

EXPLORATION 3: INVASIVE SPECIES

Main Problem

[Invasive species](#), also known as alien species, are found all over the world. In the Wadden Sea, invasive species are prevalent due to the close proximity to major commercial ports in Northern Germany. Ships from all around the world carry invasive species with them. However, invasive species have also been introduced through [aquaculture](#) ([Pacific oysters](#)). Globalization and aquaculture have significantly increased dispersion of alien species throughout the Wadden Sea. Invasive species destroy habitats, disrupting and causing havoc in ecosystems.

Guiding Question

What effects might invasive species be having on the national park's ecosystem?

Background Information on Invasive Species

[Invasive species](#) can be introduced accidentally or intentionally. You may ask yourself why anyone would intentionally introduce an alien species. There are a few reasons; one may be to serve as pest controls to save an ecosystem. Another reason is [aquaculture](#) for food sources, such as [Pacific oysters](#) in the Wadden Sea.

Although the Schleswig-Holstein Wadden Sea National Park is a protected region, it is surrounded by some of the busiest container ports, such as Rotterdam, Hamburg, and Bremerhaven, visited by ships from many global locations. An unintended consequence of global shipping is the transport of species from one location to another. In ports this often happens when the [ballast water](#) is emptied from ships. Often new species can thrive in a new

location because of reduced [predation](#) and outcompeting native species for food. If these species spread and reproduce, causing harm to local residents, they are considered invasive species.

Watch this short [video](#) by National Geographic to learn more about alien species.