

Alligators Awareness in The Preserve at South Branch



Did you know the alligator is a direct descendant of dinosaurs that first appeared more than 200 million years ago?

Love is in the air....Courtship begins in early April, and mating occurs in May or June. Females build a mound nest of soil, vegetation, or debris and deposit an average of 32 to 46 eggs in late June or Early July. During incubation, a female alligator can be fiercely protective of her nest, eggs and young she is never far from her hatchlings. Incubation takes approximately 63-68 days, with hatching occurring from mid-august through early September.

Never approach or feed an alligator. Alligators, like all wild animals, deserve respect and space. They are predators and opportunistic feeders, preying on species that are abundant and easily accessible. When humans hand-feed them, they lose their natural fear of humans. An alligator cannot tell the difference between a piece of food and a hand that offers it. An alligator that approaches humans is deemed a nuisance and more than likely will end up being trapped and destroyed. Also, feeding an alligator is breaking the law and you could face up to a \$500 fine and/or 60 days in jail.

Children should always have a grown-up nearby when playing near, or in, fresh or brackish water. Keep pets on a leash and away from the water's edge.

Persons with concerns about an alligator may call the **Nuisance Alligator Hotline** at **866-FWC-GATOR (866-392-4286)**.

Typically, an alligator may be deemed a nuisance if it is at least four feet in length and the caller believes it poses a threat to people, pets or property. If a complaint meets the qualifying criteria, they will

issue a permit to a contracted nuisance alligator trapper authorizing the removal of the animal.

Steps to take if you see an alligator:

- Stay as far away from the alligator as possible. (Most alligators do not want to be near you.)
- Do not agitate or feed the alligators.
- If you are concerned about an alligator, please contact the District Manager, Tish Dobson at (813) 758-4841 or the Nuisance Alligator Hotline at (866) 392-4286.
- Do not call a trapper. The community relies on FWC to notify a trapper if an alligator is deemed a nuisance.

Thank you,
The CDD Board of Supervisors