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Recent regulation changes regarding invasive species in Mexico and the development of Mexico's National Strategy on Invasive Species

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Regulation changes

Between November 2008 and February 2010, Mexico made several modifications to existing environmental and wildlife regulations regarding invasive species.

On November 2008, the Deputy Chamber made several modifications to the *Ecological Equilibrium and Environmental Protection General Law* (LGEEPA by its Spanish acronym; equivalent to NEPA), and the *Wildlife General Law*. These modifications were published in the Federal Register until February 2010.

The intent of these modifications was to strengthen existing regulations by incorporating more specific language dealing with invasive species and make these regulations more in tune with other regulations outside of the wildlife arena, such as the *Forestry, Human Health, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Economic, Biosecurity of Genetically Modified Organisms, Animal and Plant Health, and Foreign Commerce laws*.

Highlights of these modifications:

- It defines an exotic invasive species as: *"A species or population that is not native and it is found outside of its natural distribution range. It is capable of surviving, reproducing, and establishing itself in natural habitats and ecosystems and threatens the native biological diversity, economy or human health."*
- Prohibits the importation of exotic invasive species or any other wild species that can carry an exotic invasive species and represent a threat to biodiversity, the economy, and human health.
- Prohibits the release into the wild of exotic invasive species.
- Mandates the creation of a list of exotic invasive species that has to be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if needed (NOTE: There are currently more than 1,000 species considered as invasive in Mexico with fishes and plants comprising the largest numbers).
- Mandates the creation of a regulation on prevention of entry of these species, management, control and eradication of those exotic invasive species which are already established in Mexico.
- Gives the Economy Ministry the power to control transit of these species inside Mexico.

National Strategy On Invasive Species

To meet the goals of the *Convention of Biodiversity* and the *National Strategy on Biodiversity*, and considering the increasing number and impacts of invasive species in the country, the Government of Mexico drafted its *National Strategy on Invasive Species in Mexico: Prevention, Control, and Eradication* in January 2010.

The Mexican government conducted six workshops around the country between 2002 and 2006 to gather initial information about invasive species and drafted a diagnostic document. Between 2007 and 2008, an extensive consultation process around the country took place involving federal agencies only. In addition, many national strategies from other countries and discussions under the Trilateral Committee were taken in consideration. By 2008, an advisory team, a group of 30 scientists, managers, and NGO representatives, was created and asked to draft the National Strategy. The document was reviewed in 2009 and final draft was available by early January 2010. An extensive public review process took place between January 20 and March 12, 2010. The final version is expected to be published on May 2010.

Highlights of the Strategy:

- Vision: By 2020, Mexico will have an efficient system for early detection of invasive species and necessary protocols for prevention, mitigation, and eradication.
- It contains three strategic objectives:
    - #1: Prevent, detect and reduce the risk of introduction, establishment, and dispersal of invasive species.
    - #2: Establish control and eradication programs for invasive species to minimize or eliminate their negative effects and promote ecosystem restoration and conservation.
    - #3: Inform the public in a responsible and timely manner, so they can assume responsibly, their actions in the prevention, control and eradication of invasive species.

Web sites of interest:

Invasive species by the National Commission of Biodiversity (Spanish)
www.conabio.gob.mx/invasoras/index.php/Portada

Draft National Strategy document (Spanish)
www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/consulta/ConsultaEspInv.html

Additional materials (Spanish)
www.conabio.gob.mx/institucion/consulta/ConsultaEspInv.html

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