

Link found between invasive species and commercial success in global pet trade

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A pair of researchers at the University of Lausanne has found a link between invasive animal species and commercial success in the global pet trade. In their paper published in *Proceedings of the National*

Academy of Sciences, Jérôme Gippet and Cleo Bertelsmeier describe their study of sales of invasive species and what they learned about them.

Biologists have become concerned as more [invasive species](#) are being found in environments around the world. The reason for the concern is that oftentimes, invasive species can adapt so well that they take over ecosystems, leaving few resources for [native species](#); additionally, invasive animal species often find themselves in regions where they have no natural predators. In this new effort, the researchers looked into the role of the global pet trade in the growing threat of invasive species.

The work by Gippet and Bertelsmeier involved first gathering data surrounding the global pet trade. They found information describing thousands of vertebrae, including mammals, amphibians, birds and fish. They also looked at several species of [ants](#) that have become increasingly popular as pets in recent years.

They found that approximately 12.6% of the pet trade is made up of invasive species. They also found that invasive mammalian species were 7.4 times more frequent in the global pet trade than they are in the wild. And they found that ants being sold in the pet market were 6.6 times more common in the global trade market than they were in the wild and were sold approximately 1.7 times as often as non-invasive ants.

The researchers suggest that the global pet [trade](#) market is likely responsible for much of the spread of invasive species. They believe a large number of invasive species that are purchased either escape or are released into the wild by the people who buy them. They also suggest that buyers prefer invasive species, making them even more pervasive. They conclude by suggesting that countries around the world should start passing laws to restrict such sales or face growing problems related to the introduction of invasive [species](#).

More information: Jérôme M. W. Gippet et al. Invasiveness is linked to greater commercial success in the global pet trade, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (2021). [DOI: 10.1073/pnas.2016337118](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2016337118)

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