

Program Name: FWC Nonnative Fish and Wildlife Program
Project Name: Python Responder/Patrol Training
Project ID: 2503
Lead Agency: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Strategy and Biennial Report Objective Addressed: 2-B.1 and 3-D.1
Invasive Species Strategic Action Framework Goal: 1

Measurable Output(s): One way to measure the effectiveness of this program is the number of available trained responders available statewide for constrictor removal who request a permit. Many individuals trained, however, are trained because they may encounter large constrictor snakes in their line of work, therefore a secondary measure may be the total number of individuals that are trained to detect and remove. These people are more likely to call FWC if they are not willing to capture the python themselves. Since FWC took over the program in October 2013, 67 Python Patrol trainings have occurred that were attended by 1104 people. Of the 1104 participants, 809 completed the training and are currently listed as potential responders to python calls coming into FWC. While The Nature Conservancy was running this program (12/2010-10/2013), 39 trainings were conducted training 449 people.

Project Synopsis:

Python Patrol is the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's EDRR (early detection and rapid response) program designed to help control invasive constrictors in the state. The program's goal is to create a community of people in south Florida who can properly respond when Burmese pythons are encountered, and will include natural resource employees who are likely to encounter pythons during their work duties, animal control and law enforcement officers who are often called first in response to pythons, and interested members of the public who are concerned about Florida's natural resources. Python Patrol also offers detection trainings that teach the general public how to correctly report sightings of Burmese pythons.

Recent data show that training improves python detection and capture rates by an order of magnitude, and that the public recognizes a direct benefit of removing pythons to help protect native wildlife and ecosystems. Burmese pythons pose a threat to our native species, and quality data is needed to help guide management strategies. Large constrictors are dangerous and can also pose a risk to human safety, so proper training for responders is imperative. Responders must also be able to differentiate nonnative pythons from native snakes to avoid removing non-target species. The Python Patrol responder training supplies participants with knowledge, better tools, hands-on experience and more confidence; this helps us help them to be part of the solution.

The goal of the program is to offer at least 48 FWC-led trainings that will increase the number of trained responders and educated citizens by at least 700 people and to provide a more consistent response throughout the state to observations and encounters with nonnative species.

Current Status: Ongoing

Project Schedule:

Start Date: October 2013
Finish Date: Not yet defined

Detailed Project Budget Information

	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	Balance to Complete	Total
Federal							
State (FWC)	22,000	46,000	20,000*	20,000*	20,000*		\$128,000
Local							
Private Grants or Donations	18,000	12,000					\$30,000
Total	\$40,000	\$58,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000		\$158,000

*Funding is contingent on continued need, appropriations from the legislature or securing additional grant funding.

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Hyperlink: <http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/python/python-patrol/>



Pictures: