



BURMESE PYTHON CONTROL Partner With Hunters Program

A cooperative program between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, National Park Service and licensed hunters.



The purpose of the Big Cypress National Preserve *Partner With Hunters Program* is to assist the National Park Service (NPS) with controlling reptiles of concern, particularly Burmese pythons, within the Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area. This program is being implemented in cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission through Order Number EO 09-08 establishing special regulations to aid in control of reptiles of concern listed in Rule 68A-6.007(1), F.A.C. which are a threat to native wildlife. Hunters are cautioned to be certain of the identity of reptiles of concern to avoid harming native species. The Big Cypress *Partner With Hunters Program* will allow hunters to take reptiles of concern within the Big Cypress Wildlife Management Area.

Regulations to Remember

- (1) Reptiles of concern as listed in Rule 68A-6.007(1)(a)-(f) are taken during established seasons for the taking of game animals and only by persons properly licensed and permitted to take game animals.
- (2) Reptiles of concern shall not be removed from the areas alive.
- (3) Persons who take any reptile of concern shall report the take within 36 hours, and shall provide all data requested.
- (4) Guns are a prohibited method of take for Reptiles of Concern, *except when the use of guns to take game on the areas is authorized and only to the extent that guns are authorized.*

Identifying Burmese Pythons

Burmese pythons have a pyramid-shaped head with a dark arrowhead shaped wedge on the top of the head extending towards the nose. The snake has dark blotches along the back and sides similar to a giraffe.

Most Burmese pythons will be longer than any native snake. The longest native snake, the indigo snake, reaches a maximum of 8 feet long. The protected indigo snake is midnight blue or black and has no markings.

Photos below show the distinct arrowhead marking on the Burmese python head (left) and blotches on the body (center) compared to the jet black native indigo snake (right).



Frequently Asked Questions?

What are the requirements for harvesting a Reptile of Concern (ROC) on a Wildlife Management Area (WMA)?

ROCs can only be taken during established seasons for the taking of game animals and only by persons properly licensed and permitted to take game animals. ROCs must be euthanized on site. Guns and firearms can be used to take an ROC during hunting seasons when their specific use is allowed (bows during archery season, muzzleloaders during muzzleloading season, etc.) ROCs harvested may not be removed alive.

Do I have to capture an ROC if I see one?

No, you do not. When taking any wild creature in general, sometimes a risk is involved and you should not try anything that you do not feel safe or comfortable doing. We would like you to report any sightings of ROCs by using the form below.

Who is eligible to Harvest ROCs on the WMA?

Licensed hunters who also have the necessary permits (i.e., management area permit, archery or muzzleloading gun permit, quota permit) to legally hunt on the WMA are eligible.

What are the legal harvest seasons for ROCs?

Properly licensed and permitted hunters can harvest ROCs during the following hunting seasons within the Big Cypress WMA:

- Archery seasons
- Muzzleloading gun season
- General gun season
- Small-game season
- Spring turkey season

For more information visit -

<http://www.nps.gov/bicy/planyourvisit/hunting.htm>

Reporting Harvested Snakes or Sightings

Reporting hunter observations of reptiles of concern under this program is an important way to assist state and federal wildlife managers in controlling the spread of these species. **Sighting / harvest of ROCs must be reported within 36 hours of event by providing the information below to the hunter check station.**

Species _____
(refer to handout on other non-native and large native snakes)

Date animal was seen/harvested (MM/DD/YYYY) _____

Time of Day animal was seen/harvested _____

Location _____ Latitude _____ Longitude _____

Was animal killed? YES NO If yes, did you collect animal? YES NO

Approximate length _____

Hunter Name _____ Phone Number _____

E-mail _____

Other Observations _____

Reports of reptiles of concern outside Big Cypress National Preserve can also be made on-line at www.myfwc.com. The state rule allows hunters who take reptiles of concern to keep the animals. If hunters wish to provide the reptile to the NPS for research purposes, they may arrange to leave the specimen at hunter check stations or the Oasis Visitor Center while facilities are staffed.