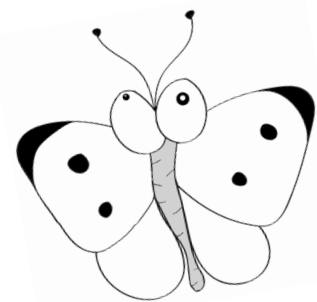


Native and invasive species fact sheet



Back ground information for the – Native or Not activity

New Zealand has been an island land mass since separating from ancient Gondwana around 85 million years ago.

Native species of plants and animals are either:

1. The species that were present 85M years ago and are still present.
2. The species that have descended from those present 85M years ago; or
3. Species that have arrived since but *without* human assistance and survived.

Native species that are found here and *nowhere else* are called **endemic**. Because of our long isolation, we have a large number of endemic species.

Non-native species are usually called **introduced** or **exotic** species, and they have arrived here *with* human assistance.

They are either:

1. Species that have been *deliberately* brought here by people for a number of reasons (e.g. stoats, starlings, gorse, and bumble bees); or
2. Species that have arrived *accidentally* with people or goods onboard human transport systems (e.g. garden slugs, Argentine ants, Didymo).

Introduced species may exist in New Zealand either as:

1. Domestic plants and animals (crops, ornamental flowers, livestock, pets); or
2. Wild plants and animals that have established, escaped or been released.

Introduced species that have established in the wild and able to breed and survive long term are said to be **naturalised**.

Invasive species

Some introduced species become **invasive**, meaning that they breed to produce enormous numbers and spread rapidly throughout large areas of the country, often displacing native species or causing significant environmental harm.

Invasive species can also have major impacts on humans through spreading disease or having damaging effects on forestry, horticulture, and agriculture.

Occasionally a native species can become invasive when something in its environment changes.

GWB School Hunt – Native and invasive species fact sheet (DOCDM-1430693)

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Great white butterfly

The great white butterfly is an **introduced species** that has arrived accidentally in Nelson City.

There is concern that unless eradicated it could become an **invasive** species, as did its close relative the Small (or "cabbage") white butterfly that arrived around 1930. The small white butterfly spread throughout New Zealand within 5 years of arriving here.

There is a risk that if the great white butterfly is allowed to spread it will:

- Cost vegetable and seed growers millions of dollars per year.
- Threaten more than 75 native plant species.
- Put at risk 300,000 hectares of forage crops of the meat and dairy industries.
- Destroy home gardeners favourite vegetables.