

Invasive species are moving across BC and Canada at a rapid pace:

- In Canada, invasive species include at least 27% of all vascular plants, 181 insects, 24 birds, 26 mammals, 2 reptiles, 4 amphibians, several fungi and molluscs, and 55 freshwater fish.
- The estimated annual cumulative lost revenue caused by just 16 invasive species is \$13-\$35 billion.
- Just six invasive plants caused an estimated combined damage of at least \$65 million in 2008. With further spread, impacts will more than double to \$139 million by 2020.
- Some of the most serious invasive species were originally sold as pets or plants for water gardens and aquariums.



Releasing pets into the wild is both inhumane and dangerous:

- British Columbia is home to several introduced invasive pet species; pet owners release these species thinking it is a humane way to get rid of the animal.
- Although most released exotic pets will die from starvation or be killed by a predator or a car, however several species have the ability to thrive and reproduce in their new environment. Along with impacts on the environment, releasing invasive species has many economic and social impacts.
- Releasing an exotic pet into an unsuitable habitat is considered animal cruelty and charges can be laid (BC SPCA).
- Charges for neglecting a pet, including releasing it into the wild, can include a fine up to \$10,000 and/or up to 18 months in prison (BC SPCA).
- The following exotic pet and plant species are commonly released into the wild, have had serious impacts on BC's native ecosystems and natural flora and fauna, and are now considered invasive species in BC:
 - Red Eared Slider Turtles
 - European Cottontail Rabbit
 - American Bullfrog
 - Round Goby
 - Rusty Crayfish
 - Parrot's Feather
 - Yellow Flag Iris
- Plants and animals should never be released into the wild: For information on actions to take visit www.bcinvases.ca and www.bcinvasesmonth.com
- Any sightings of these or other invasive species should be reported to the local invasive species committee. (<http://bcinvases.ca/about/partners/>).