

## ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES ISSUES RELATED TO WILDLIFE AND DOMESTIC ANIMAL TRADE

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The definition of an alien invasive species depends on the viewpoint of the observer, who in some cases may be responsible for introducing the species.

History has taught us that humans are the species that has invaded the largest surface area of the planet.

It has become increasingly evident that, since the outset, humans have not travelled alone. They have always carried with them their parasites and commensals, their food and ornamental crops and their favourite animals, with the list growing longer and more diverse with each successive millennium.

Gradually certain species came to be labelled universally as “useful” and began to be developed anywhere the environmental conditions were suitable, whereas others became known as “harmful”, irrespective of their biological reality.

The consequences of the invasion by alien species concern many fields including agriculture, animal and public health and biodiversity. It is an issue that affects all regions of the world to a greater or lesser extent. It can have detrimental effects on animal health and biodiversity. For example, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reported that 625 (51%) of known endangered species are threatened because of invasive (alien) species.

Both wild and domestic animals may be invasive, with detrimental effect on local biodiversity; for instance the introduction of the red fox in Australia for hunting purposes had disastrous effect on some species of autochthonous marsupials. The introduction of goats on the Galapagos Islands had also a negative impact on the native fauna and more recently, the introduction of African sciuridae as new pets in USA imported Monkeypox. All the issues of alien invasive species related to wildlife and domestic animal trade will be discussed.

