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Faunal alien species of Sri Lanka

According to IUCN, an alien species is a species, sub species, or lower taxon that occur outside its natural range and dispersal potential, and includes any part, gametes or propagule of such a species that might survive and subsequently reproduce. These alien species can easily achieve an invasive status and become a major thret to native biodiversity. Therefore, aim of this investigation is to identify such species so that their current status can be evaluated before they become a threat to the naïve biodiversity.

Information regarding introduced species was collected from published books, journal articles, project reports, dissertations, checklists, and news letters. A total of 56 species of fauna were identified as alien species and an additional 18 species and 5 sub-species were recognized as probable introductions. These alien fauna comprise of 26 species of invertebrates and 48 species and 5 sub-species of vertebrates. Of the alien fauna, 26 species have been planned introductions. These include 19 species of fish for aquaculture and 2 species of fish and 5 species of insects as biological control agents. In addition, 11 species of domesticated fauna can also be considered as intentional introductions. A further 23 species and 5 sub-species can be considered as accidental introductions. This include 9 species of escaped pets, 6 species of pathogens and 3 species of pests.

The current status of all of the alien fauna remain unknown. However some of these alien fauna is believed to have achieved invasive status. A further investigation is necessary to determine the present status of these species and to clearly identify whether they pose a threat to native biodiversity.