

ALLIGATORS AND INVASIVE SPECIES

The western boundary of the Old Plantation Water Control District (OPWCD) borders the eastern limits of the Florida Everglades. The Florida Everglades is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States and is home to thousands of plants, birds, reptiles, mammals, and marine life. Because of OPWCD's geographical make-up and its expansive system of inter-connected lakes, canals, and wetland areas, it is not at all uncommon for certain animal species associated with the Everglades to migrate and exist in OPWCD's water bodies. Residents have reported seeing alligators, snakes, and invasive species, such as the iguana, in the past.

OPWCD urges its residents to always be cautious and aware when walking or traveling along the edge of a water body.

Here is some information to consider regarding alligators:

- 1) The Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission (FWC) has a Hotline for reporting nuisance alligators and alligator sightings. That number is 1-866-392-4286.
- 2) Any resident who sees an alligator, should call the FWC Hotline number and provide as much information as possible on the time and location of the sighting.
- 3) Typically, once a call has been made to the Hotline, the FWC will assign a licensed trapper to the location and issue a Reference Number.
- 4) The assigned trapper will be responsible for trapping the alligator and once the alligator is trapped, it will usually be harvested (not relocated).
- 5) Residents should call 911 if there is ever an immediate danger or threat to public health or safety regarding alligators (or any other circumstance).
- 6) Resident should never, ever feed an alligator or throw food into the lake to try and entice an alligator to come closer in order to get a better view.
- 7) Residents should never approach an alligator or try to engage an alligator in any form or fashion. This would include throwing rocks or other items, even from a perceived, safe distance.
- 8) Residents should always be aware of their surroundings in the vicinity of a lake or water body in this regard. Lakes and water bodies are a natural habitat for alligators and there is always the potential that an alligator could be present in any of the lakes within OPWCD. This is especially true whenever residents are outside and close to the water's edge with pets and small children.
- 9) OPWCD criteria does not allow for private beaches. We discourage residents from swimming in the lakes and water bodies.

Please note that the OPWCD staff are not experts on alligator behavior, and it is strongly suggested that residents contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission to get their expert advice and to better educate themselves on this issue.