

Harvard scientists call for debate on new gene-manipulation technique

A powerful new technology could be used to manipulate nature by “editing” the genes of organisms in the wild, enabling researchers to block mosquitoes’ ability to spread malaria, for example, or to make weeds more vulnerable to pesticides, Harvard scientists said Thursday.

In an unusual step, however, the Boston team called for a public debate on the wisdom of its audacious idea, which the scientists say could lead to inadvertent species extinctions, new genes spreading through the environment in unexpected ways, and unforeseen ecological ripple effects.

The Harvard group, in a paper published in the journal eLife, described a technology called a “gene drive.” It would allow scientists to make changes to the DNA of organisms that would spread rapidly in the wild.

Read the full, original story: [Harvard scientists want gene-manipulation debate](#)