



The Institute of Jamaica
For the Encouragement of Literature, Science and Art.

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Media Release

Attention: All News Editors

KINGSTON, Jamaica

(October 21, 2015)

NATIONAL INVASIVE ALIEN SPECIES (IAS) DATABASE LAUNCHED

Jamaica's ability to prevent the introduction of Invasive Alien Species (IAS) and manage their spread in the island has been intensified with the launch of the *Jamaica Invasive Species Database (JISD)*.

IAS are animals and plants not originally from an area and when introduced into a new location, threaten the native species. They are the number one cause of species loss in many islands.

The database is the first comprehensive portal of its kind for Jamaica and provides a wide range of information about the types of invasive animals and plants found in the country, including publications. The database has the capacity to store photographs of the species, map images of where they are located and geographic reference coordinates.

The launch took place on Wednesday October 14 at the Courtleigh Hotel in Kingston and was made possible through the *National Biodiversity Planning to Support the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity 2011-2020 Strategic Plan Project*, executed by the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA). The project is funded by the Global Environment Facility-United Nations Development Programme (GEF-UNDP).

Dr. Laurence-Chounoune, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative said "Jamaica's economic development is highly dependent on its ecosystems and biodiversity, an area being aptly addressed by the database. Hence, the UNDP is keen to support this initiative and any others geared towards managing Jamaica's biodiversity, which is critical in maintaining sustainable livelihoods".

Anyone with an interest in IAS, can visit the web page <http://apps.licj.org.jm/jamaica-invasives> and see data and information. The database is being hosted by the National Spatial Data Management Division



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(NSDMD) of the Ministry of Water, Land, Environment and Climate Change. The Institute of Jamaica in collaboration with the NSDMD co-manages the *Jamaica Invasive Species Database (JISD)*. The Jamaica Clearing-House Mechanism of the Natural History Museum of Jamaica, Institute of Jamaica, through a link to the above web page, also provides access at http://jamaicachm.org.jm/ioj_wp/national-invasive-species-database-for-jamaica/.

Mrs. Dionne Newell, Chair of the national IAS Working Group commented, “the database represents Jamaica’s continued efforts in mitigating the potential serious impacts that Invasive Alien Species can have on our native plants and animals and the national Invasive Alien Species Working Group continues to support the continued development of the JISD “.

Dr. Suzanne Davis, Senior Research Officer of the Jamaica Clearing-House Mechanism emphasised that the database, which is still in its early stage will promote scientific knowledge.

“A lot of Jamaica’s IAS information is scattered across the country with different organizations and groups, the new database will now be a central portal for all the science-based information to be shared,” she said.

Dr. Davis said the information within the database was sourced by government and non- government organizations, which are part of a national IAS Working Group, as well as some information from Brazilian colleagues in the Inter-American Biodiversity Information Network (IABIN). The Invasive Information Network of IABIN was responsible for the development of the database template. The Jamaica Clearing-House Mechanism represented Jamaica within IABIN’s Invasive Information Network.

“We started entering data in June this year. Presently, 50 entries have been made of different animals and plants, where the species are found naturally, their biology, how they were brought to Jamaica, where they are located, the extent of their invasion in Jamaica and other countries or regions in which they are also invasive,” Dr. Davis said.

Mr. McKenzie, Director of Environmental Management and Conservation at the National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA) said “NEPA will be playing an active part in providing information uploads.”



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He pointed out that NEPA's contributions would include information related to the Natural Resources Conservation (Permits and licences) (Amendment) Regulations of April 2015 and associated permits for the importation or introduction of species of flora and fauna or other biological organisms; the operation of a pet store facility and the operation of a zoo.

Dr. Davis is encouraging organizations and groups with science-based data on species listed in the *Jamaica Invasive Species Database* to also share their information with the Jamaica CHM at the email address chm@nhmj-ioj.org.jm , so that it may be entered into the database.

For more information, please contact:

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