

Peer Review Plan for the Rapid Screening of Species Risk of Establishment and Impact in the United States

About the document

Subject and Purpose: The Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a rapid risk screening process to determine a high, low, or uncertain level of risk for imported nonnative species. The process uses international databases, scientific literature, and a peer-reviewed model to match climate (via 16 climate variables) of a species in its native and invasive ranges with similar climates in the United States. The results indicate approximate geographic ranges in the United States where the climate is and is not similar to where the species survives elsewhere. The species' history of invasiveness is then factored into the risk-screening model.

Importance of Scientific Information: Although only a small fraction of the species imported into the United States escape and ultimately end up causing harm to society, those that do collectively cost society billions of dollars each year. The most cost-effective and efficient approach to avoid these devastating effects is to prevent risky species from entering the country in the first place. The rapid risk screening process would provide efficient, preliminary, risk assessments of species potentially imported to the U.S. This risk screening process will help the Service evaluate species to list as injurious through the rulemaking process under title 18 of the Lacey Act, which would prohibit their importation and interstate transportation. In addition, the results of the risk screenings will be made available to government, industries, and the public, thus more efficiently protecting the biosecurity of the United States by helping to categorize high-risk species and facilitating voluntary agreements and behaviors to not trade in those high risk species.

About the Peer Review Process

Type of review: Independent Peer Review - The Service will solicit comments from independent scientific reviewers who will submit individual written comments and responses to questions posed to all invited reviewers.

Number of reviewers: The Service will use 3-5 independent expert reviewers. Letters to a minimum of three peer reviewers requesting their participation will be sent as soon as possible.

Reviewer Expertise: Any one or combination of the following: invasive species biology, invasive species risk assessment, decision-support modeling, aquatic species biology, aquaculture, fisheries.

Selection of Peer Reviewer: Peer reviewers will be selected based on their expertise with the subject matter and as described in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Peer Review Guidelines, including not having been involved in development of this Rapid Screening of Species Risk of Establishment and Impact in the United States process.

Management of Peer Reviewer: The peer review will be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Peer reviewers will be given 45 days to complete their reviews. The estimated start of review is January 2013. Peer review comments and Service response to those comments will be made available to the public on a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website: (http://www.fws.gov/injuriouswildlife/Injurious_prevention.html).

About Public Participation

The public is invited to submit comments on this peer review plan by sending emails to prevent_invasives@fws.gov (please state “Rapid Screening of Species Risk peer review” in subject line) or by mail to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Branch of Aquatic Invasive Species, 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 740D (Mailstop 770), Arlington, VA 22203. The deadline for filing comments is January 22, 2013.

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