

Fighting For Florida:

Battling Invasive Wildlife In The Sunshine State

Lionfish



Lionfish impact reef systems by consuming a wide variety of native reef fishes. Divers, anglers and commercial harvesters are encouraged to remove lionfish in Florida waters to limit negative impacts to native marine life and ecosystems.

Cane Toads



The skin-gland secretions of cane toads are highly toxic and can sicken or even kill animals that bite or feed on them. The skin secretions may irritate the skin or burn the eyes of people who handle them.

Green Iguanas



Green iguanas frequently burrow into sidewalks, foundations, water control structures, canal banks, seawalls and roadways. Their burrows can undermine the integrity of these critical infrastructures. Green iguanas also consume ornamental or garden plants that can lead to human-wildlife conflict.

Management Priorities:

Preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species is the most cost-effective approach to eliminating or reducing these threats. Even the best prevention efforts cannot stop all invasive species. Early detection and rapid response is a critical second defense against the establishment of invasive animals. Once invasive animals are well established, control and containment is necessary to protect natural resources.



Prevention



Early Detection and Rapid Response



Control and Containment



Burmese Pythons

Burmese pythons were likely established in Everglades National Park by the mid-1980s, and their population has since expanded into many of South Florida's natural areas.



Pythons are incredibly hard to find, creating a significant challenge for control.



Burmese pythons eat a variety of prey including birds, mammals and even reptiles including alligators.

Sailfin Catfish



These invasive catfish disrupt aquatic food chains and are known to degrade bodies of water through burrowing and tunneling.

How to help:

Report observations of invasive wildlife to the Exotic Species Hotline (888-IVEGOT1), www.lvegot1.org or using the I'veGot1 smart phone apps. Citizens are encouraged to find ways they can participate—including removing invasive species when it's safe to do so.

Argentine Black and White Tegus



Tegus are known egg-eaters and have consumed alligator eggs, gopher tortoise hatchlings and may pose significant risk to ground nesting birds, sea turtles or endangered American crocodiles. Tegus can grow over four feet, lay an average of 29 eggs per year and can burrow underground to avoid freezing temperatures.

Nile Monitor Lizards



Nile monitors may impact state- and federally-listed species including sea turtles, wading birds and the American crocodile. Nile monitors have also attacked small pets and livestock.

Invasives

There are at least **139** established nonnative fish and wildlife species in the Sunshine State. In fact, Florida has more nonnative species of reptiles and amphibians living and breeding in the wild than anywhere else in the world. Invasive wildlife can negatively impact an area's ecology, cause economic harm and/or threaten human health and safety.

Don't Let It Loose!

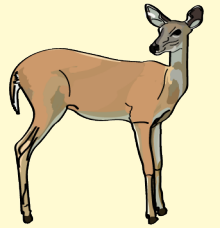


It is illegal to release nonnative species in Florida.



FWC's Exotic Pet Amnesty Program offers a legal, no-cost, no-penalty alternative to release of unwanted exotic pets.

Native Wildlife We Are Fighting For



White-tailed Deer



American Alligators



Key Largo Woodrats



White Ibis



Marsh Rabbits



Gopher Tortoise