

## Champion Invasive Species

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With irritating frequency I hear or read comments about a critter or plant being an "invasive species."

Pardon the cliché, but it takes one to know one.

Naked apes and our machines have been places no other creature—as far as we know—has even imagined, from deep within our planet to the Moon and beyond to the heliosphere near the border of the Sun's realm and into interstellar space.

*We're zooming toward the stars.*

Along the way we have lived in, on, and under oceans worldwide; camped or domiciled on towering peaks; and traveled to the bottom of Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, which is so far down if Mount Everest could be set on its floor, one mile of water would still be above it.<sup>1</sup>

Miners extract gold 2.5 miles below the surface in South Africa, pursuing deposits so deep rock temperatures of 151 degrees fahrenheit necessitate pumping slurry ice into the depths to lower the air temperature to 86 degrees fahrenheit.<sup>2</sup> (Note: *Desulforudis audaxviator*, an extremophile bacterium, is present in the mine's ground water and *resents* our presence<sup>3</sup>—or so some posit. "Invasive and unwanted!" DAs castigate in their strange language. "Go away!")

A fleet of our rovers rolls across the sands of Mars—one even flits through the thin air. Explorer craft from NASA and other agencies orbit companion planets in our solar system, plunge through their thick atmospheres, or smash into them recording data all the way.

And someday, *in my lifetime I hope*, we'll figure out ways to travel through space and time to the stars as they are "today" or "yesterday" or many thousands or trillions of "years" from now. Who knows?

Our invasions will continue—and rightly so—but I'd like us to be less judgemental about the incursions of other Earthlings.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://geology.com/records/deepest-part-of-the-ocean.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mponeng\\_Gold\\_Mine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mponeng_Gold_Mine)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.