

How do Invasive Species arrive and spread?

Invasive Species Schools Resource Kit Factsheet 02

At the back of this factsheet is a glossary defining the words in bold

Invasive species can be spread **deliberately** by people for food, as pets, for economic opportunity, or for planting in the garden. A few species such as the mongoose, were deliberately introduced to try and control other pests, but ended up becoming serious invasive species.

Invasive species can be introduced accidentally such as attaching themselves on cargo, clothing or equipment used in the field. In the marine environment, invasive species are commonly introduced through the **ballast water** of ships.

Impacts of Invasive Species

Invasive species can damage our environment in many different way:

Create **negative impacts** on the resources people rely on for living such as food, water and shelter. In Samoa an invasive species in the early 1990's wiped out most of the taro varieties, causing **food security** problems for families, as well as loss of income from taro exported to overseas markets.



1. Interfere with our **ecosystems** and their normal functions for example when the Crown-of-Thorns Starfish eats and kills other coral. Fish that rely on a healthy coral reef will move elsewhere causing problems for people that fish.

2. Invasive species can carry diseases, for example the **Black Plague** killed millions of people and rats and fleas were the main cause.



3. They can damage buildings, bridges and other structures. For example, some schools in Fiji were abandoned because the subterranean white ant, also known as the termite, ate the timber making the building vulnerable. Invasive species can affect our culture and traditions.

Invasive species will impact all of us. They are on every island in the Pacific and the number of accidental introductions of invasive species is happening more often as more people and goods are moved across different countries and islands.

Quarantine and Biosecurity Departments can always be found at airports and harbours to check you and your luggage when you enter a new country, but they are not always on every island, so please do the right thing by checking your luggage and all your belongings before entering a new place.



How can we fix this problem?

1. Prevention is the best solution - this means we all work together to stop new invasive species from arriving into your country. It is easier to keep something out than to treat it once it arrives and has grown and spread.
2. Eradication is when you remove all the invasive species. This can be done if the invasive species is found quickly after it arrives and before it's spread widely.
3. Containment or exclusion means stopping the invasive species from spreading out of a certain area in your country.
4. Site-specific control is managing the invasive species population to a certain level in special areas such as reserves or other natural areas.
5. Biological control means introducing a natural enemy or a predator of the invasive species that will prey or help control its population.

Glossary

Ballast Water - fresh or salt water held in tanks and cargo holds of ships to increase stability during transit

Biosecurity - process or measures put in place to help protect the environment and the community from harmful impacts of biological or biochemical substances

Black plague - a pandemic resulting in the deaths of millions of people between the years of 1346 - 1353

Deliberately - carrying out an action intentionally or on purpose

Ecosystems - are the habitats, the environment and the all the species and their interaction with each other. All the living and non-living matters are considered to be important parts of an ecosystem

Food security - when you have reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food

Negative impacts - A bad, unpleasant, harmful or undesirable effect

Quarantine and Biosecurity Departments - Generally these are departments, ministries or offices that aim to prevent and respond to pests and diseases that threaten a country's economy and environment

