

By Senator Artiles

40-00395-17

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1                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to nonnative animals; amending s.  
3           379.231, F.S.; directing the Fish and Wildlife  
4           Conservation Commission, in consultation with the  
5           Department of Environmental Protection, to establish a  
6           pilot program for the eradication of specific species;  
7           providing legislative findings; providing goals for  
8           the pilot program; requiring the commission to enter  
9           into specified contracts; specifying parameters for  
10          the implementation of the pilot program; requiring the  
11          commission to submit a report to the Governor and the  
12          Legislature by a specified date; providing an  
13          appropriation for the implementation of the pilot  
14          program; providing an effective date.

15  
16 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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18           Section 1. Section 379.231, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
19           read:

20           379.231 Regulation of nonnative animals.—

21           (1) It is unlawful to import for sale or use, or to release  
22           within this state, any species of the animal kingdom not native  
23           to Florida unless authorized by the Fish and Wildlife  
24           Conservation Commission.

25           (2) A person in violation of this section commits a Level  
26           Three violation under s. 379.4015.

27           (3) The commission, in consultation with the Department of  
28           Environmental Protection, is directed to establish a pilot  
29           program to mitigate the impact of lizards of the genus  
30           Tupinambis, also known as tegu lizards, and species listed in s.  
31           379.372(2)(a) on public lands in this state.

32           (a) The Legislature finds that lizards of the genus

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33 Tupinambis, also known as tegu lizards, and species listed in s.  
34 379.372(2) (a) continue to expand their range and to decimate the  
35 fauna and flora of the Everglades and other natural areas and  
36 ecosystems in the southern and central parts of this state at an  
37 accelerating rate.

38 (b) The goal of the pilot program is to examine the  
39 benefits of using strategically deployed hunting teams to slow  
40 the advance of these nonnative animals and begin to contain and  
41 eradicate such species from this state.

42 (c) The commission shall form hunting teams by entering  
43 into contracts with entities or individuals to capture or  
44 destroy lizards of the genus *Tupinambis*, also known as tegu  
45 lizards, and species listed in s. 379.372(2) (a) found on public  
46 lands. The commission shall award such contracts through a  
47 competitive bidding process. All parties awarded contracts by  
48 the commission shall ensure that each individual who  
49 participates in a hunt holds a valid hunting license of this  
50 state. The commission shall ensure that all captures and kills  
51 of lizards of the genus *Tupinambis*, also known as tegu lizards,  
52 and species listed in s. 379.372(2) (a) are documented and  
53 photographed and that the geographic location of the take is  
54 recorded for research purposes. The commission shall direct the  
55 disposal of all animals captured and not destroyed in a hunt.

56 (d) The commission shall compose teams of contracted  
57 entities and individuals and direct their operations in  
58 geographic areas in a manner designed to maximize the take of  
59 lizards of the genus *Tupinambis*, also known as tegu lizards, and  
60 species listed in s. 379.372(2) (a) or to achieve the greatest  
61 gain in territory from which such species have been eradicated.

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62       (e) Teams are authorized to hunt at the direction of the  
63 commission in the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor Wildlife  
64 Management Areas and all other state lands managed by the  
65 commission. The commission is authorized to enter into memoranda  
66 of agreement with other state and local entities to be permitted  
67 to deploy teams of hunters in other state and local natural  
68 areas. The commission is directed to seek permission from the  
69 National Park Service to deploy hunting teams in the Everglades  
70 National Park.

71       (f) The commission shall submit a report of findings and  
72 recommendations regarding its implementation of the pilot  
73 program to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the  
74 Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2020.

75       (g) The Legislature appropriates \$300,000 per year from the  
76 Land Acquisition Trust Fund for the next 2 fiscal years for the  
77 implementation of this subsection.

78       Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2017.