



June 2010

Inside this Brief

- **Background**
- **Oregon Invasive Species Council**
- **Examples of Invasive Species**
- **The Economics of Invasive Species**
- **Invasive Species Online Hotline and 1-866-INVADER**
- **100 Worst List**
- **Public Outreach and Education**
- **Recent Legislation**
- **Staff and Agency Contacts**

Legislative Committee Services
State Capitol Building
Salem, Oregon 97301
(503) 986-1813

Background Brief on ...

Invasive Species

Background

“Invasive species” are plants, animals, and microbes not native to a region which, when introduced, outcompete native species for available resources, reproduce prolifically, and dominate regions and ecosystems. Because they often arrive in new areas unaccompanied by their native predators, invasive species can be difficult to control. Left unchecked, many invasives can transform entire ecosystems, as native species and habitats disappear.

Oregon Invasive Species Council

The Oregon Invasive Species Council was created by the Legislature in 2001 (**ORS 561.685**). The mission of the Council is to conduct a coordinated and comprehensive effort to keep invasive species out of Oregon and to eliminate, reduce, or mitigate the impacts of invasive species already established in Oregon. The Council has 15 members (6 ex-officio members from state agencies and academic institutions and 9 organizations and entities that comprise federal, state, and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and industry).

The Council has four main statutory functions:

1. Create and publicize a system for reporting sightings of invasive species and refer those reports to appropriate agencies;
2. Undertake educational activities to increase awareness of invasive species;
3. Develop a statewide plan for dealing with invasive species. The Council developed a [plan](#) in June of 2005, completed a short-term [business plan](#) in 2008, conducted a [statewide management assessment](#) of invasive species in 2009, and began the process to develop a statewide invasive species strategic plan for Oregon in 2010; and
4. Administer a trust account for funding eradication and education projects.

The Council produces an annual [report card](#).

The Council has five primary goals:

1. **Promote cooperation, coordination, and communication** among government agencies, tribal governments, industry, nonprofit organizations, citizen groups, and landowners relative to invasive species.
2. **Ensure long-term sustainable funding** and the use of an emergency fund to address the threat of invasive species to Oregon's economy, environment, and quality of life.
3. **Identify gaps in Oregon's legislation** and promote new and enhanced regulations to protect Oregon from the spread of invasive species and new introductions.
4. **Instill in all Oregonians and those visiting and conducting business with the state an appreciation, awareness, and understanding of the threat invasive species** has to Oregon's economy, environment, and quality of life, ultimately leading to actions that lessen the threat.
5. **Promote systems, forums, and processes that result in efficient and cost-effective methods of research and surveillance of** invasive species in Oregon.

Examples of Invasive Species

Here are four examples of invasive species; the first 3 are currently found in Oregon:

- **Sudden Oak Death**, *Phytophthora ramorum*, a fungus-like microorganism that kills certain types of oak trees. It spreads by wind and wind-driven rain and infects more than 100 host species, including Douglas fir, grand fir, coast redwoods and other trees and shrubs. The disease now infects native hosts in 14 coastal counties in California and Curry County, Oregon. Sudden Oak Death threatens Oregon's nursery industry, and has infected horticultural plants at Oregon, California and Washington nurseries.
- **Spotted-Wing Drosophila** is a fruit fly native to Asia. It was first discovered in California in 2008. A 2009 survey in Oregon found the fruit fly from Portland south to Douglas County. Unlike most fruit

flies, the spotted-wing drosophila attacks ripe, healthy fruit, and thus is of great concern to Oregon's fruit/berry industry.

- ***Spartina***, commonly called "cordgrass," is native to the East Coast of the United States and Canada. However, four non-native species of cordgrass are found in Oregon. Non-native *Spartina* converts estuarine mudflats and salt-marsh ecosystems into uniform expanses of dense grass. Non-native *Spartina* alters the hydrology of estuaries by modification of tidal creeks and navigational channels, dominates newly restored tidal marshes, displaces thousands of acres of shorebird habitat, and drastically reduces biodiversity.
- **Quagga and Zebra Mussels** are freshwater mollusks that typically have a dark and white (zebra-like) pattern on their shells. They are the only freshwater mollusks that attach to hard surfaces via hair-like threads. They have thin, fragile shells. They are native to the watersheds of Eastern Europe and western Asia. They were likely introduced to the Great Lakes of North America in the ballast water of cargo ships in the mid 1980s. Once established, zebra and quagga mussels can dramatically alter the ecology of a water body.

The Economics of Invasive Species

Invasive species pose a threat to Oregon's economy. A total of 21 noxious weed species in Oregon cost the state \$125 million annually in production losses, fire damage and control costs. Sudden Oak Death currently costs Oregon \$7 million annually to contain; if it becomes widespread in the state, the cost to nursery production and forest losses will reach \$81–310 million/year. It is estimated that control costs to 13 hydropower facilities would reach \$25.5 million/year if zebra mussels became established.

Invasive Species [Online Hotline](#) and 1-866-INVADER

Early detection and rapid response (EDRR) is the most economic and effective way to protect Oregon from invasive species. The Oregon Invasive Species Online Hotline and 1-866-

INVADER telephone line are designed to help all Oregonians become involved in this effort. By using the Online Hotline or calling 1-866-INVADER to report suspected invasive species, Oregonians can contribute vital early detection information to the experts best able to stop the spread of invasives.

100 Worst List

The Oregon Invasive Species Council publishes a list of the 100 most dangerous invasive species to **keep out** of Oregon. This list includes micro-organisms, aquatic and land plants, land invertebrates, fish, birds, mammals and reptiles. To be placed on the list, species must be non-native to Oregon and absent from the state or limited to a small, contained range within the state. Species are removed from the list when they have become established beyond a small, contained range, or are lower priority than another eligible species not currently on the list.

One entry on the 100 Worst List was recently discovered in Oregon. The “colonial tunicate,” a native of Japan, has been found in both Winchester Bay and Coos Bay. The potential economic consequences of this species includes fouling surfaces of boats, fishing nets, water intakes, docks and buoys as well as smothering shellfish beds.

Public Outreach and Education

Informing the public about the role they can play to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species is critical to the future of Oregon’s economy and natural resources. In 2008, the Council, with numerous partners, launched a Silent Invasion campaign to raise awareness about the threat of invasive species to Oregon. In 2010, the Council is launching, in cooperation with Washington and Idaho, a tri-state outreach campaign to raise awareness about the movement of untreated firewood as a vector of invasive species.

Recent Legislation

Eleven bills related to invasive species were enacted in 2009, including:

- **Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Program**—Authorizes the Department of

Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the State Marine Board, and the Department of Agriculture (ODA) to operate check stations for the purpose of inspecting watercraft for aquatic invasive species. The Marine Board is directed to charge fees for aquatic invasive species prevention permits, including: \$5 for motorboats; \$5 for manually propelled boats over ten feet in length; \$20 for nonresidents; and annual fees for operators of boat liveries. The fee revenues are used for invasive species mitigation, including staffing five mobile units with two technicians per unit in each of the five ODFW regions to inspect boats. (House Bill 2220)

- **Clean Launch Law**—Prohibits launching a boat if the boat has any visible aquatic species on its exterior hull, or aquatic invasive species within interior parts of boat (including the bilge). It authorizes the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, in consultation with ODA, to adopt rules to allow presence of certain aquatic species on or within a boat. A violation of the launch prohibition is designated a Class B violation, punishable by maximum fine of \$287. (House Bill 2583)
- **Invasive Species Control Account**—Establishes the Invasive Species Control Account. It authorizes the Invasive Species Council to spend money from the account to provide funding for efforts by agencies, organizations and individuals to eradicate or control new infestations and infections of invasive species. (House Bill 2020)
- **Invasive Species Council Membership**—Places the Oregon Invasive Species Council within ODA and adds two seats to the Council, one representative from the Department of Environmental Quality and one additional at-large member, bringing the total membership of the Council to 15. (House Bill 2213)
- **Feral swine control**—Prohibits selling or offering to sell a hunt for feral swine on public or private lands. (House Bill 2221)
- **Adopt-a-Highway Program, Noxious Weed Removal**—Adds the removal of

noxious weeds to Oregon's Adopt-a-Highway Program. (House Bill 2424)

- **Invasive Species in Ballast Water**—Authorizes the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to board and inspect vessels regulated under ballast water statutes and to collect samples of ballast water to verify compliance. (House Bill 2625)
- **Shipping Transport of Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force**—Establishes in statute the Shipping Transport of Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force. (House Bill 2714)
- **Integrated Weed Management**—Updates and consolidates Oregon's plant quarantine laws and enhances the definition of integrated weed management. (House Bill 2212)
- **Ballast water compliance**—Increases maximum civil penalties for non-compliance with ballast statute regulations from \$5,000 to \$25,000, similar to neighboring western coastal states. (House Bill 2625)
- **Releasing live fish into Oregon waters**—Increases penalties for releasing or attempting to release live fish into a body of water without a permit. (Senate Bill 571)

Staff and Agency Contacts:

Lisa DeBruyckere, Coordinator
[Oregon Invasive Species Council](#)
(503) 704-2884
lisad@createstrat.com

Beth Patrino
[Legislation Committee Services](#)
(503) 986-1741
beth.patrino@state.or.us