



FWC Burmese Python Media Event April 4, 2024

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Why:

Burmese pythons are a high priority for removal efforts by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) due to their negative impacts on native wildlife.

FWC staff and volunteers, along with staff from partnering agencies, are monitoring and surveying for Burmese pythons in Charlotte and Lee Counties. The FWC aims to ensure residents are aware of Burmese pythons in the area and how they can help by reporting sightings and getting involved with python surveys.

While ultimately unknown, there is no indication at this time that the Burmese pythons in this area are a result of natural migration from the Burmese python population in south Florida. The FWC suspects that initially these animals were likely escaped or released captive animals.

- From 2015-2024 the FWC has received confirmed reports of Burmese pythons (*Python molurus bivittatus*) in western Charlotte County, Lee County, and southern Sarasota County, within the townships of Rotonda, Placida, Englewood, Gasparilla Island, and Port Charlotte. In 2020 the FWC received an increase in python reports causing us to increase surveys in this location for pythons.
 - 12 of the 25 reported python observations resulted in captures or were found dead on the road and removed and seven of those carcasses were turned over to the FWC.
- The public can get involved with python surveys by filling out the form (myfwc.com/get-involved/volunteer/contact/) and including the statement, "Charlotte County python surveys". The FWC is also reaching out to local residents in the impacted area to increase reports of python removals or sightings. Public reports will be used to help assist biologists in understanding python activity and rapidly respond to and remove Burmese pythons from this

area. These reports are crucial to minimizing impacts of the species on native wildlife while slowing population growth and spread.

- Public reports of pythons will be used to help assist biologists in understanding python activity and rapidly respond to and remove Burmese pythons from this region. Please report all python sightings to the FWC's Invasive Species Hotline at 888-Ive-Got1 (888-483-4681) or online at Ivegots1.org. If possible, please take a picture and note the exact location when reporting.
 - FWC staff are available to answer phone calls on Mondays-Friday 8AM-5PM EST, with the exception of state Holidays.
 - If a python is found outside of Hotline hours, we recommend you take a picture of the python, record its location, and call the Hotline immediately to leave a message. FWC staff will get back to you as soon as regular business hours resume. Every python reported helps biologists better understand python activity in Charlotte County and will help optimize continued control of this invasive species.
 - If a python is presenting immediate danger to human health and safety outside of Hotline hours, please call your local emergency hotline.

Background information on Burmese pythons in Florida:

The Burmese python is a large, nonvenomous constrictor snake that is an invasive species in Florida. Burmese pythons are found primarily in and around the Everglades ecosystem in south Florida, where the invasive snake presents a threat to native wildlife. Burmese pythons reported outside these areas are often likely released or escaped captive snakes.

FWC staff work collaboratively with external agencies and partners to assess the threat of Burmese pythons and further develop management and control strategies to prevent population spread. Burmese pythons are a Prohibited species in Florida, thus it is illegal in Florida to acquire a Burmese python as a pet. Executive Order 23-16 allows for the lethal take of pythons and other nonnative reptiles from 32 Commission-managed lands year-round using humane and legal methods, with no bag limits. Burmese pythons can also be humanely killed on private lands with landowner permission by legal methods for the local area. Every python removed from the Florida landscape is one less invasive snake impacting our native wildlife and ecosystems.

For more information on this invasive species in Florida, please visit

[MyFWC.com/Python](https://www.fwc.com/python).

FWC Burmese python photos:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/myfwcmedia/albums/72157655228279454/>

FWC B-Roll of Burmese pythons:

<https://vimeo.com/130338443>