

EXOTIC INVASIVE SPECIES

An “exotic invasive species” is defined as a species that is 1) non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration **and** 2) whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. (*Executive Order 13112*). Exotic invasive species are spread primarily through human actions.

The Reserves have several exotic invasive species. The Chinese Tallow Tree (*Triadica sebifera*), also known as the Popcorn Tree, and Cogon Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) are the two most common exotic invasive plants on the Reserves. The Nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) and the Feral Hog are common exotic invasive animals.

Exotic invasive species compete with native species for food, water and space. Their impacts contribute to losses in native biodiversity and changes in habitat structure, hydrology and productivity. Exotic invasive species are now being recognized as “biological pollution,” and many states are passing laws to prohibit their sale and distribution.

