



# Turtle Rock Ponds Report

## Coexisting with Alligators

Turtle Rock residents may sometimes see an alligator cruising in a pond or

sunbathing on shore. Alligators, which descended from the same common ancestor as dinosaurs, are technically reptiles but are in fact more closely related to birds, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission. Alligators have existed for approximately 85 million years. They were here well before us. Early last century, humans hunted alligators nearly to extinction. They are now federally protected by the Endangered Species Act as a Threatened species and as a Federally-designated Threatened species by Florida's Endangered and Threatened Species Rule. We now share our state with about 1.3 million alligators. In Florida, serious injuries from alligators are rare. Nevertheless, living safely with our ancient alligator neighbors relies on taking common-sense precautions:

- Don't feed them. In fact, it is illegal to do so. Alligators are generally afraid of people, but feeding them can cause them to lose that important fear (and put them in danger of being "removed"; more about that below).

- Don't walk right at the edge of ponds when you can avoid it, and do not bring small children or dogs to ponds' edges. Keep pets on a leash. Watch for alligators relaxing nearby and give them plenty of space.

- Don't swim or wade in the ponds.

- Leave the alligators alone. Know that they are mostly active between dusk and dawn and during mating season typically April-June in Florida. When a resident asks to have an alligator removed, they are typically asked if the alligator is being aggressive. Generally, a non-aggressive alligator can be left in peace.

If the resident still wants the alligator to be "removed," it is in fact killed and then sold for its meat and hide – it is not simply relocated. Please consider Turtle Rock's alligators as wildlife to be admired and respected. If a problem arises, call Ed Olson at the Turtle Rock office.

Photo credit: Jean Beaufort has released this "Alligator" image under Public Domain license.

**Logo Created by Barry Domenick,  
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