



## Alligators They Aren't Going Away

Gateway has an extensive storm water system that includes over 100 ponds, wetlands and upland preserves. Our natural setting provides beauty and recreation for our residents, and adds value to our homes. Living on a storm water system such as in the Gateway District means we will inevitably come across alligators. Alligators and humans have shared habitat for many centuries. Although alligator attacks are rare, you should take precautions to reduce potential conflicts with alligators.

**Please DO NOT feed the wild life in the storm water system, including the fish, birds, ducks and turtles. This practice is very unhealthy for the wildlife as it discourages them from feeding on their natural food sources. Human food and grains that are not naturally available cause digestive issues and make the wild life more susceptible to disease other health issues. Also Alligators can be attracted by a group of feeding fish or fowl. It's like you set the dinner table for them.**

If you encounter an alligator that truly poses a serious threat to human safety, (an Alligator in the pond water or sunning on the bank is not truly posing a threat) call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) toll-free at 866-392-4286. Cell phone customers can call \*FWC or #FWC depending on the service carrier. Or Contact Gateway Services CDD and then the District will contact the Trapper directly through the Targeted Harvest Area Program FWC does not allow the trapping of Alligators less than 4 feet in length and will call Elle Harris at Gateway Services CDD 239-561-1313 option 4 or email Elle Harris at [elle.harris@gatewaydistrict.org](mailto:elle.harris@gatewaydistrict.org) at 239-561-1313. You can also go to [www.gatewaydistrict.org](http://www.gatewaydistrict.org); click on the "Contact Us" button and select "Type of Request". Scroll down and select "Other" and fill in the message box. Select the "Submit" button.

**Trapped Alligators are NOT RELOCATED they are killed and the hide and harvested meat are sold commercially.**

### Alligator Safety Tips

- Leave alligators alone. State law prohibits people from feeding, harassing, molesting or attempting to move alligators. The potential for being bitten or injured by a provoked alligator is high.
- NEVER feed or entice alligators—it's dangerous and illegal. Alligators will overcome their natural fear of humans and associate them with food.

- Dispose of fish scraps in garbage cans at most boat ramps or fish camps. Although you are not intentionally feeding alligators when you dispose of fish scraps in water, the end result can be the same—feeding.
- Closely supervise children when playing in or around water. **Never allow small children to play by themselves near water.**
- Don't swim in any of the storm water ponds, **alligators most actively feed at dusk, dawn or at night.**
- Don't allow pets to swim, exercise or drink in waters not known to be free of alligators or in designated swimming areas with humans. Dogs suffer many more attacks than humans, probably because dogs more closely resemble natural prey items of large alligators. Alligators are more likely to attack small animals than larger ones.
- Never remove any alligators from their natural habitat or accept one as a pet. It is a violation of state law to do so. Alligators do not become tame in captivity and handling even small ones may result in bites.
- Enjoy viewing and photographing wild alligators. **Remember, they're an important part of Florida's natural history, as well as an integral component of many freshwater ecosystems.**
- Seek immediate medical attention if you are bitten by an alligator. Alligators harbor a very infectious bacteria, and even minor bites may require special treatment.
- Inform others that feeding alligators is a violation of state law and that by feeding alligators; people create problems for others who want to use the water for recreational purposes.

Although the majority of the problems with alligators relate to their being in places where they aren't wanted, a small number tragically involve alligator attacks. The number of alligator attacks that occur annually has remained constant in spite of the increased potential for alligator-human interaction.

***Alligators are an important part of Florida's heritage and play an important role in the ecology of Florida's wetlands. An understanding of these facts and broader knowledge of alligator behavior helps ensure that humans and alligators continue their long-term coexistence.***

