



## Recreation among Alligators

*"All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth, befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life. He is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web. He does to himself."*

—Chief Seattle, 1854



American alligators basking in the sun- a familiar sight at Big Cypress National Preserve.

Enjoying the great outdoors is a time-honored tradition passed down from generation to generation. The memories made, while camping, fishing and hunting will last a lifetime. It is, however, important to do so in a safe and responsible manner- not only for your safety, but for the protection of the wildlife.

By following a few simple rules found on the reverse of this card, those memories will be positive ones.



Visitors viewing an alligator.



Human fed & conditioned alligator being killed.

**For the benefit of all, follow these rules to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience while recreating among alligators.**

**Keep alligators at a safe distance- Use “the rule of thumb”**

Although an alligator on land may seem very docile and slow, they are capable of brief bursts of speed and may attack if they feel threatened. With your arm outstretched hold your thumb in front of the alligator. Back up until it completely obscures it. You are now at a safe distance.

**Never feed alligators - “a fed gator is a dead gator”**

When fed, alligators may overcome their natural wariness, associate people with food and approach them, looking for more. When this occurs, these alligators may be captured and killed.

**At your campsite**

Do not wash dishes and pans in any body of water. The splashing activity, smell, and food scraps attract alligators. Dispose of food scraps in a trash cans and wash dishes at your campsite, away from the water.

**Fishing among alligators**

If an alligator swims toward you, reel in your line and move to another location. If the alligator continues to approach, stop fishing. If you catch a fish, do not throw it near alligators - this conditions it to associate people with food.

**Hunting in gator country**

Do not discard game meat or entrails into any body of water. Gut your game in the woods, where you harvested it, and never near campgrounds.

---

State law prohibits the feeding and harassing of wildlife with offenses subject to penalties of fines up to \$500 and up to 60 days in jail.

In case of emergencies, please call Park Dispatch at 800-788-0511, or 9-1-1.

For more information, please contact:

Big Cypress National Preserve  
33100 Tamiami Trail E  
Ochopee, FL 34141

239-695-1201, or  
239-695-4758