Definition: An invasive species is an introduced, nonnative organism (disease, parasite, plant, or animal) that begins to spread or expand its range from the site of its original introduction and that has the potential to cause harm to the environment, the economy, or to human health. ([What is an invasive species and why are they a problem? | U.S. Geological Survey (usgs.gov)](https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-invasive-species-and-why-are-they-problem#:~:text=An%20invasive%20species%20is%20an%20introduced%2C%20nonnative%20organism,the%20environment%2C%20the%20economy%2C%20or%20to%20human%20health.))

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With no natural predators, invasive species can proliferate and cause a lot of ecological and economic damage where they have invaded. Invasive species can [threaten the biodiversity of an ecosystem](https://greentumble.com/why-is-biodiversity-important-to-ecosystems/), especially if native species are outcompeted or entirely driven to extinction. As our global natural environment continues to undergo damage and development around the world, the disturbed and deteriorating ecosystems are now becoming increasingly vulnerable to invasion by invasive species. In disturbed ecosystems, introduced invasive species can take advantage of niches that have been opened up that were previously occupied by native species.( [Why Are Invasive Species a Problem? | Greentumble](https://greentumble.com/why-are-invasive-species-a-problem#google_vignette)) The direct threats of invasive species include preying on native species, outcompeting native species for food or other resources, causing or carrying disease, and preventing native species from reproducing or killing a native species' young. There are indirect threats of invasive species as well. Invasive species can change the food web in an ecosystem by destroying or replacing native food sources. The invasive species may provide little to no food value for wildlife. Invasive species can also alter the abundance or diversity of species that are important habitat for native wildlife. Aggressive plant species like kudzu can quickly replace a diverse ecosystem with a monoculture of just kudzu. Additionally, some invasive species are capable of changing the conditions in an ecosystem, such as changing soil chemistry or the intensity of wildfires. ([Invasive Species | National Wildlife Federation (nwf.org)](https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Threats-to-Wildlife/Invasive-Species))

An invasive species can be any kind of living organism—an amphibian (like the cane toad), plant, insect, fish, fungus, bacteria, or even an organism’s seeds or eggs—that is not native to an ecosystem and causes harm. An invasive species does not have to come from another country. For example, lake trout are native to the Great Lakes, but are considered to be an invasive species in Yellowstone Lake in Wyoming because they compete with native cutthroat trout for habitat. ([Invasive Species | National Wildlife Federation (nwf.org)](https://www.nwf.org/Educational-Resources/Wildlife-Guide/Threats-to-Wildlife/Invasive-Species))