

CHAPTER 2018-82

Senate Bill No. 168

An act relating to nonnative animals; creating s. 379.2311, F.S.; defining the term “priority invasive species”; providing legislative findings; requiring the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to establish a pilot program for the eradication of priority invasive species; providing the goal of the pilot program; authorizing the commission to enter into specified contracts; specifying parameters for the implementation of the pilot program; specifying procedures for the capture and disposal of animals that belong to priority invasive species; requiring the commission to submit a report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 379.2311, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

379.2311 Nonnative animal management.—

(1) As used in this section, the term “priority invasive species” means the following:

(a) Lizards of the genus *Tupinambis*, also known as tegu lizards;

(b) Species identified in s. 379.372(2)(a);

(c) *Pterois volitans*, also known as red lionfish; and

(d) *Pterois miles*, also known as the common lionfish or devil firefish.

(2) The Legislature finds that priority invasive species continue to expand their range and to decimate the fauna and flora of the Everglades and other natural areas and ecosystems in the southern and central parts of the state at an accelerating rate. Therefore, the commission shall establish a pilot program to mitigate the impact of priority invasive species on the public lands or waters of this state.

(a) The goal of the pilot program is to examine the benefits of using strategically deployed, trained private contractors to slow the advance of priority invasive species, contain their populations, and eradicate them from this state.

(b) In implementing the pilot program, the commission may enter into contracts in accordance with chapter 287 with entities or individuals to capture or destroy animals belonging to priority invasive species found on public lands or in the waters of this state. Any private contracted work to be performed on public land or in the waters of the state not owned or managed by the commission must have the consent of the owner.

(c) The commission shall ensure that all captures and disposals of animals that belong to these priority invasive species are documented and photographed and that the geographic location of the take is recorded for research purposes. The commission shall direct the disposal of all animals captured and not destroyed in removal efforts.

(d) The commission shall submit a report of findings and recommendations regarding its implementation of the pilot program to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by January 1, 2021.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2018.

Approved by the Governor March 23, 2018.

Filed in Office Secretary of State March 23, 2018.