

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Are There Snakes On St. Croix? Yes, Says 'Sauce Creole'

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It is widely believed by residents of the territory that there are no snakes in the U.S. Virgin Islands. None because the mongooses let loose in the wild killed and ate them all. But a St. Croix fisherman, who goes by the moniker "Sauce Creole," said he recently spotted and caught a snake on his farm at Mount Washington.

The encounter happened when Creole Sauce said he was tending his crops and saw something moving nearby. After a brief search, the man discovered the movement was coming from a large snake.

According to a 2002 report by Rafe Boulon, former chief of resource management for the park service, mongooses were brought to the Virgin Islands by sugar cane plantation owners in the 1800s to control the population of tree rats.

Several years later, however, sugar farmers discovered that mongooses are diurnal (active chiefly during the day) and cannot climb trees. Conversely, tree rats are nocturnal (active at night) and sleep in trees during the day. As a result, both populations flourished.









Since then, it is believed the mongooses preyed on snakes, eradicating the reptile's population in the territory. Also, since mongooses have no natural predators in the Virgin Islands, their population grew rapidly and unchecked.

Some species can learn simple tricks and they can be domesticated and are kept as pets. However, they are more often destructive than desired. When imported into the West Indies to kill rats and snakes, they destroyed most of the small, ground-based fauna. For this reason, it is illegal to import most species of mongooses into the United States, Australia, and other countries.

Mongooses mostly feed on insects, crabs, earthworms, lizards, snakes, birds, and rodents. However, they also eat eggs and carrion, according to [Wikipedia](#).

The images were taken outside the Morgan supermarket in Barren Spot and sent to VI Consortium by Morgan Richardson, Jr.