no non-target impacts to wildlife, domestic animals and people.

Component 2 Planned: Community based monitoring and biosecurity systems are effectively functioning in Palau and Fiji

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

The Kayangel Biosecurity Plan was developed in partnership with the Kayangel community and key stakeholders, including Government Agencies. The plan has been reviewed by the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) and the Kayangel Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Services on the 17th October 2013. Following revisions the has been submitted to the Governor and the NISC on the 19th November 2013. The final is expected to be submitted to the President, with recommendations for establishing interisland biosecurity measures in February. The plan builds on training given to the Kayangel community by PCS and BirdLife in 2011 (at the time of the eradication operation) and will be further strengthened through a comprehensive training for state agencies including the Kayangel Department of Natural resources and other stakeholders in April 2014.

In Fiji, community-based biosecurity plans have been developed for Vatu-i-Ra Island and the 7 islands in the Ringgold Group. Site Support Groups, with recognized governance structures have been established for Vatu-i-Ra, Mabualau and the Ringgold islands. Members of the SSGs have undergone training in biosecurity and monitoring protocols and continue to lead this work. Monitoring data collected by SSGs in May and November 2013 has been reported to NFMV and uploaded to the IBA/KBA site register on the World Bird Database (WBDB). The monitoring results confirm Vatu-I-Ra, Mabualau and the Ringgold isl
ands remain rat free.

The representation of NFMV on the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan Working Group, where it is working with national agencies (such as the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji and the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji) is providing a mechanism for addressing inter-island biosecurity

at a national level complimenting the work of project communities at a local level. Partnerships have also been established with tourism authorities and tourism operators to outer islands, to develop biosecurity awareness programs for tourists and visitors to islands. NFMV produced a biosecurity flier which has been disseminated to SSGs, Provincial Offices and Tourism operators.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for Kayangel developed in 2011 has been implemented annually with some revision in 2012. While continuity of skills has been variable a repeat training of PCS and Kayangel personnel in enabled a repeat of the socio-economic and biological indicators. The main result has been a 68% increase in megapode. PCS plans to continue building monitoring capacity for the local conservation staff and will conduct monitoring activities twice in 2014. This is under the Island Ecosystem Restoration Project supported by the European Commission. A formal training for birds and forest survey and monitoring is slated for 2014 under the Jensen Grant and also supported by the US Forest Services. The Kayangel conservation staff will be attending this training

Component 3 Planned:

Restored island ecosystems are sustainably managed in Palau and Fiji

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

A community-based protection agreement has been secured for Vatu-i-Ra Island, whereby landowning clans of the Vanua Nakorotubu gave written permission and approval to protect the island for 20 years. The MOU is now with the Ra Provincial Office. In addition, the reefs and seas surrounding the island are part of a large network of marine protected areas called the Vatu-i-Ra Seascape (c.24,600ha), established by the Wildlife Conservation Society. NFMV in partnership with the Ra Provincial Office is working with the landowning communities to implement the Community Resource Management Plan and to develop viable income-generating projects identified in the plan. Because Vatu-i-Ra Island is already a very popular tourism attraction, the Nagilogilo Clan and BirdLife have developed a 'TOR' for the use of the island. The TOR, once approved and endorsed will provide a guideline for the communities, tourists, researchers and anyone using the island. This will ensure biosecurity protocols are effectively in place and resources sustainably managed. Progress has been made toward securing protection for the Ringgold Islands with the landowners of Yanuca (one of three Ringgold communities) agreeing to the protection of Nukubasaga, Nukupureti & Nukusemanu (3 islands in the Ringgold Group). The Yavusa (landowners) have requested the Cakaudrove Provincial Council endorse the agreement. The Cakaudrove Provincial Office (*Roko Tui*) and NFMV are in consultation with the landowners of the other two islands (Naqelevelu & Vetauua), to seek support for protection of their islands. Upon approval, NFMV and the Cakaudrove Provincial Office will traditionally approach the *Vanua of Laucala* to declare the Ringgold Group of Islands and its Marine areas as a community-managed/protected area.

A Management Plan has been developed for the 7 islands in the Ringgold Group and an Action Plan is currently being developed for Mabualau Island.

A five year management plan for the entire Kayangel Protected Areas Network was adopted in 2012, a management unit was established and the plan is being implemented. Kayangel successfully acquired membership for its protected areas in the Palau Protected Areas Network and today receives sustainable financing support from the Palau PAN Fund.

On November 1st 2013, the grand opening for the coconut mill sustainable livelihood component was held and the CBO was able to distribute sample souvenirs of virgin oil to everyone who attended the opening. Members of the CBO also received the certificates for completion of the Basic Business Planning and Financial Projections workshop that was conducted by the Palau Small Business Development Center. A draft business plan was developed as a result of this workshop. Unfortunately, the typhoon came on November 7th and destroyed the mill building. Work is underway to restore the building and an assessment will be made of the coconut trees that remain and a strategy for addressing a supply of coconuts for the mill.

Component 4Planned:

Demonstrate impact and disseminate best practice/models

Component 4 Actual at Completion:

Project results and outcomes have been shared across audiences locally, nationally and regionally. NFMV have presented at Laucala Tikina Council Meetings and at meetings with the *Roko Tui*. Project staff presented at the Pacific Invasives Learning Network in Kiritimati Island in March 2012 and the BirdLife International World Congress in June 2013. Information from project sites has been shared at the international review of tropical rodent eradication operations held in Auckland NZ in October 2013. The BirdLife Pacific Secretariat and NFMV have contributed to technical sections, case studies and training workshops for the Pacific Invasives Initiative Cat & Rat Eradication training resource.

While eradication & biosecurity are two key elements in IAS management, demonstrating the impacts & benefits of IAS management is just as important. PCS & NFMV have both achieved much in this area with local communities & resource owners and have begun documenting these lessons, challenges and successes. This information will provide the basis for a review in deciding future directions in extending this work to other islands and additional support among those worked on to date.

Component 5Planned:

The Palau Conservation Society manages the project sub grant and associated activities in Palau

Component 5 Actual at Completion:

PCS successfully managed the project sub grant and implemented all activities on the ground, with effective financing and project administration systems in place. All technical and financial reports were submitted to BirdLife Pacific Secretariat and project management needs addressed through various communications and assistance on site as required.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

All project components have been realized although there is a delay in finalizing the biosecurity plan, nevertheless its implementation has begun. The training scheduled for April (2014) will strengthen the skills and knowledge of local conservation staff and enhance implementation of the biosecurity plan.

Protection agreements as originally anticipated have not been finalized for Mabualau and the Ringgold Islands. However, NFMV continue to work with these communities and the Provincial Councils and protection agreements will be fulfilled but importantly both NFMV and the Provincial Council continue to address biosecurity, fisheries management and other conservation management needs for all sites

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

- 1) SSG Terms of Reference
- 2) Monitoring Reports (Ringgold Islands, Vatu-i-Ra, Mabualau and Kayangel)
- 3) Biosecurity Plans (Kayangel, Ringgold Islands, Vatu-i-Ra)
- 4) Community-Protected Area Documents (Kayangel Protected Areas Network Management Plan, Vatu-i-Ra Protected Area Map & Letter of Consent)
- 5) Training Reports (Vatu-i-Ra & Mabualau Ecotourism Scoping Report, SSG Local Empowerment Workshop Report)
- 6) Mabualau and Ringgold Islands Ramsar nominations

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The project has been quite challenging as working with communities requires a lot of engagement and communication. One must always keep an open mind as their views and reactions about the project may not remain the same throughout the project. Regular community visits is a must for these projects, never assume that they know everything you are talking about, always take time to reassess situations whether in the form of one to one discussions or group interviews.

The protected area project components resulted in products/deliverables that were in the end considered too ambitious. Most of the deliverables required extensive community consultation and support resulting in the project lagging. The project extension enabled NFMV to fulfil the majority of project deliverables.

This was a long and complex project and many lessons were learned about planning, leadership, money management, and other aspects about project management. This project showed that resourcing of the eradication operation should be separate from the operational planning effort and that flexibility in funding is key to success of complex, long-term projects.

In the project planning phase identify all potential partner agencies whose involvement is likely to increase positive outcome from the project. For example, the project discovered the Palau Small Business Development Center, a public community agency whose mandate precisely met project needs such as having the ability to conduct a full certification workshop at the community so that everyone interested can attend. The instructor was able to spend seven consecutive days at Kayangel and conducted the business planning workshop in the evenings. Not only did it provide opportunity for more members of the cbo to attend, but it gave them an opportunity to participate in developing their very own business plan for the coconut mill. A better outcome than hiring an external consultant to develop a business plan for a community enterprise.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

This project is primarily focused on community based conservation and its success is attributed to community engagement that built on established relationships between NFMV and communities at the project sites. The development of the SSGs to lead on conservation actions with the communities have further contributed to the success of the project. The involvement of the SSGs has led to a sense of ownership of the project. In addition, empowering SSGs to lead on engagement of stakeholders to secure support for protection has further enhanced their capacity as SSGs and motivated them to identify and lead on sustainable livelihood projects appropriate to their island resources. Communities more readily accept SSGs in leading local projects and are more likely to discuss issues or concerns of the project with these people than they would with anyone from outside the community.

Provincial Offices are key stakeholders in engaging communities on land use issues in Fiji and provided important guidance in establishing community managed areas.

The complexity of this project required close partnership with every member of the Kayangel community. This project gained valuable insight into methods for working successfully with

communities. For example, recognizing traditional protocols to access local information and using such protocols

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

Lessons in protected area management planning

“You must be present to succeed”

The expeditious passage of the Kayangel Conservation Act of 2012 (supported by this project) is rewarding in the sense that when you invest time in the community to build your understanding of local systems and acknowledge the people’s wishes and accept such systems and desires as a foundation to build conservation work, the rest of the building blocks toward effective management of protected areas fall into place almost automatically.

“You don’t need to wait for information to make a plan”

Scientists may disagree, but we found that waiting for new information was not necessary. These management plans were completed with community support because they incorporated what the community already knew and already desired. In one state, PCS asked the team to wait until we had completed a full socioeconomic survey. It turned out this information was not used. The best approach is to use the best available information, and to write a plan that balances uncertainty with what people believe. In the end the plan needs to be implemented, and if it does not resemble what the community wants, it will not be implemented. Likewise, if plans wait for information, they will never be finished.

“Money is best spent on getting people together”

When PCS started this process, we were not experienced facilitators or management plan authors. What we did have was money for food (and we found money for field trips). This enabled us to put groups of people together. Planning teams shared a meal together and simply relaxed with each other before getting down to work. And nearly all work was accomplished during group meetings – not during the day via email or telephone. We believe that investing in putting people together is critical. This is not to say that external consultants are not valuable, but given limited budgets, we would invest in food and local facilitators over consultants. Also, this means that the main costs of management planning are in people, particularly facilitators. Donors: There is no getting around this. Personnel and food are where the investment should be for management planning

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
Darwin Initiative	A	\$153,025	Project ended March 2012. Restoration of Pacific Island Ecosystems for People & Biodiversity; Ringgold Islands, Vatu-i-Ra & Mabualau Island in Fiji & Kayangel Atoll in Palau.
Micronesia Conservation Trust	A	44,700	
David & Lucile Packard Foundation	B	\$499, 950	Permanently removing IAS & restoring 21 important

			seabird islands in the Pacific (Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia & Palau). Project will end October 2014.
European Union	C	\$972, 000	Reducing the spread & the environmental and socioeconomic impact of IAS in SIDS/OCTs, through replicable Models supporting eradication & control of IAS and enhancing local and inter-island biosecurity. Project ends December 2014.

****Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:***

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

The success of ensuring sustainability of project outcomes was achieved through the high level of community involvement that practically involved everyone from official leaders, chiefs, elders, men, women, young people and children. Everybody had a chance to learn and participate. Even children, through the animal clinics that the project brought to Kayangel, they got to understand why they have to take better care of their pets (cats and dogs) so they do not leave home to the wild and what happens to the birds when cats are wild in the forests. The creation of a dedicated conservation management unit with fulltime staff situated right there at the community made it even easier to train and transfer capacity.

With a protected area management plan that encompass ecological and social goals, supported financially, and backed by the community makes sustainability of the outcomes of this project highly possible.

The forged partnership between PCS and the Palau Small Business Development Center (SBDC) resulted in a business plan that over thirty members of the community themselves got to help develop and trained on.

Capacity building for local communities has ensured that communities at restored sites, in particular SSGs are now equipped to implement biosecurity measures and to ensure that project activities are sustained. The development of community protected areas in Fiji and the Protected Area Network in Palau will support the recognition of and protection of these high biodiversity value sites.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

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*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****



Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(1 April 2011 – 31 October 2013)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from April 1, 2011 to October 31, 2013. (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	Yes		212,837ha	Kayangel Protected Area Network Vatu-i-Ra Island/Seascape
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	Yes		209,437ha	Kayangel Protected Area Network Vatu-i-Ra Island/Seascape
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes		45ha	Vatu-I-Ra island Ngeriungs
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	Yes		200ha	Ringgold Islands, Mabualau
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	Yes		3	Kayangel, Ringgold and Vatuiria communities

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

