



The title "Invasive Species" and the meta prompt "an 8-letter word" were your two biggest hints on this one. You were quite literally looking for species that had "invaded" the 8 longest across answers (theme entries).

Those eight species were all birds: IBIS, TIT, RHEA, CONDOR, OWL, KIWI, LOON, and SHAG.

Then, the clue for 128-Across, "With 129-Across, bird feature that is especially important for moving in the right direction", told you that you needed to use the TAIL END of the birds to move in the right direction. Basically, take the last letter of each of those birds. This was an interesting twist Sara threw in since normally you're looking for the first letters of words.

So, the last letters of each of those birds spell STARLING, which is an 8-letter word, a bird itself, and also an invasive species.