

# COOL RIVER PROGRAM

## WANTED: HABITAT INVADERS

Hundreds of plants and animals call the San Diego River home... and they need our help! Our native plants and animals are threatened by invasive species that are taking over their habitat!

### What is a native species?

A plant or animal that occurs naturally within a region and is specially adapted to survive there.

### What is an invasive species?

A non-native plant or animal that has been brought to a new region on purpose or by accident that causes harm to the environment in which it is introduced.

### Where do invasive species come from?

Invasive species are usually brought by humans from other countries and end up spreading out of control when they arrive. Seeds from invasive plants can spread from gardens, hiking boots, firewood, and boats. Invasive pests can spread from boats, firewood, and even people releasing their pets into the wild!

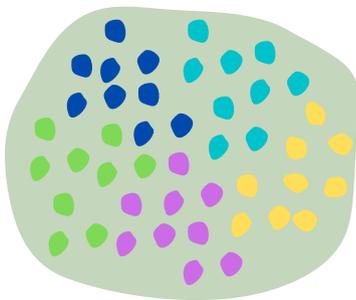
### What's so bad about invasive species?

Invasive species can cause big problems for our native species! Since they are coming from another part of the world, when they arrive, there aren't any predators or diseases around to keep them in check. With nothing around to eat or kill invasive species, they can grow out of control and start to out-compete our native species for space, nutrients, sunlight, and water.

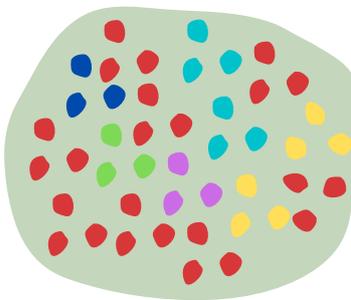
Over time, invasive species can take over entire habitats! Turning what was once a healthy habitat filled with a variety of different plants and animals into an unhealthy habitat with only a few species.

### See how just one invasive species can completely take over an entire habitat over time:

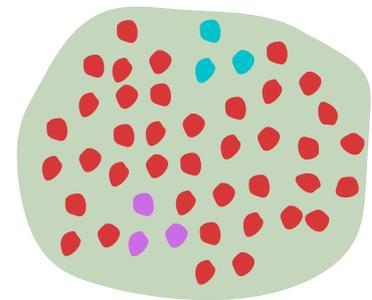
Native species: ● ● ● ● ● Invasive species: ●



NATIVE HABITAT



HABITAT 5 YEARS LATER



HABITAT 10 YEARS LATER

### How can we help stop the spread of invasive species?

- Replacing invasive plants in our gardens with native plants!
- Cleaning your hiking gear before exploring new areas to prevent seeds from spreading!
- Volunteering with the San Diego River Park Foundation to help remove invasive plants!

### Here are a few examples of invasive species causing trouble in San Diego:



Giant Reed  
(*Arundo donax*)



Gold Spotted Oak Borer  
(*Agrilus auroguttatus*)



Tamarisk  
(*Tamarix ramosissima*)

Flip the page over for a fun activity!

[www.sandiegoriver.org/distance\\_learning.html](http://www.sandiegoriver.org/distance_learning.html)



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## WANTED: HABITAT INVADERS

Do some research on your own to find an invasive species in San Diego and create a Wanted poster for it below!

# • WANTED •

## FOR DESTROYING PRECIOUS NATIVE HABITAT

**INVASIVE SPECIES NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

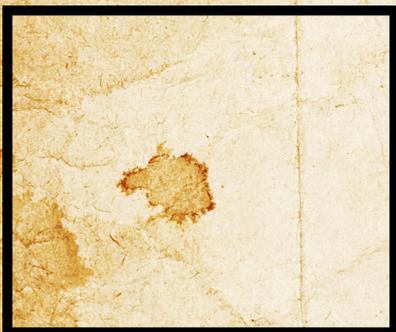
**CHARACTERISTICS**



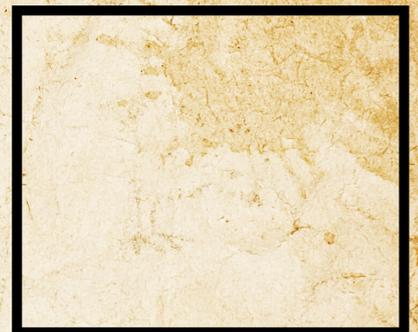
**METHOD OF INVASION**



**ORIGIN**



**CRIMES COMMITTED**



**DRAWING OF SPECIES**



## REWARD: HEALTHY HABITAT FOR ALL!



We'd love to see your Wanted poster!

Share your design with [coolriver@sandiegoriver.org](mailto:coolriver@sandiegoriver.org)!

[www.sandiegoriver.org/distance\\_learning.html](http://www.sandiegoriver.org/distance_learning.html)

