

For alga

The Urth list — 3 messages, 2 voices, 13 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3673>

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James Jordan — 13 Dec 2002, 15:45

Today Florida and Louisiana, tomorrow New York. Beware, alga!

Giant rats roam Florida

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) -- Like something escaped from a mad scientist's laboratory, the monstrous rodents creep through the underbrush. Don't worry, these critters just want some salad. These rats -- as big as the family dog and weighing more than a Thanksgiving turkey -- are nutria, roaming eastern Hillsborough County as the result of commercialism gone to seed. "I saw this humongous rat on the road," said JoAnn Hoffmann, who encountered a nutria while driving to work. "My jaw just dropped." The nutria are the remnants of a get-rich-quick scheme some 40 years ago, said Bill Kern, urban wildlife specialist with the Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Entrepreneurs imported nutria -- an extremely large South American aquatic rat -- to start a fur trade in Florida. But people didn't want to walk around in coats or mittens made of the hide or fur of 3-foot-long rats with naked, scaly tails. "The prices dropped so low, nobody bothered to trap them," Kern said in Monday's editions of the Tampa Tribune. The nutria found homes along lakes, drainage ditches and ponds at dairy farms. Exclusively vegetarian, they dine on aquatic plants. The nutria are not considered game animals, so it's always open season on them. Just don't expect to get rich as a trapper: A nutria pelt might fetch \$4, Kern said.

Nutria tail now worth \$4

Wednesday, November 20, 2002

By Dan Majors, Post-Gazette Staff Writer

Today's installment of "Animals Gone Wild" involves the nutria, a ravenous rodent that is currently consuming the Louisiana coast. Nutria may sound like some kind of new diet or face cream, but it isn't. It's a big old 10-pound water-dwelling rat-like-lookin' thing from South America. (Don't let the name fool you. Think muskrat.) They were brought to this country in the 1930s, before the words "ecological balance" were coined. Back then, folks were still focused on the words "fur trade." In 1937, 13 of the critters escaped from a colony owned by Tabasco founder L.E. McIlhenny, who figured they'd amount to gator bait out there in the bayou. But McIlhenny underestimated the nutria. They thrived in Louisiana's marsh grasses. And they proved to be very prolific. Besides being born eaters, nutria can reproduce when they are four to six months old. Meaning a nutria born on Thanksgiving can be a grandma nutria by Halloween. Sure enough, they're raging in Cajun country, overrunning the Gulf of Mexico wetlands. Ravaging the rice and shredding the sugarcane. And as they devour the plants, the soil is washing away. At a rate of 35 square miles a year. In the meantime, demand for nutria fur is pretty much nonexistent. People have tried to come up with other uses for nutria. The state even tried to develop a market for its meat. Its taste, like its reproductive abilities, has been compared to rabbit. But it hasn't caught on. No matter how many sauces and spices you throw at it, people just don't pick "rodent gumbo" off the menu. Even when it's today's special. Still, something has to be done. So, starting today, the state of Louisiana is offering a \$4-a-tail bounty -- officials prefer the term "incentive" -- in hopes of wiping out 400,000 nuisance nutria this winter. (Tails must be turned in frozen or salted.) Just another of the ways that government puts tax dollars to work for a better world.

Alice K. Turner — 14 Dec 2002, 03:43 · follows James Jordan

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As we New Yorkers (even gentiles) say; Oy vay!!!

Nutria tail now worth \$4

On the other hand....

-alga

James Jordan — 14 Dec 2002, 15:54 · follows Alice K. Turner

At 09:43 PM 12/13/2002, you wrote:

Nutria tail now worth \$4

On the other hand....

-alga

Yeah. It's nice to be worth SOMETHING, even if it's only my ... well....

Nutria