

16.4 Threats To Biodiversity

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- An **introduced species** is any organism that is brought to an ecosystem by humans.
 - accidental
 - purposeful
- **Invasive species** can have an environmental and economic impact.



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- Only those that prove highly successful in their new homes are referred to as **invasive species**.



Example:

If someone releases a carp from Asia into a pond ecosystem in Wisconsin, the carp is an introduced species.

But if the carp dies or does not reproduce, it will not be considered invasive.

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- Invasive species often push out native species.
 - **Burmese python** (Florida Everglades)



- Came to the United States as a pet species.
- Irresponsible owners have released many of the snakes back into the wild.

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 - **mice** (Australia)



During the late 1700s, mice came from Europe as stowaways on British cargo ships.

Major pest species in Australia.

It was estimated that during the 1993–1994 season, the mouse population in Australia cost farmers about \$65 million in lost revenue.

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 - kudzu (southeastern United States)



Introduced in 1876 as an ornamental tropical houseplant enjoyed for its fragrant flowers and large leaves.

It was planted as field cover to prevent soil loss from erosion, but it rapidly began to spread out of the fields.

By blanketing trees and shrubs with its large leaves, kudzu deprives other plants of the sunlight they need to survive.

The plant is resistant to most types of herbicides and can live for many years.