

# Sneaky Sssnakes

**R** [readworks.org/article/Sneaky-Sssnakes/85e6e659-a4b9-44d4-b84e-9ad4ac920b1d](https://readworks.org/article/Sneaky-Sssnakes/85e6e659-a4b9-44d4-b84e-9ad4ac920b1d)

## A new report shows pythons are spreading.

What's 23 feet long, as thick as a telephone pole, and slithering into a state near you? A Burmese python!

Pythons and other giant snakes are worming their way into Florida and other states. That is the finding of a new report by the U.S. Geological Survey. The species are not native to, or originally from, the area. They might have started out as pets that were set free. Many pythons are native to Asia.

Today, there are tens of thousands of pythons in Florida. They may one day creep into almost one-third of the United States, scientists say.

"They [can move] long distances in a short period of time," scientist Gordon Rodda told *WR News*. He worked on the study. "We had a python in Florida that in a few weeks ... traveled 30 miles."

That's bad news for ecosystems. Those are groups of plants and animals that live in the same area. The snakes eat everything from birds to bobcats. They lie still until an animal comes near. Then the reptiles strike. Reptiles are cold-blooded animals that often have scales.

U.S. officials are coming up with ways to stop the snakes. One idea is to ban people from bringing pythons into the country. To ban is to prevent.



Newscom



AP Images

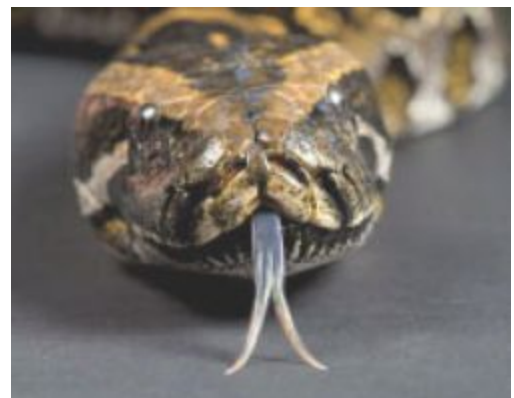
People in Florida move an 18-foot-long python to a safer home.

People who own pet snakes can help too, Rodda says. If you have a snake that gets too big for your home, take it to a zoo. “We don’t want to create a problem by [setting free] an animal we no longer want to take care of,” says Rodda.

## Snake Bytes

---

What makes giant snakes special? Wrap your head around these python facts to find out.



Joel Sartore

## The Big Squeeze

---

How do pythons constrict, or squeeze, prey? They loop their bodies around the prey and tighten their muscles to kill the animals. Then they swallow them.



National Park Service

## Gator Haters

---

Only alligators are tough enough to eat adult giant snakes. Don't feel bad for the snakes, though. They eat alligators!



McDonald Wildlife Photog./Animals  
Animals/Earth Scenes

## Mamma Mia!

---

Female pythons can lay up to 100 eggs at a time. The snakes stay on the eggs for two to three months to keep them warm until they hatch.