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Python Bill Slithers Way Through Florida Senate and House

Law prohibiting importing pythons, other snakes passes

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Florida Senate and House have passed an anti-python bill that will make it harder to bring dangerous, non-native snakes into the state.

Senate Bill 318, sponsored by Senator Eleanor Sobel of Hollywood, was passed unanimously Wednesday and now goes to the Governor to be signed into law.

The bill prohibits importing or owning seven different species of reptiles, including Burmese pythons and African Rock pythons.

"The bill is about prevention and being proactive," said Sobel, in a released statement. "We must address already existing problems with species like Burmese pythons and Nile Monitors, but we must also be proactive so we can avoid future problems with species like the African Rock python and Green Anaconda."



LOOK

Python Patrol in Pictures

Officials have spent the past year trying to capture and kill pythons and other snakes in the wild in South Florida through permit programs. The first one, which concluded last year, helped eradicate 39 of the snakes. The latest one, which ended earlier this month, didn't do much good.

The snakes, many of which have been released by owners or escaped during Hurricane Andrew, have been breeding in substantial numbers, with estimates as high as over 100,000 roaming the Everglades and elsewhere.

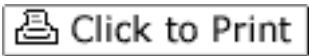
The pythons wreak havoc on native animals, killing and consuming just about anything in their path, according to officials.

The new law would go into effect on July 1.

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