

# Invasive Species Action Month

## Don't Let it Loose

June 2015

### FACT SHEET

#### 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 cost of invasive species to Canada is between \$16.6 billion and \$34.5 billion per year. Invasive species cause increased maintenance costs to public parks and private property, devaluing real estate.
- 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, and have had serious impacts on BC's native ecosystems and natural flora and fauna:
  - Red Eared Slider Turtles
  - European Rabbit
  - Goldfish
  - Eurasian Watermilfoil
  - Parrot Feather
  - American Bullfrog
  - Brazilian Elodea
  - Koi Carp
- Plants and animals should never be released into the wild: For information on actions to take visit [www.bcinvasives.ca](http://www.bcinvasives.ca) and [www.bcinvasivesmonth.com](http://www.bcinvasivesmonth.com)
- Any sightings of these or other invasive species should be reported to the local invasive species committee. (<http://bcinvasives.ca/about/partners/>).



TD Friends of the  
Environment  
Foundation

