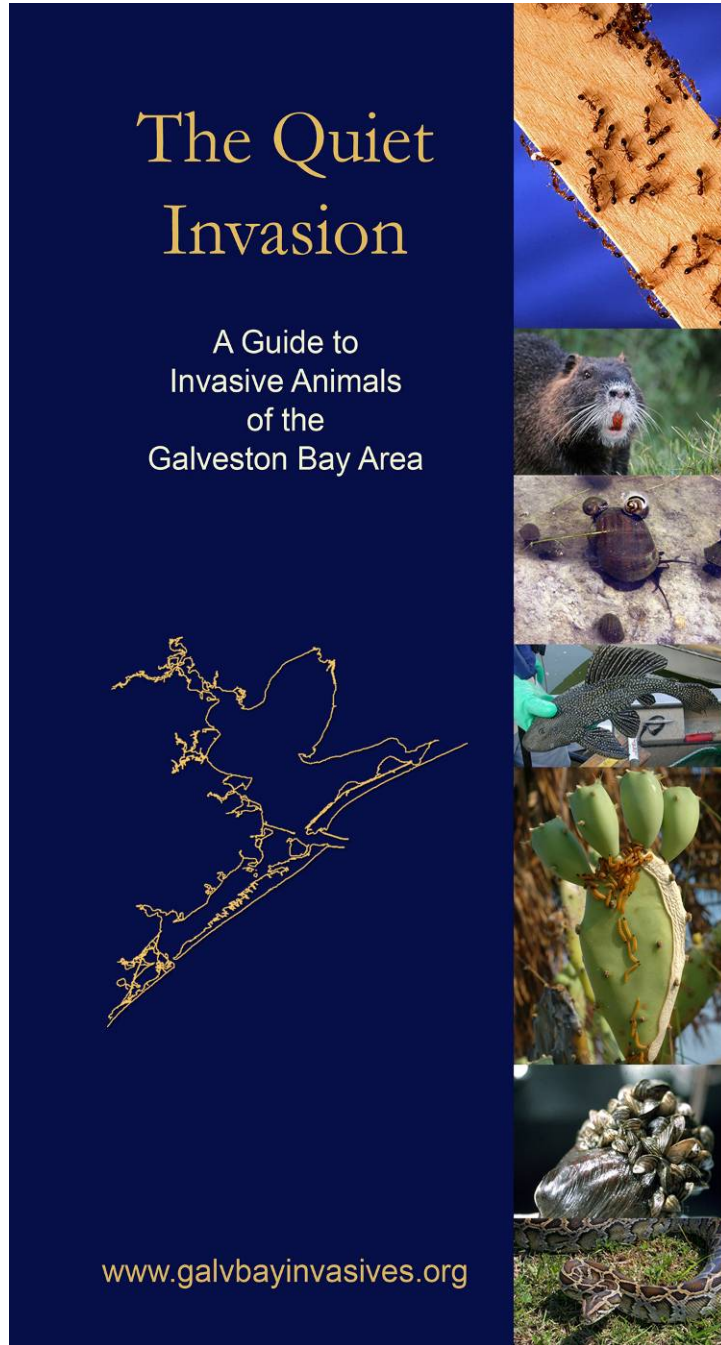


**Final Report**  
**Galveston Bay Invasive Animal Field Guide**  
**TCEQ Contract Number 582-8-84976**



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**[www.galvbayinvasives.org](http://www.galvbayinvasives.org)**

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# 1 Executive Summary

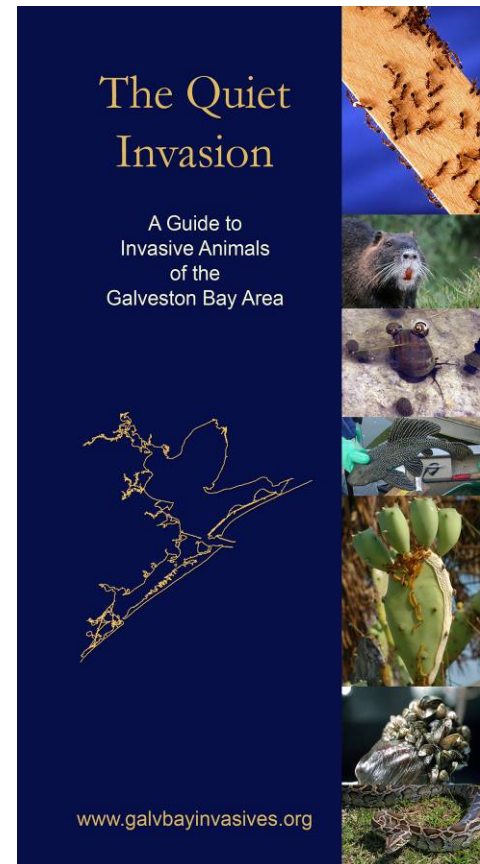
*The Quiet Invasion: A Guide to Invasive Animals of the Galveston Bay Area* was created in 2010 by the Houston Advanced Research Center with funding from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Galveston Bay Estuary Program. The pocket-sized field guide helps pet owners, homeowners, land managers and members of the general public identify invasive animals that can be harmful to local habitats.

Invasive species identified in the guide are animals from other parts of world that, when introduced to and established in the Houston-Galveston region could survive, reproduce and out-compete native species. Invasive species eventually harm local habitats and the wildlife that depend on them. Examples of invasive animals include: zebra mussel, island apple snail, and the armored catfish. On an annual basis, invasive plants and animals cost this country nearly \$120 billion in economic losses and control costs (Pimentel et al. 2005).

Color photos help the audience in Brazoria, Chambers, Galveston, Harris and Liberty counties identify each of the 20 invasive animal species described in the printed guide. An additional 20 species are presented in Web version at—[GalvBayInvasives.org](http://GalvBayInvasives.org). Information on each species' geographic distribution, pathway of introduction, physical characteristics, preferred habitat, reproduction and feeding habit is included.

The invasive animal field guide was created as a companion guide to the *The Quiet Invasion: A Guide to Invasive Plants of the Galveston Bay Area* which was completed in 2006 (TCEQ contract 582-5-65092) (Gonzalez and Christofferson 2006). To date, more than 7,000 field guides have been distributed via public outreach events and postal service (copies requested through the website). The [website](http://www.galvbayinvasives.org) has received more than 124,000 visitors since its launch in June 2006.

Feedback on the Galveston Bay Invasive Plant and Animal Field Guides has been overwhelmingly positive. Demand for the guides as well as demand for public outreach presentations related to the guide continues through summer 2010. The guides are a useful resource for homeowners, land and resource managers, pet owners and educators as evidenced from comments received by the project team via emails and field guide requests. The guides have raised public awareness regarding the invasive species issue in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed. Additionally, the guides are used as a resource in local and statewide citizen science invasive species tracking efforts ([TexasInvasives.org](http://TexasInvasives.org)).



## 2 Introduction

Invasive species are identified as species that establish and successfully reproduce in biogeographic regions where they do not naturally exist. The impacts of invasive species represent an additional ecological and economic stressor to the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed. During the 2001 review of the priorities and goals established in *The Galveston Bay Plan*, invasive species were identified as the second highest priority problem behind habitat loss. In 2004, the Galveston Bay Estuary Program (GBEP), the Houston Advanced Research Center (HARC), and the Environmental Institute of Houston at the University of Houston-Clear Lake (EIH-UHCL) completed an invasive species risk assessment for the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed. The project identified 296 species (including 166 plant species) as current and potential invaders of the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed. Each species was then ranked according to ecological risk by a group of experts. The risk assessment also outlined a series of recommendations to enhance prevention and control of invasive species (Lester and Gonzalez 2004).

The Invasive Species Field Guide series (the Field Guide) is a follow-up outreach effort to the 2004 risk assessment. The goal of the Field Guide is to facilitate prevention and prompt control of invasive species in the Houston-Galveston region by providing information to the public regarding species identification, introduction pathway descriptions, native species alternatives, control strategies, and agency reporting contact information. The target audience for the guide consists of homeowners and land managers.

The Invasive Animal Field Guide has two components: 1) a hard copy, pocket version of the guide and 2) a companion website. The Invasive Animal Field Guide identifies and provides information describing 40 of the highest risk invasive animals of the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed. The Invasive Animal Field Guide is available in two forms. A bound, color, pocket field guide, 48 pages in total length was developed and printed for distribution (3,900 copies) to the public. The printed field guide provides information on 20 invasive animal species. A companion web-based field guide detailing 40 species was developed and is located on the internet at [www.galvbayinvasive.org](http://www.galvbayinvasive.org). The hard copy and electronic versions of the Field Guide are divided into 3 main content areas:

1. General Information about invasive species introductions. Information includes a general background of the establishment of invasive species and impacts, regulatory and non-regulatory management of invasive species, and information on what the public can do to stop the spread of invasive species.
2. Species Descriptions:
  - Scientific and common names
  - Color photos
  - Human health impacts
  - State and federal regulation of species
  - Introduction pathway(s) and history
  - Geographic distribution in native and invasive ranges
  - Habitat preferences

- Impacts
  - Physical description and identifying characteristics
  - Reproduction characteristics
  - Feeding habits
  - Suggested control methods
3. Agency contacts for reporting invasive species (in the back of the field guide)

## 3 Project Methodology

### 3.1 Invasive Species Chosen for Inclusion

As mentioned above, invasive animal species identified by the Galveston Bay Invasive Species Risk Assessment Project (TCEQ Contract number 582-2-53287) were considered for inclusion in the Field Guide. Of the 123 invasive animal species identified by the risk assessment, 47 were ranked according to ecological risk (see Appendix A). The list of 47 ranked invasive animal species served as the preliminary list of animals for inclusion in the field guide. The list was updated using information from several databases including the USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Database (<http://nas.er.usgs.gov/>). Preliminary species lists (20 species for the hard copy guide and 40 species for the online version) were presented to the GBEP Invasive Species Working Group for review. The list as modified and approved by the ISWG (see Appendix B) formed the basis for the field guide.

### 3.2 Data Collection and Database Creation

A number of sources were used to populate the field guide with descriptive information. Scientific names were verified using the USDA Integrated Taxonomic Information System (ITIS) database (<http://www.itis.gov/>). All species on the project website are linked to the ITIS database of taxonomic information. All resources (217 bibliographic records) used for species profiles in the hard copy and web-based field guides are included on the project website via a [References](#) page. All citations are contained within and managed using an EndNote™ bibliographic library. Examples of sources include databases, reports, peer review scientific journal articles, and species profiles prepared by federal and state agencies, university programs, and non-governmental organizations with a reputation for well-documented information. All references used the Invasive Animal Field Guide are included in Appendix C.

More than 100 species-specific, high resolution photos were obtained with permission from individual photographers and from the online photo resources (e.g., <http://www.invasive.org/>). All photos are open source and are cited in the field guide per instruction from the source of the photo.

### 3.3 Creation and Printing of the Field Guide

The hardcopy field guide layout was created using Microsoft Publisher. The Publisher file was then sent to Bayside Printing Company (<http://www.baysideprinting.com>) for final layout, print setting, and printing. Bayside Printing is a certified woman and minority business entrepreneur



(WMBE) in the State of Texas and also has many other certifications that meet both local and national certification standards. Bayside is HUB Certified through the Texas Building and Procurement Commission (TBPC).

The hard copy field guide is pocket-size, wire-bound, and printed on recycled paper. The recycled paper is glossy, and of heavy stock to enable outside use. The front and back covers are reinforced to withstand repeated use outdoors. A ruler is printed on the back cover to enable field measurements. The master is held by Bayside Printing to enable easy reprints of the guide.

### 3.4 Website Development

The online version of the field guide is available at <http://www.galvbayinvasives.org/>. It contains information on 81 invasive animal and plant species. Users can browse species according to habitat (aquatic or terrestrial), presence in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed (current invaders or future threats), state listed (e.g. TPWD prohibited exotic species), unlisted (not regulated) species of concern, or all 40 animal species can be viewed.

The “About Invasive Species” section of the website provides general information about invasive animal and plant species including management techniques for prevention and control, native species alternatives, and additional internet resources with invasive species information. An online survey regarding the field guide is also available. The survey is intended to provide information detailing who uses the guide and for what purpose. The survey is also a means to obtain feedback on the guide.


Each species page contains the species profile, links to the USDA Plants database, USDA Integrated Taxonomic Information System, information about state listed status, and photo thumbnails. Each thumbnail enlarges once clicked to facilitate its use in other publications.

## 4 Project Results

### 4.1 *Hard Copy, Field Guide Printing*

An initial printing of 3,000 copies of the invasive plant guide was completed in August 2006. By November 2006, all copies of the invasive plant guide were distributed. In the fall of 2006, GBEP authorized a second printing of 4,500 copies. In 2010, a third printing of 3,250 additional invasive plant field guides was completed in partnership with Jesse H. Jones Nature Center, Harris County Precinct 4. The Nature Center contributed \$1,900 toward the field guide printing, giving them 500 copies for distribution (2,750 copies were shipped to GBEP for distribution). The partnership with the Nature Center allowed the project to print the field guides at a lower per unit cost. The total number of invasive plant field guides printed to date is 10,750 copies. The project printed 3,900 invasive animal field guides which were delivered to the Galveston Bay Estuary Program offices.

## 4.2 **Website Use**

Visitors to the [www.galvbayinvasives.org](http://www.galvbayinvasives.org) website and associated page views are tracked using Sitemeter, a free web traffic tracking software application that runs continuously on the website. Web traffic can be viewed any time by clicking the  icon at the bottom of a webpage.

The website was launched in June 2006. Since that time more than 124,000 visitors have obtained information from the website. On average 2,570 visitors visit the galvbayinvasives.org website each month. Additional visitor demographics can be viewed from the project's Sitemeter website.

## **5 Conclusions and Lessons Learned**

Feedback on the Galveston Bay Invasive Animal Field Guide has been overwhelmingly positive. Demand for the guide as well as demand for public outreach presentations related to the guide continues through 2010. 10,750 copies of the invasive plant field guide have been printed with more than 7,000 distributed. 3,900 invasive animal field guides have been printed for distribution. The [galvbayinvasives.org](http://galvbayinvasives.org) website has had more than 124,000 visitors since 2006 and the number continues to grow. Additional website visits can be viewed on the website's [traffic meter](#).

The invasive animal field guide was created due an interest from GBEP stakeholders and recommendations made by users of the invasive plant field guide created in 2006. Overall, the invasive animal and plant field guides are a useful resource for homeowners, pet owners, land and resource managers, and educators as evidenced from comments received by the project team via the online survey, emails, and field guide requests. The guides have raised public awareness regarding the invasive species issue in the Lower Galveston Bay Watershed. Additionally, the guides have assisted local and statewide efforts to implement a citizen science invasive species tracking program which use the guide as an educational tool.



## 6 Appendices

### Appendix A – Galveston Bay Invasive Species Risk Assessment; Species Rankings, Kingdom Animalia

Kingdom	Phylum/Division	Genus species	Common Name	Sum
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Solenopsis invicta</i>	Red imported fire ant	26
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Pomacea canaliculata</i>	Channeled applesnail	24
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Ctenopharyngodon idella</i>	Grass carp	23
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>	Nutria	23
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Dreissena polymorpha</i>	Zebra mussel	23
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Apis mellifera scutellata</i>	Africanized honeybee	21
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Eriocheir sinensis</i>	Chinese mitten Crab	21
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Oreochromis sp.</i>	Hybrid tilapia	21
Animalia	Ectoprocta	<i>Zoobotryon verticillatum</i>	Sauerkraut grass	21
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Carcinus aestuarii</i>	Mediterranean green crab	20
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Carcinus Maenas</i>	European green crab	20
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Channa argus</i>	Northern Snakehead	20
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Monopterus albus</i>	Asian swamp eel	20
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Corbicula fluminea</i>	Asian clam	20
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Felis domesticus</i>	Feral cat	19
Animalia	Cnidaria	<i>Phyllorhiza punctata</i>	Australian spotted jellyfish	19
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Coptotermes formosanus</i>	Formosan subterranean termite	18
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Cichlasoma cyanoguttatum</i>	Rio Grande cichlid	18
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Hypostomus plecostomus.</i>	Suckermouth catfish, plecostomus	18
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Feral pig	18
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Melanoides tuberculatus</i>	Red-rim melania	18
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Rapana venosa</i>	Veined rapa welk	18
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Aedes albopictus</i>	Asian tiger mosquito	17
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	Eurasian collared dove	17
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	European starling	17
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Perna perna</i>	Brown mussel, Mexihalo mussel	17
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Blastobasis graminea</i>	Sugarcane borer	17
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Perna viridis</i>	Green mussel	16
Animalia	Cnidaria	<i>Drymonema dalmatinum</i>	Peptol jellyfish	16
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Litopenaeus stylirostris</i>	Blue shrimp	15
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Linepithema humile</i>	Argentine ant	15
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Hemigrapsus sanguineus</i>	Asian shore crab, Japanese shore crab, Pacific crab	15
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Litopenaeus vannamei</i>	Pacific white shrimp	15

**Appendix A Continued...**

Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Daphnia lumholtzi</i>	Water flea	14
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Cichla temensis</i>	Speckled pavon	14
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Charybdis hellerii</i>	Indo-Pacific Swimming Crab	14
Animalia	Cnidaria	<i>Diadumene lineata</i>	Orange-striped sea anemone	14
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Cichla monoculus</i>	Fire-belly peacock cichlid	13
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Cichla ocellaris</i>	Peacock cichlid	12
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Didemnum perlucidum</i>	Ascidian	12
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Crassostrea gigas</i>	Pacific oyster	10
Animalia	Mollusca	<i>Crassostrea ariakensis</i>	Chinese river oyster	10
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Botryllus niger</i>	Ascidian	10
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Botryllus schlosseri</i>	Ascidian	10
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Palaemon africanus</i>	African prawn	10
Animalia	Arthropoda	<i>Anoplophora glabripennis</i>	Asian long-horned beetle	9
Animalia	Chordata	<i>Astyanax mexicanus</i>	Mexican tetra	9

**Appendix B – Hard copy and online invasive animal species list approved by the GBEP Invasive Species Working Group**

**Scientific Name (Common Name)**

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1. *Aedes albopictus* (Asian tiger mosquito)
2. *Agrilus planipennis* (Emerald ash borer)
3. *Anguilla sp.* (Freshwater eel)
4. *Anoplophora glabripennis* (Asian long-horned beetle)
5. *Boiga irregularis* (Brown tree snake)
6. *Cactoblastis cactorum* (Cactus moth)
7. *Cairina moschata* (Muscovy duck)
8. *Carcinus maenas*, *C. aestuarii* (European green crab, Mediterranean green crab)
9. *Channa sp.* (Snakehead, all species)
10. *Charybdis hellerii* (Indo-Pacific swimming crab)
11. *Cichla sp.*, *Cichlasoma sp.* (South American cichlids)
12. *Colossoma sp.*, *Piaractus sp.* (Pacu, pirapatinga, red-bellied pacu)
13. *Coptotermes formosanus* (Formosan subterranean termite)
14. *Crassostrea ariakensis*, *Crassostrea gigas* (Chinese river/Suminoe, Pacific giant oyster)
15. *Ctenopharyngodon idella*, *Hypophthalmichthys nobilis*, *H. molitrix*, *Mylopharyngodon piceus*, *Carassius auratus*, *Cyprinus carpio* (Carp (grass carp, bighead carp, silver carp, black carp), goldfish, and koi)
16. *Didemnum perlucidum* (White crust tunicate)
17. *Dreissena bugensis* (Quagga mussel)
18. *Dreissena polymorpha* (Zebra mussel)
19. *Eriocheir sinensis* (Chinese mitten crab)
20. *Hemigrapsus sanguineus* (Asian shore crab)
21. *Hypostomus plecostomus*, *Pterygoplichthys anisitsi* (Armored catfish, pleco)
22. *Linepithema humile* (Argentine ant)
23. *Litopenaeus stylirostris*, *Litopenaeus vannamei*, *Penaeus monodon* (Blue shrimp, Pacific white shrimp, Asian tiger shrimp)
24. *Marisa cornuarietis* (Giant ramshorn snail)
25. *Melanoides tuberculatus* (Red-rim melania)
26. *Monopterus albus* (Asian swamp eel)
27. *Myiopsitta monachus* (Monk parakeet)
28. *Perna perna*, *Perna viridis* (Brown/Mexilhao mussel, Green mussel)
29. *Phyllorhiza punctata* (Australian spotted jellyfish)
30. *Pomacea insularum* (Island apple snail)
31. *Potamopyrgus antipodarum* (New Zealand mud snail)
32. *Pterois volitans* (Lionfish)
33. *Pycnonotus cafer* (Red-vented bulbul)
34. *Python sp.*, *Eunectes sp.* (Pythons and constrictors)
35. *Rapana venosa* (Veined rapa whelk)
36. *Solenopsis invicta* (Red imported fire ant; RIFA)
37. *Sus scrofa* (Feral hog/pig)
38. *Tilapia sp.*, *Oreochromis sp.*, and *Sarotherodon sp.* (Tilapia)
39. *Zoobotryon verticillatum* (Sauerkraut grass, spaghetti Bryozoa)

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