

## Nile monitors in Palm Beach County



### *What's the problem?*

Currently, the four largest species of lizards established in South Florida are nonnative species. One of these large lizards is the Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*), an invader from sub-Saharan Africa that can grow to more than six feet in length. Nile monitors were introduced as pets and are now established and breeding in the wild in Lee and Palm Beach Counties. These lizards are strong swimmers and climbers that are often found near canals and other bodies of water. They are generalist predators that eat birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and eggs. These habits make them a threat to native wildlife, including endangered and threatened species like burrowing owls and sea turtles.

### *What's being done?*

There are still several unknowns about Nile monitors in Palm Beach County. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is currently working with other agencies and organizations to assess the threat of this species and develop management strategies. The University of Florida collaborates with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, South Florida Water Management District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and members of the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area to better understand their distribution, relative abundance, and future management. A large part of understanding these uncertainties relies on public understanding and awareness. Having more “eyes” and “ears” can help managers rapidly respond to Nile monitor sightings and potentially contain established populations before they spread into vulnerable areas, such as Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and the associated Storm Water Treatment Areas.

### *What you can do?*

If you see a monitor lizard, take a picture, note the location, and report your sighting:

- By calling 1-888-IVE-GOT1 (1-888-483-4681)
- Online at [IveGot1.org](http://IveGot1.org)
- Or download the [IveGot1 reporting app](#)