

Internet Trade of Aquatic Invasive Species

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Intentional and unintentional releases of live organisms that are bought and sold for use in aquariums, nurseries, water gardens, aquaculture, and as live bait make up a complex vector for invasive species—organisms in trade—that can adversely affect the Great Lakes. Internet commerce facilitates this trade in live organisms, providing consumers, hobbyists and others on-demand access to distribution networks worldwide. While research has shown that restricted plants and animals are available online; little is currently being done to address this pathway as a way to prevent the import, trade or release of potentially invasive species into the Great Lakes environment. The Great Lakes Commission is working to support invasive species prevention efforts by developing software to assess the availability of invasive species via Internet sales, identify sellers, and develop and implement targeted management activities. This project will provide management tools to decision-makers and regulators, present information on the Internet marketplace, conduct outreach to sellers, better assess the risks associated with this pathway, and present options for additional action to effectively prevent AIS via this pathway.