Invasive Species, READ MORE...

Before we look at the fundamentals of using location data it may be important to look over the definition of an invasive species. “Invasive species” are defined as a non-native organisms that are expanding outside their native range and are likely to cause harm to the environment, the economy or human health’. The important part of this definition for you as a citizen scientist is ‘expanding outside their native range’. Knowing the range of an invasive species is particularly important in order to map the species distribution in a particular environment. The range of a species can be calculated by looking at the specific locations it inhabits. Believe it or not, the current distribution of many invasive species is not well known. To determine the current distribution of a species, data needs to be collected over a large geographic area. However, staff and funds to monitor these species are often limited. This is where you can help! Simply recording and reporting the locations of invasive species in your local community can help researchers and land managers know where these species are located. These techniques may also be used to predict the current distribution of an invasive species in the larger environment, on a national or even global scale.

Location data can be used to produce species distribution maps, which are not only good to look at; they are incredibly useful for creating distribution models. These maps can help field crews better control invasive species, which saves time and money. Invasive species scientists can use data on the location of invasive species provided by citizens, like yourselves, to predict other potential locations susceptible to invasion.

Want to read more about invasive species?
Check out the link to a tutorial developed by “CitSci.org”, Invasive Species <http://citsci.org/DH.php?WC=WS/CitSci/Tutorials_Wisconsin/Tutorial1_Static.html>. You can find other interesting tutorials developed for citizen scientists there as well.