The Everglades Coalition Resolution Supporting the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Proposal to Enhance Regulation of Invasive Reptiles

Whereas, south Florida has a uniquely favorable environment for the introduction, establishment, and proliferation of nonnative, invasive reptiles;

Whereas, human activities have introduced nonnative, invasive reptiles into Florida’s ecosystems, resulting in established breeding populations that are expanding across the state;

Whereas, nonnative, invasive reptiles severely threaten Everglades ecosystems by preying on and outcompeting Florida’s native species, destroying and degrading habitat, and introducing disease and parasites;

Whereas, nonnative, invasive reptiles like the Burmese python have already caused severe declines of native species in the Everglades;

Whereas, nonnative, invasive reptiles threaten human health and safety and cause significant economic harm by destroying property and infrastructure, impacting tourism, and necessitating costly control and removal measures;

Whereas, the importation, possession, breeding, and sale of nonnative, invasive reptiles contribute to Florida’s invasive species problem when animals escape, or people release them;

Whereas, continuing to allow the importation, possession, breeding, and sale of nonnative, invasive reptiles undermines costly federal, state, and individual efforts to control and contain the spread of invasive reptiles and restore Florida’s native ecosystems;

Whereas, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is proposing to regulate some of the highest risk invasive reptiles as prohibited nonnative species: Burmese python (Python molurus), reticulated python (Python reticulatus), northern African python (Python sebae), southern African python (Python natalensis), amethystine python (Morelia amethistinus), scrub python (Morelia kinghorni), green anaconda (Eunectes murinus), nile monitor (Varanus niloticus), green iguana (Iguana iguana), and tegus (genera Salvator and Tupinambis, all species);
Whereas, listing these reptiles as prohibited nonnative species would limit their possession by permit to use for educational exhibition and research only, with exception for permitted possession associated with eradication and control measures;

Whereas, limiting the possession of these highest risk nonnative, invasive reptiles would enhance efforts to remove and contain the spread of these species and restore the Greater Everglades Ecosystem;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that: November 6, 2020.

The Everglades Coalition strongly supports the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s proposed draft rules related to high-risk, nonnative, invasive reptiles, which would add the highest risk invasive reptiles to the list of prohibited nonnative species.

Mark Perry
Co-Chair

Marisa Carrozzo
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