

Alien Invasion

An activity of "Hairy crabs: meal or menace"

Biodiversity is critical to our existence. Its balance is maintained by nature, and we should protect it. Species that enter a foreign habitat can upset the balance in biodiversity there. Read carefully "**Hairy crabs: meal or menace**" (page 21, *What's Up* January 2021) to understand this.

The table below lists a few of the invasive alien species that threaten the biodiversity and ecosystems in Singapore. Working in pairs, unscramble the words under the column "Invasive species" to discover what they are. Ask an adult or search the internet for help.

	Description	Invasive species
1	Native to North America, this turtle is one of the "World's 100 Worst Invasive Alien Species". It was introduced here through the pet trade. Pet owners who tired of them released them into local waterways. These turtles are omnivores and can survive in many freshwater habitats, making them a threat to our native aquatic biodiversity.	eRd-rdeea ersidl
2	This amphibian, native to North America, is a voracious carnivore and eats just about anything. It was imported here in large numbers as food for humans and as an aquatic pet. Some escaped and some were released into our freshwater ecosystems.	eanmirAc olrulbgf
3	This bird is the most abundant bird here and is seen everywhere. They were introduced here through the pet trade. Their aggressive behaviour and adaptability have allowed their numbers to grow uncontrolled and caused some native birds like the oriental magpie-robin to become threatened. They feed on a wide variety of foods.	javan yman
4	This mollusc is native to Central and South America but has somehow found its way to S E Asia and parts of India. It multiplies rapidly (they have been found in clusters of 10,000) and threatens to drive out the rare native horseshoe crab and the Asian green mussel. The latter is a popular food here.	meicAnar ihrcbska tewar sesmlu
5	This rodent is a native of Indochina and was introduced here through the pet trade. It is larger than its local cousins and competes aggressively with them for resources. It is now abundant here and causes much damage to trees (particularly young saplings) by stripping off their bark. It is also a host of parasitic flatworms which can be transmitted to native mammals.	vbreaali rqlreis

Do note: Invasive alien species are very often released into the wild by irresponsible pet owners. They pose a grave threat to our ecosystems. Anyone who releases animals anywhere in Singapore can be fined up to \$5,000 under the Wildlife Act.