

FIJI JOINTS RAT RACE

A team from New Zealand will begin a BirdLife Fiji Program project to eradicate rats on Vatuira Island, which holds internationally important seabird colonies and has been identified as an Important Bird Area. This is the second rat eradication that will be carried in Fiji in 2006; the other is the removal of rats on Viwa Island by a team from the University of the South Pacific. Rats are a serious threat to the native birds and wildlife in Fiji and other Pacific islands. Three species of rats have been introduced to Fiji. The Pacific rat (*Rattus exulans*) arrived thousands of years ago, and Norway and black rats (*Rattus norvegicus* and *R. rattus*) more recently. All have had devastating impacts on the biodiversity of Pacific islands and have led to the extinction of innumerable island species.
