



United States Department of the Interior

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
Office of the Director
Reston, Virginia 20192

In Reply Refer To:
Mail Stop 159
#20097-DO

JAN - 5 2009

This letter is in response to your September 28, 2008, appeal to the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) decision on your July 26, 2008, Information Quality Act (IQA) Request for Correction. Your request for correction concerned the following publication:

Gordon H. Rodda, Catherine S. Jarnevich, and Robert N. Reed, *What parts of the US mainland are climatically suitable for invasive alien python spreading from Everglades National Park?* published in Biological Invasions online February 27, 2008 [Rodda].

This IQA Request for Correction was supplemented by your August 14, 2008, email which referenced a paper by R. Alexander Pryon, Frank T. Burbrink, and Timothy J. Guiher, *Claims of potential expansion throughout the U.S. by invasive python species are contradicted by ecological niche models*, published in PLoS ONE online in August 2008 [Pryon], which was published after the Rodda paper.

A panel composed of representatives from the USGS and the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service was convened to review your appeal and address your concerns about "unwarranted assumptions and defective methodologies." The panel determined that the Rodda paper met the requirements of independence, with two of the three peer reviewers coming from outside the USGS, as well as internal supervisory review. Based on this affirmation of peer review, the panel agreed that it was unlikely that there were "unwarranted assumptions or defective methodologies."

In further discussion, the panel considered the Rodda and Pryon papers as a good example of "dueling models" and agreed that such disagreements were well within the tradition of scientific dialog where different points of view could be worked through the scientific method. Such differences were not "incorrect," rather they were critical to the evolution of scientific thought. Because a later-published paper (in this case Pryon) differs from a previous paper (Rodda) does not mean the previous paper should be changed.

Based on the panel's review and determinations, I concur with the earlier USGS determination regarding your IQA Request for Correction; that is, the Rodda paper is technically correct, unbiased, and objective and therefore we find no need for modification.

This correspondence completes this appeal process for this complaint. We appreciate your consideration of these issues and thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. D. Myers', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark D. Myers
Director