

Pet and Aquarium Retailer Program

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

The information in this guide will assist you to implement the Code of Conduct for the Recognized Retailer Program at your business. We recommend you develop a set of tasks that are relevant for your business.

Review the material provided and use the information in this guide along with the suggested resources to help your business meet its commitment to reducing the introduction and spread of invasive species through the pet and aquarium trade.

In-House Review

The first step is to [identify](#), if any invasive species are present in your business. Review your inventory and make a list of invasive species currently sold, grown/raised, or prescribed by your company. Should you find an invasive species while reviewing your inventory, note proactive measures you can take with your customers or alternatives you wish to offer as suitable, non-invasive options. Once you have reviewed the species you stock, including any invasive species, your next step is researching the common and Latin names for your inventories. Using Latin names helps to avoid confusion caused by the multiple common names an individual may have or a shared common name between two individuals. Reach out to your [local Invasive Species organization](#) for assistance.

Here are some common pet and aquarium species that are invasive in NS:

- » Red-eared slider turtle (*Trachemys scripta elegans*)
- » American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*)
- » Goldfish (*Carassius auratus*)
- » Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)
- » Parrot's feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*)
- » European rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)
- » Brazilian elodea (*Egeria densa*)
- » Koi carp (*Cyprinus rubrofuscus*)
- » Carolina fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*)
- » Starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*)
- » Marbled crayfish (*Procambarus fallax forma virginalis*)
- » Chinese mystery snails (*Cipangopaludina chinensis*)
- » Yellow floating heart (*Nymphoides peltata*)

Don't Let It Loose Training

Research proves that knowledgeable customer service staff attracts and retains customers as they seek in-store assistance. NSISC staff are available to answer questions and provide support.

Identify all staff positions at your business that should be aware of this program and would benefit from reviewing this implementation guide, the code of conduct, and the educational material provided.

Educate Customers

Recognized Retailers are vital for increasing invasive species awareness amongst clients. Market research has shown that the point of sale is the best place to reduce the introduction and spread of invasive species. Invasive species are available to hobbyists and the public through catalogues, online distributors, local sales, and sharing invasive species amongst themselves. These sources are more difficult to monitor than in-store purchasing or doing direct business with industry professionals. In general, once educated about the issues around invasive species in the environment, customers genuinely desire to 'do the right thing' and practice responsible pet ownership to avoid contributing to these serious impacts.

- » Retailers have a great opportunity to educate the public on responsible pet and aquarium ownership:
- » Place window clings on tanks that contain known invasive species
- » Display printed resources in a place that is visible to all customers, like near the point of purchase
- » Share knowledge with staff so they can educate customers on invasive species you stock, as well as responsible pet and aquarium ownership
- » Provide invasive species resources, like decals and rack cards, to interested customers
- » Share invasive species messaging on your social media accounts. The NSISC and Canadian Council on Invasive Species' (CCIS) social media accounts are excellent sources to repost messaging from or tag to spread the word further

Promotion And Recognition Of Your Business

Businesses that sign and submit the Don't Let It Loose Code of Conduct automatically have their name and link to their website on the NSISC and CCIS websites. Your business will be seen as an industry leader in sustainable, responsible pet ownership by setting an example for other businesses in reducing the spread of invasive pet and aquarium species. Your voluntary and successful participation in the Don't Let It Loose program can attract and retain customers.

Annual Check-In

A program representative will contact your business via email or phone annually to check in on your Recognized Retailer participation. The intent is to support your company in following the recommended practices for meeting the commitments outlined in the Code of Conduct and ensure your business can continue to be recognized in our advertising materials and on our websites.

- » The annual check-in will determine the following:
- » If management still supports the Recognized Retailer Program
- » What improvements to the program would help your business
- » Updates to contact information
- » Your success with any alternative species you offer customers and clients
- » Your success with education and outreach to your customers and clients
- » What marketing and training resources have worked/not worked for your business

We want to continue to develop our relationship with your business through the Recognized Retailer Program to meet our collective goal of reducing the spread of invasive pet and aquarium species through industry practices.

Resources

The NSISC website at nsinvasives.ca provides information on the Don't Let It Loose program, resources, products, factsheets, and webinars. Keep up to date and learn more about:

- » Invasive species
- » Impacts of invasive species
- » Benefits of being a Recognized Retailer
- » Upcoming programs and events
- » New Alert Species

All NSISC publications and products are downloadable from our website free of charge. You may purchase hard copies from the NSISC office based on available inventory. Please contact your local program coordinator for more information and/or restock educational materials that have been provided. We can be contacted at nsinvasives@gmail.com.

Updates From NSISC

Participating in the Don't Let It Loose Recognized Retailer Program keeps you updated on invasive species news and events across Nova Scotia and globally.

We also encourage you to become sign up for NSISC's monthly e-newsletter and to stay up to date on local events, new invasive species, and training opportunities in Nova Scotia. The NSISC website is updated regularly with invasive species and NSISC news, as well as event and program information.

Contact Information

council email: nsinvasives@gmail.com