

Conservation – Yes, There is an App for That

New smartphone app makes invasive species reporting user-friendly and fun

An invasive species is any species that is non-native to an ecosystem and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Non-native species often compete with and ultimately displace the native flora and/or fauna communities. It is estimated that half of all the birds threatened with imminent extinction are threatened either wholly or in part by introduced plant and animal species.

How can you help? If you have a smartphone, it just became a whole lot easier.

One of the best ways to combat the spread of invasive species (either plant or animal) is by accurate and detailed reporting. This information is used by scientists and researchers to develop strategies to eradicate the invasive species or to learn more about the spread-knowledge that can be used with future invasions. Using the photo and Global Positions System (GPS) capabilities of your smartphone, you can help by providing the “boots on the ground” information that would be impossible to collect by a single researcher or team.

As Audubon members, we are some of the most-frequent guests in our parks and on our public conservation land. If you are headed out on a field trip, encourage your group to download the *free* Ivegat1 app – available in the app store (iPhone and Android). Create an account so you can enter information and then you are on your way as Florida’s newest citizen scientist.

Next time you are in the field (or even in your neighborhood) and you spot an invasive species, **open your app, snap a photo, enter location details and push send**. It’s that easy.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.eddmaps.org/florida/report/> or call Audubon Florida’s Jonathan Webber at 850-222-2473. Also, you can download and print instructions to bring on your next field trip: <http://bit.ly/1pdUnLB>.

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