

Competitive Advantage Lab: Scoop vs. Spoon

Game Overview:

This hands-on activity demonstrates how invasive species have physical and behavioral advantages that allow them to outcompete native species—and especially species at risk—for food and resources.

How to Play:

- Fill a large container (like a bucket or bin) with small items such as beads, rice, or beans to represent food or resources.
- Provide three different “feeding tools”:
 - Scoop – represents the invasive species.
 - Spoon – represents the native species.
 - Bag clip – represents the species at risk.
- Each student or group should also have a small jar, cup, or container to collect their “food.”
- On the teacher’s signal, each participant uses their assigned tool to collect as many beads as possible within a set time.
- Each player can only use their tool, no hands!
- Count how many beads each player collected.
- Discuss which “species” gathered the most and why.

Learning Outcome:

This activity illustrates how invasive species can dominate ecosystems by using available resources more efficiently, leaving fewer for native and at-risk species.

