

Final Statistics

Positive Properties	719
Core Surveys	240,595
Non-Core Visual Surveys	56,846
Controls	102,085
Total Snails	168,538
Debris Removed	4.2 million pounds
Number of Employees Assigned to Program	92
Total Hours of Labor	~752,960
Total Size of GALS Quarantine Zones	27,368.13 acres
Total Area of Non-Core Visual Surveys Completed	14,554.57 acres
Total Canine Surveys	5,400

Contact Information

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GIANT AFRICAN LAND SNAIL ERADICATION PROGRAM MEDIA KIT

As a regulatory agency of the
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services,
the Division of Plant Industry works to detect, intercept
and control plant and honey bee pests that threaten Florida's
native and commercially grown plants and agricultural resources.



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Background

The giant African land snail (GALS), *Lissachatina (Achatina) fulica*, is an invasive pest to the state of Florida. This pest has a lifespan of up to eight years, the ability to grow up to eight inches long and product 2,000 eggs per year. They feed on more than 500 host plants, can damage structures by consuming stucco to obtain the calcium necessary to build shells and can carry the rat lungworm parasite, which can cause a form of meningitis in humans and animals which makes them a significant threat to landscapes, crops, buildings and human and animal health. In 1966, three GALS were smuggled into Miami, Florida. The outbreak was discovered by DPI in 1969 and an eradication program began immediately. In the end, more than 17,000 snails were found in the state. After seven years, and \$1 million, FDACS DPI became the first in the world to declare the eradication of this pest.



About the Program

After GALS were found in Miami in 2011, FDACS-DPI and the USDA began emergency eradication efforts. The FDACS-DPI quickly established a presence in Miami and began what would become a decade-long partnership with the community. Outreach, inspections, surveys and treatments were just some of the regular practices of GALS personnel.

The GALS eradication program has been a collaborative effort of the United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Plant Protection and Quarantine, the FDACS, Miami-Dade County and its various municipalities. Other community involvement made the program's success possible. From homeowners associations, landscaping companies, green waste facilities, cultural groups, the nursery industry to homeowners themselves, everyone pulling in the same direction is part of today's success.

How Does Eradication Work?

Cores or core population areas include properties within a half-mile radius around the location of a live snail. Cores are decommissioned after intensive protocols are conducted by a team of scientists and administrators from FDACS and the USDA. The last live snail was found in 2017. The absence of GALS on any property can be assured because of the thorough protocols in place and the hundreds of hours of training, practice and routine testing ensuring the efficacy of the canine inspections on this program.

Data

Since the inception of the program, data tracking has been a crucial part of the program's success. Over the 11-year span of the program, DPI's inspectors went from paper tracking to real-time GPS data entry and viewing on tablets. DPI GIS specialists built and maintained thousands of maps. Compiling essential data into consistently updated GIS systems provided GALS staff with the records and maps necessary for planning and task execution. On screen output identified quantities and locations of GALS within specific properties.

Outreach

Because of proactive outreach efforts, FDACS-DPI communicated the importance of this program to the public strategically and efficiently. Up to 97% of live snail finds were the product of the public reporting sightings to the FDACS-DPI. Strong communication tactics gave the public understanding and the conviction to act.

The Public Information & Outreach section of DPI had the opportunity to communicate the GALS message to millions of people during the program. Throughout this program, continual outreach was the key to making sure all snail sightings were reported to the DPI Helpline. Campaigns lasted many weeks and were implemented through advertisements in digital and print media. A few key elements of the advertising mix included ads on billboards, radio and TV spots, mall banners, bus benches, newspaper articles and movie theaters ads. Eventually, program vehicles were wrapped with GALS messaging to simultaneously assist with safety and outreach. In addition to paid advertising campaigns, DPI utilized the distribution of printed materials and promotional items to reach millions of people. Press events, news media coverage, community outreach, blogs and social media contributed to raising awareness about DPI's eradication efforts and how the public should help.

