

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Kipp Frohlich, Director, Habitat and Species Conservation  
**Date:** July 23, 2020  
**Subject:** Enhanced Regulation of Nonnative Invasive Reptiles

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**Purpose:**

Obtain approval for draft rules to modify nonnative species regulations found in Chapter 68-5, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

**Why:**

Modify commission rules to enhance regulations on some species of invasive reptiles.

**Top Points:**

1. Burmese pythons, reticulated pythons, amethystine python, scrub pythons, Northern African pythons, Southern African pythons, green anacondas, Nile monitor lizards, tegus (all species) and green iguanas are a threat to Florida's ecology, economy or human health and safety. Because of these threats, enhanced regulations are necessary.
2. Proposed draft rules address importation of these high-risk reptile species so that species may not be imported into the State, and may only be held by permitted facilities engaged in educational exhibition, research, eradication or control activities. Draft rule language also provides limited exception for commercial sale entities that conduct business with green iguanas or tegus and existing pet owners of these newly listed species. and includes additional provisions, reporting requirements for permittees, biosecurity requirements to limit escape of these high-risk species.
3. During the 2020 Legislative session, changes were passed to Section 379.372, Florida Statutes, which became effective on July 1, 2020 that also address these high-risk reptile species.

**Affected Parties:**

Owners of tegus and green iguanas, pet stores, reptile industry, and nuisance wildlife control operators.

**Summary:**

Regulation of high-risk nonnative fish and wildlife supplements ongoing field work and other management strategies to minimize adverse impacts of invasive species and to prevent their introduction and spread. Proposed draft rules move most of the species of reptiles on the Conditional list and all species of tegus and green iguanas to the Prohibited list to address the risk of these invasive species and better align with statutory changes. Proposed draft rule language expands live possession allowances of prohibited reptile species for the purposes of eradication and control. Draft rule language includes components to clarify how the statute will be implemented and also clarifies language regarding the Exotic Pet Amnesty Program.

Staff will continue to conduct outreach to inform stakeholders about the new laws and collect comment from stakeholders through the rule development process to improve rule language.

**Staff Recommendation:** Approval of the proposed draft rule language of Chapter 68-5, F.A.C. as presented for advertisement and further public comment. Final rule language will be presented at a subsequent Commission meeting.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Kristen Sommers, Leader, Wildlife Impact Management Section