



BUREAU OF AGRICULTURE

Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment & Tourism
Republic of Palau

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PRESS RELEASE: Southwest Islands Women Take the Lead on Invasive Species

This past Saturday, May 23, a group of women from Hatohobei and Sonsorol States, concerned about protecting their islands from invasive species such as insect pests and weeds, met to discuss what they can do to protect their islands. Their discussion was assisted by Dr. Joel Miles, National Invasive Species Coordinator. Dr. Miles gave a brief presentation on invasive species: he informed the women that, while Koror and Babeldaob have over 300 species of invasive plants, Hatohobei and Sonsorol have less than 50. Similar numbers exist for insect pests. The women told Dr. Miles that they believe the fruit fly, which was not present in their islands in 2002, has found its way to their islands. They are also having problems with the coconut rhinoceros beetle. They asked for assistance and advice to protect their islands.

During this meeting, the women learned that invasive species can travel in almost any cargo, including soil, plants, food, and even on the anchor of the boat. They concluded that their states need regulations to protect themselves from invasive species, as well as greater awareness and cooperation from the residents and visitors to their islands. They decided to discuss this with other island residents, and to bring it up with their state legislators and governors. The women thank the Kalau Gym for providing a space for their meeting.

Dr. Miles is available to discuss invasive species with any interested community group. You can contact him by telephone at 544-5804 (Forestry Office in Nekken, Aimeliik), or by email at joelmiles52@gmail.com.

