



which is the bigger threat?



... surprisingly, it is the drop of ballast water; 10 billion tonnes of which is transferred around the world each year. Ballast water is carried by ships to provide balance and stability.



Although essential to the safe operation of ships, ballast water can contain thousands of species of marine plants and animals.



When discharged into new environments, these species may become invasive, with potentially devastating effects on the local ecology, economy and human health.



Unlike an oil spill, which can be cleaned up, the effects of marine species introductions are usually irreversible.



Ballast water transfers and invasive marine species are perhaps the biggest environmental challenge facing the global shipping industry this century.



Further Information:

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Photo credits (from top to bottom): IMO - sinking ship. Steve Raaymakers - ship discharging ballast. Gustaf Hallegraef - dinoflagellates. Roger Steene - crab larvae. Cawthron Institute, NZ - coral shrimp. Richard Harbison - comb jelly. CSIRO - North Pacific seastar. Daniel West & Associates, London. www.dwa.uk.com

