FWC Iguana Management Projects

Dan Quinn
Nonnative Fish and Wildlife Biologist
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Ecological Impacts
Other Impacts
Iguana Reports

- 4460 reports total in Florida
- FY 17/18 = 315 hotline reports
Increasing Iguana Reports
Iguana Project Goals

- Public technical assistance
- Evaluation of management techniques
- Removal in ecologically sensitive areas
Green Iguana (Iguana iguana)

**Description**

The green iguana (Iguana iguana) is a large lizard not native to Florida. Hatchling and young green iguanas usually have bright green coloration. Adults range in color from green to brown to almost black, although usually remain predominantly green as they mature. Some adults can take on an orange or pink coloration during breeding season. Green iguanas have a row of spikes down the center of the neck, back, and upper portion of the tail, and have dark black rings on the tail. Mature male iguanas develop heavy jowls and a throat fan (or dewlap) that are much larger than those of female iguanas. Larger throat fans can make male iguanas appear bigger, repel rivals or warn predators. Female iguanas may choose to breed with male iguanas that have larger dewlaps. The throat fan can also help iguanas regulate body temperature.

Green iguanas can live on the ground, in shrubs or in trees in a variety of habitats including suburban developments, urban areas, small towns and agricultural areas. Green iguanas are excellent swimmers and tolerate both salt and freshwater. They can submerge themselves for up to 4 hours at a time.

**Technical assistance information**

Can I remove iguanas from my property?

Green iguanas are not protected in Florida except by anti-cruelty laws and can be removed from private property year-round with landowner permission. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) encourages removal of green iguanas from private properties by landowners. Members of the public may also remove iguanas from 22 FWC managed public lands without a license or permit under Executive Order 17-11.

How can I deter green iguanas from frequenting my property?

If you have an iguana frequenting your area, you can take steps to deter the animal such as modifying the habitat around your home or humanely harassing the animal. Examples of effective habitat modification and harassment include:

What if I own a pet iguana I can no longer care for?

Escaped or released pets remain a primary source of introduced species in Florida, although it is illegal to introduce nonnative species into the state. Through the FWC's Exotic Pet Amnesty Program, pet owners who are either unable to care for their exotic pets, such as green iguanas, or who no longer wish to keep them can surrender them with no questions asked and without penalties regardless of whether those pets are kept legally or illegally.
FWC Brochure

Iguanas in Florida

Florida’s subtropical climate has allowed iguanas to thrive and establish populations in regions of the state where they have been introduced into the wild. Iguanas can be a nuisance to homeowners by damaging landscapes, plants or gardens, leaving droppings on porches and roofs, or causing property damage by digging burrows.

Outlining Iguanas
- Never feed iguanas directly or inadvertently by leaving fruit on a tree near the house.
- Maintain botanical gardens by removing flowers and fruit from flowering plants.
- Protect valued plants with cages to prevent fruit or seed predation.
- Avoid planting vegetation that iguanas eat, such as bananas, oranges, and roses.

How Can You Help Stop the Spread of These Invasive Lizards?

- Plant iguanas-resistant vegetation such as mulched soil and grass.
- Have your yard inspected regularly by local inspection agencies.
- Keep your yard and landscaping free of fruit, flowers, and other suitable habitats.
- Create a barrier between your property and other nearby areas to prevent iguanas from spreading.
- Make your yard less of a habitat for iguanas by removing or modifying any features that might attract them.

Legal Options to remove iguanas
- If an iguana is found in your yard, you can report it to your local wildlife management agency.
- You can also contact your local animal control agency to remove iguanas.

Trapping Iguanas
- Live animal traps can be utilized to trap iguanas in your yard.
- Place the traps near the entrance to your yard, away from any potential escape routes.
- If an iguana is caught, contact your local wildlife management agency to remove it from your yard.

For more information, visit MyFWC.com/Pythons or call the FWC’s Wildlife Trapping Hotline at 1-800-399-0840.
Statewide Efforts

Counties

- Monroe (Florida Keys)
- Broward
- Collier
- Sarasota
Florida Keys – Iguana Biologist

Goals
• Public technical assistance
• Remove iguanas on FWC lands
• Remove BSTI’s on No Name and Big Pine Key’s
Florida Keys – Iguana Biologist (Workshops)
Florida Keys – Iguana Biologist (No Name Key)
Florida Keys – Contractors

Priority State Parks
- John PenneKamp SP
- Windley Key
- Dagne Johnson
- Curry Hammock
Florida Keys – Contractors

Removed >800 since April
East Coast – Volunteer Removal

Hollywood, FL
East Coast – Volunteer removal

- Removed 45 BSTI with traps
- Began pilot snaring project
East Coast – UF Research Contract

Goals

1. Compare trap types

2. Evaluate manual removal effectiveness

3. Compare trapping to manual removal

4. Evaluate environmental correlates to capture
East Coast – UF Research Contract

Trapping
- Single and Multi-capture

Figure 6. University of Florida green iguana (Iguana iguana) trap types are Havahart 1079 (A), Tomahawk 450 (B), Tomahawk 850 (C), Tomahawk MDH (D), custom Trapper Mark (E), and Tomahawk 463 (F).
Trapping

- 38 removed (0.026 iguanas/trap night)

- Havahart 1079 had most captures (n=14, CPUE = 0.05*)

- Moderate correlation with average air temperature
East Coast – UF Research Contract

Manual Removal

- Night transect on canal
Manual Removal:

- 808 removed (2.56/person-hr)
- Control Transect Survival = 96.4%
- Removal Transect Survival = 77.5%
East Coast – UF Research Contract

Trap vs. Manual Removal:
- Trapping had lower CPUE*
- Trapping sites = 26.3% decrease
- Manual Removal sites = 66% decrease
West Coast – Keewaydin (BST)
West Coast – Keewaydin (BST)

Removed 54
West Coast – Sarasota County (BS)

Removed 160
Thank You