Iguana fast facts

- Iguanas are large lizards that can grow over 4 feet in length.
- Green and spinytail iguanas are native to Central and South America, but are commonly found in the exotic pet trade.
- Iguanas bask in open areas and are often seen on sidewalks, docks, patios, decks, in trees or open mowed areas.
- They can run or climb swiftly when frightened and dive into water or retreat into burrows or thick foliage.
- Green iguanas can range from green to grayish black in color and have a row of spikes down the center of the head and back.
- During the breeding season, adult male green iguanas can sometimes take on an orange hue.
- Spinytail iguanas can range from gray to dark tan in color with black bands and have whorls of spiny scales on the tail.
- Green iguanas are mainly herbivores and feed primarily on leaves, flowers and fruits of various broad-leaved herbs, shrubs and trees, but will feed on other items opportunistically.
- Spinytail iguanas are omnivorous, eating primarily vegetation, but have been documented eating small animals and eggs.

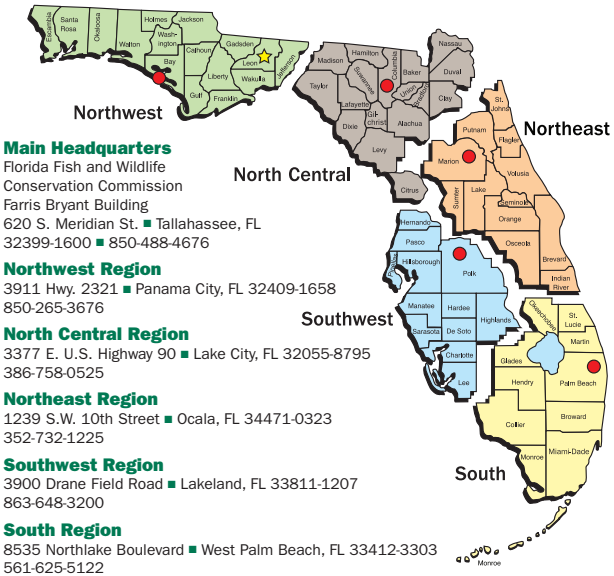
Three members of the iguana family are now established in South Florida and occasionally observed in other parts of Florida: the green iguana, the Mexican spinytail iguana, and the black spinytail iguana.

Young female green iguana, FWC

Black spinytail iguana, Adam G. Stern

Mexican spinytail iguana, Kenneth L. Krysko

If you have further questions or need more help, call your regional Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission office:



Main Headquarters
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Farris Bryant Building
620 S. Meridian St. ■ Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600 ■ 850-488-4676

Northwest Region
3911 Hwy. 2321 ■ Panama City, FL 32409-1658
850-265-3676

North Central Region
3377 E. U.S. Highway 90 ■ Lake City, FL 32055-8795
386-758-0525

Northeast Region
1239 S.W. 10th Street ■ Ocala, FL 34471-0323
352-732-1225

Southwest Region
3900 Drane Field Road ■ Lakeland, FL 33811-1207
863-648-3200

South Region
8535 Northlake Boulevard ■ West Palm Beach, FL 33412-3303
561-625-5122

9/2017

Iguanas in Florida

Green iguanas, FWC

How You Can Help Stop the Spread of These Invasive Lizards

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
MyFWC.com

Male green iguana

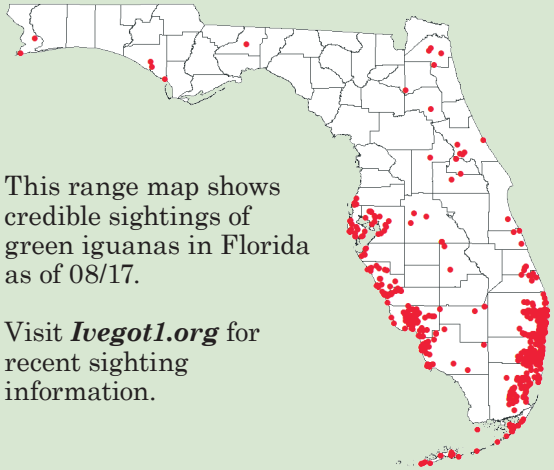
An invasive species

Florida's subtropical climate has allowed iguanas to thrive and reproduce in regions of the state where they have been introduced into the wild.

Iguanas can be a nuisance to homeowners by damaging landscape plants or gardens, leaving droppings in yards and pools, or causing property damage by digging burrows.

Deterring iguanas

- Never feed iguanas directly or inadvertently by leaving attractants outside, such as pet food or ripened fruits.
- Avoid planting vegetation that iguanas eat, such as hibiscus, orchids and roses.
- Protect valued plants or gardens with cages or screened enclosures.



This range map shows credible sightings of green iguanas in Florida as of 08/17.

Visit ***Ivegot1.org*** for recent sighting information.

- Plant iguana-resistant vegetation such as milkweed and citrus.
- Haze basking iguanas by spraying with a water hose until they leave the area, or install a motion activated water scarecrow sprinkler.
- Create a wire fence barrier along seawalls or other sensitive areas on your property to prevent digging.
- Make loud noises to startle iguanas and create an unwelcome atmosphere around your property.

Legal options to remove iguanas

- All species of iguana may be humanely captured and removed from private property without a permit at any time with landowner permission.
- As with all wildlife, iguanas are protected by anti-cruelty laws, and inhumane treatment of them is punishable by law.
- No poisons are legal for use on iguanas or any reptiles in Florida.
- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recommends the use of cage traps to homeowners interested in the live capture and removal of iguanas.
- All captured iguanas must be kept in captivity or humanely euthanized. It is illegal to relocate or release nonnative species in Florida.
- Homeowners who capture other nonnative species and need help should call the FWC's Exotic Species Hotline at **888-Ive-Got1 (888-483-4681)**.
- Florida state law requires euthanasia to be humane. Please consult the American Veterinary Medical Association website for complete guidance on methods of humane euthanasia.
- Iguanas may be euthanized by use of a firearm on private property during daylight hours with landowner permission. Please check with the local sheriff's office or police department for firearm ordinances before discharging a firearm.
- Iguanas and other nonnative reptiles may be taken year-round without a permit on 22 public lands. Please visit **MyFWC.com/Python** and click on "Removing Pythons" for more information.

Open trap, FWC

Trapping iguanas

- Live animal traps can be baited with red flowers or fruit such as strawberries, banana, grapes, pieces of ripe melon, papaya or mango.
- Pre-baiting can make live traps more effective in catching iguanas. Simply bait the open trap for a few days until iguanas are regularly entering the trap, then release the door and set the trap normally.
- Iguanas can get cuts or wounds when trying to escape from traps, so cover traps with foliage or cardboard to help the animal feel less exposed or vulnerable.

Covered trap, FWC

- For the welfare of any caught animal, traps should be set in a shaded area.
- Set traps during the day when iguanas are active to avoid catching non-target species such as cats, raccoons and opossums that are more likely to be caught in traps left open at night.
- Traps must be checked at least once every 24 hours.
- Captured non-target native species are required to be released on site.
- The FWC recommends hiring a nuisance wildlife trapper for interested property owners who may find it difficult to perform trapping or humane euthanasia on their own.
- A list of trappers can be found at **MyFWC.com** by typing "trappers by county" in the search box and clicking on the search result that says "Nuisance Wildlife Trappers."