

## **Understanding Schools and classroom activities as consumers of organisms in the trade and pathways for invasive species: turning a dilemma into a solution.**

Samuel Chan  
Oregon Sea Grant

We report on the scope and risks of an invasive species pathway linked with schools, science curricula, biological supply warehouses and aquaria/pet suppliers. To characterize the scope of the problem and explore solutions, we surveyed nearly 2000 teachers from eight states and two Canadian provinces (FL, NY, IN, IL, OR, WA, CA, CT, Ontario and British Columbia), interviewed curriculum specialists, conducted 8 focus groups involving 84 teachers, surveyed and worked with biological supply houses . We evaluated the value teachers placed on live plants and animals in the classroom, teachers' awareness and knowledge of invasive species, the organisms being used, sources of organisms, disposal methods, and potential solutions to unwanted introductions of non-native species. We interviewed and worked with biological supply houses ranging from corporate giants such as Carolina Biological to smaller suppliers to understand what, why and how species are shipped to classrooms. We worked with school districts, teachers, suppliers and national science curriculum developers that serve nearly half of all school districts in the USA, on potential pilot solutions and understanding barriers to increase awareness and on processes to prevent the shipment and release of invasive species some suppliers to implement solutions.