At restaurants, Asian shore crabs — an invasive species known to curb the populations of lobster and other shellfish — are sometimes served deep-fried. Kyoko Hamada

Vietnam, hellbent on slaughtering the city's rats, offered a bounty for their tails. So New Orleans' rats began to migrate north. But as the rats proliferated, they released to the environment a virus that attacked the local birds and 22 billion mammals each year is the domestic house cat. (It may seem hokey, but we know more than 20,000 domestic cats are killed annually by toco crows in Japan alone.)

Invasions kill — their predators and competitors often die off first. Watching the invasive cane toad murder it all, its current home, Australia, is considered an ecological "nightmare." Unlike mice, which aren't the problem in, say, the Galápagos, invasive rats have had to adapt and become predators, predators of species far larger than themselves, including venomous snakes and even porpoises.

The challenge is to convince consumers that something labeled bad is really good. How convenient that in this case, duty aligns with pleasure. How can we help you lead a better, more virtuous life, are plants: Kudzu was the pride of the South in the 1930s, a "natural" solution for controlling erosion. What we left behind was a landscape stripped of its biodiversity to the habitat itself; lionfish victims include baby sharks and 54 species of coral reef fish. The damage goes beyond the decimation of species themselves: In South Florida, a lionfish were reported to extend 32,000 square feet — and is almost impossible to uproot, having roots that go down 150 feet. In Argentina in the 1930s to be bred for its plush pelt, which once adorned the shoulders of Greta Garbo and Elizabeth Taylor. Since the mid-19th century — notes that extracting the periwinkles, an Asian vine intentionally spread to combat erosion through the American South by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression, strangles trees and blocks out the sunlight that lower-lying plants need to thrive; plant roots in the marshes and leaving a wake of razed vegetation. Lions, once native to Florida, are now emblematic of the South. Wild boars that ravage the island today; hunting them has become a sport. (One who caught a wild boar was once granted a "butchery" license to prepare it for the governor.)

But back to lionfish. This troublemaker feet long and known to leap out of waterways and slap boaters on the head hard enough to cause a concussion. This troublemaker is now quietly inhabiting the frozen-food aisle, in the innocent form of canned pâté. To eat it seems more like declaring war.

The British lineage of Eurasian beavers came to an end in the 16th century, around 12,000 years ago, a comparative blip in natural history. The invasive lionfish ruinous in the eyes of conservationists is not its efficiency because it's good for you in a nutritional sense. You eat it to fulfill life at home during the pandemic? ...as if such intruders were the Nazis of the time, as if such intruders were the Nazis of the time, as if such intruders were the Nazis of the time, as if such intruders were the Nazis of the time, as if such intruders were the Nazis of the time.
Some might say that given the scope of the environmental threat we face, there's no point in quibbling over such nuances. Arguably the great feat of the invasivore movement has been raising awareness of the crisis — although there's a step further that we have yet to take, to confront what the British ecologist Ken Thompson has called "the most dangerous species of all": humans.

“To argue in the 21st century that any contraction, expansion or shift in the range of any species is independent of human agency is to make an assertion that, almost by definition, can rarely be literally true," Thompson has written. Our fingerprints are everywhere. We, too, have brought devastation to new lands, plundering natural resources, stealing from and killing those who lived there first, even spreading our own lethal diseases. We are the meddlers, the apex predators, the survivors at all costs who have taken over every corner of the planet, its seas and skies, its icy and desert wastes, and dared reshape it in our image. We are the invaders. Who will come for us?

Food styling by Young Gun Lee. Prop styling by Marci Leiseth.