

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: Agriculture Committee

BILL: CS/SB 990

INTRODUCER: Agriculture Committee and Senator Posey

SUBJECT: Regulated Reptiles

DATE: March 28, 2006

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Akhavein</u>	<u>Poole</u>	<u>AG</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>DS</u>	<u> </u>
3.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>TA</u>	<u> </u>
4.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>GA</u>	<u> </u>
5.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>WM</u>	<u> </u>
6.	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u>RC</u>	<u> </u>

I. Summary:

Florida agencies spend over \$100 million annually to protect the state's natural resources from destructive exotics. This committee substitute makes changes to the regulations for venomous, nonnative, or other regulated reptiles to better manage and control exotic wildlife.

This committee substitute directs the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (commission) to establish a list of venomous, nonnative, or other reptiles for which the possession, transportation, or exhibition is regulated. It requires people currently possessing regulated non-native, non-venomous reptiles for personal use to purchase a license for \$100 per year. In addition, it increases the required bond amount for the exhibition of regulated reptiles from \$1,000 to \$10,000 and requires the bonds to be payable to the commission rather than to the governor. The committee substitute requires the commission to establish by rule a reporting system for regulated reptiles regarding purchase, possession, sale or gift, and death, destruction or disposition of regulated reptiles. It also provides criminal penalties for violations of the rules and regulations related to regulated reptiles.

This committee substitute amends sections 372.86, 372.87, 372.88, 372.89, 372.90, 372.901, 372.91, 372.912, and 372.92 of the Florida Statutes.

This committee substitute renumbers sections 372.911 and 372.912, of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

Thousands of non-native animal and plant species have invaded Florida in the past decades. The economic toll is enormous, but the ecological toll on places such as the Everglades National Park is equally as expensive. Second only to habitat loss, invasive species are the leading cause of

species endangerment and extinction. One predator competing with native animals for food, space, burrows, crevices, and rocks are Burmese pythons.

Native to Southeast Asia, the Burmese python is one of the largest snake species in the world. It is also one of the most popular animals in the multi-billion dollar international pet trade. People pay as low as \$20 per hatchling not realizing how big they grow, and biologists believe that most of the pythons found in the Everglades were discarded by pet owners. There are few options for owners who want to get rid of the snakes because zoos will not take them and although animal shelters try to find other homes for the snakes, most end up being released into the wild.

In the Everglades National Park where the climate and environment are similar to their native habitat, there are regular and increasing sightings of Burmese pythons and occasional and infrequent sightings of ball pythons, reticulated pythons, and common boas. Since December 2003, more than 50 Burmese pythons have been captured and removed or found dead on roads in the park.

It is unlawful to dispose of unwanted exotic pets within this state without a permit to do so from the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (s. 372.265, F.S.). Rule 68A-6.0023, F.A.C., states that “any condition which results in wildlife escaping from its enclosure, cage, leash, or other constraint, or which results in injury to any person, shall be considered a violation”.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1. Amends s. 372.86, F.S., to require the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (commission) to establish a list of venomous, nonnative, or other reptiles for which the possession, transportation, or exhibition is regulated. Authorizes the commission to adopt rules to implement the provisions of ss. 372.86-372.91, F.S. Changes references of “poisonous or venomous reptile” to “regulated reptile.”

Section 2. Amends s. 372.87, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Requires licensure for the keeping, possessing, or exhibiting of regulated reptiles.

Section 3. Amends s. 372.88, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Requires people currently possessing regulated non-native, non-venomous reptiles for personal use to purchase a license for \$100 per year. Increases the required bond amount for the exhibition of regulated reptiles from \$1,000 to \$10,000. Requires such bonds to be payable to the commission rather than to the governor.

Section 4. Amends s. 372.89, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Requires safe, secure, and proper housing of regulated reptiles.

Section 5. Amends s. 372.90, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Provides criteria for the transportation of regulated reptiles.

Section 6. Amends s. 372.901, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Requires the commission to establish by rule a reporting system for

regulated reptiles regarding purchase, possession, sale or gift, and death, destruction or disposition of the regulated reptile.

Section 7. Amends s. 372.91, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Prohibits any person except a licensee or her or his authorized employee to open regulated reptile cages.

Section 8. Renumbers s. 372.911, F.S., relating to rewards as s. 372.0715, F.S.

Section 9. Renumbers s. 372.912, F.S., relating to organized regulated reptile hunts as s. 372.902, F.S. Changes references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.”

Section 10. Amends s. 372.92, F.S., to change references of “poisonous or venomous reptiles” to “regulated reptiles.” Provides criminal penalties for certain activities related to regulated reptiles.

Section 11. Provides that this act shall take effect July 1, 2006.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

People who currently possess regulated non-native, non-venomous reptiles for personal use will have to purchase a license for \$100 per year. People who exhibit regulated non-native, non-venomous reptiles will have to post bond in writing in the penal sum of \$10,000 instead of \$1,000.

C. Government Sector Impact:

	<u>FY 2006-07</u>	<u>FY 2007-08</u>	<u>FY 2008-09</u>
Revenues:			
Recurring –			
State Game Trust Fund (Estimated 3,000 additional people requiring \$100 licenses)	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Expenditures:			
Recurring –			
Salaries and Benefits	70,768	72,537	74,350
Standard Expenses	15,972	10,390	10,390
Standard OCO	4,200		
HR Services	786	786	786
Expenses - Operations	208,274	216,287	214,474
Total Expenditures	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
Net Impact	0	0	0

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will incur additional expenditures for licensing reptiles, development and implementation of a reporting system, and inspection of newly regulated entities/facilities. Two additional Administrative Assistant I positions are needed the first year and beyond to handle the additional program component and to issue permits. Law Enforcement investigators will begin inspections on the additional estimated 3,000 entities in the first year; however, the commission is unable to anticipate the overall increase in workload on the Investigators until a full year of the new program has occurred. The commission anticipates the need to request additional law enforcement investigator positions in the second year of the program with the number of additional FTE's to be determined after new data is analyzed.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Summary of Amendments:

None.

This Senate staff analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
