

Project Name: Eradication of the Giant Gambian Pouched Rat
Project ID: 2700
Lead Agency: FDACS, FWC
Cooperating Agencies: FWC, SFWMD, USDA-WS, USFWS
Funding Source: Federal/State

Goal(s) Addressed: 2.B.3

Measurable Output(s): Eradication of Giant Gambian Pouched Rat (GPR)

Project Synopsis: In February 2006, a pilot eradication project was initiated on Crawl Key where Giant Gambian pouched rats (GPR) were documented in 2005. In June 2006, USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) deployed 94 bait stations. Supplemental trapping was done to obtain rats for radio telemetry. From January to May 2007, 1,000 bait stations were placed throughout Grassy Key hammock and residential areas. In March 2007, 20 GPR were trapped for the USDA-APHIS National Wildlife Research Center for studies of more effective attractants and third generation rodenticides. USDA-WS developed GPR-specific bait deployment stations effectively eliminating the non-target mortality observed in the earlier stages of baiting and trapping, and in addition, after numerous trials developed an effective bait, zinc phosphide, to eliminate GPR.

In May 2007, the eradication effort commenced with the pre-baiting of roughly 600 stations around the periphery of the core GPR infestation area. As of January 2008, direct baiting and post-baiting monitoring has resulted in the removal of 39 GPR from Grassy Key and surrounding areas. A few GPR remained in areas that could not be accessed, but these properties were recently acquired by government agencies allowing access for monitoring and trapping by USDA-WS. Zero rats have been documented since two months prior to June 12, 2009. USDA-WS continues to monitor for GPR using 60 motion-activated cameras and 318 live traps. A 'rat hotline' has been established (FWC, Scott Hardin), and when a report is confirmed, the 'hot spot' area (s) is/are saturated with zinc phosphide baits to further ensure complete removal.

Current Status: A female GPR was captured in September 2009, sterilized and was fitted with a radio collar, and subsequently released on Grassy Key. This individual remains in the wild as a 'judas' specimen in hopes of attracting other wild GPR, and is monitored for its movements. No additional animals have been documented or trapped since this animal was captured. Additional funding from USFWS could be made available to continue monitoring and trapping efforts through FY11.

Estimated Cost: \$750,000

Project Schedule:

Proposed Start Date: February 1, 2006
Finish Date: September 30, 2012

Detailed Project Budget Information (\$1000s)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
Federal		60	10	50			120
State	15	15	15	15	15		75
Tribal							
Local							
Other							
Total	15	75	25	65	15		195

Hyperlink: N/A

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Additional Information:



Figure 1. USFWS National Invasive Species Coordinator Michael Lusk with mature giant Gambian pouched rat.