

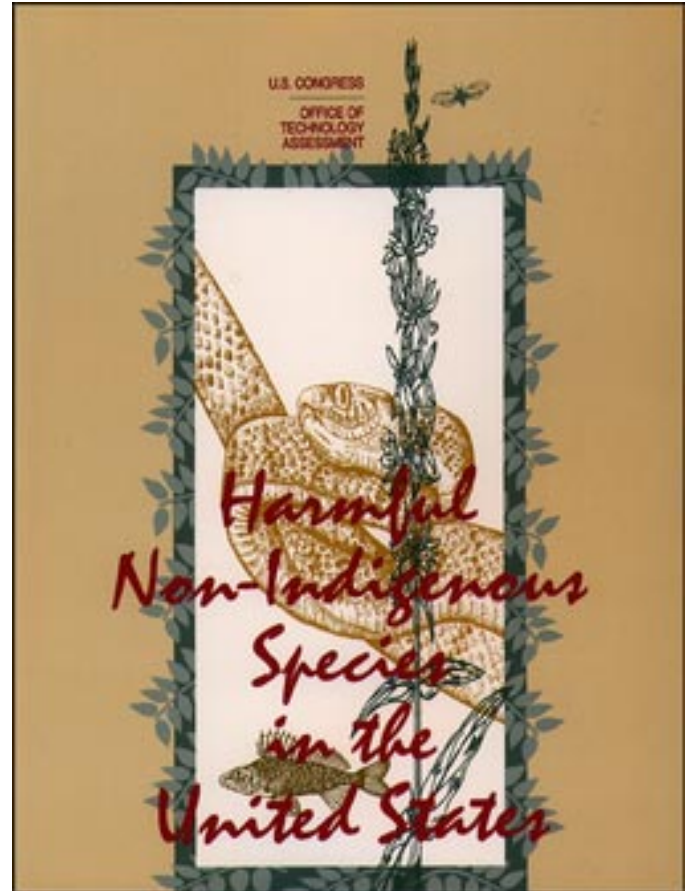
*Harmful Non-Indigenous Species in the
United States*

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Foreword

Non-indigenous species (NIS)----those species found beyond their natural ranges—are part and parcel of the U.S. landscape. Many are highly beneficial. Almost all U.S. crops and domesticated animals, many sport fish and aquiculture species, numerous horticultural plants, and most biological control organisms have origins outside the country. A large number of NIS, however, cause significant economic, environmental, and health damage. These harmful species are the focus of this study.

The total number of harmful NIS and their cumulative impacts are creating a growing burden for the country. We cannot completely stop the tide of new harmful introductions. Perfect screening, detection, and control are technically impossible and will remain so for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, the Federal and State policies designed to protect us from the worst species are not safeguarding our national interests in important areas.

These conclusions have a number of policy implications. First, the Nation has no real national policy on harmful introductions; the current system is piecemeal, lacking adequate rigor and comprehensiveness. Second, many Federal and State statutes, regulations, and programs are not keeping pace with new and spreading non-indigenous pests. Third, better environmental education and greater accountability for actions that cause harm could prevent some problems. Finally, faster response and more adequate funding could limit the impact of those that slip through.

This study was requested by the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee; its Subcommittee on Fisheries and Wildlife Conservation and the Environment and the Subcommittee on Oceanography and Great Lakes; the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, and by Representative John Dingell. In addition, Representatives Amo Houghton and H. James Saxton endorsed the study.

We greatly appreciate the contributions of the Advisory Panel, authors of commissioned papers, workshop participants, survey respondents, and the many additional people who reviewed material. Their timely and indepth assistance enabled us to do the extensive study our requesters envisioned. As with all OTA studies, the content of the report is the sole responsibility of OTA.



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NOTE: OTA appreciates and is grateful for the valuable assistance and thoughtful critiques provided by the advisory panel members. The panel does not, however, necessarily approve, disapprove, or endorse this report. OTA assumes full responsibility for the report and the accuracy of its contents.

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