

Aquatic Invasive Species Dictionary

There are a number of useful terms that can be used when it comes to describing invasive species. Because of the extensive vocabulary surrounding the concept, terms are often used subjectively. Even the term *invasive* itself poses somewhat of a controversy when describing certain species. The following list aims to be a helpful tool for describing frequently used terms surrounding invasive species, and should help to distinguish different ways in which they are most commonly used. You may find that some definitions overlap or can be used quite interchangeably, but remember – *invasive* is in the eye of the beholder!

TERMS ABOUT ORIGINS OF A SPECIES

Alien: *alien*, *adj* \ 'ā-lē-ən, 'āl-yən\ - Belonging or related to another person, place, or thing. The term normally represents a **non-native** species, but a species is referred to as alien often when it is invasive. This term can also evoke references to extraterrestrial life and human immigration policy.

Cryptogenic: *cryptogenic*, *adj* \,krip-tə-'je-nik\ - of obscure or unknown origin. This term is commonly used to describe a species whose origin or introduction is not supported by clear evidence; it is essentially unknown as to where the species originally evolved.

Endemic: *endemic*, *adj* \en-'de-mik, in-\ -Similar to the word **native**, belonging to a particular place or region, can also be a prevalent characteristic of a field, area, or environment. Endemic species are unique to a given area.

Exotic: *exotic*, *adj* \ig-'zä-tik\ - **Introduced** from another country or location, not **native**, can also be used to describe something unusual or mysteriously different. Species are often referred to as exotic when they come from outside of the *country*.

Hitchhiker: *hitchhiker*, *noun* \ 'hich-,hīkər\ - One who is carried or transported by chance or unintentionally. This term is used to refer to species which have been transported accidentally, usually by latching onto a mass that relocates.

Indigenous: *indigenous*, *adj* \in-'di-jə-nəs\ - Similar to **native** species, an indigenous species also naturally belongs to a particular place or region.

Introduced: *introduce*, *verb* \,in-trə-'düs, -'dyüs\ - to lead or bring in especially for the first time. Species are **introduced** when they are brought to a geographical location other than their **native** area, normally by human activity either intentionally or accidentally. Introduced species are not always considered **invasive**, and can often be beneficial; for example, most common domestic animals and crops in the United States were introduced.

Native: *native*, *adj* \ 'nā-tiv\ - Belonging to a particular place by birth, grown, produced or originated in a particular place. A native species evolved and lives in a particular ecosystem through natural means, without the involvement of humans.

Natural: nat·u·ral, *adj* \ 'na-chə-rəl, 'nach-rəl\ - Living in or as if in a state of nature untouched by the influences of civilization and society. When a species is referred to as **natural**, rather than simply **native**, a focus is often on the absence of human activity regarding its native life.

Naturalized: nat·u·ral·ize, *verb* \ 'na-chə-rə-ˌlīz, 'nach-rə-\ - To cause to become established as if native. A naturalized species is a **non-native** that seems to have become integrated into its new ecosystem (but may still negatively affect native species). Naturalization can often refer to species which have sustained populations in **non-native** areas without the aid of humans.

Non-indigenous: Not belonging to a particular place or region. Non-indigenous species are similar to **introduced** species in that they live outside of their native location and are usually brought there through human activity.

Non-native: Not naturally occurring in a particular place. Non-native species are **introduced** through human activity or influence. This can also include any distribution of species through any of its parts, seeds or eggs, to name a few.

Hey Readers! What should we call a native species which naturally expands its range due to human alterations to the landscape and/or climate change? Tweet us your responses [@usfwspacific!](#)

ABOUT THE IMPACT OF A SPECIES

Harmful: harm·ful, *adj* \ 'härm-fəl\ - Of a kind likely to be damaging. Harmful species are those which tend to have severe negative impacts on native species, human health or economic resources.

Invader: in·vad·er, *noun* \ in-'vādər\ - One who enters for conquest or plunder, to affect injuriously and progressively. **Invader** is synonymous with the term **invasive** when it comes to describing a species which encroaches upon and negatively impacts another, usually native species.

Invasion: in·va·sion, *noun* \ in-'vā-zhən\ The incoming or spread of something usually hurtful. Invasion, when dealing with species refers to the actual process of an **invasive** species encroaching on and damaging a **native** species.

Invasive: in·va·sive, *adj* \ -siv, -ziv\ - Tending to spread, invade or infringe. Though its true definition does not imply a negative impact, in relation to species, the term is normally used to describe species which are **non-native** and negatively impact surrounding species. In fact, the official U.S. definition of “invasive species” is “an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.”

Noxious: nox·i·ous, *adj* \ 'näk-shəs\ - Physically harmful or destructive to human beings. This term sometimes legally refers to a “noxious **weed**” to classify invasive and damaging **weed** species.

Nuisance: nui·sance, *noun* \ 'nü-sən(t)s, 'nyü-\ - One that is annoying, unpleasant, or obnoxious. The term nuisance when related to a species is closely related to the term **invasive**, but most always refers

to a species which is actually causing damage, rather than potentially just encroaching. The term focuses on the negative actions and impacts of the species. Nuisance species can also be native.

Pest: pest, *noun* \ 'pest\ - A plant or animal detrimental to humans or human concerns. Though a common term used to describe **invasive** species, this term is commonly used to refer to a species that is bothersome to *humans*. Pest species can also be native.

Weed: weed, *noun* \ 'wēd\ - A plant that is not valued where it is growing and is usually of vigorous growth; especially one that tends to overgrow or choke out more desirable plants. The term weed does not necessarily refer to an **invasive** species (see noxious above).

RELATED TERMS

Habitat: hab-i-tat, *noun* \ 'ha-bə-,tat\ - The place or environment where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives and grows

Colonization: col-o-ni-za-tion, *noun* \,kă-lə-nə-'zā-shən\ - The act or instance of establishing a group of bodies living or growing in close association.

Species: spe-cies, *noun* \ 'spē-(,)shēz, -(,)sēz\ - A group of organisms that are unique from all other groups of organisms and can reproduce fertile offspring.

Sources:

<https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/home/index.cfm>

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/7005.html>

<http://www.suite101.com/content/glossary-of-invasive-species-terms-a30743#ixzz1SIVAA8Kd>

Stay tuned for any new additions to the dictionary, and if you'd like to make any suggestions let us know via [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).