

## ALLIGATORS

Part of living in the beautiful PGA National community is living with the wildlife. In addition to the birds and other fuzzy/furry critters, we also have alligators.

The Grassy Waters Preserve is just west of PGA National on Northlake Blvd. It is surrounded by wetland areas where there are many, many gators. The wetland areas start at the western edge of PGA National and since all the lakes and canals within PGA National are inter-connected with pipes for drainage, the alligators can travel from one area to another. Alligators are hard to see in the water but you can often see them sunning themselves along the lake banks.

Lots of seasonal residents and guests are fascinated by these pre-historic looking creatures and think it's neat to feed them or take pictures: DON'T DO IT!!! When humans start feeding Alligators, they learn to associate people with food and this creates a dangerous situation. Most cameras can zoom so you don't need to get close. If you simply *have* to have a picture, be sure you are at least 50 feet away. Because they feed on small wildlife, it isn't unusual for them to go after dogs (just another reason to keep your dog on a leash and away from lake banks).

Alligator mating season is from April to early June and they can become aggressive during these times. They build their nests along the edge of the water and in June/July they produce eggs that hatch by mid-August to early September: Stay clear of the nests and babies as well as the parents!

Some reminders for living safely with the alligators:

- Do not feed alligators. Again, just to be clear: *never* feed them!
- If taking a photo or looking at an alligator, remain at least 50 feet away in distance.
- Stay out of the water (swimming in the lakes/canals is also against the rules in PGA National).
- Never go near an alligator nest.
- Never touch or go near an alligator on a road, even if it looks dead.
- Stay away from water at night and definitely stay away during the breeding season

Seeing alligators is just part of living with wildlife but if an alligator is aggressive, or you are at all concerned for your safety, call Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission's Nuisance Alligator Hotline at 866-392-4286. They will assign a trapper to trap and destroy the animal.