

Alligators and Other Wildlife in Verandah

Over the past few weeks some Verandah residents have noticed greater activity by the alligators in our community. We think the FAQ below might help everyone understand why our alligators are so active, the corresponding Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) guidelines and what the VCA is working on.

Why are we seeing more alligators this year?

The VCA has explored why we are seeing more than the normal number of alligators in the community. We learned this abundance is not exclusive to Verandah and it is an unusually busy season for alligators throughout Florida. A principal reason is that it is alligator mating season. Secondly, Hurricane Ian affected wildlife habitats in SWFL by shifting waterways and destroying their homes. The SWFL drought is also causing alligators to move from their remote swampland to seek water, such as the lakes in Verandah. Finally, alligators have few predators and their population throughout Florida is growing.

How do I learn more about Florida wildlife?

We have found the links below to be a great starting point to learn more about Florida's wildlife.

FWC Alligator Brochure

<https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-serve/wildlife/gators/>

FWC Living with Alligators – article and video

Click the link below and scroll to the bottom of the web page to view the video.

<https://myfwc.com/conservation/you-serve/wildlife/gators/>

What is the process the VCA follows when a homeowner asks to have an alligator removed?

The VCA follows FWC guidelines for the removal of nuisance wildlife. They state these are animals exhibiting behavior that:

- causes (or is about to cause) property damage,
- presents a threat to public safety, or
- causes an annoyance within, under, or upon a building.

The FWC places the highest priority on public safety and administers a Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP). The goal of SNAP is to proactively address alligator threats in developed areas, while conserving alligators in areas where they naturally occur. Generally, an alligator is deemed a nuisance if it is at least 4 feet in length and the caller believes it poses a threat to people, pets, or property. There are situations when smaller alligators are in places that are not acceptable, such as swimming pools, garages, etc., and must be removed.

Has the VCA had alligators removed this year?

We had many calls from residents requesting alligators to be removed due to a potential threat. However, if the alligator did not meet the FWC guidelines or had moved from the area, it was not removed. Since the beginning of the year, three (3) alligators were removed. One seven-footer, an eight-footer, and the third was nine feet nine inches.

How to report nuisance wildlife?

If you have a nuisance alligator, bear, boar, coyote, or fox you will need to contact the VCA office at Office@VCALife.com with the location, date, and time of the sighting. The VCA will contact the permitted trapper for Verandah through the FWC and the nuisance wildlife will be assessed.

If you have other nuisance animals (e.g., raccoon, armadillo, opossum, palm rats or other small wild animals) that are of concern you will need to contact your exterminator.

Wildlife Seminar

We know many homeowners are interested in learning more about coexisting with Florida wildlife. We are collaborating with a local biologist to schedule a seminar and will send an email invitation as soon as we have confirmed the time.

Can I feed the wildlife?

It is illegal to harass or feed any animal on the endangered list, which includes many species also protected by federal laws. In addition, Florida outlaws the feeding of animals such as alligators, bears, coyotes, foxes, raccoons and nonhuman primates.

