

Tipping Points and Sticking Points: Hawaii Resident Awareness of Invasive Species  
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Oral presentation

Two independent studies in the 1990s found that Hawaii had the nation's worst alien pest problem due to gaps in prevention, detection, and control programs, which could be addressed through increased inter- and intra-agency communication, cooperation, and public outreach. The Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species (CGAPS) formed in 1995 to address these gaps and to raise the awareness of the public, officials, and special interest groups about invasive species issues to effect a positive change in perception, actions, policy, and funding for invasive species programs. In 1996, 29% of Hawaii residents had heard of the concept of invasive species, rising to 70% in 2007. During this time, the introduction and spread of coqui frogs and high media attention on a proliferation of *Salvinia molesta* in an Oahu reservoir proved to be tipping points in public and policymaker awareness and support. However, there are also some cases where public and policymaker support has come out in favor of an invasive species. From brown treesnakes to biocontrol and beyond, some issues that have gained traction with the public, while others have become sticking points.

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