

FEATURE - INVASIVE PLANTS, ANIMALS TARGETED BY PARTNERSHIP

INTRO: Hunters and anglers are key players in a USDA-sponsored partnership to control the spread of invasive plants, animals and pathogens. The USDA's Pat O'Leary has more in part 3 of a 5 part series - "Defending Favorite Places." (1:58)

INVASIVE SPECIES ARE UPSETTING THE BALANCE OF ECOSYSTEMS ACROSS AMERICA, INCLUDING FAVORITE PLACES FOR HUNTING AND FISHING. ON THE ANCIENT BARRIER ISLAND OSSABAW, OFF THE GEORGIA COAST, INVASIVE WILD HOGS ARE DESTROYING THE NATURAL HABITAT.

Jim Simmons, Georgia DNR: Feral hogs compete with native wildlife. One of the struggles that we face here on Ossabaw is that they target the nests of endangered loggerhead sea turtles.

Ed Van Otteren, Georgia DNR: And because of the hogs, there has been very little live oak regeneration. They also do a lot of destruction out in the marsh.

BUT THE STATE IS GETTING HELP FROM HUNTERS TO CONTROL THE INVASIVE HOG POPULATION, WHICH ALONG WITH NOXIOUS WEEDS AND OTHER INVASIVES, ARE A THREAT TO A TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE.

Dennis McDuffie, Hunter: It's been a family tradition as far back as I can remember. And hunters can be part of keeping everything equal out there.

AROUND THE NATION, HUNTERS AND ANGLERS ARE PART OF A GROWING PARTNERSHIP TO STOP THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES. THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S FOREST SERVICE AND OTHER AGENCIES ARE WORKING WITH SPORTSMEN'S GROUPS TO GET THE WORD OUT.

Samuel Chan, Oregon State University: We can all be part of the solution just mainly by looking at ways that prevent invasive species - being familiar with a few invasive species, share that with our neighbors, our friends, our fellow hunters and fishermen.

Sandy Kratville, USDA Forest Service: If they know their weeds, they can help us by reporting those invasive species when they see them on a new site, making sure that when they're out in the woods that they don't bring in invasive species on their clothes or with their stock or in their hay.

Kelly Uhing, State Weed Coordinator, Colorado Dept of Agriculture: It would be a fantastic idea for hunters and fishermen to work together and form what is called a cooperative weed management area, and that would include anybody who has interest in a specific area or for a specific weed, to pool their resources together.

YOU CAN LEARN MORE AT INVASIVEPSECIIESINFO.GOV.
FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, I'M PAT O'LEARY.