



Photo credit: Jenny Novak



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Presentation Outline

- 1) Background Information
- 2) Snake Identification
- 3) How to Search for Pythons
- 4) Safely Handling Pythons
- 5) Wrap-up



Photo credit: McKayla Spencer

Burmese Pythons

- Large constrictor snake native to southeast Asia
 - Over 20' in length and 200lbs
- Semi-aquatic and generally found in or near water
- Now established in South Florida
 - Largest in FL: 18' 9"

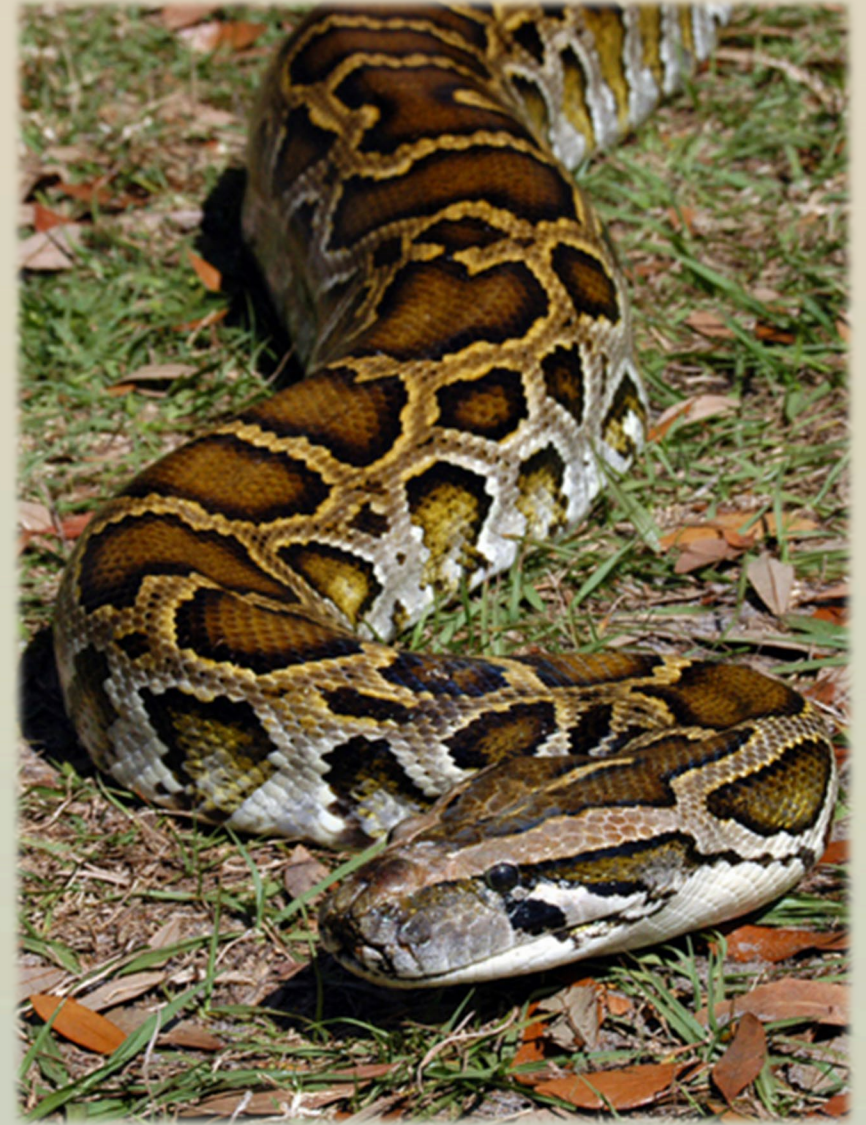


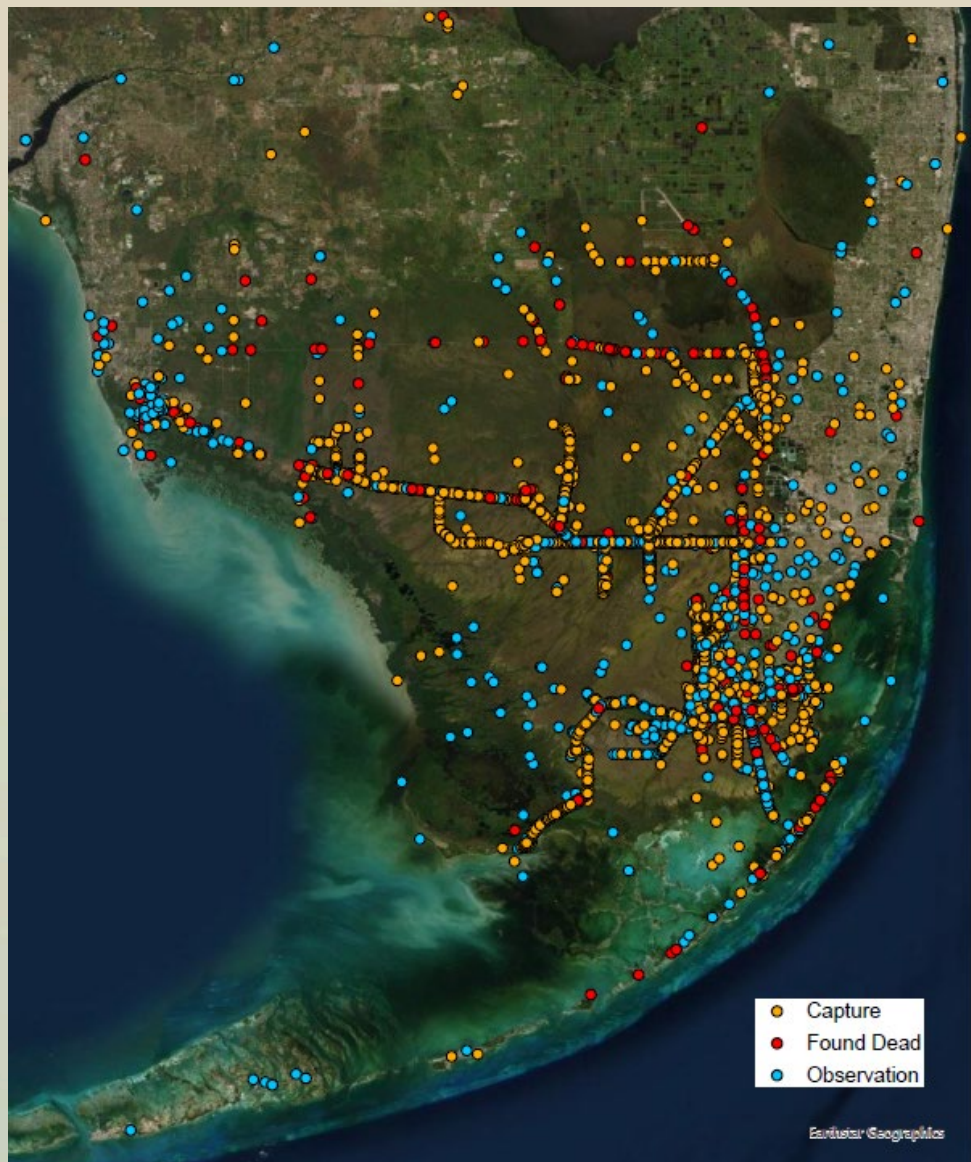
Photo credit: FWC



Burmese Pythons in Florida

1979-Aug 2020

- Python removals, found dead, and observations
- Almost all data points occurred after 2001



Map credit: FWC



Why are they in Florida?

Accidental and intentional releases from pet trade



Why are they so successful?

- Sunny, warm with mild winters
- High reproductive output
- A variety of prey available
- Generalist predators
- Great habitat



Photo credit: Pat Lynch, SFWMD



Burmese Python Impact

Florida's native flora and fauna are at risk.



Photo credit: Smithsonian Insider

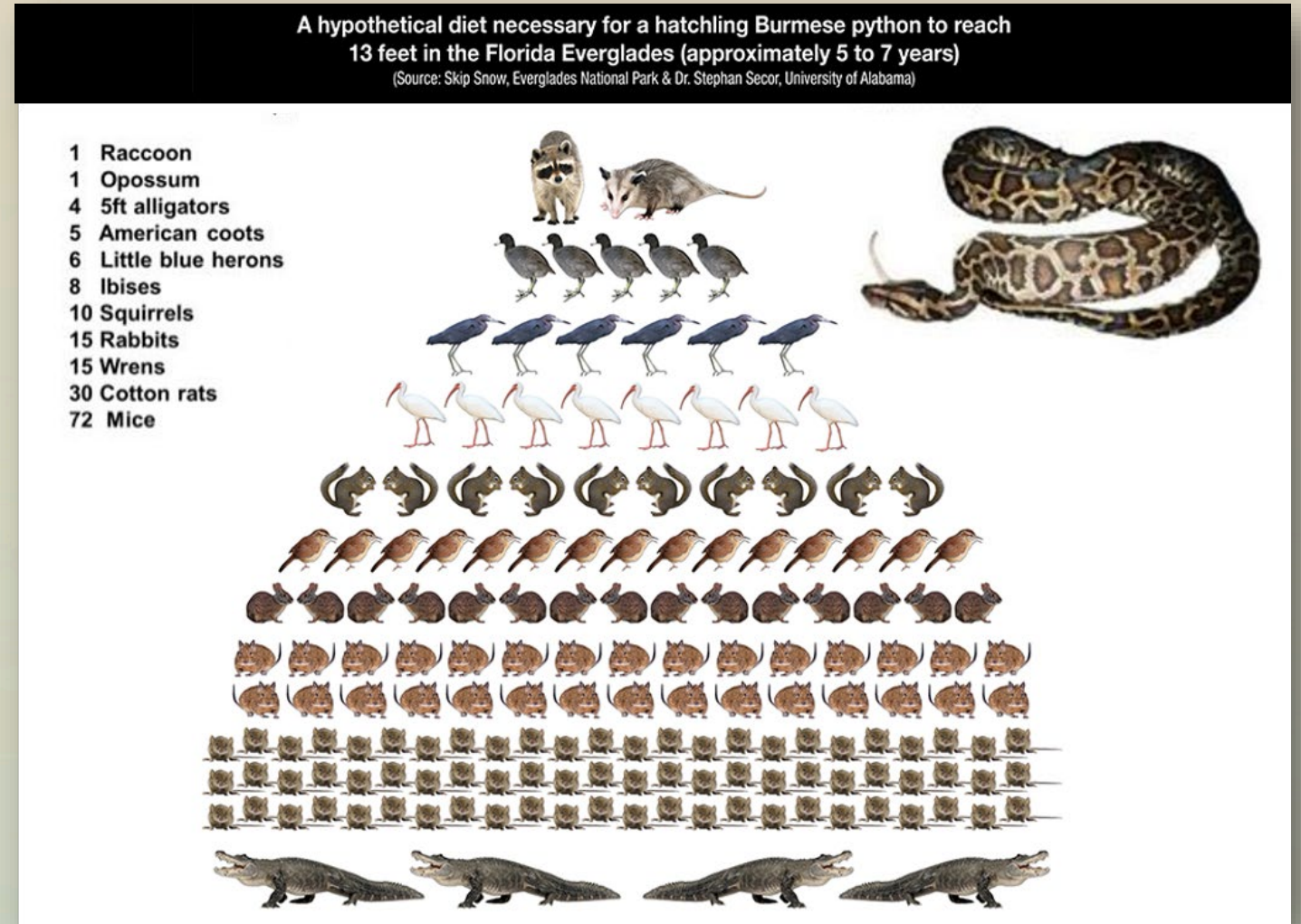


Image credit: Skip Snow, Everglades National Park & Dr. Stephan Secor, University of Alabama

Pythons have few predators



Photo credit: Lori Oberhofer, National Park Service



Ideal Habitat

- Everglades habitat is large, undeveloped, and has plenty access to water
- Grasses offer great hiding places
- Pythons hide in places humans cannot easily access



Photo credit: FWC



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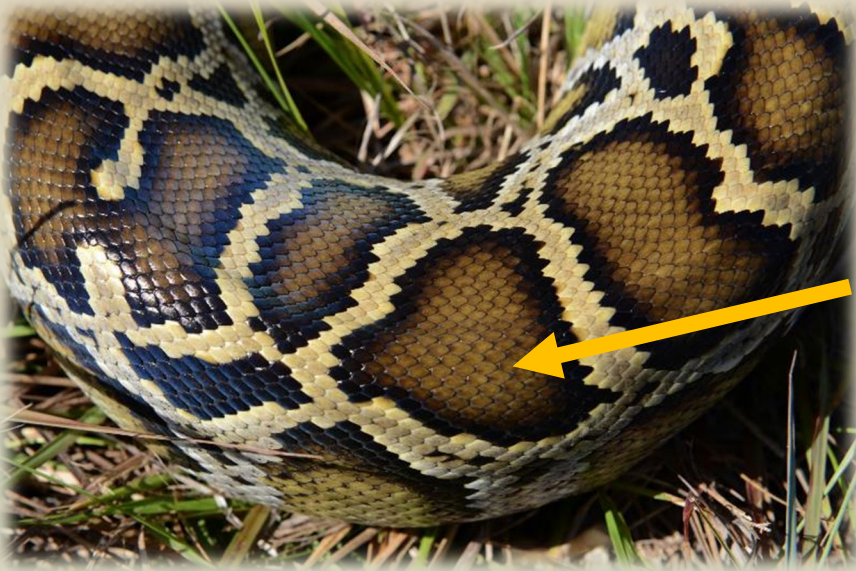
Snake Identification



Photo Credit: Everglades National Park



Non-native Snakes: Burmese Python



Dark irregular blotches on tan background (like puzzle pieces that fit together or the markings on a giraffe)

Photo credit: FWC



Dark wedges present behind and below each eye

Photo credit: FWC

Dark arrowhead-shaped wedge on back of head



Photo credit: William DeShazer



Non-native Snakes: North African Python

Tends to curl tail →



Dark blotches
on tan
background
that look
blended
together

Head very
similar to
Burmese python

Photo credit: Adam Stern



Burmese Python vs North African Python



Photo credit: Anthony Flanagan



Photo credit: McKayla Spencer/FWC



Non-native Snakes: **Boa Constrictor**



Ovals turn red near the tail on red-tailed boas

Tan ovals separated by dark brown saddles

Thin dark-colored line on head

Photo credit: FWC



Native Snakes: Corn Snake



Regularly spaced
reddish blotches on
tan, gray or reddish
background

Photo credit: FWC



Native Snakes: **Brown Water Snake**

Dark brown blotches
along back and sides
that are uniformly
shaped and spaced
apart

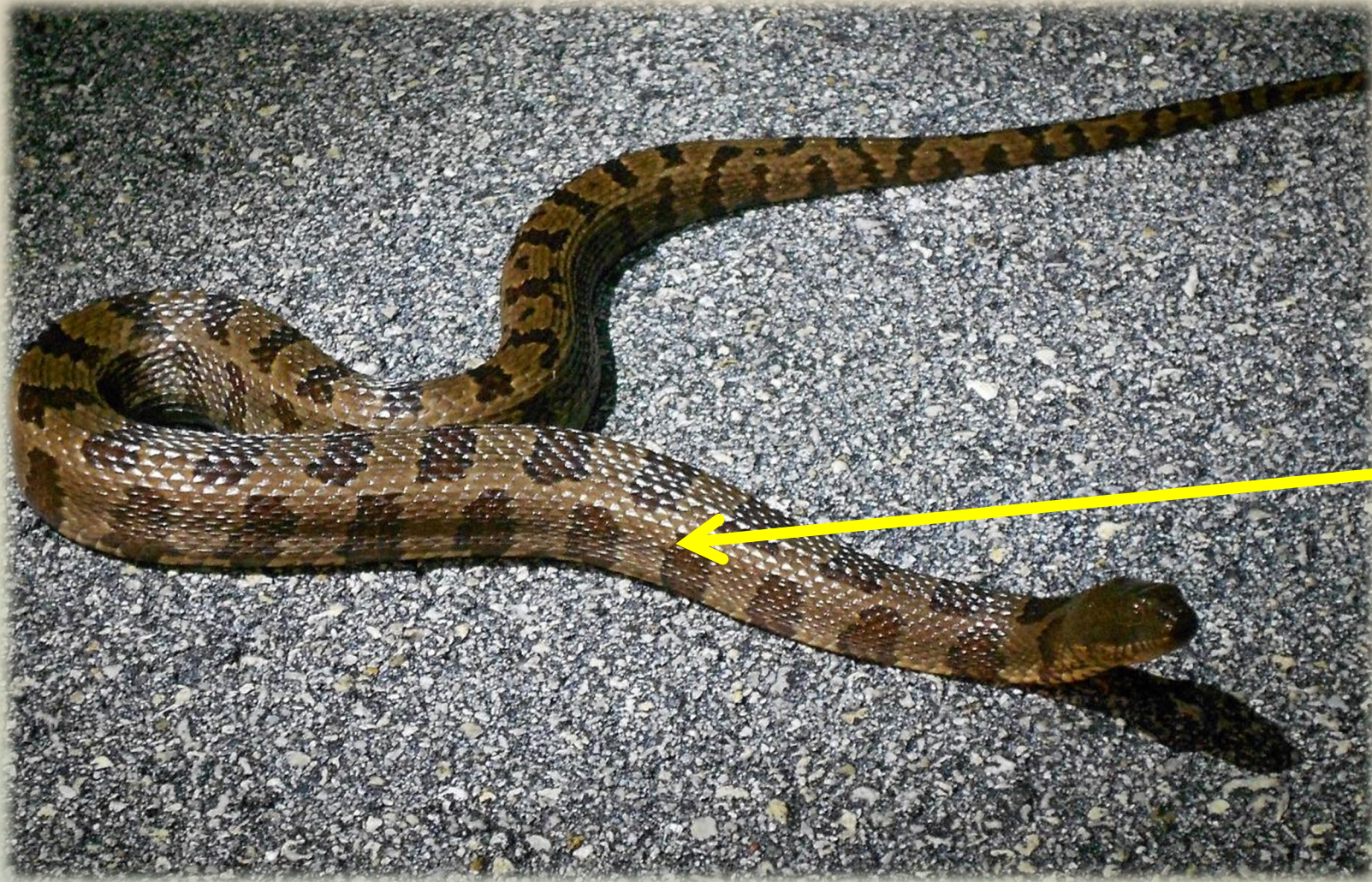
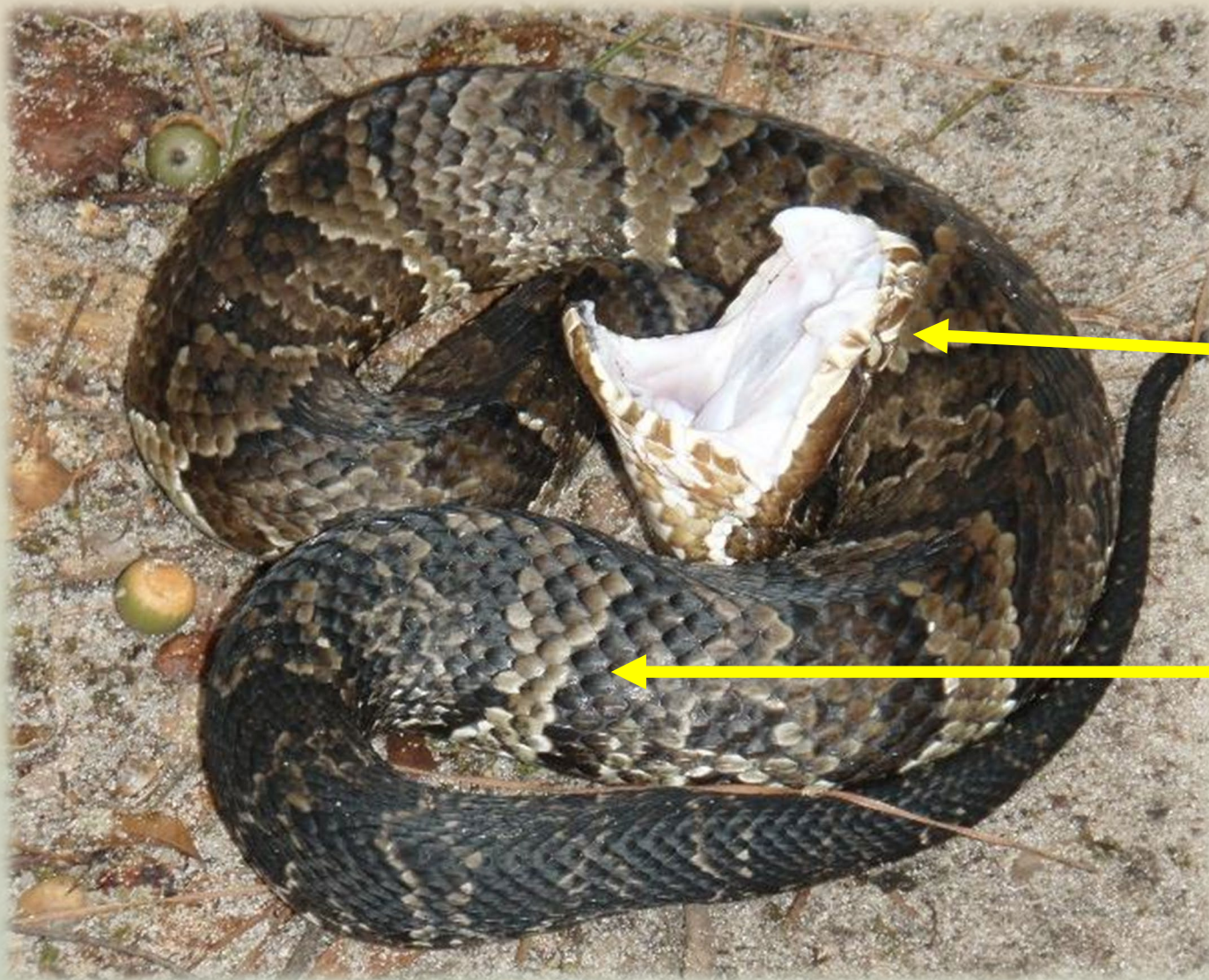


Photo credit: Edward Mercer



Native Snakes: **Venomous** Water Moccasin/ Cottonmouth



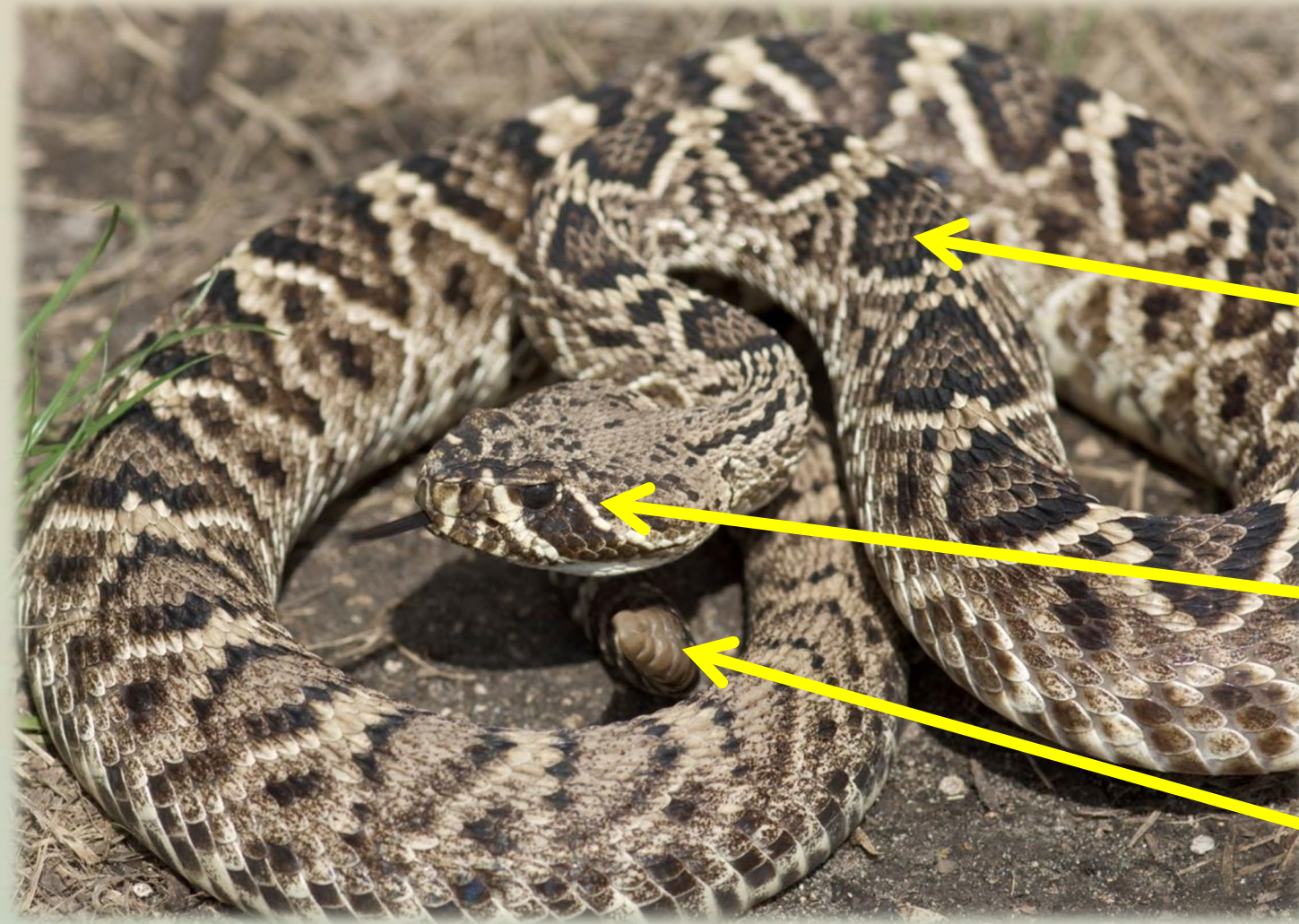
Open, white mouth is characteristic defensive display

Dark crossbands on brown background although color may vary and older individuals can be uniformly dark

Photo credit: FWC



Native Snakes: **Venomous** Diamondback Rattlesnake



Dark diamonds outlined in white regularly spaced down the back

Dark diagonal eye stripes bordered in cream

Tail Rattle

Photo credit: FWC



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Photo credit: McKayla Spencer

Searching for Pythons

Scan the habitat:

1. Canals & banks
2. Vegetation edge between canal and road shoulder
3. Road shoulders



Photo credit: FWC



Searching for Pythons: Shiny coils

Only one small section or “coil” may be visible



Photo credit: Lori Oberhofer, NPS



Photo credit: Alicia Wellman

Light reflecting on scales



Where Can You Remove Pythons Year-Round?

- The FWC wants the public to help remove invasive species!
- Burmese pythons may be humanely killed without a permit or hunting license at any time throughout the year on the following lands: **EO-20-17**

**Use of firearms must follow specific area regulations (appropriate firearm during hunting seasons)*

MyFWC.com/Hunting/WMA-brochures

- ❖ Allapattah Flats WMA
- ❖ Allapattah Flats SGA
- ❖ C-23/24 Reservoir SGA
- ❖ CREW WEA
- ❖ Dinner Island Ranch WMA
- ❖ Dupuis Dove Field SGA
- ❖ Everglades and Francis S. Taylor WMA
- ❖ Fisheating Creek
- ❖ Frog Pond North SGA
- ❖ Holey Land WMA
- ❖ J.W. Corbett WMA
- ❖ Okaloachoochee Slough WMA

MyFWC.com/Python

- ❖ John C. and Marina Jones/Hungryland WEA
- ❖ John G. and Susan H. Dupuis Jr. WEA
- ❖ Picayune Strand WMA
- ❖ Rocky Glades SGA
- ❖ Rotenberger WMA
- ❖ Southern Glades WEA
- ❖ Spirit-of-the-Wild WMA
- ❖ STA 1 West SGA
- ❖ STA 2 SGA
- ❖ STA 3/4 SGA
- ❖ STA 5 SGA
- ❖ A1-FEB SGA
- ❖ Big Cypress WMA



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Photo credit: McKayla Spencer

Be Aware, Be Careful, Be Safe!

- Pythons bite
- Pythons constrict
- Pythons will likely defecate/musk when handled
- The ground may be wet and/or unstable



Photo credit: Tiffany Duong, Ocean Rebels



Be Aware, Be Careful and Be Safe!



How many
pythons in this
photo?

Photo credit: FWC



Be Prepared!



Photo credit: Tiffany Duong, Ocean Rebels

- Gloves
- Snake hook
- Tool to humanely kill the python (ex. Captive bolt gun, firearm*)
- Maps/navigational aids
- Rules for property (*firearms)
- First aid kit



**Use of firearms must follow specific area regulations (appropriate firearm during hunting seasons)*



Photo credit: National Park Service

Safe Capture: Step 1

Assess the situation

Use a hook or other tool to pull snakes onto open ground so you can see what you're dealing with.



Safe Capture: Step 2

Pin the python

Firmly pin the python's neck right behind the head, using the rubber handle of the hook. Your hook should be parallel to the ground.

Get down on your knees and work at ground level.



Photo by Tiffany Duong, Ocean Rebels





Photo by Tiffany Duong, Ocean Rebels

Safe Capture: Step 3

Grasp the python

Grasp the python right behind the head, making sure you feel the jaw bones on your hand. If you hold the python too far down its neck, it can turn its head and bite you.



After you have secured the snake:

- It is illegal to transport Burmese pythons alive without a permit
- Burmese pythons must be humanely killed at the time of capture



Photo credit: FWC



Humanely killing Burmese pythons

- Immediate loss of consciousness and destruction of brain
- Example methods:
 1. Firearm*
 2. Captive bolt gun
 3. Stunning, decapitation followed by brain destruction



Brain is located at the intersection of the two red lines



Photo Credit: FWC

*Be sure to follow property specific/local firearm rules For more info: flpythonchallenge.org



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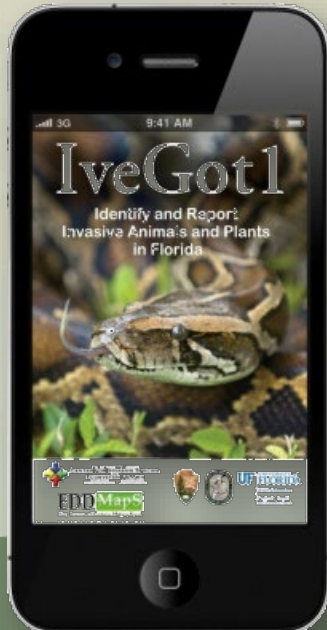


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Report Exotic Species

Exotic Species Hotline
888-Ive-Got-1
(888-483-4681)

I've Got 1 App

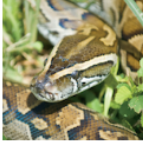


www.IveGot1.org





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Ive Got 1

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Let's go catch some pythons!



Photo credit: Ron Driggers



Photo credit: Jenny Novak

