



## The Declare, Deposit or Pay Campaign

The *Declare, Deposit or Pay Campaign* aims to encourage passengers to leave at home items that pose a pest and disease threat and to declare such products being carried into countries. A failure to do so can have disastrous consequences for agriculture, the environment and human health, so everyone pays. The campaign supports national and regional efforts to safeguard national and Caribbean biodiversity and protect people and their livelihoods from invasive alien species (IAS).

The most common pathways by which IAS are introduced and spread are via trade, travel, transportation and tourism, and the most cost-effective way to manage these 'pathways' is through prevention. Since the practice of casually transporting animal and plant material is prevalent, raising awareness and educating the travelling public is critical in getting passengers to become self-monitoring and assume responsibility for ensuring that they do not facilitate the introduction of IAS into countries. This would reduce the chance of IAS breaching borders and minimise the potential devastation.

A six-month pilot campaign, *Declare, Deposit or Pay*, is being implemented at air and sea ports, from July to December 2022. The aim is to create an awareness of the consequences of transporting IAS, whether it is deliberate or unintentional. This public awareness is important in gaining the support of travellers and encouraging behaviour change leading to persons choosing not to transport anything that can harbour IAS, to declare any item of concern and to dispose of potential risk items in special, biosecure bins provided for that purpose.

The *Declare, Deposit or Pay Campaign* is being implemented by the 'Preventing the Costs of Invasive Alien Species in Barbados and the OECS' Project, which is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), implemented by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and executed by the Centre for Agriculture and Biosciences International (CABI) with support from the participating countries of Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, and St Vincent and The Grenadines.

## Answering Some Key Questions

### What are invasive alien species (IAS)?

Invasive alien species are organisms that are non-native to a particular ecosystem. Their deliberate or accidental introduction and spread impacts human health and well-being, disrupts agriculture and trade, and threatens biological diversity in the marine, fresh water and terrestrial ecosystems.

### What is biodiversity?

The United Nations Environmental Programme defines 'biodiversity' as, *the variety of life on earth, it includes all organisms, species, and populations; the genetic variation among these; and their complex assemblages of communities and ecosystems.*

## Why are IAS a problem?

Invasive alien species out-compete native species causing biodiversity loss. This is especially significant on islands, where they are the primary cause of recent extinctions in many taxonomic groups. The number of new introductions of species to areas outside their natural range is rapidly increasing. As the climate changes, more areas are becoming suitable for a greater number of IAS and extreme weather events will likely facilitate their spread. The impacts of IAS are therefore expected to continue to increase.

## What are the economic and social impacts of IAS?

The economic and social impacts of IAS include the direct effects of an introduced species, as well as costs associated with control efforts. A 2021 study estimated that invasive species, which cost North America \$2 billion per year in the early 1960s, rose to over \$26 billion per year since 2010. Globally, it is estimated that the economic cost of invasive species has been \$1.288 trillion over the past 50 years.

## What are some examples of IAS damage?



**The Pink Hibiscus Mealybug** (*Maconellicoccus hirsutus* Green) was first reported in the Caribbean in Grenada in 1994. By early 2001, it had spread to over 25 other countries. There was heavy damage as the pest fed on the young growth of a wide range of trees and plants causing severe stunting and distortion and, in severe cases, leaf-drop and death.



**Lionfish** (*Pterois volitans*) is beautiful and deadly. This venomous, carnivorous and voracious predator eats reef fish and the young of important commercial fish species. The lionfish invasion could become the most disastrous in history, devastating coral reef ecosystems and adversely affecting commercial fisheries throughout the Americas.



**The Coral Creeper** (*Antigonon leptopus*) is an ornamental vine that bears a mass of attractive coral-coloured flowers. It is relatively drought tolerant, can grow in almost any soil type, including poor soils, and grows aggressively to smother other vegetation. It is also difficult to control.



The **Giant African Snail** (*Achatina fulica*), which is native to East Africa, was first reported in the Caribbean in 1984 in Guadeloupe. It is reputed to attack over 500 plant species inclusive of tree crops, ornamentals, vegetables and root crop. It is also a potential public health problem as an agent of human disease, including eosinophilic meningitis.

## What can I do to make sure I don't spread invasive species?

Prevention is the best way to manage the threat of invasive alien species. That means leaving at home any items that may transmit IAS, declaring all risk items, and disposing of uneaten food and undeclared plant or animal products in biosecure bins.

**We can all help to save our species!**

For further information on IAS and this initiative visit: [caribbeaninvasives.org](http://caribbeaninvasives.org)

