

Invasive Species: Facts and Figures

- Invasive species are found on agricultural cropland and in natural and urban areas, and can be either terrestrial or aquatic. Invasive species represent all taxonomic groups- plants, animals and microorganisms- and cause harm by multiplying rapidly, crowding out native species, damaging agricultural and industrial resources and generally altering natural systems.¹
- The invasion of nonnative species is the second greatest threat to rare, native species and the integrity of ecosystems.²
- More than 50 percent of species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act are adversely affected by nonnative plant, animal and marine species.³
- Nine out of 21 of the most endangered ecosystems in the U.S. are significantly impacted by exotic invasions.⁴
- 80 percent of the nation's fish communities are considered degraded because of decline or loss of native species and introduction of exotics.⁵
- The U.S. spends \$120 billion annually on the control and impacts of more than 800 invasive species infestations. This does not account for the values of species extinctions and losses in biodiversity, ecosystems, services and aesthetics.⁶
- 126 million acres of land in the 48 contiguous United States are infested by 16 invasive plants, which does not account for all invasive plant infestations throughout the country.⁷

¹ GAO, "Invasive Species: Clearer Focus and Greater Commitment Needed to Efficiently Manage the Problem, GAO-03-1 (Washington, DC.: Oct. 22, 2002); "Invasive Species: Federal and Selected State Funding to Address Harmful, Nonnative Species, GAO/RCED-00-219 (Washington, D.C.: Aug. 24, 2000).

² Flather, C.H., L.A. Joyce and C.A. Bloomgarden. "Species Endangerment Patterns in the United States." USDA Forest Service Technical Report RM-241. Fort Collins, CO, 1994; Miller, R.R., J.D. Williams, and J.E. Williams. 1989. "Extinctions of North American fishes during the past century." Fisheries 14: 22-38; Williams, J.E., J.E. Johnson, D.A. Hendrickson, et al.; Scemske, D.W., B.C. Husband, M.H. Ruckelshaus, et al. 1994. Cited by Noss, Reed F. & Robert L. Peters, "Endangered Ecosystems: A Status Report on America's Vanishing Habitat and Wildlife." Defenders of Wildlife, Dec. 1995, p. 46.

³ Flather, C.H., L.A. Joyce and C.A. Bloomgarden; Scemske, D.W., B.C. Husband, M.H. Ruckelshaus, et al. 1994. Cited by Noss, Reed F. & Robert L. Peters, "Endangered Ecosystems: A Status Report on America's Vanishing Habitat and Wildlife." Defenders of Wildlife, Dec. 1995, p. 47.

⁴ Noss, Reed F. and Robert L. Peters. "Endangered Ecosystems: A Status Report on America's Vanishing Habitat and Wildlife." Defenders of Wildlife, Dec. 1995.

⁵ Noss, Reed F. and Robert L. Peters. "Endangered Ecosystems: A Status Report on America's Vanishing Habitat and Wildlife." Defenders of Wildlife, Dec. 1995.

⁶ Pimental, David, Rodolfo Zunigo and Doug Morrison. "Update on the environmental and economic costs associated with alien-invasive species in the United States." College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University, 2004.

⁷ Duncan, Celestine A. and Janet K. Clark. "Invasive Plants of Range and Wildlands and Their Environmental, Economic and Societal Impacts." Weed Science Society of America, pg. 3.