Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge - Biological Resources

Jeremy Dixon, Refuge Manager, Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge
Crocodile Lake NWR
Endangered (E) and Threatened (T) species

- Schaus’ Swallowtail Butterfly (E)
- American Crocodile (T)
- Florida Semaphore Cactus (E)
- Key Largo Woodrat (E)
- Eastern Indigo Snake (T)
- Stock Island Tree Snail (T)
- Key Largo Cotton Mouse (E)
- Keys Tree Cactus (E)
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U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM
American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*)
American Crocodile

- Nesting habitat limited
- Females must return to excavate nests
American Crocodile

• Females sexual mature 8-10 years old
• Uses sand/marl to create nests
• Clutch size 15-40 eggs
• Females must return to excavate nests
American Crocodile

• Threats:
  – Habitat loss
  – Roads
  – Human-wildlife conflicts
  – Invasive predators
Monitoring for Invasive Predators
Key Largo Woodrat (*Neotoma floridana smalli*)
Key Largo Woodrat
Role in the Environment

Fruit and Seed Dispersal

Food Source

Nutrient Cycling

Builder and Landlord
Woodrat nests

• Why aren’t woodrats building stick nests?
  – Habitat modification?
  – Introduced predators?
Building homes for woodrats
Key Largo Woodrat Nest Monitoring

August 28, 2014
Burmese pythons
Burmese pythons

1-888-IVE-GOT1
Extinction of Island Woodrats

- San Martin Island woodrat
  - Isla San Martin Island: 786 acres
  - Last sighting: 1926
- Bunker’s woodrat
  - Isla Coronado: 2,200 acres
  - Last sighting: 1931
- Anthony’s woodrat
  - Isla Todas Santos: 321 acres
  - Last sighting: 1926
Why are woodrats so vulnerable to cats?

- Behavior
- Place
- Non-native Predator

- Time
Percent of remote camera trap nights with cat detections and numbers of cats captured in CLNWR
How do we know that management actions are helping?

- Increasing occupancy of nests
- Expansion of woodrat range
- Creation of new natural nests in the habitat
- More stick-stacking at nests
Catio Workshop

- FL Keys Refuges Outdoorfest
  - Building a Catio: Protect your cat and wildlife!
  - Friday, March 18th, 11 AM
  - To register:  http://www.favorfloridakeys.org/outdoor-fest
Thank You Volunteers!