

STRATEGY, ACTION PLAN AND PRIORITY PILOT ACTIVITIES ON PITCAIRN ISLANDS





 **BUDGET: €102,000 (XPF 12.1 million)**

 **PARTNERS:**



 **ACTION TIME PERIOD: June 2020 – December 2024**

BRIEF SUMMARY

 In September 2024, the Pitcairn authorities adopted the territory's first invasive alien species management planning document. The document aims to formalise the prioritisation of the issues to be addressed, as well as the resources required, in order to facilitate calls for external support.



The Territorial Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan (TISSAP) is the result of a combination of external expertise and local consultations. An analysis of the existing documentation enabled the preparation of a study and consultation mission that was unprecedented for this isolated territory. It allowed field assessment on biosecurity, the identification of invasive plant species and the formulation of recommendations to inform local consultations.

Today, the territory and its 51 inhabitants have a document that will facilitate the mobilisation of external support and effort coordination, which are essential given the limited human and material resources available, to preserve its exceptional biodiversity from invasive alien species.

BACKGROUND

 The isolation of the Pitcairn Islands archipelago has favoured the development of a unique biodiversity, while at the same time making this area highly vulnerable to invasive alien species. Located halfway between New Zealand and South America, the four islands are home to 23 endemic species over a total area of just 49 km². The lagoons and surrounding waters are home to 13 endemic marine species.

“23 species endemic to the 4 Pitcairn Islands: a unique biodiversity worth protecting”

Preserving biodiversity and ecosystems is essential for the local community, which is heavily dependent on its environment and local natural resources. After creating one of the world's largest marine reserves around the Pitcairn Islands in 2015, the territory decided to take action to preserve terrestrial ecosystems in the face of the growing impact of invasive alien species (IAS).

Although some action had already been taken on the ground, the territory and its 51 residents had only limited human and financial resources to manage biosecurity and the species already present on the islands.



ISSUES & OBJECTIVES



THE TISSAP HAS 4 GOALS:

- Prioritising issues** relating to invasive alien species
- Identifying potential partners**
- Identifying the required and available resources**
- Implementing priority pilot actions**

 The project addresses the need for support in developing a strategy and action plan to deal with the issues associated with invasive alien species (TISSAP). In this sense, the project's contribution was both to coordinate consultations with local stakeholders and to mobilise complementary external expertise to advise local stakeholders.

Adapting the implementation of the project to Pitcairn's geographical isolation was a key challenge in achieving the objectives, made all the more complex by the travel restrictions associated with COVID-19.



OUTCOMES

 The project enabled the Island Council to adopt the territory's first invasive alien species management planning document (TISSAP) in July 2024. Despite the logistical constraints on carrying out actions in the field, linked to the geographical isolation and travel restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, this TISSAP is the result of in-depth consultations with local partners and is based on field expertise, which has helped to guide the development of local management measures.

To prepare and guide the development of the TISSAP, a documentary study was carried out in 2022 to establish an inventory of IAS and biodiversity specific to the territory's four islands. The study details the species present, assesses the level of risk associated with invasive species and identifies the most critical endemic and threatened species. It characterises the risks posed by invasive species in neighbouring countries, as well as the potential pathways for their introduction and spread. Finally, the study lists the initiatives already underway on Pitcairn to prevent, manage and control IAS.

"A first planning document based on unprecedented field expertise"

Following on from this analysis, an 11-day mission was organised in 2023 to carry out field assessments and local consultations with a view to develop the TISSAP. The mission involved three experts in the following fields: beekeeping (honey being Pitcairn's main export), the identification of invasive plant species and the formulation of recommendations for biological control solutions. Consultations with local residents during this mission resulted in the first version of the TISSAP.

The field expertise in biosecurity was carried out at a later stage, due to last-minute health constraints. This assessment made it possible to evaluate the measures in place

from the moment people and goods boarded the supply ship and during the journey, right up to the moment they disembark on the island. The trip also provided an opportunity for further consultations, leading to a revised version of the TISSAP.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, which delayed the adoption of the TISSAP by the authorities, and the delays in transporting people and equipment to Pitcairn, it was not possible to fund priority pilot actions under the PROTEGE project.





KEY FIGURES

1  **TISSAP**
(strategy and action plan)
adopted by the Pitcairn
Assembly

40 
newly identified
plant species

4 
field
expertises

30+ 
recommendations
for biosecurity purposes



FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS

MICHELE CHRISTIAN

Head of the Environment, Conservation and Natural Resources Division of the Government of the Pitcairn Islands

“ The TISSAP provides the Pitcairn Government with a strategy on how to best manage invasive species that are specific to Pitcairn. The TISSAP also provides further scope for funding pilot projects on Pitcairn.

Visiting scientists and experts play an extremely important role for us, as our geographical remoteness does not always allow us to participate in field workshops and conferences. [They] not only provide the Pitcairn Islands Government with the opportunity to engage and learn, but also encourage our whole community to participate and gain a deeper understanding of invasive species control and the importance of border controls.

”

CHARLENE WARREN

Pitcairn Islands Biosecurity Officer

“ On the Pitcairn Islands, we have very few pathways to move people and our supplies.

It is therefore important, now more than ever, that we try to upkeep firm control over our border and encourage people to declare what they may like to import to Pitcairn.





PROSPECTS AND SUSTAINABILITY

 The adoption of the TISSAP is an essential milestone, as it demonstrates political will and provides a framework for future action. Prioritising targeted actions and integrating them into a structured strategy should make it easier to request funding from donors, to obtain the resources needed to implement them.

In the short term, Pitcairn plans to adopt measures to tighten control over the supply ship from New Zealand, which transits through Mangareva. These measures, such as the control of imported goods and the cleaning of containers at the port of departure, are direct applications of the biosecurity recommendations included in the TISSAP.

“a framework conducive to the implementation of actions in the future”

DOCUMENTARY RESOURCES



PROTEGE



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click to
access
resources



Pitcairn's first invasive species planning document: TISSAP 2024-2031



Pitcairn Islands seeks to improve biodiversity and climate resilience with SPREP Invasive Species Team and PRISMSS partners, October 2023



Pitcairn Islands Adopts Inaugural Invasive Species Strategy and Action Plan, October 2024



- Regional ecosystem profile – Pitcairn Islands, Pacific Region. 2016. EU Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories, Eleonora Avagliano, Flora Artzner, Jean Kape & Aurélie Bocquet. BEST, Service contract 07.0307.2013/666363/SER/B2.
- Brooke, M de L.; Hepburn, I.; R. J Trevelyan (2004) Henderson Island World Heritage Site
- Management Plan 2004–2009. Published 2004 by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office,
- London, in conjunction with the Pitcairn Islands Administration and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

- BirdLife International (2022) Important Bird Areas factsheet: Pitcairn Island
- BirdLife International (2022) Important Bird Areas factsheet: Henderson Island.
- BirdLife International (2022) Important Bird Areas factsheet: Oeno Island
- BirdLife International (2022) Important Bird Areas factsheet: Ducie Island



Find all the lessons-learned factsheets on invasive alien species **freely available on our website.**



PROTEGE

PACIFIC TERRITORIES REGIONAL PROJECT FOR
SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

protege.spc.int/en



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