

HAWAII IBP SYNTHESIS:  
7. IMPACT OF EXOTIC PLANTS AND ANIMALS IN HAWAI'I\*

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Although biologists have long assumed that the influx of exotic plants and animals reaching Hawai'i in the past 200 years has caused severe disturbances in natural ecosystems and to native organisms, few reliable data have been obtained. Some such data have been obtained in recent years, mostly in connection with Hawaii IBP and with the National Park Service. This paper will discuss a number of different effects of introduced species, including their roles in destruction or displacement of native species, spreading fire, biological control, changes in moisture regimes, and disease introduction and spread. The literature will be summarized and gaps in our knowledge requiring further work will be indicated.

It is postulated that the rate of introduction of exotic species, and hence the rate at which perturbations have been imposed on Hawaiian ecosystems, has been an important factor in accounting for the magnitude of change which has occurred in these ecosystems.

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\* Abstract