

# All About the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*)



## Did You Know...

### The Average Gator:

**Male Size:** 13-14 feet

**Female Size:** 10 feet

**Length Estimation:** Each inch in length from front of eye to nostrils = 1 foot of body length

**Life Span in Wild:** 35-50 years

**Body:** Gators are protected by hard bony body plates called **SCUTES**.

**Tail:** Normally half the length of the body and used as a propeller to move through the water

**Large Jaws:** 80 total teeth

**Breathing:** Gators can stay submerged for 45-60 minutes

**Diet:** Birds, fish, small mammals, turtles, snakes

**Feeding Times:** Primarily at night

**Summer:** 20 lbs. of meat in a week

**Winter:** Can go weeks without food

## Breeding

**Sexual Maturity** at 10-12 years of age

**Mating Season:** Early May

**Eggs:** When - Late June to early July  
Quantity - 30-70 eggs are laid  
Incubation - 65 days

**Mortality:** Only 2 out of 10 Gators live to maturity (80% mortality)

## Territory

The American alligator lives in fresh and brackish waters. Its territory range extends from the East Coast of North Carolina to the coast of Texas along the Gulf of Mexico, encompassing all of Louisiana and Florida.

## Gator Safety Tips

**Gator State Law 220-2.95 prohibits feeding gators.**

**Feeding: A FED Gator is a DEAD Gator –** Gators fed by humans no longer fear them and the human can become prey. Fed gators have to be relocated from human contact or euthanized.

- No harassing or capturing gators
- Avoid swimming in waters known to have gators or only swim during daylight hours.

## Conservation

- Due to over hunting, gators were pushed to the brink of extinction.
- In the 1970s, they were placed on the endangered species list.
- Significant conservation efforts and laws have restored gator populations to the point that many states have gator hunting seasons.

## Gator Alley Park

- The Gator Alley Park is part of the Eastern Shore Trail system.
- The City of Daphne sponsored the recent Low Impact Development (LID) Project to improve the water quality of D'Olive Creek for gators.
- LID practices help to infiltrate stormwater and reduce polluted runoff from entering the Bay
- LID practices demonstrated in Gator Alley Park:
  - Step pool conveyance
  - Bio-retention
  - Porous pavers
  - Use of native plants

**For more information visit:**  
[www.mobilebaynep.com](http://www.mobilebaynep.com)

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Photos by Sherry Stimpson Frost

