

What Lives in Your Back Yard

A South Florida wildlife & pest field guide for Montura residents



Rural South Florida wildlife is part of life in Montura. Most of what you'll meet is harmless if you know what it is. This guide covers the eight species you're most likely to encounter on your property — how to identify them, how to handle them safely, and where to get help.

EMERGENCY — Venomous snake bite or other animal injury:

Call 911 for an ambulance, then Florida Poison Control: 1-800-222-1222 (24/7, free). Do not apply ice, tourniquets, or try to suck out the venom. Keep the bitten limb still and below heart level.

Fire Ants



Imported red fire ants build loose, dome-shaped mounds in sandy, sunny yards. Stings burn and leave white pustules. UF/IFAS recommends the two-step method: broadcast bait across the whole yard 1–2 times a year, then treat new mounds individually. Keep kids and pets clear of fresh mounds.

More info: UF/IFAS Ask IFAS — Fire Ants: edis.ifas.ufl.edu/entity/topic/fire_ants

Termites



South Florida has subterranean (native and Formosan) and drywood termites. Look for mud tubes on block walls and piers, hollow-sounding wood, or piles of wing-shaped frass. Get a licensed annual inspection — termite damage is not covered by homeowners insurance.

More info: UF/IFAS — Florida Termite Identification & Control: edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN236

Mosquitoes



Florida mosquitoes can carry West Nile, EEE, and occasionally Zika. Dump anything that holds water every few days (buckets, tires, plant saucers, tarps, gutters), screen rain barrels, and wear repellent at dawn and dusk. Montura is inside the Hendry County Mosquito Control MSBU.

More info: Hendry County Mosquito Control: hendryfla.net/mosquito_control_and_prevention — questions 1-800-203-6485

Spiders



Most Florida spiders — golden silk orb weavers, banana spiders, wolf spiders, jumping spiders — are harmless and useful (they eat bugs that bite you). The two medically significant species are the Southern black widow and the brown recluse (rare). Learn ID first so you know what's in your shed.

More info: UF/IFAS — Common Spiders of Florida: edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IN1018

Venomous Snakes



Florida has six venomous species; four are realistic in this area: Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, dusky pygmy rattlesnake, cottonmouth (water moccasin), and Eastern coral snake. Most snakes you see in Montura are non-venomous and helpful. Give any snake room to leave on its own.

More info: FWC — Florida's Venomous Snakes: myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/reptiles/snakes

Alligators



Gators live in every canal, pond, and wet ditch around Montura. Never feed them (it's a felony and it's what makes them dangerous), keep pets and small children away from the water's edge, and assume any freshwater body could have one.

More info: FWC Living with Alligators: myfwc.com/conservation/you-serve/wildlife/alligators — Nuisance Alligator Hotline 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286)

Raccoons



Raccoons get into trash, chicken coops, pet food, and attics. They can carry rabies and canine distemper. Use locking trash cans, feed pets indoors, and close off crawl-space and soffit gaps. Don't handle one — call a licensed nuisance wildlife trapper.

More info: FWC Raccoon Profile: myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/mammals/land/raccoon

Marsh Rats & Roof Rats



Marsh rice rats live along canals and wet edges; roof rats and Norway rats move into sheds, attics, and feed rooms. Seal openings larger than a quarter, store feed in metal cans with tight lids, cut vegetation back from the house, and use snap traps in protected stations. Avoid loose rodenticide — it poisons owls, hawks, and pets.

More info: UF/IFAS — Roof & Norway Rat Control: edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/IG142

Wildlife (Not Pests)

Native and non-native animals you'll see around Montura. Most are protected or beneficial — know how to live alongside them.

Wild Pigs (Feral Hogs)



Feral hogs root up pastures, gardens, and septic drainfields and can damage fences overnight. They are not native and are legal to trap or hunt year-round on private land in Florida with landowner permission. Don't approach — sows with piglets and boars with tusks can charge. Call a licensed trapper for removal.

More info: FWC — Wild Hog Species Profile: myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/mammals/land/wild-hog

Florida Black Bears



Black bears occasionally wander into Hendry County from the Big Cypress area, especially in spring and fall. They are after trash, pet food, and birdseed — not people. Use bear-resistant cans, feed pets indoors, take down feeders if a bear visits, and never approach or feed one. Bears are a protected species.

More info: FWC Bear Program: myfwc.com/bear

Bobcats



Bobcats are native, shy, and rarely a threat to people. They mostly hunt rats, rabbits, and birds — which is good for your yard. They can take unattended small pets and backyard chickens, so use secure coops and bring small pets in at dusk and dawn. Seeing one is normal; it does not need to be removed.

More info: FWC — Bobcat Species Profile: myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/mammals/land/bobcat

Coyotes



Coyotes are now established across all 67 Florida counties, including Hendry. They eat rodents, rabbits, and fruit, but will take cats, small dogs, and chickens. Don't leave pet food outside, secure trash, supervise small pets, and haze any coyote that loses its fear of people (shout, wave arms, throw objects). Removal alone doesn't work — new coyotes move in.

More info: FWC — Living with Coyotes: myfwc.com/conservation/you-conserve/wildlife/coyotes

Emergency & Reporting Numbers

Florida Poison Control (24/7 — snake bites, stings): 1-800-222-1222

FWC Nuisance Alligator Hotline: 866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286)

FWC Wildlife Alert (poaching, nuisance wildlife): 888-404-FWCC (888-404-3922)

Hendry County Sheriff (non-emergency): 863-674-5600

Hendry County Mosquito Control: See hendryfla.net

Emergency: 911

About this guide

Produced by the Montura Civic Coalition. Information drawn from UF/IFAS Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS), the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and Hendry County agencies. Not a substitute for licensed pest-control or wildlife professionals.

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