

**Report on Invasive Species Activities in 2011**  
**for**  
**the Invasive Species Advisory Committee Meeting**

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U.S. Department of State  
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)

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The **Office of Ecology and Conservation (ENC)** leads the formulation of policies to address international threats to biodiversity and ecosystems - notably unsustainable land use practices and land degradation, invasive alien species (IAS) and illegal trade - as well as issues associated with the safe handling of living modified organisms, access to genetic resources, and the sharing of benefits arising from subsequent resource use. ENC promotes biodiversity-related priorities in free trade agreements and other international fora, and reviews and clears official correspondence and policy documents addressing issues at the interface of diplomacy and biodiversity conservation. We also work with the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) to improve communication among domestic USG agencies on international IAS activities.

The **Office of Oceans and Polar Affairs (OPA)** leads State Department involvement in marine invasive species science and conservation policy. OPA represents the State Department at the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) meetings, and represents the U.S. in international fora regarding aquatic invasive species, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the London Convention and International Maritime Organization, and the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program. Most recently, OPA represents international relations in discussions on ballast water regulation and regional coordination of marine invasive species management.

Here is a sampling of OES activities related to invasive alien species in late 2011.

**Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**: OES leads the interagency process to develop and represent U.S. government positions on issues being considered at the CBD (the United States is not a party to the CBD). In the recent meeting of the CBD Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA), IAS was recognized as one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, their increasing impact on biodiversity and economic sectors, and their negative impacts on human well-being, and emphasized the need for continued work on IAS. The SBSTTA will recommend to the COP in October 2012 that the Secretariat:

- Identify and assess gaps in international standards regarding IAS as *pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food*.
- Encourage governments and others to ensure effective collaboration among national authorities and focal points for the CBD and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), the World Organization for Animal Health, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the SPS Agreement, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to address threats of IAS as *pets, aquarium and terrarium species, and as live bait and live food*.
- Provide more detailed guidance on drafting and implementing national measures associated with IAS.

- Document how guidance, relevant activities, and standards of relevant organizations can support parties in addressing the threats from IAS.
- List the most common IAS pathways; and propose criteria for prioritizing and identifying tools to manage or minimize the risks associated with such pathways.

Lionfish Invasion in the Caribbean: DOS and NOAA have been working closely to assist countries and territories in the Wider Caribbean Region in their response to the lionfish invasion. This rapidly expanding invasion threatens the ecological integrity of coral reef ecosystems, native fisheries, and potentially the tourism sector, which relies on healthy reefs to attract divers and snorkelers to the region. Together with Mexico and the Caribbean Environment Programme, DOS co-chairs the Regional Lionfish Committee, an ad hoc committee of the International Coral Reef Initiative that aims to facilitate a regional response to the lionfish invasion. DOS has funded NOAA to carry out work in the Caribbean that will benefit regional coordination which includes training workshops, drafting the first iteration of a regional control plan, and gathering experts in the region to review and reach consensus on a regional response. Partners in ICRI and SPAW will be integrally involved in these activities.

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