

# Economic Impact of Invasive Species to Washington State

## \$1.3 Billion Total Economic Impact

Invasive species are non-native organisms that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state. Invasive species harm Washington State's landscapes, ecosystems, agriculture, commerce, recreation, and sometimes human health. The damages from invasive species translate into economic losses for communities and businesses.

While there more than over 200 known invasive species found within or near Washington State, this economic analysis highlights the damages and potential impacts that could result if 23 of these plant and animal species were allowed to spread in Washington in a single year. Without prevention and control, the selected invasive species could have a total impact of \$1.3 billion dollars annually.

### Four Costly Invasive Species

These four invasive species damage our state economy and resources. The dollar amounts and lost jobs represent the potential total economic impact\* of each species.

#### Plants

##### Scotch Broom

*Cytisus scoparius*

Ubiquitous Scotch broom is a serious threat to native prairies and forests. It prevents timber regeneration and displaces pasture forage for grazing animals. The plant is toxic to livestock and is a fire hazard.

**\$142.8 million 660 jobs lost**

##### Smooth Cordgrass

*Spartina alterniflora*

Smooth cordgrass is an estuarine grass that has densely arranged stems and a thick mat of roots. It displaces native species, destroying habitat and food sources for fish, waterfowl, and other marine life.

**\$48.6 million 360 jobs lost**

#### Animals

##### Quagga/Zebra Mussels

*Dreissena bugensis/D. polymorpha*

While not established in Washington, invasive mussels have the potential to devastate numerous industries. The freshwater mollusks threaten lakes, rivers, dams, and irrigation systems; degrade water quality; and impact the ability to recreate on waterways.

**\$100.1 million 500 jobs lost**

##### Apple Maggot

*Rhagoletis pomonella*

A major threat to Washington's apple industry, the apple maggot also affects pear, plum and cherry crops. If apple maggots are found in an orchard, the fruit is unsuitable for export.

**\$392.5 million 2,900 jobs lost**

### Industry Impacts

The dollar amounts shown represent the potential total economic impact\* of 23 invasive species on Washington industries in terms of lost revenue and jobs.



#### Recreation

\$47.6 million  
300 jobs



#### Water Facilities

\$100.5 million  
500 jobs



#### Livestock

\$282.9 million  
1,500 jobs



#### Timber

\$297.0 million  
1,300 jobs



#### Crops

\$589.2 million  
4,400 jobs

#### Invasive species included in this analysis

Rush skeletonweed	Apple maggot
Scotch broom	Quagga/zebra mussels
Himalayan blackberry	Gypsy moths
Yellow starthistle	Emerald ash borer
Knapweed species	Nutria
Leafy spurge	Feral swine
Purple loosestrife	
Invasive knotweed	
Eurasian watermilfoil	
Smooth cordgrass	

\*Total economic impact includes direct, indirect and induced impacts