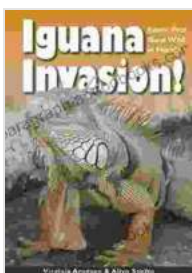


Invasive Iguanas: Florida's Unwelcomed Exotic Guests

Picture this: you're enjoying a leisurely stroll through a lush Florida park when suddenly, out of nowhere, a giant green lizard darts across your path! This is not a scene from a science fiction movie but a growing reality in the Sunshine State. Invasive iguanas have become an unwelcome fixture in Florida's ecosystem, posing a significant threat to native wildlife, the environment, and even human safety.

The invasion of iguanas in Florida can be traced back to the 1960s when a few individuals were introduced as exotic pets. Over time, these escaped or were released into the wild, and their population exploded due to the state's warm climate and abundant food sources. Today, there are an estimated 1.5 million iguanas roaming free in Florida, primarily in the southern part of the state.

The presence of invasive iguanas has had a devastating impact on native Florida species. These lizards compete with native wildlife for food and resources, such as fruits, vegetation, and basking spots. They also prey on native bird eggs and small animals, disrupting the delicate balance of the ecosystem.



Iguana Invasion!: Exotic Pets Gone Wild in Florida

by Virginia Aronson

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 4853 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 69 pages



In addition to their impact on native species, iguanas have also caused significant environmental damage. They create extensive burrow systems that can destabilize soil and damage roads, bridges, and other infrastructure. Moreover, their droppings contribute to water pollution and the spread of diseases.

While iguanas are not typically aggressive towards humans, they have been known to charge and bite when threatened. Their sharp claws can also cause injuries. In some cases, iguanas have even caused power outages by climbing onto electrical equipment.

Recognizing the urgent need to address the invasive iguana problem, Florida wildlife officials and environmental groups have implemented various management strategies. These include trapping and removing iguanas, implementing public awareness campaigns, and conducting research to develop more effective control methods.

While the invasive iguana problem in Florida is a serious challenge, there is hope for the future. Continued efforts to control their population, educate the public, and support research will help mitigate their impact on the state's ecosystem and way of life.

The invasion of iguanas in Florida serves as a stark reminder of the devastating consequences that can result from the of non-native species.

By understanding the origins, impacts, and management strategies surrounding this issue, we can better appreciate the importance of protecting our native wildlife and the environment for future generations.

Join the fight against invasive iguanas in Florida! Report any sightings to your local wildlife authorities, educate others about the risks, and support organizations working to protect our state's precious ecosystem. Together, we can make a difference and preserve the beauty and biodiversity that make Florida such a special place.

- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission:
<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/nonnatives/reptiles/green-iguana/>
- U.S. Geological Survey:
<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/cesc/science/invasive-green-iguana>
- University of Florida: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/UW052>

Alt Attributes for Images:

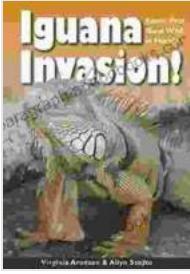
- **Image 1:** Invasive green iguana basking on a rock in a park
- **Image 2:** Iguanas digging a burrow in a grassy area
- **Image 3:** Iguana climbing on an electrical pole
- **Image 4:** Wildlife officials trapping an iguana
- **Image 5:** Volunteers educating the public about invasive iguanas

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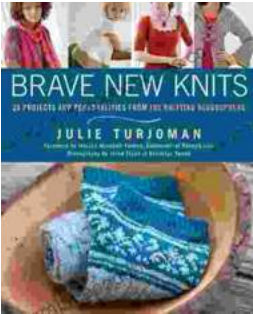
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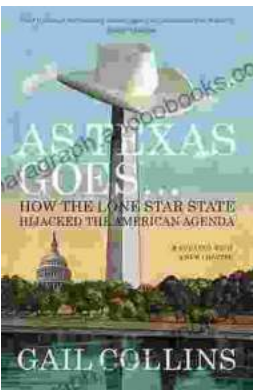


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