

Beware Alligators!

We have alligators (and all sorts of other wildlife) present in our lagoons and lakes. Read this fact sheet to learn more about them and remember to use caution near all bodies of water in Palmetto Dunes.

THE AMERICAN ALLIGATOR

Alligators are fascinating creatures and should by all means be enjoyed as part of the natural beauty of our region. According to the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), alligator attacks are exceedingly rare and the animals are usually afraid of people. Still, they are large carnivorous predators and should be respected as such. A few precautions on our part can help both humans and alligators coexist safely.

DESCRIPTION

The average size for an adult female American alligator is 8.2 feet and the average size for a male is 11.2 feet.

The young can be distinguished from adults by the bright yellow stripes on the tail; adults have dark stripes on the tail.

Female alligators usually remain in a small area, but males occupy areas larger than two square miles. Both extend their ranges during the courting and breeding season. Juveniles remain where they were born until 2-3 years of age when they leave that area in search of food or are driven out by larger alligators.



SAFETY TIPS

Concerns about having negative encounters with alligators can largely be dissolved with common sense and an understanding of alligator behavior. Below are several tips for safety.

Do not feed alligators. When alligators start associating people with food, they will be more likely to approach. Do not feed ducks, turtles, fish, or any other animals inhabiting water either. This food source attracts alligators.

Be aware of your surroundings. If you're in an alligator-friendly habitat—just about any local body of water—be mindful of your environment.

Keep your distance. If you encounter an alligator, walk backwards and back away from it. A safe distance from an adult alligator should be maintained at about 60 feet. If the alligator hisses or lunges at you, you are too close.

Keep your pets and children away from alligators. Large alligators do not recognize the difference between domestic pets and wild food sources. When hungry, alligators act on their hunting instinct. Do not allow pets or children to swim in, drink, or play at the edge of waters inhabited by alligators. To an alligator, any splash potentially means a food source is in the water.

A FED GATOR IS A DEAD GATOR

In their natural, wild state alligators—especially the big ones—tend go out of their way to avoid people, their only natural enemy. But once they become too familiar, alligators lose their fear of humans, necessitating their removal for the safety of everyone concerned. **All removed alligators are exterminated per South Carolina State Law.** Relocation is illegal due alligators strong homing instincts.

DO NOT FEED ALLIGATORS. DO NOT FEED ANY WILDLIFE IN PALMETTO DUNES.

FEEDING ALLIGATORS IS ILLEGAL IN SOUTH CAROLINA.

AGGRESSIVE ALLIGATOR?

If you encounter an alligator in Palmetto Dunes that you believe to be aggressive or used to humans and you have a safety concern, contact Palmetto Dunes Dispatch at (843) 785-1120.

When we receive a call, a Security officer and third-party wildlife service provider will be dispatched to locate and/or monitor the alligator. We will rely on the recommendation of the wildlife service provider in determining if an alligator should be harvested.