2013 Python Challenge™

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Jen Williams

Burmese Pythons - What is the Problem?

- Here since 1979
- Eat native FL species
- Few predators here
- Hard to find
- Can’t eradicate

Keys to Their Success

- Climate
- Generalist diet and habitat use
- Large clutches of eggs (8 to 107)
- Long lived (20+ years)
- Able to survive long periods without eating

What Has Been / Is Being Done?

- 2010 FWC listed as conditional species
- 2012 USFWS put on injurious species list
- Conditional Reptiles Season (Mar – Apr)]
- Python Removal Agents

CONDITIONAL REPTILES SEASON:

March **4** through April **14**

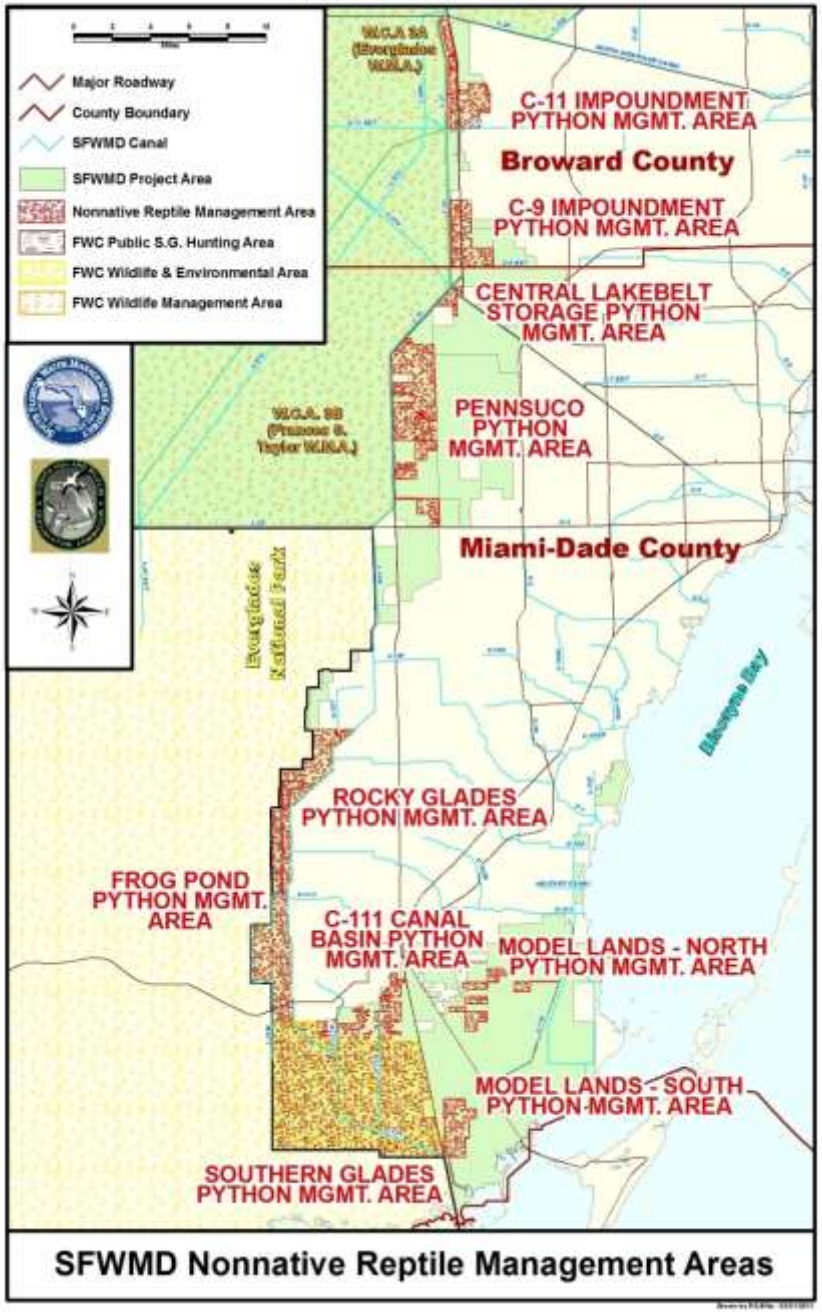
Permit, Stamp and License Requirements - Hunting license and management area permit.

Legal to Hunt - Conditional Reptiles: Indian python, Burmese python, reticulated python, Northern African/rock python, Southern African python, amethystine python, scrub python, green anaconda and Nile monitor.

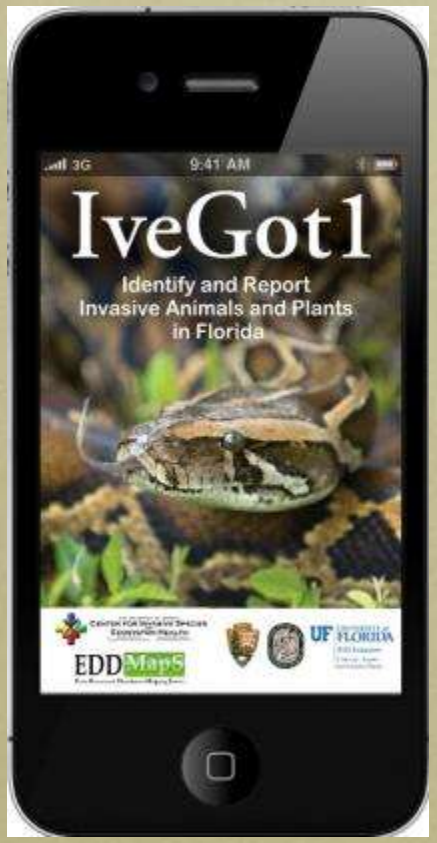
Regulations Unique to Conditional Reptiles Season – In addition to these regulations, all General Area Regulations shall apply.

1. Conditional Reptiles shall not be removed from the area alive.
2. Hunting with centerfire rifles is prohibited.
3. Shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise until ½ hour after sunset.

Exhibit "A"


Major Roadway
County Boundary
SFWMD Canal
SFWMD Project Area
Nonnative Reptile Management Area
FWC Public S.G. Hunting Area
FWC Wildlife & Environmental Area
FWC Wildlife Management Area
C-11 IMPOUNDMENT PYTHON MGMT. AREA
Broward County
C-9 IMPOUNDMENT PYTHON MGMT. AREA
CENTRAL LAKEBELT STORAGE PYTHON MGMT. AREA
PENNSUCO PYTHON MGMT. AREA
Miami-Dade County
Everglades National Park
Biscayne Bay
ROCKY GLADES PYTHON MGMT. AREA
FROG POND PYTHON MGMT. AREA
C-111 CANAL BASIN PYTHON MGMT. AREA
MODEL LANDS - NORTH PYTHON MGMT. AREA
MODEL LANDS - SOUTH PYTHON MGMT. AREA
SOUTHERN GLADES PYTHON MGMT. AREA
SFWMD Nonnative Reptile Management Areas

What Has Been / Is Being Done? (cont'd)



The Nature Conservancy

Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

Goals of the Python Challenge

- Raise awareness
- Remove pythons
- Try an incentive-based program as a management tool
- Gather other data:
  - Locations
  - Contaminants
  - Diet

Stakeholders

- Conservation groups, including hunters
- Local, state, federal gov't
- Animal rights groups
- Native Americans
- Educational institutions (UF)
- General public

Steps / Timelines

- Got assignment last spring
- First meeting in June
- FWC staff
- Partners
- Other agency cooperation

Major Hurdles

- Size / nature of event
- **Developing a website!!!**
- Accepting payment

Rules and Regs of the Challenge

- $25 fee to enter
- Register online
- Take snake I.D. training
- Receive permit via email
- 2 categories of competition – general and python permit holders **19.61 hrs / python in 2011**

Rules and Regs of the Challenge (cont'd)

- Only Burmese pythons and only those from the wild
- Kill on site
- Fill out datasheets
- 24 hours to get to a drop location
- GPS tracklogs from python agents

January 12, 2013 Kickoff Event

- UF Research and Education Center in Davie / Fort Lauderdale

2013 Python Challenge™ rules and regulations overview

Snake identification

Data collection and GPS use

VENOM ONE

PYTHON CHALLENGE™
2013

Snakehead Fish Dishes!

February 16, 2013
Awareness and Awards Event

Reef Environmental Education Foundation

Chef Justin Timineri
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
PAN SEARED SNAKEHEAD WITH
A HONEY CITRUS GLAZE

Results

Python Agents

- 24 registered
- 42 pythons removed

General Public

- 1558 registered
- 26 pythons removed

68 snakes total

38 states and 1
Canadian province

2013 Python Challenge™ Prizes

Python Agents	**General Public**
Most (Grand Prize)-$1500 • 18 pythons	Most (Grand Prize)-$1500 • 6 pythons
Longest (1st Place) $1000 • 11’ 1”	Longest (1st Place) $1000 • 14’3”

What was accomplished?

- Exceeded education and awareness goals
- Number of participants /number snakes harvested
- Publications

NRLI Concepts, Skills

- Facilitation
- Agenda building
- Community effort

Questions?

www.pythonchallenge.org