Nile monitor fast facts

- Large, semi-aquatic lizard.
- Can grow over 5 feet in length.
- Native to Africa.
- Seen most frequently on canal banks.
- Have a rudder-like tail which can assist with swimming.
- Active during the day.
- Females lay an average of 20 eggs per year in their native range.
- Can live up to 20 years in captivity.
- Active foragers that prey on birds, mammals, amphibians, fish, reptiles, carrion, and eggs.
- In Florida they can no longer be acquired as personal pets.

If you see a Nile monitor:

The FWC does not recommend that you attempt to capture Nile monitors.

1. **Take a picture**
2. **Note the location**
3. **Report the sighting**

In addition to Nile monitors, the FWC would like reports of all nonnative species in Florida.

How to report a sighting:

1. **Call the Exotic Species Hotline**
   888-Ive-Got1 (888-483-4681)
2. **Report online**
   www.IveGot1.org
3. **Download the IveGot1 app**
   Free for smart phones and tablets

If you live near affected areas, you can make your yard less attractive to Nile monitors by removing excess debris and maintaining landscaping.

Nile monitors are hard to find in overgrown vegetation.

It is illegal to release any animal into the wild that is not native to Florida!

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Nile Monitors in Florida

Help Stop the Spread of an Invasive Lizard

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

MyFWC.com

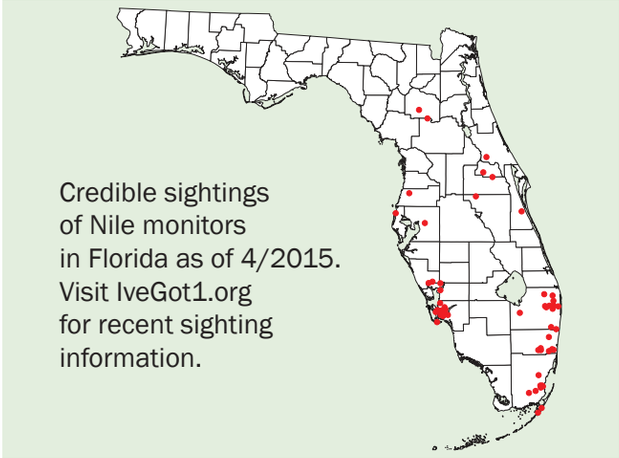
What is a Nile monitor?

The Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) is a large, nonnative lizard that has been introduced to Florida. A typical adult Nile monitor can grow over 5 feet in length and weigh close to 15 pounds. Nile monitors are semi-aquatic and are often found basking or foraging for food along canal banks in Florida. If encountered, they typically flee into the water. Once in the water, they can swim swiftly and stay submerged for an extended period. These animals are almost exclusively active during the daytime, spending nights sleeping in burrows or hiding in other refuges.

The diet of a monitor includes mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, carrion, and eggs.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has documented breeding populations of Nile monitors in Lee, Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties. However, there have been reports of these lizards in other Florida counties.

The FWC works with other agencies and organizations to remove Nile monitors and contain the spread of the species. The FWC also asks people to report sightings to the Exotic Species Hotline at 888-Ive-Got1 (888-483-4861),



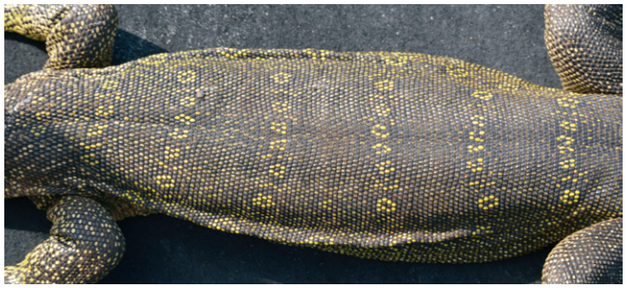
or online at IveGot1.org. Once a monitor sighting is verified, the FWC coordinates the removal of the animal. Reports will also help experts better manage and track the distribution of the species.

Be aware

Attacks on domestic pets have been reported but are rare. However, like any wild animal, a Nile monitor is likely to defend itself if aggravated or threatened. People living close to natural areas need to be aware of wildlife and exercise caution and common sense.

How to identify a Nile monitor

Nile monitors are light yellow to dark olive or brown in color. They have a pattern of light yellow chevron markings on the back, which appear as bands or stripes closer to the head and tail. The top side of the tail tapers up in the shape of a rudder to assist in swimming.



Green iguanas, spiny-tailed iguanas, and tegus are other nonnative species that can be mistaken for Nile monitors and vice versa. The most effective way to verify the species, due to variation in coloration and pattern, is to take a picture and report your sighting.

These species can be mistaken for Nile monitors:

Argentine black and white tegu

Green iguana

Black spiny-tailed iguana