

INVASIVE SPECIES IN NORTH DAKOTA

What is an invasive species?

Invasive alien species are plants, animals, or other organisms that are introduced to a given area outside their original range and cause harm in their new home. Because they have no natural enemies to limit their reproduction, they usually spread rampantly. Invasive alien species are recognized as one of the leading threats to biodiversity and impose enormous costs to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other human enterprises, as well as to human health.



- The cost to control invasive species and the damages they inflict upon property and natural resources in the U.S. is estimated at **\$137 billion** annually.
- Grazing losses from leafy spurge infestations in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Wyoming amount to \$129 million and represent the potential loss of 1,433 jobs

Invasive Species in North Dakota: A Quick Look

North Dakota has been invaded by a number of harmful exotic plants and animals. Here is a quick look at some of the worst current and potential invaders:

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Leafy spurge	Plant	Eurasian, brought to U.S. in late 1800s	Over 1 million acres in ND	Irritant “latex” in plant causes blisters and blindness; cattle will not graze in areas with >20% cover by spurge.
Dutch elm disease	Fungus	Asia; one strain of the disease arrived in the 1930s in Cleveland, OH on infected elm logs from Europe; a more virulent strain arrived in 1940s	American elm originally ranged in all states east of Rockies- most of this area is infested	Elms were once the nation’s most popular urban street tree, have now largely disappeared from both urban and forested landscapes. It is estimated that “Dutch” elm disease has killed over 100 million trees.
Purple loosestrife	Wetland plant	Europe and Asia; introduced in 1800s as ornamental and medicinal plant or ship ballast water	Found along Missouri Red, Sheyenne, and Mouse Rivers, and beyond	Displaces native wetland plants; has less food and habitat value for waterfowl and other wildlife
Common Carp	Fish	Asia; introduced in the 1870s to the U.S. as a food fish	Found in many ND waterbodies	Voracious eaters that outcompete native species for food resources; silver carp pose physical danger to boaters due to their leaping abilities
Salt Cedar (Tamarisk)	Plant	Eurasia and Africa; introduced in early 1800s as erosion control method	Found in Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, Lake Sakakawea and Sargent County.	Dense stands out-competes native vegetation for resources (especially water) and contaminates topsoil with salt

Name	Type	Origin	Extent	Damage
Curly-leaf Pondweed	Aquatic Plant	Eurasia and Africa; introduced in early 1800s as an aquarium plant	Common in Lake Audubon, Lake Sakakawea and Missouri River	Creates thick surface mat monoculture unfavorable for fish and wildlife thereby negatively impacting the recreation and fishing industries

What Congress Can Do:

A. Make Prevention Our Top Priority

- Reverse current U.S. policy on the intentional import of live plants and animals, that is, switch from a “dirty” to a “clean” list approach that requires screening for invasiveness before import and which keeps out or limits import of species so as to prevent harm to native species or ecosystems – and make the legislative changes to do so.
- Substantially cut the unintentional introduction of aquatic invaders by overseeing federal standard-setting on the discharge of ballast water in the United States, supporting the development of technology to meet these standards; ensuring that agencies monitor and enforce compliance; and reauthorizing the 1996 National Invasive Species Act in the strongest and most comprehensive form.
- When considering, reviewing, or approving trade agreements, rigorously address invasive species, e.g., by allowing for restriction of imports of non-native species that are invasive elsewhere and by identifying pathways by which inadvertent introductions travel so that they may be interrupted.

B. Make Federal Agencies More Effective

- Use oversight authority to ensure that all federal agencies immediately and strongly implement that part of Executive Order 13112 that asks them to identify and reduce actions that introduce or spread invasive species in the United States or elsewhere.
- Appropriate adequate funds so that federal agencies have the resources to address invasive species problems promptly and comprehensively over the long-term.
- Strengthen the structure and leadership of the National Invasive Species Council and prompt more aggressive implementation of its National Management Plan.
- Oversee the work of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to ensure that the agency and its Administrator are committed to protecting biological diversity as well as agriculture.
- Evaluate the serious problems with border inspection for pests, weeds, and pathogens, e.g., in staffing and cross-department coordination, exacerbated by moving these functions into the Department of Homeland Security and amend its authorizing legislation if needed.

References:

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ND Game & Fish Dept. Common Carp Factsheet <http://www.state.nd.us/gnf/fishing/ans-animals.html#carp>

ND Game & Fish Dept. Salt Cedar Factsheet <http://www.state.nd.us/gnf/fishing/ans-plants.html#salt>

ND Game & Fish Dept. Curly-leaf Pondweed Factsheet <http://www.state.nd.us/gnf/fishing/ans-plants.html#curly>

*For more information, please contact Aimee Delach at Defenders of Wildlife
202-682-9400 x271 ♦ adelach@defenders.org*