



IUCN Guidelines for the Prevention of Biodiversity Loss Caused by Alien Invasive Species

APPROVED BY THE 51ST MEETING OF THE IUCN COUNCIL, GLAND SWITZERLAND, FEBRUARY 2000



© Cornwall County Council

International Union for Conservation of Nature



IUCN GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF BIODIVERSITY LOSS CAUSED BY ALIEN INVASIVE SPECIES

Prepared by the SSC [Invasive Species Specialist Group](#)

Approved by the 51st Meeting of the IUCN Council, Gland Switzerland, February 2000

INDEX

1. [BACKGROUND](#)
 2. [GOALS AND OBJECTIVES](#)
 3. [DEFINITION OF TERMS](#)
 4. [UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS](#)
 5. [PREVENTION AND INTRODUCTIONS](#)
 6. [ERADICATION AND CONTROL](#)
 7. [LINKS TO RE-INTRODUCTION OF SPECIES](#)
 8. [KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH ISSUES](#)
 9. [LAW AND INSTITUTIONS](#)
 10. [ROLE OF IUCN](#)
 11. [BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RELATED INFORMATION](#)
 12. [ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS](#)
- [APPENDIX](#)
-

1. **BACKGROUND**⁽¹⁾

Biological diversity faces many threats throughout the world. One of the major threats to native biological diversity is now acknowledged by scientists and governments to be biological invasions caused by alien invasive species. The impacts of alien invasive species are immense, insidious, and usually irreversible. They may be as damaging to native species and ecosystems on a global scale as the loss and degradation of habitats.

For millennia, the natural barriers of oceans, mountains, rivers and deserts provided the isolation essential for unique species and ecosystems to evolve. In just a few hundred years these barriers have been rendered ineffective by major global forces that combined to help alien species travel vast distances to new habitats and become alien invasive species. The globalisation and growth in the volume of trade and tourism, coupled with the emphasis on free trade, provide more opportunities than ever before for species to be spread accidentally or deliberately. Customs and quarantine practices, developed in an earlier time to guard against human and economic diseases and pests, are often inadequate safeguards against species that threaten native biodiversity. Thus the inadvertent

ending of millions of years of biological isolation has created major ongoing problems that affect developed and developing countries.

The scope and cost of biological alien invasions is global and enormous, in both ecological and economic terms. Alien invasive species are found in all taxonomic groups: they include introduced viruses, fungi, algae, mosses, ferns, higher plants, invertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals. They have invaded and affected native biota in virtually every ecosystem type on Earth. Hundreds of extinctions have been caused by alien invasives. The ecological cost is the irretrievable loss of native species and ecosystems.

In addition, the direct economic costs of alien invasive species run into many billions of dollars annually. Arable weeds reduce crop yields and increase costs; weeds degrade catchment areas and freshwater ecosystems; tourists and homeowners unwittingly introduce alien plants into wilderness and natural areas; pests and pathogens of crops, livestock and forests reduce yields and increase control costs. The discharge of ballast water together with hull fouling has led to unplanned and unwanted introductions of harmful aquatic organisms, including diseases, bacteria and viruses, in marine and freshwater systems. Ballast water is now regarded as the most important vector for trans-oceanic and inter-oceanic movements of shallow-water coastal organisms. Factors like environmental pollution and habitat destruction can provide conditions that favour alien invasive species.

The degradation of natural habitats, ecosystems and agricultural lands (e.g. loss of cover and soil, pollution of land and waterways) that has occurred throughout the world has made it easier for alien species to establish and become invasive. Many alien invasives are "colonising" species that benefit from the reduced competition that follows habitat degradation. Global climate change is also a significant factor assisting the spread and establishment of alien invasive species. For example, increased temperatures may enable alien, disease-carrying mosquitoes to extend their range.

Sometimes the information that could alert management agencies to the potential dangers of new introductions is not known. Frequently, however, useful information is not widely shared or available in an appropriate format for many countries to take prompt action, assuming they have the resources, necessary infrastructure, commitment and trained staff to do so.

Few countries have developed the comprehensive legal and institutional systems that are capable of responding effectively to these new flows of goods, visitors and 'hitchhiker' species. Many citizens, key sector groups and governments have a poor appreciation of the magnitude and economic costs of the problem. As a consequence, responses are too often piecemeal, late and ineffective. It is in this context that IUCN has identified the problem of alien invasive species as one of its major initiatives at the global level.

While all continental areas have suffered from biological alien invasions, and lost biological diversity as a result, the problem is especially acute on islands in general, and for small island countries in particular. Problems also arise in other isolated habitats and ecosystems, such as in Antarctica. The physical isolation of islands over millions of years has favored the evolution of unique species and ecosystems. As a consequence, islands and other isolated areas (e.g. mountains and lakes) usually have a high proportion of endemic species (those found nowhere else) and are centres of significant biological diversity. The evolutionary processes associated with isolation have also meant island species are especially vulnerable to competitors, predators, pathogens and parasites from other areas. It is important to turn this isolation of islands into an advantage by improving the capacity of governments to prevent the arrival of alien invasive species with better knowledge, improved laws and greater management capacity, backed by quarantine and customs systems that are capable of identifying and intercepting alien invasive species.

2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of these guidelines is to prevent further losses of biological diversity due to the deleterious effects of alien invasive species. The intention is to assist governments and management agencies to give effect to Article 8 (h) of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which states that:

"Each Contracting Party shall, as far as possible and as appropriate:
...(h) Prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species."

These guidelines draw on and incorporate relevant parts of the 1987 IUCN Position Statement on Translocation of Living Organisms although they are more comprehensive in scope than the 1987 Translocation Statement. The relationship to another relevant guideline, the IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions, is elaborated in Section 7.

These guidelines are concerned with preventing loss of biological diversity caused by biological invasions of alien invasive species. They do not address the issue of genetically modified organisms, although many of the issues and principles stated here could apply. Neither do these guidelines address the economic (agricultural, forestry, aquaculture), human health and cultural impacts caused by biological invasions of alien invasive species.

These guidelines address four substantive concerns of the biological alien invasion problem that can be identified from this background context. These are:

- improving understanding and awareness;
- strengthening the management response;
- providing appropriate legal and institutional mechanisms;

- enhancing knowledge and research efforts.

While addressing all four concerns is important, these particular guidelines focus most strongly on aspects of strengthening the management response. This focus reflects the urgent need to spread information on management that can quickly be put into place to prevent alien invasions and eradicate or control established alien invasives. Addressing the other concerns, particularly the legal and research ones, may require longer-term strategies to achieve the necessary changes.

These guidelines have the following seven objectives.

1. To increase awareness of alien invasive species as a major issue affecting native biodiversity in developed and developing countries and in all regions of the world.
2. To encourage prevention of alien invasive species introductions as a priority issue requiring national and international action.
3. To minimise the number of unintentional introductions and to prevent unauthorised introductions of alien species.
4. To ensure that intentional introductions, including those for biological control purposes, are properly evaluated in advance, with full regard to potential impacts on biodiversity.
5. To encourage the development and implementation of eradication and control campaigns and programmes for alien invasive species, and to increase the effectiveness of those campaigns and programmes.
6. To encourage the development of a comprehensive framework for national legislation and international cooperation to regulate the introduction of alien species as well as the eradication and control of alien invasive species.
7. To encourage necessary research and the development and sharing of an adequate knowledge base to address the problem of alien invasive species worldwide

3. DEFINITION OF TERMS⁽²⁾

"Alien invasive species" means an alien species which becomes established in natural or semi-natural ecosystems or habitat, is an agent of change, and threatens native biological diversity.

"Alien species" (non-native, non-indigenous, foreign, exotic) means a species, subspecies, or lower taxon occurring outside of its natural range (past or present)

and dispersal potential (i.e. outside the range it occupies naturally or could not occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans) and includes any part, gametes or propagule of such species that might survive and subsequently reproduce.

"**Biological diversity**" (biodiversity) means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

"**Biosecurity threats**" means those matters or activities which, individually or collectively, may constitute a biological risk to the ecological welfare or to the well-being of humans, animals or plants of a country.

"**Government**" includes regional co-operating groupings of governments for matters falling within their areas of competence.

"**Intentional introduction**" means an introduction made deliberately by humans, involving the purposeful movement of a species outside of its natural range and dispersal potential. (Such introductions may be authorised or unauthorised.)

"**Introduction**" means the movement, by human agency, of a species, subspecies, or lower taxon (including any part, gametes or propagule that might survive and subsequently reproduce) outside its natural range (past or present). This movement can be either within a country or between countries.

"**Native species**" (indigenous) means a species, subspecies, or lower taxon, occurring within its natural range (past or present) and dispersal potential (i.e. within the range it occupies naturally or could occupy without direct or indirect introduction or care by humans.)

"**Natural ecosystem**" means an ecosystem not perceptibly altered by humans.

"**Re-introduction**" means an attempt to establish a species in an area which was once part of its historical range, but from which it has been extirpated or become extinct. (From IUCN Guidelines for Re-Introductions)

"**Semi-natural ecosystem**" means an ecosystem which has been altered by human actions, but which retains significant native elements.

"**Unintentional introduction**" means an unintended introduction made as a result of a species utilising humans or human delivery systems as vectors for dispersal outside its natural range.

4. UNDERSTANDING AND AWARENESS

4.1 Guiding Principles

- Understanding and awareness, based on information and knowledge, are essential for establishing alien invasive species as a priority issue which can and must be addressed.
- Better information and education, and improved public awareness of alien invasive issues by all sectors of society, is fundamental to preventing or reducing the risk of unintentional or unauthorised introductions, and to establishing evaluation and authorisation procedures for proposed intentional introductions.
- Control and eradication of alien invasive species is more likely to be successful if supported by informed and cooperating local communities, appropriate sectors and groups.
- Information and research findings which are well communicated are vital prerequisites to education, understanding and awareness. (See Section 8.)

4.2 Recommended Actions

1. Identify the specific interests and roles of relevant sectors and communities with respect to alien invasive species issues and target them with appropriate information and recommended actions. Specific communication strategies for each target group will be required to help reduce the risks posed by alien invasive species. The general public is an important target group to be considered.
2. Make easily accessible, current and accurate information widely available as a key component of awareness raising. Target different audiences with information in electronic form, manuals, databases, scientific journals and popular publications. (See also Section 8.)
3. Target importers and exporters of goods, as well as of living organisms as key target groups for information/education efforts leading to better awareness and understanding of the issues, and their role in prevention and possible solutions.
4. Encourage the private sector to develop and follow best practice guidelines and monitor adherence to guidelines. (Refer 5.2 and 5.3.)
5. As an important priority, provide information and recommended actions to travellers, both within country and between countries, preferably prior to the start of journeys. Raising awareness of how much human travel contributes to alien invasive problems can improve behaviour and be cost-effective.

6. Encourage operators in eco-tourism businesses to raise awareness on the problems caused by alien invasive species. Work with such operators to develop industry guidelines to prevent the unintentional transport or unauthorised introduction of alien plants (especially seeds) and animals into ecologically vulnerable island habitats and ecosystems (e.g. lakes, mountain areas, nature reserves, wilderness areas, isolated forests and inshore marine ecosystems).
7. Train staff for quarantine, border control, or other relevant facilities to be aware of the larger context and threats to biological diversity, in addition to practical training for aspects like identification and regulation. (See Section 5.2.)
8. Build communication strategies into the planning phase of all prevention, eradication and control programmes. By ensuring that effective consultation takes place with local communities and all affected parties, most potential misunderstandings and disagreements can be resolved or accommodated in advance.
9. Include alien invasive species issues, and actions that can be taken to address them, in appropriate places in educational programmes and schools.
10. Ensure that national legislation applicable to introductions of alien species, both intentional and unintentional, is known and understood, not only by the citizens and institutions of the country concerned, but also by foreigners importing goods and services as well as by tourists.

5. PREVENTION AND INTRODUCTIONS

5.1 Guiding Principles

- Preventing the introduction of alien invasive species is the cheapest, most effective and most preferred option and warrants the highest priority.
- Rapid action to prevent the introduction of potential alien invasives is appropriate, even if there is scientific uncertainty about the long-term outcomes of the potential alien invasion.
- Vulnerable ecosystems should be accorded the highest priority for action, especially for prevention initiatives, and particularly when significant biodiversity values are at risk. Vulnerable ecosystems include islands and isolated ecosystems such as lakes and other freshwater ecosystems, cloud forests, coastal habitats and mountain ecosystems.
- Since the impacts on biological diversity of many alien species are unpredictable, any intentional introductions and efforts to identify and prevent unintentional introductions should be based on the precautionary principle.
- In the context of alien species, unless there is a reasonable likelihood that an introduction will be harmless, it should be treated as likely to be harmful.

- Alien invasives act as "biological pollution" agents that can negatively affect development and quality of life. Hence, part of the regulatory response to the introduction of alien invasive species should be the principle that "the polluter pays" where "pollution" represents the damage to native biological diversity.
- Biosecurity threats justify the development and implementation of comprehensive legal and institutional frameworks.
- The risk of unintentional introductions should be minimised.
- Intentional introductions should only take place with authorisation from the relevant agency or authority. Authorisation should require comprehensive evaluations based on biodiversity considerations (ecosystem, species, genome). Unauthorised introductions should be prevented.
- The intentional introduction of an alien species should only be permitted if the positive effects on the environment outweigh the actual and potential adverse effects. This principle is particularly important when applied to isolated habitats and ecosystems, such as islands, fresh water systems or centres of endemism.
- The intentional introduction of an alien species should not be permitted if experience elsewhere indicates that the probable result will be the extinction or significant loss of biological diversity.
- The intentional introduction of an alien species should only be considered if no native species is considered suitable for the purposes for which the introduction is being made.

5.2 Unintentional Introductions - Recommended Actions

Unfortunately, it can be very difficult to control unintentional introductions that occur through a wide variety of ways and means. They include the most difficult types of movement to identify, control and prevent. By their very nature the most practical means of minimising unintentional introductions is by identifying, regulating and monitoring the major pathways. While pathways vary between countries and regions, the best known are international and national trade and tourism routes, through which the unintentional movement and establishment of many alien species occurs.

Recommended actions to reduce the likelihood of unintentional introductions are:

1. Identify and manage pathways leading to unintentional introductions. Important pathways of unintentional introductions include: national and international trade, tourism, shipping, ballast water, fisheries, agriculture, construction projects, ground and air transport, forestry, horticulture, landscaping, pet trade and aquaculture.
2. Contracting parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, and other affected countries, should work with the wide range of relevant international trade

authorities and industry associations, with the goal of significantly reducing the risk that trade will facilitate the introduction and spread of alien invasive species.

3. Develop collaborative industry guidelines and codes of conduct, which minimise or eliminate unintentional introductions.
4. Examine regional trade organisations and agreements to minimise or eliminate unintentional introductions that are caused by their actions.
5. Explore measures such as: elimination of economic incentives that assist the introduction of alien invasive species; legislative sanctions for introductions of alien species unless no fault can be proved; internationally available information on alien invasive species, by country or region, for use in border and quarantine control, as well as for prevention, eradication and control activities. (See also Section 8.)
6. Implement the appropriate initiatives to reduce the problems of alien invasives arising from ballast water discharges and hull fouling. These include: better ballast water management practices; improved ship design; development of national ballast water programmes; research, sampling and monitoring regimes; information to port authorities and ships' crews on ballast water hazards. Make available existing national guidelines and legislation on ballast water (for example Australia, New Zealand, USA). At the national, regional and international level, disseminate international guidelines and recommendations, such as the International Maritime Organisation's guidelines on ballast water and sediment discharges. (See also Section 9.2.2.)
7. Put in place quarantine and border control regulations and facilities and train staff to intercept the unintentional introduction of alien species. Quarantine and border control regulations should not be premised only on narrow economic grounds that primarily relate to agriculture and human health, but, in addition, on the unique biosecurity threats each country is exposed to. 7. Improved performance at intercepting unintentional introductions that arrive via major pathways may require an expansion of the responsibilities and resourcing of border control and quarantine services. (Also see 9.2)
8. Address the risks of unintentional introductions associated with certain types of goods or packaging through border control legislation and procedures.
9. Put in place appropriate fines, penalties or other sanctions to apply to those responsible for unintentional introductions through negligence and bad practice.
10. Ensure compliance by companies dealing with transport or movement of living organisms with the biosecurity regimes established by governments in the exporting and importing countries. Provide for their activities to be subjected to appropriate levels of monitoring and control.

11. For island countries with high risks and high vulnerabilities to alien invasive species, develop the most cost-effective options for governments wanting to avoid the high costs of controlling alien invasive species. These include more holistic approaches to biosecurity threats and better resourcing of quarantine and border control operations, including greater inspection and interception capabilities.

12. Assess large engineering projects, such as canals, tunnels and roads that cross biogeographical zones, that might mix previously separated flora and fauna and disturb local biological diversity. Legislation requiring environmental impact assessment of such projects should require an assessment of the risks associated with unintentional introductions of alien invasive species.

13. Have in place the necessary provisions for taking rapid and effective action, including public consultation, should unintentional introductions occur.

5.3 Intentional Introductions - Recommended Actions

1. Establish an appropriate institutional mechanism such as a 'biosecurity' agency or authority as part of legislative reforms on invasives. (Refer to Section 9.) This is a very high priority, since at present the legislative framework of most countries rarely treats intentional introductions in a holistic manner, that is, considers all organisms likely to be introduced and their effect on all environments. The usual orientation is towards sectors, e.g. agriculture. Consequently the administrative and structural arrangements are usually inadequate to deal with the entire range of incoming organisms, the implication for the environments into which they are being introduced, or with the need for rapid responses to emergency situations.

2. Empower the biosecurity agency, or other institutional mechanism, to reach decisions on whether proposed introductions should be authorised, to develop import and release guidelines and to set specific conditions, where appropriate. (Operational functions should reside with other agencies. See 9.2.1)

3. Give utmost importance to effective evaluation and decision-making processes. Carry out an environment impact assessment and risk assessment as part of the evaluation process before coming to a decision on introducing an alien species. (See Appendix)

4. Require the intending importer to provide the burden of proof that a proposed introduction will not adversely affect biological diversity.

5. Include consultation with relevant organisations within government, with NGOs and, in appropriate circumstances, with neighbouring countries, in the evaluation process.

6. Where relevant, require that specific experimental trials (e.g. to test the food preferences or infectivity of alien species) be conducted as part of the assessment process. Such trials are often required for biological control proposals and appropriate protocols for such trials should be developed and followed.
7. Ensure that the evaluation process allows for the likely environmental impacts, risks, costs (direct and indirect, monetary and non-monetary) benefits, and alternatives, to have been identified and assessed by the biosecurity authority in the importing country. This authority is then in a position to decide if the likely benefits outweigh the possible disadvantages. The public release of an interim decision, along with related information, should be made with time for submissions from interested parties before the biosecurity agency makes a final decision.
8. Impose containment conditions on an introduction if and where appropriate. In addition, monitoring requirements are often necessary following release as part of management.
9. Regardless of legal provisions, encourage exporters and importers to meet best practice standards to minimise any invasive risks associated with trade, as well as containing any accidental escapes that may occur.
10. Put in place quarantine and border control regulations and facilities and train staff to intercept unauthorised intentional introductions.
11. Develop criminal penalties and civil liability for the consequent eradication or control costs of unauthorised intentional introductions.
12. Ensure that provisions are in place, including the ability to take rapid and effective action to eradicate or control, in the event that an unauthorised introduction occurs, or that an authorised introduction of an alien species unexpectedly or accidentally results in a potential threat of biological invasion. (See Sections 6 and 9.)
13. As well as taking the efforts that are required at global and regional levels to reduce the risk that trade will facilitate unintentional introductions (Section 5.2), utilise opportunities to improve international instruments and practices relating to trade that affect intentional introductions. For example, the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) are addressing the implications alien invasive species may have on the operation of the Convention. Similar initiatives should be made with respect to relevant international trade authorities and industry associations.

6. ERADICATION AND CONTROL

When a potential or actual alien invasive species has been detected, in other words, when prevention has not been successful, steps to mitigate adverse impacts include eradication, containment and control. Eradication aims to completely remove the alien invasive species. Control aims for the long term reduction in abundance or density of the alien invasive species. A special case of control is containment, where the aim is to limit the spread of the alien invasive species and to contain its presence within defined geographical boundaries.

6.1 Guiding Principles

- Preventing the introduction of alien invasive species should be the first goal.
- Early detection of new introductions of potential or known alien invasive species, together with the capacity to take rapid action, is often the key to successful and cost-effective eradications.
- Lack of scientific or economic certainty about the implications of a potential biological alien invasion should not be used as a reason for postponing eradication, containment or other control measures.
- The ability to take appropriate measures against intentionally or unintentionally introduced alien invasive species should be provided for in legislation.
- The best opportunities for eradicating or containing an alien invasive species are in the early stages of invasion, when populations are small and localised. (These opportunities may persist for a short or long time, depending on the species involved and other local factors.)
- Eradication of new or existing alien invasive species is preferable and is more cost effective than long-term control, particularly for new cases.
- Eradication should not be attempted unless it is ecologically feasible and has the necessary financial and political commitment to be completed.
- A strategically important focus for eradication is to identify points of vulnerability in the major invasive pathways, such as international ports and airports, for monitoring and eradication activities.

6.2 Eradication - Recommended Actions

1. Where it is achievable, promote eradication as the best management option for dealing with alien invasive species where prevention has failed. It is much more cost effective financially than ongoing control, and better for the environment. Technological improvements are increasing the number of situations where eradication is possible, especially on islands. Eradication is likely to be more difficult in the marine environment. The criteria that need to be met for eradication to succeed are given in the Appendix.

2. When a potentially alien invasive species is first detected, mobilise and activate sufficient resources and expertise quickly. Procrastination markedly reduces the chances of success. Local knowledge and community awareness can be used to detect new alien invasions. Depending on the situation, a country's response might be within the country, or may require a cooperative effort with other countries.
3. Give priority to eradication at sites where a new alien invasion has occurred and is not yet well established.
4. Ensure eradication methods are as specific as possible with the objective of having no long-term effects on non-target native species. Some incidental loss to non-target species may be an inevitable cost of eradication and should be balanced against the long-term benefits to native species.
5. Ensure that persistence of toxins in the environment does not occur as a result of eradication. However, the use of toxins that are unacceptable for long-term control may be justified in brief and intensive eradication campaigns. The costs and benefits of the use of toxins need to be carefully assessed in these situations.
6. Ensure that methods for removing animals are as ethical and humane as possible, but consistent with the aim of permanently eliminating the alien invasive species concerned.
7. Given that interest groups may oppose eradication for ethical or self-interest reasons, include a comprehensive consultation strategy and develop community support for any proposed eradication as an integral part of the project.
8. Give priority to the eradication of alien invasive species on islands and other isolated areas that have highly distinctive biodiversity or contain threatened endemics.
9. Where relevant, achieve significant benefits for biological diversity by eradicating key alien mammalian predators (e.g. rats, cats, mustelids, dogs) from islands and other isolated areas with important native species. Similarly, target key feral and alien mammalian herbivores (e.g. rabbits, sheep, goats, pigs) for eradication to achieve significant benefits for threatened native plant and animal species.
10. Seek expert advice where appropriate. Eradication problems involving several species are often complex, such as determining the best order in which to eradicate species. A multidisciplinary approach might be best, as recommended in the IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions.

6.3 Defining the Desired Outcomes of Control

The relevant measure of success of control is the response in the species, habitat, ecosystem or landscape that the control aims to benefit. It is important to concentrate on quantifying and reducing the damage caused by alien invasives, not concentrating on merely reducing numbers of alien invasives. Rarely is the relationship between pest numbers and their impacts a simple one. Hence estimating the reduction in the density of the alien invasive species will not necessarily indicate an improvement in the wellbeing of the native species, habitat or ecosystem that is under threat. It can be quite difficult to identify and adequately monitor the appropriate measures of success. It is important to do so, however, if the main goal, namely preventing the loss of biodiversity, is to be achieved.

6.4 Choosing Control Methods

Control methods should be socially, culturally and ethically acceptable, efficient, non-polluting, and should not adversely affect native flora and fauna, human health and well-being, domestic animals, or crops. While meeting all of these criteria can be difficult to achieve they can be seen as appropriate goals, within the need to balance the costs and benefits of control against the preferred outcomes.

Specific circumstances are so variable it is only possible to give broad guidelines of generally favoured methods: specific methods are better than broad spectrum ones. Biological control agents may sometimes be the preferred choice compared to physical or chemical methods, but require rigorous screening prior to introduction and subsequent monitoring. Physical removal can be an effective option for clearing areas of alien invasive plants. Chemicals should be as specific as possible, non-persistent, and non-accumulative in the food chain. Persistent organic pollutants, including organochlorine compounds should not be used. Control methods for animals should be as humane as possible, consistent with the aims of the control.

6.5 Control Strategies - Recommended Actions

Unlike eradication, control is an ongoing activity that has different aims and objectives. While there are several different strategic approaches that can be adopted they should have two factors in common. First, the outcomes that are sought need to achieve gains for native species, be clearly articulated, and widely supported. Second, there needs to be management and political commitment to spend the resources required over time to achieve the outcomes. Badly focused and half-hearted control efforts can waste resources which might be better spent elsewhere.

Recommended actions are as follows:

1. Prioritise the alien invasive species problems according to desired outcomes.

This should include identifying the areas of highest value for native biological diversity and those most at risk from alien invasives. This analysis should take into account advances in control technology and should be reviewed from time to time.

2. Draw up a formal control strategy that includes identifying and agreeing to the prime target species, areas for control, methodology and timing. The strategy may apply to parts of, or to a whole country, and should have appropriate standing as, for example, the requirements of Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity ("General Measures for Conservation and Sustainable Use"). Such strategies should be publicly available, be open for public input, and be regularly reviewed.

3. Consider stopping further spread as an appropriate strategy when eradication is not feasible, but only where the range of the alien invasive is limited and containment within defined boundaries is possible. Regular monitoring outside the containment boundaries is essential, with quick action to eradicate any new outbreaks.

4. Evaluate whether long-term reduction of alien invasive numbers is more likely to be achieved by adopting one action or set of linked actions (multiple action control). The best examples of single actions come from the successful introduction of biological control agent(s). These are the 'classical' biological control programs. Any intentional introductions of this nature should be subject to appropriate controls and monitoring. (See also Sections 5.3, 9 and Appendix.) Exclusion fencing can be an effective single action control measure in some circumstances. An example of multiple action control is integrated pest management which uses biological control agents coupled with various physical and chemical methods at the same time.

5. Increase the exchange of information between scientists and management agencies, not only about alien invasive species, but also about control methods. As techniques are continuously changing and improving it is important to pass this information on to management agencies for use.

6.6 Game and Feral Species as Alien Invasives - Recommended Actions

Feral animals can be some of the most aggressive and damaging alien species to the natural environment, especially on islands. Despite any economic or genetic value they may have, the conservation of native flora and fauna should always take precedence where it is threatened by feral species. Yet some alien invasive species that cause severe damage to native biodiversity have acquired positive cultural values, often for hunting and fishing opportunities. The result can be conflict between management objectives, interest groups and communities. In these circumstances it takes longer to work through the issues, but resolution can often be achieved through public awareness and information campaigns

about the damaging impacts of the alien invasives, coupled with consultation and adaptive management approaches that have community support. Risk analysis and environmental impact assessment may also help to develop appropriate courses of action and solutions.

Recommended actions are as follows:

1. Consider managing hunting conflicts on public land by designating particular areas for hunting while carrying out more stringent control to protect biodiversity values elsewhere. This option is limited in its application to situations where there is high value attached to the alien species and yet biological diversity values can still be protected through localised action.
2. Evaluate the option of removal of a representative number of the feral animals to captivity or domestication where eradication in the wild is planned.
3. Strongly encourage owners and farmers to take due care to prevent the release or escape of domestic animals that are known to cause damage as feral animals, e.g. cats, goats.
4. Develop legal penalties to deter such releases and escapes in circumstances where costly economic or damaging ecological consequences are likely to follow.

7. LINKS TO RE-INTRODUCTION OF SPECIES

7.1 Guiding Principle

- Successful eradications and some control programmes can significantly improve the likely success of re-introductions of native species, and thereby provide opportunities to reverse earlier losses of native biological diversity.

7.2 Links Between Eradication and Control Operations and Re-introductions

An eradication operation that successfully removes an alien invasive species, or a control operation that lowers it to insignificant levels, usually improves the conditions for native species that occupy or previously occupied that habitat. This is especially true on many oceanic islands. Eradications are often undertaken as part of the preparation for re-introduction(s).

The IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions (May 1995) were developed to provide "...direct, practical assistance to those planning, approving or carrying out re-introductions." These guidelines elaborate requirements and conditions, including

feasibility studies, criteria for site selection, socio-economic and legal requirements, health and genetic screening of individuals, and issues surrounding the proposed release of animals from captivity or rehabilitation centres. They should be referred to as part of the planning of eradication or control operations where re-introductions might be an appropriate and related objective. They should also be referred to if reviewing any re-introduction proposal.

The socio-economic considerations that apply to eradication and control operations largely apply to re-introductions as well, namely the importance of community and political support, financial commitment and public awareness. This makes it cost-effective to combine consultation over the eradication objective with proposals to re-introduce native species. It has the added advantage of offsetting the negative aspects of some eradications (killing valued animals) with the positive benefits of re-introducing native species (restoring heritage, recreation or economic values).

8. KNOWLEDGE AND RESEARCH ISSUES

8.1 Guiding Principle

- An essential element in the campaigns against alien invasive species at all levels (global, national, local) is the effective and timely collection and sharing of relevant information and experiences, which, in turn, assist advances in research and better management of alien invasive species.

8.2 Recommended Actions

1. Give urgency to the development of an adequate knowledge base as a primary requirement to address the problems of alien invasive species worldwide. Although a great deal is known about many such species and their control, this knowledge remains incomplete and is difficult to access for many countries and management agencies.
2. Contribute to the development of an easily accessible global database (or linked databases) of all known alien invasive species, including information on their status, distribution, biology, invasive characteristics, impacts and control options. It is important that Governments, management agencies and other stakeholders should all participate in this.
3. Develop "Black Lists" of alien invasive species at national, regional and global levels that are easily accessible to all interested parties. While "Black Lists" are a useful tool for focusing attention on known alien invasive species, they should not be taken to imply that unlisted alien species are not potentially harmful.

4. Through national and international research initiatives, improve knowledge of the following: ecology of the invasion process, including lag effects; ecological relationships between invasive species; prediction of which species and groups of species are likely to become invasive and under what conditions; characteristics of alien invasive species; impacts of global climate change on alien invasive species; existing and possible future vectors; ecological and economic losses and costs associated with introductions of alien invasive species; sources and pathways caused by human activity.

5. Develop and disseminate better methods for excluding or removing alien species from traded goods, packaging material, ballast water, personal luggage, aircraft and ships.

6. Encourage and support further management research on: effective, target-specific, humane and socially acceptable methods for eradication or control of alien invasive species; early detection and rapid response systems; development of monitoring techniques; methods to gather and effectively disseminate information for specific audiences.

7. Encourage monitoring, recording and reporting so that any lessons learned from practical experiences in management of alien invasive species can contribute to the knowledge base.

8. Make better use of existing information and experiences to promote wider understanding and awareness of alien invasive species issues. There need to be strong linkages between the actions taken under Sections 4 and 8.

9. LAW AND INSTITUTIONS

9.1 Guiding Principles

- A holistic policy, legal and institutional approach by each country to threats from alien invasive species is a prerequisite to conserving biological diversity at national, regional and global levels.
- Effective response measures depend on the availability of national legislation that provides for preventative as well as remedial action. Such legislation should also establish clear institutional accountabilities, comprehensive operational mandates, and the effective integration of responsibilities regarding actual and potential threats from alien invasive species.
- Cooperation between countries is needed to secure the conditions necessary to prevent or minimise the risks from introductions of potentially alien invasive species. Such cooperation is to be based on the responsibility that countries have to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other countries.

9.2 Recommended Actions

9.2.1 National level

1. Give high priority to developing national strategies and plans for responding to actual or potential threats from alien invasive species, within the context of national strategies and plans for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.
2. Ensure that appropriate national legislation is in place, and provides for the necessary controls of intentional and non-intentional introductions of alien species, as well as for remedial action in case such species become invasive. Major elements of such legislation are identified in previous sections, particularly sections 5 and 6.
3. Ensure that such legislation provides for the necessary administrative powers to respond rapidly to emergency situations, such as border detection of potential alien invasive species as well as to address threats to biological diversity caused by intentional or non-intentional introductions of alien species across biogeographical boundaries within one country.
4. Ensure, wherever possible, for the designation of a single authority or agency responsible for the implementation and enforcement of national legislation, with clear powers and functions. In cases where this proves impossible, ensure there is a mechanism to coordinate administrative action in this field, and set up clear powers and responsibilities between the administrations concerned. (Note : these operational roles regarding implementation and enforcement are different from, and in addition to the specific function of the 'biosecurity' agency that was recommended in Section 5.3.)
5. Review national legislation periodically, including institutional and administrative structures, in order to ensure that all aspects of alien invasive species issues are dealt with according to the state of the art, and that the legislation is implemented and enforced.

9.2.2 International level

1. Implement the provisions of international treaties, whether global or regional, that deal with alien invasive species issues and constitute a compulsory mandate for respective Parties. Most prominent among these treaties is the Convention on Biological Diversity, and a number of regional accords.
2. Implement decisions taken by Parties to specific global and regional conventions, such as resolutions, codes of conduct or guidelines related to introductions of alien species, for example the International Maritime Organisation's guidance on ballast water.
3. Consider the desirability, or as the case may be, necessity, of conducting

further agreements, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, or adapting existing ones, with respect to the prevention or control of introduction of alien species. This includes, in particular, consideration of international agreements related to trade, such as those under the auspices of the World Trade Organisation.

4. For neighbouring countries, consider the desirability of cooperative action to prevent potential alien invasive species from migrating across borders, including agreements to share information, through, for example, information alerts, as well as to consult and develop rapid responses in the event of such border crossings.

5. Generally develop international cooperation to prevent and combat damage caused by alien invasive species, and provide assistance and technology transfer as well as capacity building related to risk assessment as well as management techniques.

10. ROLE OF IUCN

1. IUCN will continue to contribute to the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP)[\(3\)](#), together with CAB International, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment (SCOPE).

2. IUCN will actively participate in the processes and meetings of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to implement article 8(h) by providing scientific, technical and policy advice.

3. The components of IUCN (including its Commissions, Programmes and Regional Offices) will act together to support the IUCN Global Initiative on Invasive Species.

4. IUCN will maintain and develop links and cooperative programmes with other organisations involved in this issue, including international organisations such as the United Nations Environment Programme, Food and Agricultural Organisation, Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment, World Trade Organisation and international NGOs. IUCN will work with Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Parties to the RAMSAR Convention, and with regional programmes such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

5. IUCN regional networks will play a significant role in raising public awareness at all levels on the issues of alien invasive species, the various threats to native biological diversity and the economic implications, as well as options for control.

6. The IUCN Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) of the Species Survival Commission (SSC) will, through its international network, continue to collect, organise and disseminate information on alien invasive species, on prevention

and control methods, and on ecosystems that are particularly vulnerable to alien invasion.

7. The separate work of IUCN/SSC on identifying species threatened with extinction and areas with high levels of endemism and biodiversity will be supported. This work is valuable when assessing alien invasion risks, priority areas for action, and for practical implementation of these guidelines.

8. The ongoing work of the ISSG will be supported, including the following actions: the development and maintenance of a list of expert advisors on control and eradication of alien invasive species; expansion of the alien invasive species network; production and distribution of newsletters and other publications.

9. IUCN, in association with other cooperating organisations, will take a lead in the development and transfer of capacity building programmes (e.g. infrastructure, administration, risk and environmental assessment, policy, legislation), in support of any country requesting such assistance or wishing to review its existing or proposed alien invasive species programmes.

10. IUCN will take an active role in working with countries, trade organisations and financial institutions (e.g. World Trade Organisation, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Maritime Organisation) to ensure that international trade and financial agreements, codes of practice, treaties and conventions take into account the threats posed to biological diversity and the financial costs and economic losses associated with alien invasive species.

11. The ISSG will support the work of the IUCN Environmental Law Programme in assisting countries to review and improve their legal and institutional frameworks concerning alien invasive species issues.

12. The ISSG will develop regional databases and early warning systems on alien invasive species and work with other cooperating organisations to ensure efficient and timely dissemination of relevant information to requesting parties.

11. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RELATED INFORMATION

The guiding principles and text of these guidelines are partially based on, or sourced from the following important documents:

Translocation of Living Organisms. IUCN Position Statement, 1987. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

IUCN Guidelines for Re-introductions. 1995. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.
Code of Conduct of the Import and Release of Exotic Biological Control Agents. United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, 1995. FAO, Rome, Italy.

Harmful Non-indigenous Species in the United States. U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, OTA-F-565, 1993. US Government Printing Office, Washington DC.

Proceedings. Norway/UN Conference on Alien Species. The Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity. 1-5 July 1996. Norwegian Institute for Nature Research, Trondheim, Norway.

Guidelines for Preventing the Introduction of Unwanted Aquatic Organisms and Pathogens from Ship's Ballast Water and Sediment Discharges. International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Resolution A.774(18)(4.11.93) (Annex).

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

IUCN gratefully acknowledges the dedication and efforts of the Invasive Species Specialist Group (ISSG) and other experts on alien invasive species whose collaborative work has made the production of these guidelines possible. Input from the IUCN Environmental Law Programme is also gratefully acknowledged.

APPENDIX

1. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Generic questions in the EIA process concerning impacts a proposed introduced species may have on the environment should include the following:

- Does the proposed introduction have a history of becoming invasive in other places? If yes, it is likely to do so again and should not be considered for introduction.
- What is the probability of the alien species increasing in numbers and causing damage, especially to the ecosystem into which it would be introduced?
- Given its mode of dispersal, what is the probability the alien species would spread and invade other habitats?
- What are the likely impacts of natural cycles of biological and climatic variability on the proposed introduction? (Fire, drought and flood can substantially affect the behaviour of alien plants.)
- What is the potential for the alien species to genetically swamp or pollute the gene pool of native species through interbreeding?
- Could the alien species interbreed with a native species to produce a new species of aggressive polyploid invasive?
- Is the alien species host to diseases or parasites communicable to native flora or fauna, humans, crops, or domestic animals in the proposed area for introduction?
- What is the probability that the proposed introduction could threaten the continued existence or stability of populations of native species, whether as a predator, as a competitor for food, cover, or in any other way?

- If the proposed introduction is into a contained area(s) with no intention of release, what is the probability of a release happening accidentally?
- What are the possible negative impacts of any of the above outcomes on human welfare, health or economic activity?

2. Risk Assessment

This refers to an approach that seeks to identify the relevant risks associated with a proposed introduction and to assess each of those risks. Assessing risk means looking at the size and nature of the potential adverse effects of a proposed introduction as well as the likelihood of them happening. It should identify effective means to reduce the risks and examine alternatives to the proposed introduction. The proposed importer often does a risk assessment as a requirement by the decision-making authority.

3. Criteria to be Satisfied to Achieve Eradication

- The rate of population increase should be negative at all densities. At very low densities it becomes progressively more difficult and costly to locate and remove the last few individuals.
- Immigration must be zero. This is usually only possible for offshore or oceanic islands, or for very new alien invasions.
- All individuals in the population must be at risk to the eradication technique(s) in use. If animals become bait- or trap-shy, then a sub-set of individuals may no longer be at risk to those techniques.
- Monitoring of the species at very low densities must be achievable. If this is not possible survivors may not be detected. In the case of plants, the survival of seed banks in the soil should be checked.
- Adequate funds and commitment must continuously exist to complete the eradication over the time required. Monitoring must be funded after eradication is believed to have been achieved until there is no reasonable doubt of the outcome.
- The socio-political environment must be supportive throughout the eradication effort. Objections should be discussed and resolved, as far as practicable, before the eradication is begun.

Footnotes

[1](#) Definition of Terms in section 3

[2](#) At the time of adoption of these Guidelines by IUCN, standard terminology relating to alien invasive species has not been developed in the CBD context. Definitions used in this document were developed by IUCN in the specific context of native biodiversity loss caused by alien invasive species.

3 SCOPE, UNEP, IUCN and CABI have embarked on a programme on invasive species, with the objective of providing new tools for understanding as well as dealing with invasive species. This initiative is called the Global Invasive Species Programme (GISP). GISP engages the many constituencies involved in the issue, including scientists, lawyers, educators, resource managers and people from industry and government. GISP maintains close cooperation with the CBD Secretariat on the issue of alien species.