

DID YOU KNOW?

Fun facts about science...

Alligators primarily inhabit freshwater swamps and marshes and can also be found in rivers, lakes, and smaller bodies of water. They can tolerate a reasonable degree of salinity for short periods of time and are occasionally found in brackish water around mangrove swamps even though they lack the salt-secreting glands present in crocodiles.



- Adult male alligators occasionally reach 13 to 15 feet in length. Maximum length for females is approximately 10 feet.
- The bright yellow cross-bands that juvenile alligators sport against a black background provide effective camouflage. The yellow banding fades away as the juveniles mature. Juveniles eat a wide variety of small invertebrates, particularly insects, as well as small fish and frogs.
- Perhaps no other animal is more closely identified with the Everglades than the American alligator. This keystone species bears considerable importance in the health and function of south Florida's ecology. It is well understood that reproductive success is contingent on many factors, particularly hydrology.
- Most of the muscle in an alligator's jaw evolved to bite and grip prey. The muscles that close the jaws are exceptionally powerful, but the muscles for opening their jaws are comparatively weak. As a result, an adult human can hold an alligator's jaws shut barehanded. It is common today to use several wraps of duct tape to prevent an adult alligator from opening its jaws when handled or transported.