



The Nile Monitor's head is gray-brown and marked with light-colored, V-shaped marks across the neck—these marks extend forward through the eyes. The fleshy, forked tongue is blue. The narrow neck is longer than the head.



The Nile Monitor's body is gray-brown and marked with bands of lighter-colored (often tan) spots with light speckles between them. Toward the end of the tail, the bands of spots fuse into solid bands.



Young Nile Monitors look nearly identical to adults. At hatching, they are already nearly a foot long.



FLORIDA INVADER: Nile Monitor Lizard

**Report sightings:
www.IveGot1.org**



The Nile Monitor lizard (*Varanus niloticus*), native to sub-Saharan Africa, has become established in the wild in coastal areas of Lee and Charlotte Counties in Florida due to releases or escapes of pets. There are also isolated populations in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, and individual lizards of several *Varanus* species have been captured in other areas. Nile Monitors are large, voracious predators that may grow to over 7 feet long. These large lizards eat the eggs of birds, alligators, crocodiles, and turtles and could impact many threatened and endangered species, including Burrowing Owls and sea turtles. They are opportunistic predators and will consume any prey they can subdue, including pets. They thrive in a wide variety of habitats near water, especially in and around urban areas, where they live in burrows near the water's edge. They are strong swimmers and spread via canal systems and coastal mangroves. Females lay eggs which they bury. Lifespan is 10-15 years.

Authors:

Steve A. Johnson^{1,2} and Monica E. McGarrity¹

¹University of Florida, Gulf Coast REC, Plant City, FL

²University of Florida, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Gainesville, FL

Footnote

1. This document is WEC293, one of a series of the Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. First published September 2010. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on UF/IFAS Extension, visit <http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu>. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A. & M. University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Millie Ferrer-Chancy, Interim Dean.

Copyright Information

This document is copyrighted by the University of Florida, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) for the people of the State of Florida. UF/IFAS retains all rights under all conventions, but permits free reproduction by all agents and offices of the Cooperative Extension Service and the people of the State of Florida. Permission is granted to others to use these materials in part or in full for educational purposes, provided that full credit is given to UF/IFAS, citing the publication, its source, and date of publication.