



News Release

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International Day For Biodiversity Friday May 22, 2009

Help Keep Canada Beautiful & Natural

Central Lake Ontario is part of a global effort to recognize the United Nations International Day for Biological Diversity on Friday May 22. The intent of this day is to increase awareness and understanding of biodiversity issues around the world. Biodiversity is the measure of the number and variety of different species found in an ecosystem. The loss of the earth's biodiversity is a major concern and one of the contributors to this problem is invasive alien species.

In an effort to draw attention to this threat, this year's theme for International Day for Biological Diversity is invasive alien species. Invasive alien species can be plants, animals, pathogens and other organisms that are non-native to an ecosystem and may cause economic and environmental harm and adversely affect human health. Invasive alien species are often introduced or spread outside their natural habitats, often unintentionally, affecting native biodiversity of almost every ecosystem type on earth.

Scientists have determined that since the 17th century, invasive alien species have contributed to nearly 40 percent of all animal extinctions, where there is no other known cause. Invasive species impact agriculture, forestry, fisheries and natural systems and these impacts are further accelerated by climate change, pollution, habitat loss and disturbance caused by humans. Globalization has resulted in greater trade, transport, travel and tourism, all of which can facilitate the introduction and spread of species that are not native to an area. If a new habitat is similar enough to a species' native habitat, it may survive and reproduce. For a species to become invasive, it must successfully out-compete native organisms for food and habitat, spread through its new environment, increase its population and harm ecosystems in its introduced range.

"There are some common examples of invasive alien species right here in Durham," says Kathy Luttrell, Terrestrial Resource Analyst with Central Lake Ontario Conservation. "The zebra mussel, purple loosestrife, and more recently in the news, the emerald ash borer, are just a few examples. We all have a responsibility to protect Canada's natural ecosystems and area residents can play a key part in helping to control the spread of invasive alien species like emerald ash borer," adds Kathy.



Emerald Ash Borer
Photo courtesy of- CFIA

For more information on International Day for Biodiversity and on what you can do to reduce the impact of invasive species please visit the Central Lake Ontario Conservation's web site at www.cloca.com.

What we do on the land is mirrored in the water.