PIFWO Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocols

(Updated April 2022)

Project activities may introduce or spread invasive species, causing negative ecological consequences to new areas or islands, resulting in potential impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitat. For example, seeds of invasive plant species (e.g., *Chromolaena odorata*, *Senecio madagascariensis*, *Cyathea cooperi*, or *Miconia calvescens*) can be inadvertently transported on equipment from a previous work site to a new site where the species are not present. Likewise, equipment used in an area infected with a pathogen or insect pest that can have ecological consequences (e.g., rapid ʻōhiʻa death (*Ceratocystis spp.*), black twig borer (*Xylosandrus compactus*), or naio thrips (*Klambothrips myopori*), if not properly decontaminated, can act as a vector to introduce the pathogen into a new area. Additionally, vehicles must be properly inspected and cleaned to ensure vertebrate or invertebrate pests do not stowaway and spread to other areas. These are just a few examples of how even well-intended project activities may inadvertently introduce or spread invasive species.

To avoid and minimize invasive species potential impacts to fish, wildlife, and their habitat we recommend incorporating the following Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocol into your project planning. We recommend this biosecurity protocol be incorporated when project activities occur within any area containing predominantly native habitat. Project activities involving transportation of a substantial amount of materials (i.e., construction materials or aggregate, etc.), vehicles, machinery, equipment, or personnel between sites should also incorporate the biosecurity protocols. Additional consultation with the Service is recommended if the project involves transportation of materials, equipment, vehicles, etc. between islands or transpacific movement. The Species-Specific Biosecurity Protocols should also be reviewed and implemented depending on the geographic area and/or specific activities of your project.

Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocol

The following biosecurity protocol is recommended to be incorporated into planning for your project to avoid or minimize transportation of invasive species with potential to impact to fish, wildlife, and their habitat. Cleaning, treatment, and/or inspection activities are the responsibility of the equipment or vehicle owner and operator. However, it is ultimately the responsibility of the action agency to ensure that all project materials, vehicles, machinery, equipment, and personnel are free of invasive species before entry into a project site. Please refer to the resources listed below for current removal/treatment recommendations that may be relevant to your project.

1. Cleaning and treatment:
   Project applicants should assume that all project materials (i.e., construction materials, or aggregate such as dirt, sand, gravel, etc.), vehicles, machinery, and equipment contain dirt and mud, debris, plant seeds, and other invasive species, and therefore require thorough cleaning. Treatment for specific pests, for example, trapping and poison baiting for rodents, or baiting and fumigation for insects, should be considered when applicable. For effective cleaning we offer the following recommendations prior to entry into a project site:
   a. Project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment must be pressure washed thoroughly (preferably with hot water) in a designated cleaning area. Project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment should be visibly free of mud/dirt (excluding aggregate), seeds, plant debris, insects, spiders, frogs (including frog eggs), other vertebrate species (e.g., rodents, mongoose, feral cats, reptiles, etc.), and rubbish. Areas of particular concern include bumpers, grills, hood compartments, wheel wells, undercarriage, cabs, and truck beds. Truck beds with accumulated material are prime sites for hitchhiking invasive species.
   b. The interior and exterior of vehicles, machinery, and equipment must be free of rubbish and food, which can attract pests (i.e., rodents and insects). The interiors of vehicles and the cabs of machinery should be vacuumed clean particularly for any plant material or seeds.

2. Inspection:
   a. Following cleaning and/or treatment, project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment, must be visually inspected by its user, and be free of mud/dirt (excluding aggregate), debris, and invasive species prior to entry into a project site. For example, careful visual inspection of a vehicle's tires and undercarriage is recommended for any remaining mud that could contain invasive plant seeds.
   b. Any project materials, vehicles, machinery, or equipment found to contain invasive species (e.g., plant seeds, invertebrates, rodents, mongoose, cats, reptiles, etc.) must not enter the project site until those invasive species are properly removed/treated.

3. For all project site personnel:
   a. Prior to entry into the project site, visually inspect and clean your clothes, boots or other footwear, backpack, radio harness, tools and other personal gear and

equipment for insects, seeds, soil, plant parts, or other debris. We recommend the use of a cleaning brush with sturdy bristles. Seeds found on clothing, footwear, backpacks, etc., should be placed in a secure bag or similar container and discarded in the trash rather than being dropped to ground at the project site or elsewhere.

4. Additional considerations:
    a. Consider implementing a Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plan (https://www.fws.gov/policy/A1750fw1.html) to improve project planning around reducing the risk of introducing or spreading invasive species.
    b. When applicable, use pest-free or low-risk sources of plants, mulch, wood, animal feed or other materials to be transported to a project site.
    c. For projects involving plants from nurseries (e.g., outplanting activities, etc.), all plants should be inspected, and if necessary, appropriately cleaned or treated for invasive species prior to being transported to the project site.
    d. Avoid unnecessary exposure to invasive species at a particular site (to the extent practical) to reduce contamination and spread. For example, if your project involves people or equipment moving between multiple locations, plan and organize timelines so that work is completed in native habitat prior to working in a disturbed location to reduce the likelihood of introducing a pest into the native habitat.
    e. Maintain good communication about invasive species risks between project managers and personnel working on the project site (e.g., conduct briefings and training about invasive species). Ensure prevention measures are communicated to the entire project team. Also consider adding language on biosecurity into contracts or permitting mechanisms to provide clarity to all involved in the project. Report any species of concern or possible introduction of invasive species to appropriate land managers.

For current removal/treatment recommendations please refer to the following:
Hawaiian Islands:

- Hawai‘i Island – https://www.biisc.org/
- Maui – https://mauiinvasive.org/
- Moloka‘i - https://www.molokaiisc.org/
- Lāna‘i - https://pulamalanai.com/
- O‘ahu – https://www.oahuisc.org/
- Kaua‘i – https://www.kauaiisc.org/

Mariana Islands:

- Guam – https://biosecurity.guam.gov/
- CNMI – http://www.dfwcnmi.com/

Species-Specific Biosecurity Protocols

The following section contains specific protocols for a few select invasive species of concern in the Pacific Islands highlighted because of their potential to easily spread and cause great harm to native species and habitats. Other invasive species may not have existing specific protocols or may already be minimized by implementing the invasive species biosecurity protocols above (e.g., invasive plants, invertebrates, larger vertebrates). As new threats emerge that require development of species-specific protocols, those may be added to this list.

Table 1. Current island distribution of invasive species with specific biosecurity protocols in the Pacific Islands (PIFWO jurisdiction, as of February 2022).

Island	Invasive Species with Specific Protocols			
	Rapid ʻŌhiʻa Death	**Little Fire Ant**	**Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle**	**Brown Treesnake**
Island of Hawaiʻi	widespread	widespread	not present	not present
Maui	not present	incipient	not present	not present
Oʻahu	incipient	incipient	widespread	not present
Kauaʻi	widespread	not present	not present	not present
Guam	NA	widespread	widespread	widespread
CNMI	NA	not present	Rota only	not present
American Samoa	NA	incipient	widespread	not present

Rapid ʻŌhiʻa Death (ROD)

Rapid ʻŌhiʻa Death (ROD) is a caused by a fungal pathogen (*Ceratocystis* spp.) that attacks and kills ʻōhiʻa trees (*Metrosideros polymorpha*). ʻŌhiʻa is endemic to the Hawaiian Islands and is the most abundant native tree species, comprising approximately 80 percent of Hawaiʻi's remaining native forests.

For more information about ROD including its current distribution, ROD science updates, and the latest on ROD protocol, please visit www.rapidohiadeath.org.

To reduce the risk of spreading ROD, we recommend the following best management practices and decontamination protocol be implemented for projects occurring in any native habitat where ʻōhiʻa is present, on islands where ROD is currently found. If working directly with ʻōhiʻa trees (e.g., sampling suspected trees, clearing an area of ʻōhiʻa, etc.) or in an area(s) known to be highly infested with ROD, additional consultation is recommended.

Best Management Practices for ROD

1. Never transport any part of an ʻōhiʻa tree between different areas of an island or to a different island.

2. Do not use equipment from ROD infected islands on another island unless it is very specialized equipment and follows the decontamination protocol described below.

3. Avoid wounding ʻōhiʻa trees and roots with mowers, chainsaws, weed eaters, and other tools. If an ʻōhiʻa receives a minor injury like a small broken branch, then give the injury a clean, pruning-type cut (close to the main part of the trunk or branch) to promote healing, and then spray the entire wounded area with a pruning seal.

4. Always report suspect ROD ʻōhiʻa trees observed within you project area. ROD is a wilt disease that cuts off the supply of water and nutrients to the tree. The primary symptom to look for is an entire canopy or a large branch with dying leaves or red discolored leaves. Please record the GPS coordinates and location and take a picture of the tree if possible. Please report suspected ROD ʻōhiʻa trees to the following agencies:
    a. Island of Hawaiʻi – BIISC: 808-969-8268 (ohialove@hawaii.edu)
    b. Maui – MISC: 808-573-6472 (miscpr@hawaii.edu)
    c. Molokaʻi – TNC: 808-553-5236 ext. 6585 (lbuchanan@tnc.org)
    d. Oʻahu – OISC: 808-266-7994 (oisc@hawaii.edu)
    e. Kauaʻi – KISC: 808-821-1490 (kisc@hawaii.edu)

ROD Decontamination Protocol

1. Clothes, footwear, backpacks, and other personal equipment
    a. Before leaving the project site, remove as much mud and other contaminants as possible. Use of a brush with soap and water to clean gear is preferred. Footwear, backpacks, and other gear must be sanitized by spraying with a solution of >70 percent isopropyl alcohol or a freshly mixed 10 percent bleach solution.

2. Vehicles, machinery, and other equipment
    a. Vehicles, machinery, and other equipment must be thoroughly hosed down with water (pressure washing preferred) and visibly free of mud and debris, then sprayed with a solution of >70 percent isopropyl alcohol or a freshly mixed 10 percent bleach solution. Use of a "pump-pot" sprayer is recommended for the solution and a hot water wash is preferred. Be sure to thoroughly clean the undercarriage, truck bed, bumpers, and wheel wells.
    b. If non-decontaminated personnel or items enter a vehicle, then the inside of the vehicle (i.e., floor mats, etc.) must be subsequently decontaminated by removing mud and other contaminants and sprayed with the one of the same aforementioned sanitizing solutions.

3. Cutting tools
    a. All cutting tools, including machetes, chainsaws, and loppers must be sanitized to remove visible mud and other contaminants. Tools must be sanitized using a solution of >70 percent isopropyl alcohol or a freshly mixed 10 percent bleach solution. One minute after sanitizing, one may apply an oil-based lubricant to chainsaw chains or other metallic parts to prevent corrosion as bleach is corrosive to metal.

    NOTE: When using a 10 percent bleach solution, surfaces should be cleaned with a minimum contact time of 30 seconds. Bleach must be mixed daily and used within 24

hours, as once mixed it degrades. Bleach will not work to disinfect surfaces that have high levels of organic matter such as sawdust or soil. Because bleach is also corrosive to metal, a water rinse after proper sanitization is recommended to avoid corrosion.

Little Fire Ant (LFA)

The little fire ant (*Wasmannia auropunctata*), or LFA, is an invasive species with a painful sting that can inhabit many different environments. In Hawai‘i, it often infests agricultural fields and farms, damaging crops and stinging unsuspecting workers. Little fire ants are also highly disruptive to native tropical ecosystems and harmful to wildlife. Slow moving, but tiny and capable of foraging 24 hours a day with multiple queens per colony, LFA is a formidable threat to biodiversity, agriculture, and quality of life on tropical islands in the Pacific.

For more information about LFA including helpful guides and workshops for treating or detecting LFA, please visit www.littlefireants.com.

To reduce the risk of spreading LFA, we recommend the following biosecurity protocol be implemented for projects that occur in native habitats on islands where LFA is currently recorded, and in areas known to be infested with LFA (check http://stoptheant.org/lfa-in-hawaii/ for status on each island).

Biosecurity Protocol for LFA

1. For projects involving plants from nurseries (e.g., outplanting activities, etc.), all plants should be inspected for little fire ants and other pests prior to being transported to the project site. If plants are found to be infested by ants of any species, plants should be sourced from an alternative nursery and the infested nursery should follow treatment protocols recommended by the Hawai‘i Ant Lab (https://littlefireants.com/wp-content/uploads/2020-Management-of-Pest-Ants-in-Nurseries-min.pdf).

2. All work vehicles, machinery, and equipment should follow steps 1 and 2 in the “Invasive Species Biosecurity Protocol” for (1) cleaning and treatment and (2) inspection for invasive ants prior to entering a project site.

3. Any machinery, vehicles, equipment, or other supplies found to be infested with ants (or other invasive species) must not enter the project site until it is properly treated (https://littlefireants.com/how-to-treat-for-little-fire-ants-for-homeowners/#recommended-bait-products) and re-tested. Infested vehicles must be treated following recommendations by the Hawai‘i Ant Lab (https://littlefireants.com/resource-center/) or another ant control expert and in accordance with all State and Federal laws. Treatment is the responsibility of the equipment or vehicle owner. Ultimately however, it is the responsibility of the action agency to ensure that all project materials, vehicles, machinery, and equipment follow the appropriate protocol(s).

4. General Vehicle Ant Hygiene: Even the cleanest vehicle can pick up and spread little fire ant. Place MaxForce Complete Brand Granular Insect Bait (1.0 percent Hydramethylnon; https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Maxforce%20Complete%20Label%201-5-18.pdf) into refillable tamper resistant bait stations. An example of a commercially available refillable tamper resistant bait station is the Ant Café Pro (https://www.antcafe.com/). Place a bait station (or stations) in the vehicle and note that larger vehicles, such as trucks, may require multiple stations. Monitor bait stations frequently (every week at a minimum) and replace bait as needed. If the bait station does not have a sticker to identify the contents, apply a sticker listing contents to the station.

5. Gravel, building materials, or other equipment such as portable buildings should be baited using MaxForce Complete Brand Granular Insect Bait (1.0 percent Hydramethylnon; https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Maxforce%20Complete%20Label%201-5-18.pdf) or AmdroPro (0.73 percent Hydramethylnon; https://connpest.com/labels/AMDROPRO.pdf) following label guidance.

6. Storage areas that hold field tools, especially tents, tarps, and clothing should be baited using MaxForce Complete Brand Granular Insect Bait (1.0 percent Hydramethylnon; https://labelsds.com/images/user_uploads/Maxforce%20Complete%20Label%201-5-18.pdf) or AmdroPro (0.73 percent Hydramethylnon; https://connpest.com/labels/AMDROPRO.pdf) following label guidance.

7. Vehicles that have entered a project site known or thought to overlap with areas infested with LFA should subsequently be tested for LFA with baiting in accordance with protocol recommended by the Hawai‘i Ant Lab (https://littlefireants.com/survey-your-home-for-lfa/).

8. If LFA are detected, please report it to 808-643-PEST (Hawai‘i), 671-475-PEST (Guam), or 684-699-1575 (American Samoa). Please visit https://littlefireants.com/identification-of-little-fire-ants/ for assistance in identifying LFA.

Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB)

The coconut rhinoceros beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*), or CRB, is a large, horned scarab beetle native to Southeast Asia. An invasive pest where it occurs outside of its native range, the adult beetles primarily attack coconut palms by boring into the crowns to feed on developing leaves. It is also known to feed on bananas, sugarcane, pineapples, oil palms, and pandanus trees. The larval grub stage burrow into and feed upon decomposing mulch and vegetation. On most Pacific Islands it lacks natural predators, leading to severe declines and extirpations of palm species where it has become established. On Guam, researchers have recently documented a shift of CRB to the island's native and threatened cycad tree (*Cycas micronesica*) (Marler et al. 2020). In the Hawaiian Islands, CRB is a documented threat to archipelago's native *Pritchardia* palm species.

For more information about CRB including the current situation in Guam and high/low-risk areas on O‘ahu, please visit http://cnas-re.uog.edu/crb/ or https://www.crbhawaii.org/.

To reduce the risk of spreading CRB, we recommend the following biosecurity protocol be implemented for projects that involve movement or creation of green waste and occur on islands where CRB is currently found. Please note there are protocols that pertain to specific geographic areas (O‘ahu or Marianas).

Biosecurity Protocol for CRB (O‘ahu)

1. Never transport green waste between islands and minimize the creation, storage, and transport of green waste within O‘ahu, this also includes:
    a. Mulch, bark, compost
    b. Soil of any kind
    c. Potted plants of any kind

    Additional consultation is recommended if the project involves transportation of materials, soil, equipment, vehicles, etc. between islands.

2. If felling or trimming palms, contact CRB Response for a free inspection ((808) 679-5244 or email at info@crbhawaii.org)

3. Keep green waste whole until it is ready to be treated and removed.
    a. Chip green waste on site and transport it on the same day to a secure and managed green waste disposal site/facility.
    b. For chipped green waste in high-risk areas, re-chip prior to movement outside the infested area, treat with pesticide (when applicable), heat treatment (>130 degrees F), spread and dry, or store in sealed durable containers.

4. Minimize accumulations of green waste by regularly treating mulch piles or depositing it in sealed green waste bins. In low-risk areas, we also recommend thinly spreading mulch (less than 2 inches deep) and allowing it to dry (no irrigation).

5. If injured or dying coconut palm trees are observed or if CRB are detected, contact CRB Response at (808) 679-5244 or email at info@crbhawaii.org or online at https://www.crbhawaii.org/report

Biosecurity Protocol for CRB (Marianas)

1. Never transport green waste between islands in the Marianas, this also includes:
    a. Mulch, bark, compost
    b. Soil of any kind
    c. Potted plants of any kind

    Additional consultation is recommended if the project involves transportation of materials, equipment, vehicles, etc. between islands.

2. Designate secure and managed green waste disposal sites to reduce the number of potential oviposition (laying of eggs) sites and larval food.

3. Green waste disposal sites should be monitored with CRB traps. The following control measures should be utilized at green waste sites.
    a. Netting - A gill net with a 1 inch mesh measured knot to knot, made from 0.25 mm nylon monofilament, should be laid over piles of green waste such as palm tree cuttings or decaying organic matter. The netting is helpful for trapping adult beetles emerging from the mulch.
    b. If the green waste site is found within or adjacent to chain link fencing, we recommend use of the DeFence trap. These are simply constructed with a 12 ft piece of tekken netting, folded in half, and secured onto a fence line using zip ties. In the middle of the net, attach a solar powered uvLED light, and a CRB pheromone lure protected in a red Solo cup. This trap design is currently among the most effective methods because it does not require many materials and uses the least amount of space on the property.
        i. For more information on trapping methods, please visit https://cnas-re.uog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/CRB-Trapping.pdf

4. If CRB are detected contact CNMI Forestry at (670) 256-3321 or Department of Lands and Natural Resources at (670) 322-9834 or Guam's Department of Agriculture Biosecurity Division (671) 477-7822 or email at guament@teleguam.net.

Brown Treesnake (BTS)

The Brown Treesnake (*Boiga irregularis*), or BTS, was accidentally introduced to Guam likely as a stowaway in military cargo shortly after WWII. On Guam, BTS has caused the extinction or extirpation of many native and endemic species of birds and lizards. The loss of native species has furthermore triggered cascading ecological impacts affecting Guam forest regeneration and ecology (Rogers et al. 2017). Preventing the spread of BTS from Guam to other Pacific Islands is the primary goal of the BTS Technical Working Group (TWG) formed by the 2004 BTS Control and Eradication Act. The BTS TWG developed a BTS interdiction program with the goal of 100-percent inspections of outbound cargo using canine inspection teams.

For more information about BTS including links to partnerships and ongoing research, please visit: https://www.fws.gov/pacificislands/articles.cfm?id=%20149489576

The USDA Wildlife Services are responsible for interdiction on Guam and collaborates with the Department of Defense, the Government of Guam, and private industry to remove snakes from outbound aircraft, sea vessels, and cargo. In the CNMI, the Department of Fish and Wildlife conducts redundant canine or visual inspections of inbound air/seacraft and cargo.

The following protocol is required for project activities that involve cargo, baggage, materials, etc. shipped from or through Guam prior to departure and upon arrival to the CNMI:

BTS Inspection Instructions for Guam and the CNMI:

1. Schedule cargo, aircraft, vehicle, and vessel inspections on Guam with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Wildlife Services (WS) for any and all vessels, vehicles, aircraft, and cargo that has been stationed or staged on Guam (for contact info, see Contact list on page 2). Inspections are available 24/7.
    a. All cargo staged on Guam must be inspected before transport to other Pacific Islands.
    b. Examples of cargo include vehicles, pallets of goods, loose boxes, containers filled with goods, bundles of construction materials (rolls of metal sheeting, stacks of plywood/boards, PVC pipes, or any material that provides an abundance of small, dark crevices).

2. Before your Guam-outbound cargo arrives on Saipan, Tinian, or Rota, schedule cargo inspections by Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW).
    a. Rota – contact Jon Mesgnon (670-287-7683) and Manny Pangelinan (670-483-6261)
    b. Tinian – contact Ton Castro (670-287-9453) and Manny Pangelinan (670-483-6261)
    c. Saipan – contact Joe Cruz (670-285-7877) and Manny Pangelinan (670-483-6261)

3. If you see a snake while in cargo staging areas on Guam or anywhere on other islands:
    a. Report it immediately. Take note of where you are, what the snake looked like, and any notable behaviors. Attempt to kill, apprehend, or injure the snake, and take photos if possible. Keep visual contact with the snake until BTS program personnel arrive.
    b. To report a snake in the CNMI (e.g., Saipan, Tinian, Rota) call 670-28-SNAKE (670-287-6253)
    c. To report a snake on any island to the BTS Rapid Response Team on Guam, call 671-777-HISS (671-777-4477)
    d. If the snake is killed, save the carcass, and give to a CNMI, USDA, FWS, or USGS representative.

References Cited

Marler, T.E., Marler, F.C. Matanane, and L.I. Terry. 2020. Burrowing activity of coconut rhinoceros beetle on Guam cycads. Communicative & Integrative Biology, 13:1, 74-83. (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19420889.2020.1774310)

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