

GLDIATR: Leading the fight against web trafficking of aquatic invasive species



GLDIATR

Great Lakes Detector of
Invasive Aquatics in Trade

E-commerce is recognized as a growing way that species can be transferred into areas where they might be invasive. Both a patchwork of regulations on species and the growing global online marketplace can make it difficult to find and prevent sales of restricted species.

To address this threat, the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) has developed innovative software that searches the web for sites where aquatic invasive species can be purchased and shipped to the Great Lakes region. The Great Lakes Detector of Invasive Aquatics in Trade – or GLDIATR – shields against invasive species by employing advanced

technology like natural language processing and machine intelligence to scrape, sort and collect thousands of pages across the internet, focusing on keywords including both the scientific and common names of species across auction sites and search engines.

In the first 30 days of full-scale testing alone, GLDIATR scanned over 300,000 web pages and identified 200 websites with invasive species for sale, including 56 restricted species. In response, the GLC contacted website owners with information about invasive species regulations and best practices and observed changes to stock and/or shipping restrictions in 27 cases.

In 2016, the success of the project was recognized when the GLC received an additional \$340,000 in Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to work with invasive species managers to operationalize GLDIATR. The GLC will use this funding to work to refine and expand the use of GLDIATR, including targeting sales of high risk invasive species and developing customized user interfaces and reporting for each Great Lakes state and province.

For more information on GLDIATR, please visit www.glc.org.