



There's an alligator in the lake

Special Thanks to Officer Andrew Polaszek for the information provided.

Living in Florida, there is a very good chance that you're likely to see an alligator in your association pond or lake.

Training alligators to stay out of your community ponds and lakes is out of the question. The best methods to protect your association are preventative measures. Some examples of this could be the use of signs around your lakes and newsletters educating your members with alligator precautions and safety when enjoying the pond or lake in your community. Periodically sending reminders and educating your owners, helps everyone. Below are some gentle reminders and safety tips:

- Be aware of the possibility of alligator attacks when in or near fresh or brackish waterbodies. Attacks may occur when people do not pay close enough attention to their surroundings when working or recreating near water.
- Closely supervise children when they are playing in or around water. Never allow small children to play unsupervised near water.
- Do not swim outside of posted swimming areas or in waters that might be inhabited by large alligators.
- Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn. Therefore, swim only during daylight hours.
- Dispose of fish scraps in garbage cans at boat ramps and fish camps. Do not throw them in the water. Although you are not intentionally feeding alligators when you do this, the end result can be the same.
- Do not allow pets to swim, exercise or drink in or near waters that may contain alligators. Dogs are more susceptible to being targeted than people because dogs resemble the natural prey of alligators. Alligators are opportunistic feeders.
- Observe and photograph alligators only from a distance.
- Seek immediate medical attention if bitten by an alligator and report the bite to the FL FWC. An investigation will need to be conducted.

FLORIDA LAW

- **68A-25.001** Feeding or Enticement-No person shall intentionally feed, or entice with feed, any crocodilian unless held in captivity under permit issued by the FL FWC.
 - *Illegal to take, possess, harvest, etc. EXEMPTIONS:
 - *Alligator feet, viscera and skeletal parts may be bought, sold, possessed, transported and imported without a permit
- **68A-25.003** Taking and Disposal of Nuisance Alligators-only persons under contract with the FL FWC as nuisance trappers or their agents and assistants shall take, possess and kill nuisance alligators.

- **SNAP-Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program**



- 1-866-FWC-GATOR (392-4286)
- Administered by the Division of Hunting and Game Management
- Uses contracted nuisance alligator trappers and issues permits for removal if the
- nuisance alligator meets the criteria for removal

*If you suspect a fish, wildlife, boating or environmental law violation, report it to the FL FWC at 888-404-3922 or cell phone by dialing *FWC or #FWC, depending on your service provider.

*You may also report violations online at www.myfwc.com or text to Tip@MyFWC.com

*If the information you provide results in an arrest, you may be eligible for a reward of up to \$1,000. You may also remain anonymous.

So when a sighting is reported, what can you do?

Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program 1-866-FWC-GATOR (392-4286)

Florida does have a Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program or SNAP. In 2015, SNAP received 13,962 nuisance alligator complaints statewide, resulting in the removal of 7,513 nuisance alligators. When contacting to report an alligator sighting, please keep the below in mind.

1. For removal, the alligator must be at least 4' in length and pose a threat to people, pets, etc.
2. The complainant must be able to grant legal access to the property on which the nuisance alligator is located.

Feeding Wildlife

Educate owners that when they are feeding the fish, birds, turtles, and other animals that may visit or live in your lakes, they may also be inadvertently feeding the gators. While it may seem harmless, wild animals may get used to humans feeding them and lose their instinctive fear to human activity. Not only is this activity dangerous, but in circumstances, it can be considered unlawful.

Additional facts about alligators

- Females rarely exceed 10' in length, but males grow much larger
- The Florida state record for length was a 14' 3 1/2" male from Brevard County
- The Florida state record for weight was an alligator captured in Alachua County that weighed 1,043 lbs.
- The largest alligator ever caught, a world record, can now be viewed in an Alabama museum. It measured 15'9" and weighed 1,011.5 pounds.
- Courtship begins in early April, with mating occurring in May or June.
- Females build a mound nest of soil, vegetation or debris and deposit an average of 32-46 eggs in late June or early July.
- Incubation requires approximately 63-68 days and hatching occurs from mid-August through early September
- Most alligators are active when the temperature is between 82 and 92 degrees F.
- Alligators stop feeding when the ambient temperature drops below 70 degrees F and become dormant at below 55 degrees F.