

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society (TIS)

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Protection of the Tanga'eo, the endemic Mangaia Kingfisher (*Halcyon ruficollaris*) from the Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*)

Implementation Partners for This Project: Cook Islands Natural Heritage Trust (CINHT), Landcare Research, and Pacific Invasives Initiative (PII).

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): January – June 2006

Date of Report (month/year): 2 July 2006

II. OPENING REMARKS

The reason for this programme to evaluate the possibility of eradicating the myna on Mangaia was because there was some circumstantial evidence that the myna was a serious threat to the endemic Mangaia Kingfisher (Tanga'eo), which is restricted to Mangaia. Mynas have been shown to adversely affect birds by direct and indirect predation and interference in many other countries (Feare and Craig, 1999).

The team consisted of: Gerald McCormack (Team Leader), Ian Karika (Field Officer), and Euan Cameron (Youth Coordinator), John Parkes (Technical Expert), and Bill Nagle (PII). In total, one or more team members were working on Mangaia for 25 days.

On Mangaia the team was aided by the senior college students to locate roosts in the early evening, the only convenient time the birds are clearly audible. Twenty-one roosts were located and these sites were assessed for the feasibility of baiting and poisoning; and it was discovered that many of the mynas did not go to the large communal roosts but roosted in small groups elsewhere. Experiments with baiting at roosts were successful and it was determined that in an eradication programme this would be the first site of action, and this might remove around 50% of the population. The remainder would be attacked by baiting and poisoning along the roads in the afternoon. The preferred toxin would be Starlicide, which would not affect pigs or feral cats, nor non-target birds, except feral fowls and these could be replaced after the mynas were eradicated.

A community meeting was held and the consensus was that the myna could be eradicated if it was detrimental to the Mangaia Kingfisher, although one speaker presented his observations to query this claim. Another speaker was concerned that the Coconut Stick-insect might become common and destructive again, as it had been before the myna was introduced around 1958. If this occurred there would need to be a follow-up programme to deal with that. As expected several people at the meeting thought mynas should be eradicated because of the problems they inflict on the community (such as eating fruit and invading houses).

Although this study showed that myna eradication could probably be achieved on Mangaia, the Team Leader concluded that further proof of the detrimental effect of the myna on the kingfisher should be gathered to ensure that the community (and funding agencies) would be more convinced that the myna should be eradicated with the sake of the Tanga'eo. This was discussed with the CEPF representative, James Atherton, and as a result an application for funding has been submitted to CEPF to involve the senior students and youth in a study of the interactions of Mynas on breeding Tanga'eo November 2006 to February 2007. If it is clearly confirmed that the myna is seriously detrimental to nesting kingfishers, then funding will be sought to undertake the myna eradication programme during the winter of 2007.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. **What were the initial objectives of this project?**
 - (1) Determine the distribution of mynas in winter to identify ways to eradicate them;
 - (2) to assess if Mangaians would allow the myna to be eradicated by the proposed methods;
 - (3) involve the community in the assessment; and
 - (4) produce a Feasibility Plan on the best way to eradicate the mynas, if feasible.
2. **Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.**

No
3. **Briefly describe the methods used in achieving the objectives of this project.**

The team and students located the roosts during the evening chorus (usually starting around 6pm and lasting about 20 minutes), and unmapped roads were mapped with a GPS to provide knowledge of access to different parts of the island. There was an initial meeting with the Mangaia Resource Council who approved the assessment programme, and a final community meeting to discuss the assessment and obtain community approval to eradicate the myna. The Technical Expert and team members experimented with baits on the roads, and with baiting birds as they moved towards their roosts in the late afternoon. The information gathered will form an important component of the Technical Report.
4. **Was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives? If no, explain why not. If yes, please explain how the project was successful and the key factors that contributed to its success.**

The programme was successful in identifying the two most likely places to bait and kill the mynas, and it gained community approval. The reason for success was the involvement of the senior students in the fieldwork of locating the roosts, discussing openly the pros and cons of eradicating the myna with the community, and the Technical Expert is preparing the Feasibility Plan on eradicating the myna.
5. **Describe what was achieved in terms of:**
 - a) capacity development;
students learnt more about undertaking fieldwork

- b) developing partnerships;
a couple of people were identified as potential local leaders for further conservation work on Mangaia
 - c) raising awareness of invasive species and generating community support for their management;
the involvement of the students in fieldwork and in the community meeting raised awareness of the myna's role as an alien species
 - d) involving the local community and other stakeholders:
see above
 - e) providing benefits to the local community and other stakeholders.
there were general financial benefits to the community through provision of food, accommodation and transport, and a considerable donation was made to the students travel fund for their assistance in the field
6. What was the impact of the project at the local level?
There was an increased awareness of the myna as a pest, and the possibility of its eradication.
 7. What was the impact of the project (if any) at the national level?
There was considerable national interest in the idea of eradicating mynas, which are commonly seen as a pest mainly because they damage ripe fruit.
 8. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.
No
 9. Describe the key positive and negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.
The main positive lesson was that it is important to involve the local community in implementation and in discussion throughout a project.
 10. How has the project been promoted? (Please enclose/attach press clippings, brochures, publications, videos, websites, photos, etc). Please describe the products developed during the project and how and to whom these were disseminated.
There were news items in the Cook Islands News (6 June 2006, 12 July 2006), and an interview on Radio Australia; and the Technical Adviser was interviewed on Cook Islands' television. A general report of the programme will be put on the Cook Islands Biodiversity Website.
 11. Describe any follow-up activities you wish to implement and how you intend to do so (eg other invasive species management actions you wish to pursue, or how you plan to scale up the project to a broader area).
Having engaged the community in the evaluation it was obvious at the community meeting that not everyone agreed that the myna was a serious threat to the Mangaia Kingfisher. As noted above it is therefore being proposed to engage the students and community to actually study the

interaction of these two birds during the next breeding season (November – February). If the myna is shown to be a serious threat to the kingfisher we apply for support to eradicate it during the winter of 2007. The social effects of mynas will also be taken into consideration in any further proposals.

12. Please provide any additional information you think may assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.
I think all the points are covered above.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

| Donor | Type of Funding* | Amount | Notes |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Landcare Research | co-finance | | John Parkes time |
| Natural Heritage Trust | co-finance | | Gerald McCormack time of 20 days |
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**Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:*

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

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

The Project will now take a detour and seek funding to engage the community in an evaluation of the impacts of the myna on nesting kingfishers during the next breeding season (November 2006 – February 2007). If it is shown to be a serious threat to the endemic kingfisher this will make it much clearer to the community and funding agencies the need to eradicate the myna, and then funding will be sought to undertake the eradication as proposed in the Feasibility Plan.

Part of any eradication programme will be an awareness campaign to prevent reinvasion.

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It has already been outlined above that while eradication could be undertaken next winter and would have an excellent chance of success, it is proposed to engage the community in further fieldwork to determine the extent of the detrimental effect of the myna on nesting kingfishers. If it were shown to be serious, then

funding for the eradication would be sought for a programme in the winter of 2007.

A financial spreadsheet is provided. The **bold yellow row on top** shows the USD amount budgeted for each areas and the **bold yellow row at the bottom** shows the USD amount remaining. (The non-shaded central area shows all amounts in NZD per our bank check-book and bank statements.)

In summary, we have USD11,600 remaining. After meeting the cost of the report by the Technical Advisor, which is expected to be about USD5,000, there will be USD6,600 remaining. We hope CEPF approves our new proposal and that these remaining funds can be carried forward towards that project.

This project is supported by the Australian government's Regional Natural Heritage Program through the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund.

The Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund is a joint initiative of Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes ___ **Yes** ___
No _____

If yes, please also complete the following:

For more information about this project, please contact:

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