

How Many Are REALLY Out There!?!?¹

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Sneak Peek

Students will learn that a large number of invasive species exist in the United States and specifically Florida. They will research where invasive species live in Florida and graph their results. This activity incorporates research, graphing, and presentation skills.

Objectives:

Students will...

- Research invasive species and where they are currently found in Florida.
- Map locations of invasive species in Florida.
- Analyze data and graph results.

Materials:

- Pencil.
- Calculator.
- Graph paper.
- Internet access.
- Map of Florida and the United States (included).
- Overhead projector.

Aligned with the following Sunshine State Standards and FCAT Benchmarks for grades 6-8:

- SC.D.1.3.3 CS SC.F.2.3.3 CS
- SC.D.1.3.4 AA SC.G.1.3.2 CS
- SC.F.1.3.1 AA SC.G.1.3.4 AA
- SC.F.1.3.7 CS

AA = annually assessed
CS = content sampled

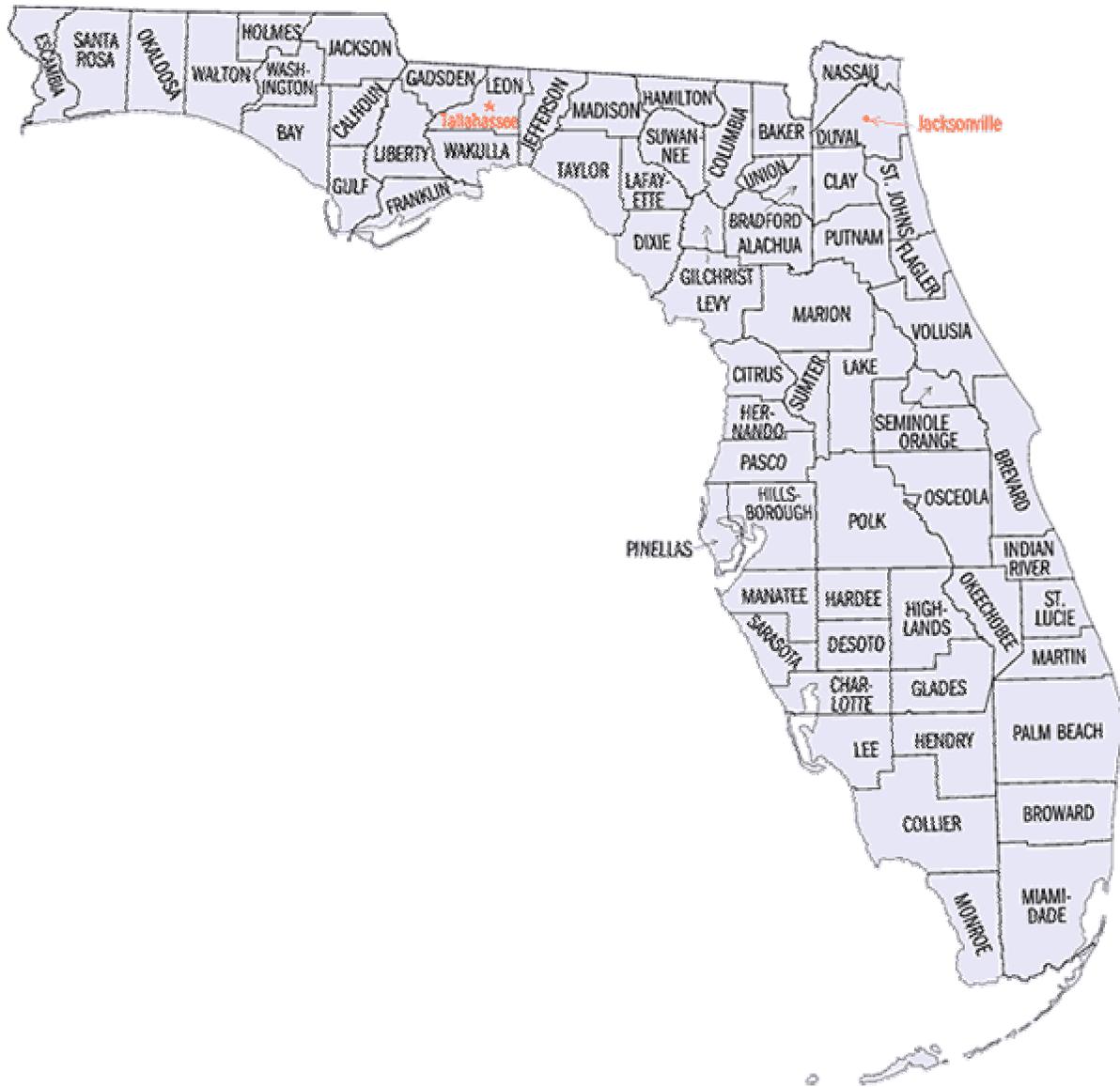
Background:

Invasive species are found throughout the United States. Animal and plant invaders can be found in each and every state. Florida has an extremely high *invasion rate* (change in number over time) resulting in more than 275 invasive animals so far. These are only the animals! Using the following websites, students will see how many invasive species are in Florida and where they are located.

- <http://www.wildflorida.org/critters/exotics/exotics.asp>
- <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/seagrant/invlists.html>
- www.invasivespecies.gov

Procedure:

1. Copy U.S. map onto overhead transparency, using the one provided, or substituting one of your choosing.
2. Lead a discussion asking students what states have invasive species, citing common names of specific examples (see website list for sites that provide information on national invasive species). After soliciting answers, place the names of each invasive on the blank map of the United States on the overhead. All the states should be covered. Florida alone has more than 350 known invasive species (including plants).
3. Distribute the map of Florida and assign geographic regions (depending on class size) with several counties per group.
4. Groups should then research their counties in an attempt to name as many invasive species currently living in that area as possible.
5. Groups should now create a bar graph of the number of species in each county using the chart provided.
6. Have groups report on the invasive species they found in their geographic region, including how many are animals and how many are plants.



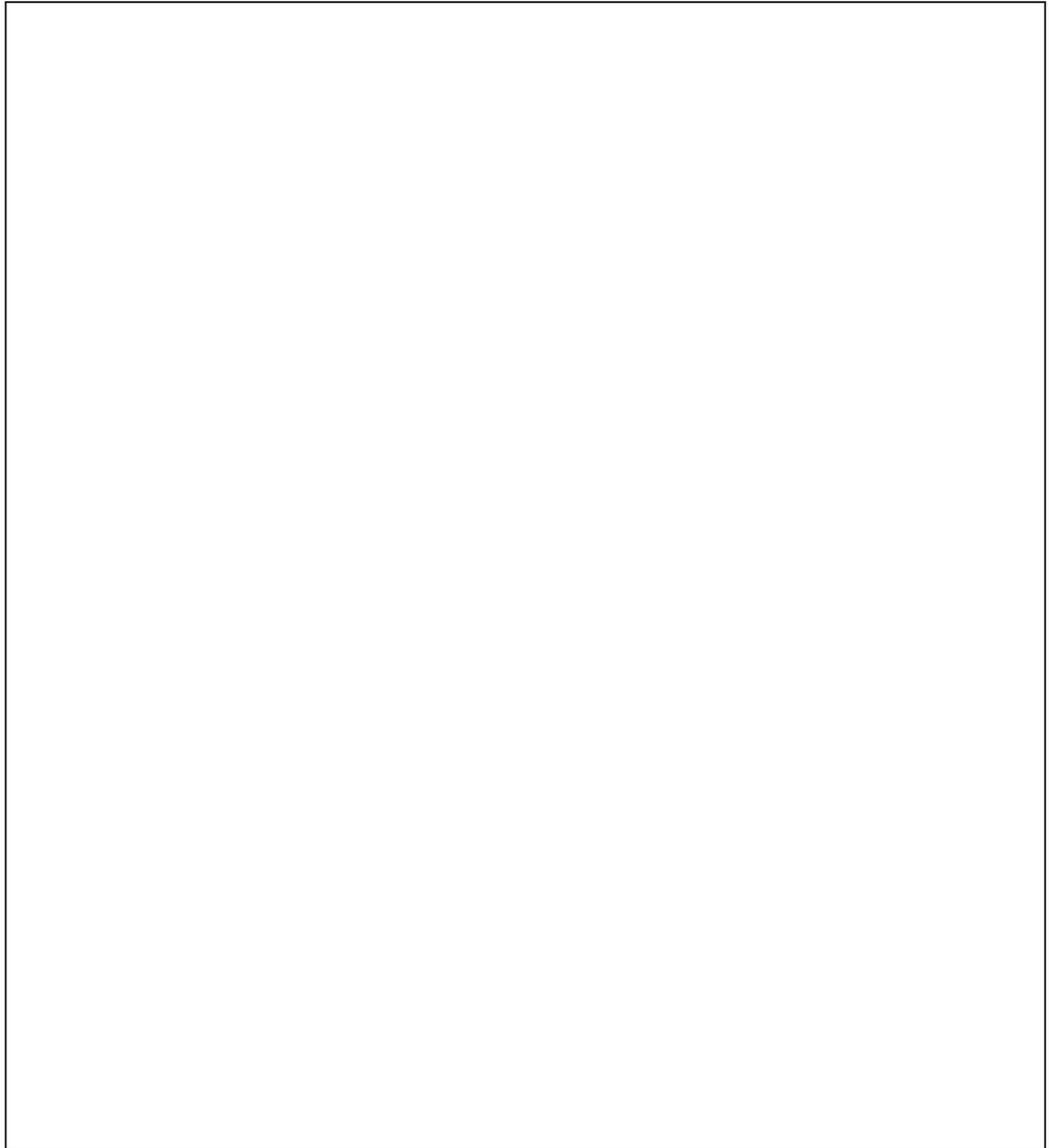
Map provided by digital-topo-maps.com at:
<http://county-map.digital-topo-maps.com/florida.shtml>

GRAPH

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COUNTIES

Glossary:

Invader/Invasive species – A plant or animal that is not native and causes harm, including disrupting natural ecosystems.

Invasion rate – How quickly invasive species are being established in a geographic region. A rate is a change in something over time.