GOOD TO KNOW

FLORIDA ALLIGATOR SAFETY

Living near the water? Know what to watch for.



1 GIVE THEM SPACE

Observe from a distance. Never approach or try to handle an alligator.

2 SWIM IN DESIGNATED AREAS

Swim only in designated swimming areas during daylight. Follow posted warnings.

3 WATCH THE WATER'S EDGE

Stay alert along lakes and ponds. Keep children away from the shoreline.

4 KEEP PETS BACK

Keep pets leashed and away from the water's edge. Do not let them swim in fresh or brackish water.

5 FISH WITH AWARENESS

Put fish scraps in the trash, not in the water or on shore. Never offer an alligator fish or bait.

6 NEVER FEED ALLIGATORS

Feeding encourages alligators to approach people. Keep food and scraps away from the water.





Give every alligator space, whether its mouth is open or closed.

Concerned about an alligator?

FWC Nuisance Alligator Hotline:

866-392-4286

Immediate danger: call 911.

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Safety guidance: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). MyFWC.com/Alligator

GOOD TO KNOW

FLORIDA ALLIGATOR FACTS

The facts behind the caution.



1 1.3 MILLION ALLIGATORS

FWC estimates Florida has about 1.3 million alligators of all sizes.

2 23.46 MILLION RESIDENTS

July 2025 Census estimate: 23,462,518 people. Roughly 18 residents per alligator statewide. This comparison does not measure personal risk.

3 SPRING ACTIVITY

Courtship begins in early April. Mating usually occurs in May or June. Warmer weather brings more activity.

4 WHY SUN ON SHORE?

Alligators use outside heat to regulate body temperature. Basking helps them warm up, including during warm spells in winter.

5 SERIOUS INCIDENTS ARE RARE

FWC figures reported in February 2026 list about 500 unprovoked bites since 1948, including 32 fatalities through 2025. These are historical totals, not annual figures. Major bites require treatment beyond first aid and include fatal bites.

6 PART OF FLORIDA'S WETLANDS

Alligators live in all 67 counties. They help keep aquatic animal populations in balance.

7 FRESH WATER IS HOME

Alligators prefer freshwater lakes, slow-moving rivers and wetlands. They can also occur in brackish water.

8 DUSK TO DAWN

Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn. Follow posted warnings and use designated swimming areas during daylight.

These photographs show the same approximately six-foot alligator. According to the photographer, it has lived in the same neighborhood for at least 10 years. Size and history are based on local observations.

Serious incidents are rare. Precautions still matter.

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Sources: FWC Alligator Facts and safety guidance; U.S. Census Bureau, July 2025 estimate.
Bite figures: ClickOrlando, June 30, 2026, reporting FWC's February 2026 summary. Later incidents excluded.