

# **The effects of yellow crazy ants on Tokelau residents**

## **Information sheet**

### **Background and purpose of the study**

This research questionnaire is being conducted by Dr. Monica Gruber, a post-doctoral fellow (scientist) at Victoria University of Wellington. Yellow crazy ants are an invasive species with potentially serious ecological consequences. The ant can also have effects on humans, but most of these effects have only been assessed informally. The purpose of the questionnaire is to find out how the invasion of yellow crazy ants is affecting the communities of Tokelau, what steps are currently being taken to manage the problem, and steps the members of the community would like to be taken to manage the problem. Individual responses will be confidential to the respondent and the researcher. Once summarised, the responses to the questionnaire will be used together with the results of ecological surveys to advise the Taupulega (Tokelau village councils) on possible approaches for managing the yellow crazy ant problem.

### **Informed consent**

The Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee, which has approved this research project, requires that all research involves participants who are: 1) fully informed about the nature of the research; and 2) consent to participate. This Information sheet and the Informed Consent Form have been designed in accordance with these requirements. This is to ensure that research participants and their communities are protected from any negative consequence potentially arising from their participation in the research process.

### **Research format**

The research involves answering a set of questions about the participant's opinions of the yellow crazy ants on Tokelau. The informal verbal questionnaire will take approximately 15 – 30 minutes and there is no obligation to answer all of the questions. All responses will be recorded anonymously, however, we will record the location of the participant's home or garden, so that we can match this with ecological assessments of the abundance of the ant. This is because ecological problems are worse when the ant is at high abundance, so high abundance may also be associated with more severe problems for people. Responses will be summarised and no individual responses will be reported. The participant has the right to check interview notes if they wish. The questionnaires will be returned to Victoria University, entered into a database and summarised. A report of the summarised results, together with our ecological surveys will be made to the Taupulega within 6 months of the questionnaire's completion. The questionnaires and summarised data will be retained for publication in a scientific journal, and destroyed subsequent to publication. Copies of the report to the Taupulega and any publication can be provided to the interviewee if required. We will require the names of all participants for this purpose, and should any follow up research be identified for which the participant's permission may be needed. The names of the participants will not be kept together with individual questionnaires. If there are any questions, concerns or further information required at any time, please contact the researcher:

Monica Gruber  
Post-doctoral Research Fellow  
School of Biological Sciences  
Victoria University of Wellington  
PO Box 600, Wellington 6140  
New Zealand  
ph: +64 4 463 5026 / 027 658 9903  
email: monica.gruber@vuw.ac.nz



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## Informed consent form

Please circle one

I have been provided with adequate information relating to the nature and objectives of this research project.	Y / N
I have understood that information and have been given the opportunity to seek further clarification or explanations.	Y / N
I understand that I am being asked to participate in an interview which will not exceed 30 minutes.	Y / N
I understand that I will have an opportunity to withdraw from the interview or refuse to answer any question(s) at any time.	Y / N
I understand that if I withdraw from the project, any data I have provided will be destroyed.	Y / N
I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential and reported only in a summarised form that will not identify me.	Y / N
I understand that when this research is completed the information obtained will be retained until publication, and then destroyed.	Y / N
I understand that data collected in this interview will be stored securely and accessed only by Dr Monica Gruber.	Y / N
I request a copy of the report to the Taupulega and any publications be sent to me after the conclusion of this research project (please specify by e-mail or postal address below).	Y / N
I understand that the information I have provided will be used only for this research project and that any further use will require my written consent.	Y / N
I agree to take part in this research.	Y / N
I agree to provide my address in case my approval is required for further use of my responses	Y / N

My address is: \_\_\_\_\_

My email is: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature:

Date:

Code

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## Interview questions

This interview is about yellow crazy ants only.

1. Do you consider the yellow crazy ants to be a problem
2. Do you see the yellow crazy ants around the outside of your home
3. Do the ants cause problems around the outside of your home
4. What sort of problems have the ants caused around the outside of your home
5. Do you see the yellow crazy ants inside your home
6. What do you see the ants doing inside your home
7. Do the ants cause a problem the outside of your home
8. What sort of problems have the ants caused around the outside of your home
9. Do the ants cause problems in your gardens
10. What sort of problems caused by the ants do you see in gardens
11. Are you afraid the ants might cause more problems
12. What sorts of problems do you think the ants might cause
13. Have you heard of the ants causing these problems for other people in the village / on another atolls
14. Have you noticed the ants bothering animals
15. Which animals have you seen bothered by the ants (pigs / chickens / sea birds etc.)
16. What do you see the ants doing to these animals
17. Have you seen any changes around the village or in Vao that you think may have been caused by the ants
18. Do you spend less time outside because of the ants
19. Have the ants made you change how you do some things
20. What do you do differently because of the ants
21. What would you like to be done about the ants
22. Have you tried doing anything to make the ants less of a problem
23. What have you tried
24. Have these things worked
25. Would you like some help to make the ants less of a problem
26. What is most important: making the ants less of a problem in home / around home / in gardens / in Vao
27. What is least important: making the ants less of a problem in home / around home / in gardens / in Vao
28. Poisons can be used to kill ants, and these poisons have no direct effects on humans. Should we use poisons to kill the ants
29. Poisons can affect other animals too. These are some examples of the effects of ant poisons.
  - a. Killing the ants will kill many more insects, so chickens may have less natural food to eat. Would this be a concern to you
  - b. "Good" insects, ones that eat "bad" insects may also be reduced so crops may be affected if there are no good insects to eat the bad insects. Would this be a concern to you
  - c. The poisons can kill small crabs. Crabs are eaten by seabirds, so less crabs means there may be less food for seabirds to eat. Would this be a concern to you
  - d. Some poisons will kill coconut crabs. Would this be a concern to you
30. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the yellow crazy ants
31. Would you like to review the answers that I have recorded

Code

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