

Stepping beyond the evidence base, or the uncomfortable process of prioritising invasive species for policy and management

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Global targets for invasive species emphasise the importance of prioritising invasive species for effective biosecurity policy and management. However, equally important is prioritising areas most at risk to invasion and those of greatest conservation or production value. It is this third dimension, i.e. area, that provides the information on the context of the problem and the type and size of impact that forms the basis of prioritisation. Ensuring the strategic allocation of resources to managing the problem must therefore include integrating information on species, pathways and areas into risk assessments and prioritisation exercises. This means collating and making sense of vast quantities of information, dealing with information and capacity gaps, which can be substantial, and incorporating diverse and shifting stakeholder values. Systematic integration of science evidence, expert judgement and stakeholder values presents a way forward that is flexible, pragmatic and repeatable. As such it meets scientific criteria for robust monitoring of trends in invasion and the effectiveness of their management. Using examples and data on global and Antarctic trends in invasions and their impacts, I'll illustrate the importance of context (area) in the prioritisation process and the importance of the evidence base for decision making.

