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American Samoa Awarded \$245,000 from the Office of Insular Affairs Coral Reef and Natural Resources Program

The Honorable Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga is pleased to announce that American Samoa has been awarded \$245,000 through the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA) Coral Reef and Natural Resources Program for the fiscal year 2024. This vital funding will support a key biosecurity initiative aimed at protecting the territory's indigenous wildlife and ecosystems while enhancing the overall environmental resilience of American Samoa.

The awarded project is: *Managing Invasive Bird Populations in Tutuila's Northern Mountainous Villages to Protect American Samoa's Biodiversity*. The grant will enable the Biodiversity Team of the Governor's Office to implement targeted strategies addressing the ecological threat posed by invasive species, such as myna and bulbul birds, which have endangered native bird populations and caused disruption to American Samoa's ecosystems. As of October 2024, the Biodiversity Team has already removed over **59,000** non-native myna birds, and this additional funding will ensure the continuation and expansion of these efforts.

Governor Lemanu expressed his deep appreciation to the Office of Insular Affairs for their ongoing support. "This generous grant from OIA is crucial to the success of our biodiversity initiatives," Governor Lemanu stated. "We are dedicated to protecting the ecological health of our islands, and this funding will empower our efforts to reduce the impact of invasive species, ensuring the long-term sustainability of our native biodiversity, natural heritage, and the well-being of future generations."

The Honorable Assistant Secretary Carmen G. Cantor, in her letter to Governor Lemanu, emphasized the importance of these initiatives, noting that the OIA is committed to supporting American Samoa in the successful implementation of these projects.

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