



Invasive Species Council of BC

FACTSHEET  
FEBRUARY 2023

# Don't Let it Loose!

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

BC is home to more species of living things than any other province or territory in Canada, including 72% of Canada's mammal species, 70% of Canada's nesting bird species and 50% of Canada's amphibian species: invasive species are the second biggest threat to this biodiversity after habitat loss.

The estimated annual cumulative lost revenue caused by just 16 invasive species is \$13-\$35 billion.

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 cruel 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 hit by a car, several species have the ability to thrive and reproduce in their new environment.

**Releasing an exotic pet into an unsuitable habitat is considered animal cruelty and charges can be laid.**

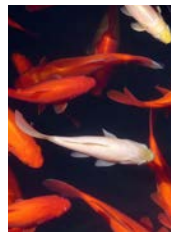


Here is what you can do instead:

**DON'T LET IT LOOSE**

- » **Return** – Contact the place where you purchased the animal to see if they will take it back.
- » **Rehome** – Contact local science centers, zoos, or aquariums to see if they can use the animal for educational purposes.
- » **Dispose** – Dry and freeze unwanted plants and add them to non-composted trash.
- » **Be Kind** – If all else fails, have a qualified veterinarian euthanize the animal in a humane manner. It is far kinder than letting it starve to death in the wild or destroy homes of native animals and plants.

The following exotic animal and plant species are commonly released into the wild where they can become established. They are invasive species in BC:



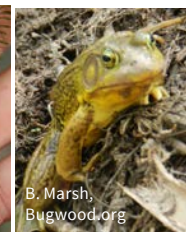
**Goldfish**  
(*Carassius auratus*)



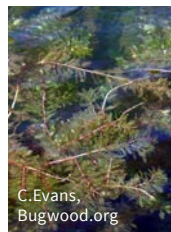
**Red-eared slider turtle**  
(*Trachemys scripta elegans*)



**Brazilian elodea**  
(*Egeria densa*)



**American bullfrog**  
(*Lithobates catesbeianus*)



**Eurasian watermilfoil**  
(*Myriophyllum spicatum*)



**Koi carp**  
(*Cyprinus rubrofuscus*)



**European rabbit**  
(*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)



**Parrot's feather**  
(*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)

Feral pigs are new invaders in BC, after escaping or being let loose from farms, they destroy crops and vegetation, eat ground-nesting birds' eggs, and cause erosion.

All these species have had serious impacts on BC's native ecosystems and natural flora and fauna. Along with impacts on the environment, releasing invasive species has many economic and social impacts as well.

Plants and animals should never be released into the wild. For information on actions to take, visit [bcinvasives.ca](http://bcinvasives.ca).

Any sightings of these or other invasive species should be reported. Visit [bcinvasives.ca/report](http://bcinvasives.ca/report).

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