

**Program Name:** Miami-Dade County/Zoo Miami Educational Programming  
**Project Name:** Zoo Miami/Miami-Dade County Invasive Species Outreach and Educational Programs  
**Project ID:** 4202  
**Lead Agency:** Miami-Dade County

**Strategic Plan Goal(s) Addressed:** Objective 3D.1- Increase awareness of the impacts of invasive exotic species on south Florida's environment, economy, culture, and human health.

**Measurable Output(s):** Exposing, educating, and engaging nearly one million visitors, students, and volunteers annually about invasive species through classes, lecture series, volunteer work days, internships, signage and tours. Invasive species removal and control programs, habitat restoration and enhancement, and biological surveys of the zoo's 740 acres and other regional properties.

**Project Synopsis:** In 2013, Zoo Miami had 955,000 visitors making it the most popular attraction in South Florida. Through our patrons, educational classes, internships and community engagement activities we leverage these numbers to increase awareness and educate the public about invasive species in South Florida and how they may be active in curtailing further introductions or spread of established species.

Upon completion of our newest area, Amazon and Beyond, several exhibits show species that are from the tropical American regions that have become invasive in South Florida with associated signage discussing the issues. The next area, opening late 2016, Florida: Mission Everglades will profile many habitats and species in South Florida and will have signage discussing the impacts of invasive species on our local habitats.

Volunteer days involving corporate, public, and school groups, magnet school students, and members of our Conservation Teen Scientist program participate in guided invasive plant species removal programs and habitat restoration and enhancement plantings.

Zoo Miami has ongoing removal programs for marine toads, Cuban tree frogs, green iguanas, and Cuban knight anoles on property and the staff engages the public about these programs and the effects on our native habitats and species. Internal training also occurs to teach staff of what dangers these animals present to the collection, their animals at home, our native species, and proper safe handling.

Zoo Miami holds family conservation fishing days twice a year at our lakes on property to engage the public about the effects of invasive fish species and participate in the removal of them from our lakes. The events continue to be popular and result in the removal dozens of pounds of spotted tilapia and mayan cichlids at each event with over hundreds of family participants since its inception.

The Conservation and Research Department offers internship opportunities for Florida International University undergrad students and zookeepers at the zoo. These internships usually involve training and active management of invasive plant and animal control programs within Miami-Dade County parks or other regional areas.

Members of the Conservation and Research Department conduct public and internal lecture series to educate about invasive species issues in South Florida. These lectures profile the history and current status of invasive species in the area and leave with messages of how the public can assist in the control and reporting of invasive species through EDDMaps and our Frogwatch USA program.

Staff at the Deering Estate at Cutler conducts field walks into the natural areas of the Deering Estate Rockland Hammock and Pine Rocklands of public groups and students. They discuss invasive plant

effects on the native habitats and convey the effects and difficulty in management of the established boa constrictor population on the property.

Zoo Miami annually hosts an FWC Amnesty Day since that program's inception. Zoo Miami curators, veterinarians and zookeepers staff the animal surrender area to support FWC's event to raise awareness about non-native animals in South Florida.

**Current Status:**

These multiple outreach and educational programs concerning invasive species will continue in perpetuity as part of our mission. As the Conservation and Research Department expands its programs for invasive species control, more outreach opportunities will be developed and expanded.

**Project Schedule:**

Start Date: July 2011  
Finish Date: Ongoing

**Detailed Project Budget Information**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Balance to Complete	Total
<b>Federal</b>							
<b>SFWMD**</b>							
<b>Local</b>	\$36,125	\$4,300	\$4,655				
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$36,125</b>	<b>\$4,300</b>	<b>\$4,655</b>				<b>TBD</b>

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**Hyperlink:** [https://issuu.com/frankridgley/docs/2015\\_zoo\\_miami\\_conservation\\_and\\_res](https://issuu.com/frankridgley/docs/2015_zoo_miami_conservation_and_res)

**Pictures:**



**Public and student invasive removal and restoration day.**



**Family Conservation Fishing Event**



Frogwatch USA field training



Map of area:

