

ALLIGATOR ALCATRAZ

Fate uncertain for detained Cubans

BY SHIRSHO DASGUPTA, ANA CEBALLOS, BEN WIEDER, SYRA ORTIZ BLANES AND ANA CLAUDIA CHACIN
Times/Herald

For much of July, Pedro Lorenzo Concepción was held at Alligator Alcatraz along with dozens of other Cuban nationals in a detention camp billed as a last stop for immigrants slated for deportation — an unnerving situation for someone whose repatriation had already been rejected by the Cuban government.

Enforcement of immigration laws under Trump has meant Cuban immigrants are increasingly finding themselves in the crosshairs of deportation officials.

He begged staff at the facility to offer some clarity on his fate, but received no response, according to his longtime partner, Daimarys Hernández. He was eventually transferred this month to Krome detention center, where he is still waiting to learn what will happen to him.

Lorenzo Concepción, 44, is among hundreds of Cubans who at one time or another have been held at the site since the first detainees arrived on July 2,

immigration laws and ramped-up deportation efforts since President Donald Trump returned to the White House have meant Cuban immigrants — who for decades enjoyed a quicker and easier path to American residency and citizenship compared to other immigrant communities — are increasingly finding themselves in the crosshairs of immigration officials.

The change has perhaps been most evident in South Florida, **See CUBANS, 2A**

Turbocharged enforcement of



A school of silhouetted bull sharks circle in the water.
(Associated Press, 2021)

Are sharks in the gulf an ‘OVERWHELMING PROBLEM?’ It’s complicated

Researchers are working to learn when and why these encounters happen and how to prevent them.

BY MICHAEL MOORE JR. AND RYAN BALLOGG
The Bradenton Herald (TNS)

Florida anglers say sharks are snatching their catches at unprecedented rates, calling it an “overwhelming problem” and blaming a boom in gulf shark numbers.

But scientific research paints a more complicated picture.

Scientists who study sharks acknowledge that depredation — the act of fish being eaten by an underwater predator while on a fisherman’s line — is a growing concern in some areas, especially Florida. They cite several potential drivers of increased shark-human conflict, including climate change-related shifts in shark behavior and rebounding populations of some species.

But they note that changes in human behavior — such as more people fishing and heightened awareness of shark

encounters through social media — may also play a role.

Now, researchers are working to learn when and why these encounters happen and how to prevent them.

Matt Ajemian, an associate research professor studying the issue at Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, cautions against calling shark depredation a crisis, noting that historical accounts show similar encounters have long occurred.

“I don’t call it a problem,” he said. “I try to call it a challenge.”

Researchers explore increased reports of shark encounters

Ajemian and research coordinator Mike McCallister are leading a NOAA-funded project launched in 2021 to study when and where depredation happens **See SHARKS, 3A**



Venus Williams waves to the crowd after a doubles match at the DC Open tennis tournament on July 21 in Washington, D.C. In an interview with NBC News Now, the seven-time Grand Slam champion described how her uterine fibroid symptoms affected her tennis career and overall health. *(NICK WASS / Associated Press)*

Venus Williams experienced uterine fibroids. So do the majority of women

Last month, the tennis star shared a story that is echoed in women in Tampa Bay.

BY ERIKA KENGNI
Times Staff Writer

A condition that can affect fertility in women went viral last month after tennis star Venus Williams shared her experience of battling symptoms while being dismissed by doctors.

Up to 80% of women will

experience uterine fibroids, or benign tumors that grow in the muscular wall of the uterus, according to the Mayo Clinic.

Latasha Lee felt like something was wrong when she began experiencing heavy periods.

“I was always feeling bloated. I was always in pain. I would bleed really, really heavy, I would have no energy,” said Lee, who lives in Largo.

Lee, 41, took medication related to painful periods as prescribed by a nurse practitioner for nearly two years before a doctor cor-

rectly diagnosed her with uterine fibroids.

Doctors do not know what causes the condition, but hormonal medications like birth control — which are commonly prescribed to control heavy periods — can make them worse, according to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Lee’s symptoms affected her life every day. Pain related to the fibroids forced her to miss work and cancel plans.

“I was ashamed to even go **See FIBROIDS, 3A**