

INVASIVE SPECIES and pollution

Invasive species are non-native plants, animals, or microorganisms that spread rapidly and harm local ecosystems, wildlife, and economies. These species often thrive due to a lack of natural predators and competition, disrupting

Pollution accelerates the spread of invasive species by altering ecosystems, making them more vulnerable to invasion. Climate change, habitat destruction, and water contamination create ideal conditions for non-native species to thrive



How Do Invasive Species Affect the Environment?

Threaten Native Species

Example: Zebra Mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) - Originally from Eastern Europe, these mollusks invaded North American lakes through ballast water from ships. They filter out nutrients needed by native species, damaging food chains (NOAA, 2023).

Impact: The Great Lakes spend €500 million annually to control zebra mussels (EPA, 2022).

Disrupt Agriculture & Food Security

Example: Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) - Native to the Americas, it has spread to Africa, Asia, and Europe due to increased global trade.

Pollution Link: Pesticide overuse contributes to resistant superbugs, making eradication harder (FAO, 2023)

Fact: The fall armyworm causes €13 billion in crop losses annually in Africa alone (CGIAR, 2022).

Damage Water Ecosystems

Example: Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) - This fast-growing aquatic plant from South America clogs waterways, depleting oxygen and killing fish.

Pollution Link: Excess nutrients from agricultural runoff (fertilizers, sewage) increase plant growth, worsening the invasion (FAO, 2023).

Fact: In Africa's Lake Victoria, water hyacinths have reduced fish populations by 60%, impacting local fisheries and economies (UNEP, 2022).