

2011
STATEWIDE ALLIGATOR HARVEST
TRAINING AND ORIENTATION MANUAL



Prepared by the Alligator Management Program
Division of Hunting and Game Management
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission





June 14, 2011

Dear Alligator Harvest Participant,

**Florida Fish
and Wildlife
Conservation
Commission**

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(800) 955-8771 (T)
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MyFWC.com

Enclosed you will find your alligator trapping license and your alligator harvest permit (both are on one page) for your assigned harvest unit and harvest period, two (2) alligator CITES tags (and 2 pink mercury tags, if permitted for the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor WMA and the Holey Land WMA), and two (2) alligator harvest report forms. If any of the items listed above are missing from your package, please contact the Office of Licensing and Permitting at (850) 488-3641.

CAUTION: Be sure to put your license/permit, and especially your CITES tags, in a safe place. If children are allowed to play with these tags, they could easily lock them, which would render them useless. A limited supply of replacement tags is available, and the time it takes to replace your permit and tags may impact your hunting opportunities.

Permit holders may have alligator trapping agents assist them with their hunt. Agent's licenses (\$52) may be purchased at any county tax collector's office, sub-agent location (authorized sporting goods store or other retailer selling hunting or fishing licenses), through the Internet (<http://www.fl.wildlifelicense.com>), or by calling toll-free, (1-888-347-4356) from anywhere in the United States or Canada. Agent's licenses are issued immediately at walk-up vendor locations. If ordered from the Internet or by using the toll-free phone number, agent's licenses are mailed to the applicant and may take days to be delivered.

Anyone with an Alligator Trapping Agent's license can help any licensed and permitted alligator trapper. Agents may only take alligators in the presence of (in the same boat with) a permitted alligator trapper.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission adopted a rule change that provides approximately four additional hours of daylight hunting to the alligator hunting season. The change will be in effect this year and establishes the legal hunting hours from 5 p.m. until 10 a.m. each day during the annual 11-week season.

Please read this training and orientation manual thoroughly. We strongly encourage you to attend a training and orientation program. The purpose of the training and orientation program is to provide basic information on the rules and regulations governing the harvest of alligators, to review hunting techniques and equipment, and to describe alligator processing procedures. The dates, times, and locations of the training and orientation programs are listed on page two of the manual. There is no cost to attend, and you are not required to make a reservation. If you plan on attending, however, please bring this training and orientation manual with you.

Alligator Harvest Participant Letter

June 14, 2011

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Remember that your license and permit must be in your personal possession while engaging in the permitted activities. It is your responsibility to read, understand, and follow all provisions in your alligator harvest permit and comply with Commission rules and regulations governing this harvest program (included in this manual).

It is **VERY IMPORTANT** for you to remember to return completed copies of Alligator Harvest Report Forms or unused CITES tags by November 15. Failure to comply with this may result in FWC law enforcement officers issuing citations (which may include misdemeanor charges) and denial of harvest permits for this harvest program for one year. In 2011, more than 200 people were blocked from the alligator harvest permit issuance system because they did not comply with this important deadline in 2010.

We recommend that you do not rely on others to submit your forms or return unused tags. While alligator meat processors and guides might offer to submit completed harvest report forms on your behalf, the return of forms and unused tags is ultimately your responsibility and you will be held accountable for failing to meet this important requirement. **We also recommend that you use a trackable service when returning these items. Alligator harvest report forms can be submitted online at MyFWC.com/alligator.**

Good luck on your hunt and be safe!

Sincerely,



Harry J. Dutton, Coordinator
Alligator Management Program
Game Species Management Section

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INTRODUCTION

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's statewide alligator harvest is an important component of alligator management in Florida. This alligator harvest receives statewide, national, and international attention and provides an excellent opportunity to inform the public about the value of alligators and wetlands while allowing participants to benefit from this renewable natural resource.

This training and orientation booklet has been prepared to:

1. Familiarize participants and other interested persons with program goals and objectives.
2. Familiarize participants with legal methods and equipment for taking alligators, while emphasizing safety considerations and responsibility for public perception of harvest activities.
3. Serve as a review of and future reference for pertinent rules, regulations, and reporting procedures governing and associated with the statewide alligator harvest.

By reading the enclosed information, you will be better prepared for the hunt. This booklet will familiarize you with common hunting techniques and safety; how to harvest your alligator; requirements for processing your alligator; and how to care for your alligator hide. This training and orientation booklet contains basic information regarding the alligator harvest program. For more information, visit our website at <http://MyFWC.com/alligator> or contact the Alligator Management Program at:

TALLAHASSEE:

Mr. Harry Dutton / Mr. Steve Stiegler
Farris Bryant Building
620 S. Meridian Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1600
(850) 488-3831

OKEECHOBEE:

Mr. Lindsey Hord / Mr. Eric Tosso/
Ms. Linda Collins / Ms. Melanie Brown
South Florida Alligator Field Station
8122 U.S. Highway 441 S.E.
Okeechobee, FL 34974
(863) 462-5195

Ocala:

Mr. Dwayne Carbonneau / Mr. Jason Waller
1515 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Suite 106
Ocala, FL 34470
(352) 732-1712 or (352) 732-1368

2011 TRAINING AND ORIENTATION SCHEDULE

NOTE: ATTENDANCE IS NOT MANDATORY, BUT WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU GO TO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CLASSES EVEN IF YOU HAVE ATTENDED THEM IN THE PAST. THE CLASSES ARE FREE AND RESERVATIONS ARE NOT REQUIRED.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
July 27 (Wednesday)	6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Gainesville, Paramount Plaza Hotel and Suites , 2900 S.W. 13th Street . For directions call (352) 377-4000 or visit http://www.paramountplaza.com .
July 30 (Saturday)	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Sanford, Sanford Civic Center , 401 East Seminole Boulevard . For directions call (407) 302-1010 or visit http://www.sanfordfl.gov/departments/leisure_services/civic_center.html .
July 31 (Sunday)	2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Dania Beach, IGFA Fishing Hall of Fame and Museum , 300 Gulf Stream Way . For directions call (954) 922-4212 or visit http://www.igfa.org .
August 3 (Wednesday)	6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Tallahassee, Bryant Building, 2nd Floor Auditorium , 620 South Meridian Street . For directions call (850) 488-3831.
August 6 (Saturday)	1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Bradenton, Bradenton Municipal Auditorium , 1005 Barcarrota Blvd. For directions, visit http://bradenton.govoffice.com/index.asp and click on "Public Facilities" in the left column menu.
August 7 (Sunday)	2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Okeechobee, Okeechobee County Civic Center , 1750 U.S. Hwy 98 North . For directions call (863) 462-5195.

ALLIGATORS AND THEIR MANAGEMENT IN FLORIDA

The American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) is a reptile scientifically classified in the Family Alligatoridae. It is similar in appearance to the threatened American crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) which is classified in the Family Crocodylidae. Habitat preferences and several physical characteristics distinguish the American alligator from the American crocodile. Alligators primarily inhabit freshwater; however, they may be found in any body of water or wetland throughout Florida. American crocodiles primarily inhabit coastal swamps and rivers in extreme southern Florida. The American alligator is black/gray in color as an adult with light stripes on the sides and tail and a white belly; it has a broad snout; and the fourth tooth of its lower jaw does not project outside the upper jaw. Whereas, the American crocodile is brown/tan in color with dark splotches on the sides and tail; it has a narrow snout; and the fourth tooth of its lower jaw projects outside the upper jaw. The American alligator's range extends from the south tip of Texas to the northeastern edge of North Carolina. Florida's wetlands support only two of 23 different species of crocodylians in the world.

The alligator is a key species in Florida's wetland ecosystems. While functioning as a top predator, alligators also provide important habitats for many wetland species. Alligators create or maintain natural depressions called "gator holes" which become important reservoirs for other species of wetland wildlife, especially during droughts when these depressions often become the last remaining aquatic refuge. Furthermore, alligator nests in marsh systems provide an important nesting substrate for a number of wetland animals, particularly red-bellied turtles.

Alligators have been part of Florida's environment for thousands of years, and records of commercial utilization of alligators in Florida date back to the late 1800's. Harvesting of alligators went unregulated through the early 1900's. In 1943, concerns about population declines in easily accessible areas stimulated establishment of a four-foot minimum size limit (the first statewide alligator regulation). In spite of this regulation, declines continued. In 1954, a statewide six-foot minimum size limit was imposed, and eventually, in 1962, the legal alligator harvest season was closed. The closed season, however, did not stop widespread exploitation because state laws were not effective in closing down a well established interstate network of illegal hide dealers. As a result, alligators were included on the first list of endangered species in 1967. In 1970, effective federal regulations were imposed through an amendment to the Lacey Act that outlawed interstate shipment of alligators taken illegally. This regulation gave enforcement officials the tool to effectively end the poaching era, and alligator populations in areas where declines had been observed made an impressive comeback.

By the mid-1970's, alligator population surveys conducted by Commission biologists indicated that most populations were increasing rapidly. At that time, the Commission was receiving 4,000 to 5,000 nuisance alligator complaints annually. In 1977, the status of Florida's alligator population was reclassified from endangered to threatened by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This change in status allowed the Commission to initiate management of the nuisance alligator problem through harvest, which continues today as the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program.

In 1980, the Commission's alligator research staff began focusing its efforts on the impact of alligator harvests on wild populations. As a result of these investigations and subsequent experimental alligator harvests on selected wetlands, the Commission created an Alligator Management Program (AMP). The major objectives of the AMP are to implement alligator harvest programs under the concept of controlled annual harvests while sustaining the economic, aesthetic, and ecological values of alligators as a renewable natural resource. By emphasizing these values, the Commission hopes to provide incentives for conservation of not only the alligator, but also the wetland ecosystems they inhabit.

Currently, the Commission's AMP administers five programs:

1. **THE STATEWIDE ALLIGATOR HARVEST PROGRAM**
This program enables the harvest of non-hatchling alligators (those greater than about 18 inches in total length) on specific public water bodies or within specific counties. Each permit authorizes the take of two alligators on a specific harvest unit. A total of 6,044 permits were issued in 2010, and 7,672 alligators were taken.
2. **THE PRIVATE LANDS ALLIGATOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**
This program allows the harvest of non-hatchling alligators (those greater than about 18 inches in total length) on private landholdings and government owned or leased lands with a documented, harvestable alligator population. In addition, this program allows collection of alligator eggs and/or hatchlings with a documented minimum number of alligator nests or hatchling pods. Sovereignty submerged lands are not eligible for this program.
3. **THE PUBLIC WATERS ALLIGATOR EGG AND HATCHLING COLLECTION PROGRAM**
The Commission permits and supervises the collection of alligator eggs and hatchlings from public waters by licensed alligator farmers who meet specific requirements established by rule.
4. **THE ALLIGATOR FARMING PROGRAM**
The number of licensed alligator farms and the number of active farms producing hides has remained relatively stable since 1991. The alligator farming industry in Florida relies on wild egg and hatchling collections to maintain alligator stock.
5. **THE STATEWIDE NUISANCE ALLIGATOR PROGRAM (SNAP)**
This program permits the harvest of alligators that are determined to be a threat to the welfare of the public, or the public's pets, livestock, or property. SNAP is administered through contracts between the Commission and nuisance alligator trappers. These private trappers are contracted for the removal of specific nuisance alligators. People can call the toll-free number to submit complaints regarding nuisance alligators. The Commission evaluates these complaints to determine if an alligator should be removed. The toll-free phone number for statewide nuisance alligator complaints is **1-866-FWC-GATOR** (1-866-392-4286).

For more information on the Alligator Management Program, visit <http://MyFWC.com/alligator>.

SECTION ONE: PREPARING FOR THE HUNT

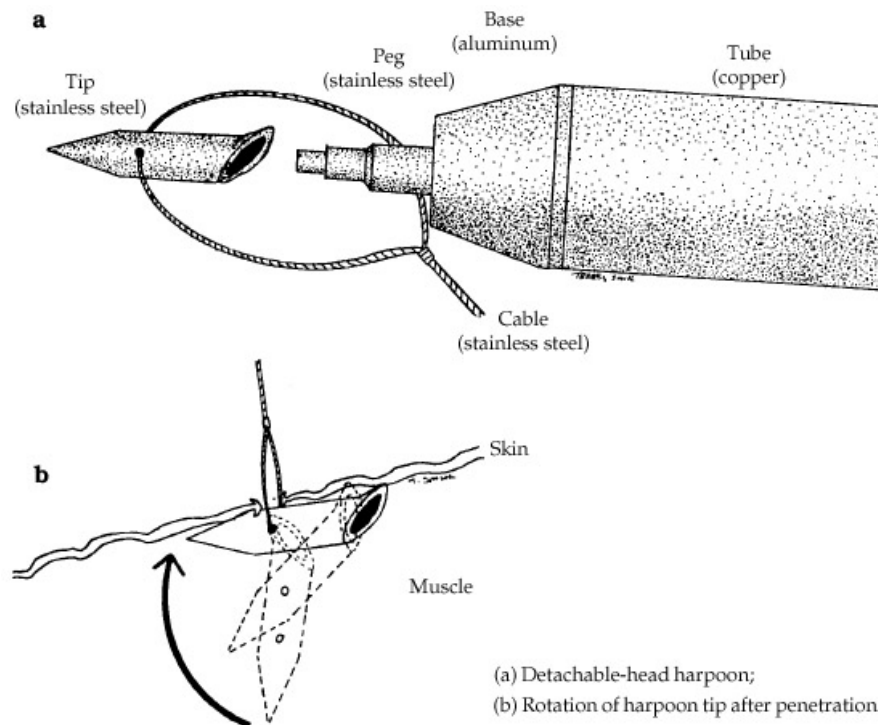
✓ REQUIREMENTS

✓ TIPS

✓ REVIEWING YOUR MATERIALS

✓ LICENSING YOUR TRAPPING AGENTS

✓ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



Key to Success: All persons engaged in alligator hunting activities must possess their licenses and tags, and the permit holder must be present.

REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Permit holders **cannot** give their permit or CITES tags to someone else. Only the permitted licensed trapper and his licensed agents may possess the CITES tags.
- ✓ Alligator Trapping or Trapping Agent license holders may take alligators, but only while in the presence of (in the same boat with) the permit holder.
- ✓ Please review Rule 68A-25.042, F.A.C., in Section Six on page 35 for other rule requirements.

TIPS

- ✓ Purchase your equipment and become familiar with it well in advance of your harvest period.
- ✓ If you make agreements with guides, processors, hide buyers, or taxidermists make sure you do so **in writing**. It is not uncommon for verbal or “handshake” agreements to fall through, and the Commission has no authority to enforce any agreement between private individuals.
- ✓ If you choose to process your alligators using a licensed alligator processor or sell your hides to a licensed hide buyer, you should contact these merchants prior to the beginning of your hunt.
- ✓ If you have difficulty finding equipment, attend a training and orientation class. Alligator harvest equipment vendors may be present to display and sell their products.
- ✓ Develop a plan to cool your alligator as quickly as possible once it is harvested. Alligator meat can spoil quickly under field conditions.
- ✓ An unlimited number of licensed agents can assist the selected participant in taking alligators.
- ✓ Any licensed alligator trapper, acting as an agent of the permit holder, may take alligators but only in the presence of (in the same boat with) the permit holder.

REVIEW YOUR MATERIALS

- ✓ Read your permit carefully and understand all permit provisions prior to hunting. Check your name, harvest area and period for accuracy.
- ✓ Make sure that you have two (2) CITES tags issued with each permit and that the tag numbers match what is listed on your permit. If you are permitted for the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor WMA or Holey Land WMA alligator hunts, make sure you also have two (2) pink mercury tags.
- ✓ Make sure that you have a harvest report form for each CITES tag issued. We highly encourage you to submit harvest report forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator.
- ✓ If there are any problems with your license or tags, please contact the Office of Licensing and Permitting at (850) 488-3641 as soon as possible.

CAUTION: Be sure to put your CITES tags in a safe place where they won't be handled by small children. If children play with these tags, they will invariably lock the tags together rendering them useless. Replacement tags are not readily available.

Submit harvest report forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator

LICENSING YOUR AGENTS

- ✓ Permit holders may have alligator trapping agents assist them with their hunt. Agent's licenses (\$52) may be purchased at any county tax collector's office, sub-agent location (authorized sporting goods store or other retailer selling hunting or fishing licenses), through the Internet <http://www.fl.wildlifelicense.com>, or by calling toll-free, (1-888-486-8356 or 1-888-347-4356) from anywhere in the United States or Canada.
- ✓ Anyone with an Alligator Trapping Agent's license can help any licensed and permitted alligator trapper.
- ✓ Agent's licenses are issued immediately at walk-up vendor locations. If ordered from the Internet or by using the toll-free phone number, agent's licenses are mailed to the applicant and may take days to be delivered.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

- Q. How many alligators can the licensed trapper take under a permit?
- A. Each permit authorizes the take of two (2) alligators. The number of alligators to be harvested from each management unit is determined by alligator population or habitat surveys.
- Q. When can the permitted alligator trapper hunt alligators?
- A. Each trapper will be assigned to one of four periods based on availability and on the order of preference that they indicated on their application. For most harvest areas, harvest periods shall be from 5:00 p.m. on August 15 until 10:00 a.m. August 22 (period 1), from 5:00 p.m. on August 22 until 10:00 a.m. August 29 (period 2), from 5:00 p.m. on August 29 until 10:00 a.m. September 5 (period 3), and from 5:00 p.m. on September 5 until 10:00 a.m. September 12 (period 4). All participants also will be allowed to trap alligators from 5:00 p.m. September 12 until 10:00 a.m. November 1 if they have any unused tags after their assigned harvest period. Exceptions will be specified in the harvest permit. **Daily hunting hours are from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 a.m. within the prescribed harvest periods.**
- Q. Will others be allowed to hunt with the permitted alligator trapper?
- A. Persons licensed as **alligator trapping agents** (\$52), may assist the permit holder take alligators. ***Additionally, any licensed alligator trapper can assist the permit holder in taking alligators during the statewide harvest.*** This means that licensed trappers may assist each other without purchasing an agent's license, and that licensed nuisance trappers, private lands trappers, or anyone possessing an alligator trapping license may take alligators during the statewide harvest provided they are in the presence of (in the same boat with) the person permitted to take alligators on a specific management unit. Only the permit holder, alligator trapping agents, or other licensed alligator trappers may actually take or kill alligators. **The permit holder must be present during all hunting activities.**
- Q. Can a licensed trapper give his permit or CITES tags to someone else so that they can hunt alligators?
- A. **NO.** Only the permitted licensed trapper and alligator trapping agents may possess tags issued under that permit, but the agents may **NOT** take alligators if the permit holder is not present.
- Q. Where will the permitted licensed trapper be able to hunt alligators?
- A. The assignment of harvest areas is based the preference of areas and periods indicated by the permit holder at the time of application. Harvest permits will specify the boundaries or limitations of the harvest unit.
- Q. Who must attend the training and orientation seminar?
- A. Attendance at the seminars **is not** required. Permit holders who have not attended a seminar in the past, however, are strongly encouraged to do so.

- Q. Can unlicensed persons ride in the boat if they do not participate in the hunting activities?
- A. Yes, provided those persons **do not** participate in **any** activity involving the take of an alligator.
- Q. Can I use an airboat or large outboard in my permitted area?
- A. Boat restrictions are regulated by local or regional government authorities. Contact the appropriate city, county, or water management district in the area where you are permitted. If your permit allows you to hunt on a Wildlife Management Area (WMA), check the specific WMA regulations or contact the appropriate FWC regional office listed on page 20.
- Q. Can I use a guide to help me with my alligator hunt?
- A. Yes, provided the guide is a licensed alligator trapper or agent. A list of guides is provided on the following page for your convenience. These guides and outfitters are not specially licensed by the Commission, nor does the Commission establish any standards or criteria for individuals to qualify as guides or outfitters. This list includes the outfitters and guides we are aware of, and it may not be complete. On some waters, outfitters and guides are required to carry captains' licenses issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. Permit holders should determine if an outfitter or guide is required to possess a U.S. Coast Guard-issued license on their permitted area prior to hiring a guide. Inclusion on this list does not constitute endorsement by the Commission.
- Q. I have a county-wide permit; where can I harvest alligators?
- A. If you received a county-wide alligator harvest permit, you can hunt on any area that you can legally access in the specified county. However, alligator trapping is **prohibited** in the following areas: in privately-owned waters and wetlands, except where access has been granted by landowners; in water management district-owned (WMD) waters and wetlands, except as designated herein or where access has been granted by the WMD; in federally-owned lands, wildlife refuges, and parks, except where access has been granted by the managing federal agency; in state-owned parks, preserves, reserves, and wilderness areas, except aquatic preserves that may be designated herein; in Indian reservations and lands leased to Indian tribes, except as designated herein or where access has been granted by the landowners; in wildlife management, wildlife environmental, and public small-game hunting areas, except as designated herein; in incorporated cities and municipalities; in publicly-owned waters closed for scientific study or protection of alligator populations; in privately-owned waters and wetlands included in management programs governed by Rule 68A-25.032, F.A.C.; and in other Alligator Management Units established in the respective counties. Permit language allows trappers to hunt both sides of a waterbody where that waterbody forms a county boundary. For county-wide permits that allow alligators to be taken on specific WMAs, consult the WMA brochure for access restrictions. **It is highly recommended that you know specific locations where you can legally take alligators in a county prior to applying for a county-wide permit.** Internet links to county map resources can be found by going to MyFWC.com/alligator and clicking on "Statewide Alligator Harvest Program."
- Q. Can I use a county-wide permit to take alligators on private property?
- A. YES, but only if you have permission from the landowner to take alligators on their property, and if the property is not enrolled in the private lands alligator management program under Rule 68A-25.032, F.A.C.
- Q. Can I receive a refund for my fees if I am permitted but I cannot participate in the hunt?
- A. **Licenses cannot be canceled or any fee refunded** after the license is issued except in the case of the subsequent death of the license holder, his or her spouse, parent, brother, sister, son or daughter supported by a copy of the respective death certificate; incapacitating illness or injury of the license holder supported by a physician's sworn statement on a Commission form; military transfer overseas supported by a copy of the official orders from the Armed Forces of the U.S. **Refunds will not be granted for alligator trapping licenses or tag fees after the beginning of the harvest period specified on the permit. Refunds will not be granted for agent's licenses after August 15.**

ALLIGATOR HUNTING GUIDES

A-1 Gator Hunts	Patty Twardzik	12197 Quinlan Ave., Port Charlotte, FL 33981	(941) 698-1403
A Bay Charter	Gary Goodrich	192 Money Bayou Dr., Apalachicola, FL 32456	(850) 229-3474
Abby's Lake Hancock Specialties	Tom Hawe	37853 Avalon Dr., Zephyr Hills, FL 33541	(813) 788-5658
Ackerly, Jon		2161 CR 540A #222, Lakeland, FL 33813	(863) 640-7783
Advantage Outfitters Guide Services		25287 N.E. 133 rd Lane, Salt Springs, FL 32134	(352) 685-2476
Adrenaline Alligator Adventures	Adam Burch	32 Grove Ave., St. Augustine, FL 32084	(904) 607-6399
Airboat & Gator Charters	Josh Mattson	P.O. Box 229303, Glenwood, FL 32722	(386) 747-0631
Airboat Rides at Midway	Derrick Lockhart	28501 E. Colonial Dr., Christmas, FL 32709	(407) 568-6790
Airboat Wildlife Adventures	John Scott	4971 US Hwy. 98, Sebring, FL 33876	(863) 655-4737
All American Gator Products		201 NW 4 th Ave., Hallandale, FL 33009	(954) 894-8003
Ammerman, Robert		2078 Allegheny Ct, Orlando, FL 32818	(407) 557-2729
Bad to the Bone Taxidermy	Edward Vitale	3498 Laurel Rd. E., North Venice, FL 34275	(941) 375-1052
Becks Fish Camp	Ted Brown	2020 Becks Lake Rd., Pensacola, FL 32533	(850) 375-0383
Bass N Bay Charters	Brady Nelson	1217 6th St. W, Palmetto FL 34221	(941) 685-4491
Big Buck Hunts		17280 Caloosa Trace Cir., Okeechobee, FL 33912	(239) 454-3726
Big Gator Charter Fishing	Rick Silkworth	16147 Ravendale Drive, Tampa, FL 33618	(813) 968-6154
Bigwater Guide Service		215 East Esperanza Street, Clewiston, FL 33440	(863) 599-3150
Boston Processing		Post Office Box 470002, Lake Monroe, FL 32747	(407) 322-9238
Bullgator Adventures	Michael Tipton	3075 Harlock Rd., Melbourne, FL 32934	(321) 288-3997
C & C Outfitters		2001 East Southport Road, Kissimmee, FL 34746	(407) 709-1773
Cajun Gator Hunt Equipment	Dennis Towns	400 Monroe Ave., Masaryktown, FL 34604	(352) 279-6961
Camp David Hunt Club	David Watson	4820 Panther Lane, Mims, FL 32754	(321) 537-7877
Capp's Guided Gator Hunt		150 Southwest 21st Ave., Okeechobee, FL 34974	(863) 763-6156
Capt. Lemo's Outdoor Adventures	Dwayne Lemus	P.O. Box 601, Floral City, FL 34436	(352) 476-3938
Carpenter, Charles		9210 Taylor Road, Seffner, FL 33584	(813) 628-8449
Cartwright, Gary "Hoss"		P.O. Box 3152, Okeechobee, FL 34973	(863) 261-4781
Central Florida Outfitter	Christopher Jolly	1835 W. Fondulac Rd., Avon Park, FL 33825	(863) 201-3767
Central Florida Trophy Hunts	Grayson Padrick	1655 Alligator Lane, Cocoa, FL 32926	(321) 632-8995
Chandley, Kevin		1100 Grape Hammock Rd., Lake Wales, FL 33898	(863) 287-1807
Childress Guide Services	James Childress	15028 NW 63rd Lane, Okeechobee, FL, 34972	(863) 447-9127
Coastal Sportsmen of Florida	Jeff Kraynik	774 Donau Ave., NW, Palm Bay, FL 32907	(321) 725-3456
Custom Adventures	Scott Swartley	2265 S.E. McCain Ln., Malabar, FL 32950	(321) 951-1919
Deep South Outfitter	Billy Henderson	6949 W Buckberry Ct, Crystal River, FL 34429	(352) 257-6999
Dock On The Bay	Ronald Crum	414 Hwy 98, Eastpoint, FL 32328	(850) 670-1081
Equaloxic Creek Outfitters	Craig Shuler	Post Office Box 942, Bristol, FL 32321	(850) 643-5738
Everglades Adventures	Mark Clemons	28965 Obern Rd., Clewiston, FL 33440	(863) 983-8999
Davison's Alligators	Carl Davison	6009 Pine Tree Dr., Fort Pierce, FL 34982	(772) 468-0987
Durrance, Buck		2045 SW 32nd Street, Okeechobee, FL 34974	(863) 634-1191
Fagan, Mickey		P.O. Box 1096, Lacochee, FL 33537	(352) 583-2786
Flatlined Charters	George Gozdz	2358 N.E. Center Circle, Jensen Beach, FL 34957	(772) 284-5922
Florida Airboat Tours	Dick Douse	2201 Scott Ave., West Palm Beach, FL 33409	(561) 718-8703
Florida Cracker Airboat Rides		2915 1 st St., Vero Beach, FL 32968	(772) 563-0001
Florida Cracker Alligator Products	Cary Crutchfield	4010 West Newberry Rd. D, Gainesville, FL 32607	(352) 372-4237
Fla. Outdoor Adventures Inc.	Bobby McDaniel	653 Fisher St., Lake Placid, FL 33852	(863) 441-1275
Florida Trophy Gators		502 Northeast 6th Avenue, Okeechobee, FL 34972	(863) 763-5185
Fly Fishing Tampa Bay	Wayne Simmons	Dunedin, Florida 34698	(727) 204-4188
Fullrut Outfitters	Orlando Paz	P.O. Box 278324, Miramar, FL 33027	(305) 456-5402
G&B Gator Gear	Bill George	3708 Futch Rd., Plant City, FL 33566	(813) 230-3934
GatorChasers	Jerry Flynn	2465 Adelia Blvd., Deltona, FL 32725	(321) 231-1685
Gator Country	Jerry Ziegler	13253 NE 44 Court, Anthony, FL 32617	(352) 427-9631
Gator Guides	Phil Walters	16147 Ravendale Drive, Tampa, FL 33617	(813) 968-6154

continued on next page

Note: Please read the disclaimer on the following page.

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ALLIGATOR HUNTING GUIDES

(continued)

Gators Unlimited	Stafford, Greg	15098 S.E. 140th Ave. Rd., Weirsdale, FL 32195	(352) 821-0315
Godwin Corporation		10001 Bluefield Road, Okeechobee, FL 34972	(863) 357-0454
Godwin, Tiger		3169 Hwy 178, Jay, FL 32565	(850) 675-6020
H & H Guide Services	Don Hampton	3635 Aurora Road, Melbourne, FL 32934	(321) 242-1012
Haley, Mike		P.O. Box 925, Penney Farms, FL 32079	(904) 813-3977
Hildreth, Bryan		PO Box 404, Lakeville, NY 14480	(585) 770-4395
Inner Ocean Alligators	Tim Tormala	15601 Burdine Ranch Rd., Immokalee, FL 34142	(239) 657-2705
J & A Outfitters		1830 Northwest 41 Street, Sunrise, FL 33323	(954) 572-3883
JL's Alligator Guide Service	J. Douglas, Jr.	1617 N.E. 12th Ave., Sumterville, FL 33585	(352) 748-5816
Ken's Guide Service	Kenny Elkins	1858 SW 28th Avenue, Okeechobee, FL 34974	(863) 467-5532
Kline, Bill		3191 "E" Road, Loxahatchee, FL 33470	(561) 793-3672
Lanier, Roger		450 Faith Avenue, Osprey, FL 34229	(941) 966-5017
L & R High Adventure Outfitters		2180 Brickell Avenue #12, Miami, FL 33129	(305) 552-7070
Lusby, Chris		1 Triangle Park, Lake Placid, FL 33852	(863) 441-0613
MasterGators	Alby Isbell		(407) 864-4876
Matthews, Gary		3571 NE 11 th Dr., Homestead, FL 33033	(305) 219-1200
McAlpin, Judd		196 Hilliardville Road, Crawfordville, FL 32327	(850) 251-4007
McCarty, Mike		17280 Caloosa Trace Circle, Ft. Myers, FL 33912	(239) 404-4525
McKechnie, Mike		6047 Lake Winona Road, Deleon, FL 32130	(386) 985-6313
Native Sons Outfitters	Peter Deeks	200 Willard St., Suite 2C, Cocoa, FL 32922	(321) 720-3723
Osceola Hunts	Keith Pearce	P.O. Box 369, Okeechobee, FL 34973	(863) 634-7007
Osceola Outfitters	William Kempfer	6210 Kempfer Road, St. Cloud, FL 34773	(407) 957-3593
Outwest Farms	Lee Lightsey	1921 S.W. 196th Terrace, Okeechobee FL 34974	(863) 763-5185
Parker Island Gator Farm & Processing		1775 County Road 29, Lake Placid, FL 33862	(863) 465-3161
Parlier, Terry		10701 Foxhole Road, Clermont, FL 34711	(407) 656-3723
Reark, Mike		1727 LaGrange Avenue, Sebring, FL 33870	(863) 443-1000
Rebel Yelp Outfitters	Chuck Echenique	12833 Hawk Hill Dr., Thonotosassa, FL 33592	(813) 986-2809
Reynolds, Roy		7390 E. Irlo Bronson Hwy., St. Cloud, FL 34771	(407) 957-3692
Rapps, Pete		Smallwood Drive, Chokoloskee, FL 34138	(239) 571-1756
Rutten, Phillip		1902 Concord Bainbridge Rd., Havana, FL 32333	(850) 539-8274
Silver Lake Preserve	Wayne Zahn	106 SW CR 721, Okeechobee, FL 34974	(863) 441-1364
Smith, David		4337 SW 9th Pl., Cape Coral, FL 33914	(239) 691-5792
Sport Fishing Guide Services	Dave Markett	19096 Gunn Hwy., Odessa, FL 33556	(813) 927-3474
SportFishing Unlimited	Woody Gore	5952 Harvey Tew Rd., Plant City, FL 33565	(813) 477-3814
Southern Fishing Guide Service	Glen Touchton	1048 N Stoney Pt., Crystal River, FL 34429	(352) 422-6838
Southern Gator Trails	Jason Everett	7840 Gemini Loop, Sneads, FL 32460	(850) 933-7282
Stafford, Bob		13441 Hwy.441 S.E., Okeechobee, FL 34974	(561) 719-9320
Switchgrass Outfitters	Seth Whitaker	1320 Cupid Ave., Christmas, FL 32709	(407) 448-9069
T. R. Outfitters	Troy Rentz	33549 Forest Drive, Deland, FL 32720	(386) 801-1810
Triple R Trophy Hunts	Robert Breisinger	4801 Oakwood Dr., St. Cloud, FL 34772	(321) 624-7391
Trusty, Roger		12177 Timberlane, Brooksville, FL 34601	(352) 442-2589
Tschorn, Brad		8183 Alderman Road, Melrose, FL 32666	(352) 494-2259
Walrath, George		2791 North Horizon Place, Oviedo, FL 32765	(407) 466-4544
Z-horse Charters	David Zeigler	138 Craig Street, Carrabelle, FL 32322	(850) 228-6091

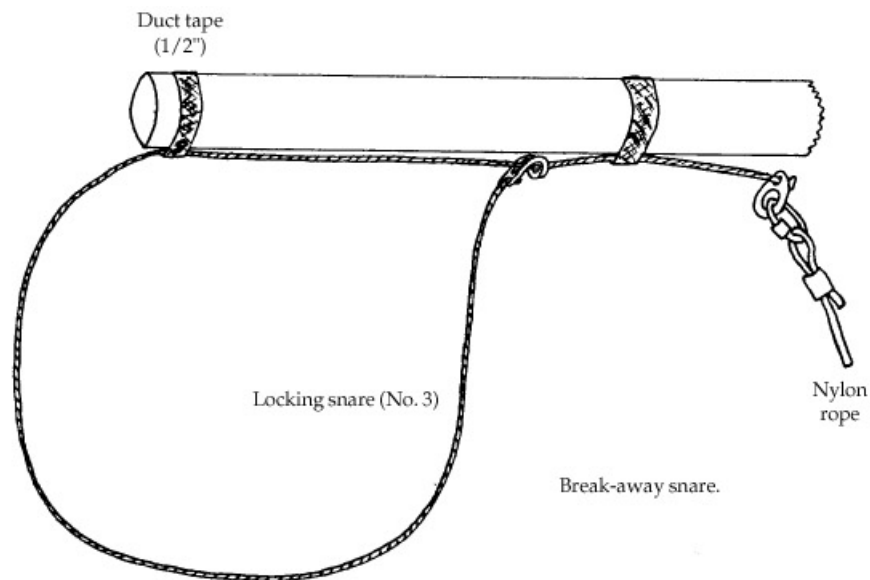
Note: Hunting guides and outfitters **are not** specifically licensed as such by the Commission, nor does the Commission establish any standards or criteria for individuals to qualify as guides or outfitters. This list includes the outfitters and guides we are aware of, and it may not be complete. On some waters, outfitters and guides are required to carry captains' licenses issued by the U.S. Coast Guard. Permit holders should determine if an outfitter or guide is required to possess a U.S. Coast Guard-issued license on their permitted area prior to hiring a guide. Inclusion on this list **does not** constitute endorsement by this agency. Go to <http://MyFWC.com/alligator> for periodic updates to this list.

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SECTION TWO: HUNTING TECHNIQUES AND SAFETY

- ✓ REQUIREMENTS
- ✓ HARVEST TECHNIQUES & EQUIPMENT
 - ✓ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
 - ✓ TREATMENT OF ALLIGATOR BITES
 - ✓ BOAT SAFETY AND REGISTRATION



Key to Success: All alligators must be tagged immediately, and you should verify that the tag is secured by pulling firmly on the locking mechanism.

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REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Alligators may be taken only by the use of artificial lures or baited, wooden pegs less than two (2) inches in length attached to a hand-held restraining line and hand-held snares, harpoons, gigs, snatch hooks, and manually operated spears, spearguns, crossbows and bows with projectiles attached to a restraining line. The use of baited hooks, gig-equipped bang sticks, or firearms for taking alligators is prohibited except that bang sticks are permitted for taking alligators attached to a restraining line.
- ✓ Alligators must be killed immediately upon capture. **Catching and releasing alligators is not allowed.**
- ✓ Please review Rule 68A-25.042, F.A.C., in Section Six on page 35 for other rule requirements.

ALLIGATOR HARVEST TECHNIQUES

This section will discuss and review effective capture and handling techniques for alligators. Although these techniques have proven effective in previous alligator harvests, by no means is the Commission promoting them as *safe*. In fact, the Commission emphasizes that by the very nature of the activity, the capture and harvest of alligators has the potential of being extremely dangerous and could result in injury to participants. The techniques, equipment, and practices described are only provided to demonstrate practical techniques that alligator trappers have used effectively under the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program and Statewide Alligator Harvest Program. You should be aware that experienced alligator trappers, using similar techniques to capture alligators, have been bitten and some seriously injured. You are urged to use extreme caution and care when capturing alligators, because observing the demonstrated techniques is by no means intended to insure you will be free from harm. If you are inexperienced in capturing alligators, we encourage you to get an experienced person to assist you and plan to attend a training and orientation seminar.

Harpoons: Harpoons are commonly used as a legal and effective method for attaching a restraining line to harvest an alligator. Harpoons or gigs consist of a penetrating point such as a detachable dart, fish gig, or spear point attached to a restraining line (see diagram on page 15). A float may be attached to the restraining line, but it cannot be left unattended. The harpoon point is typically mounted on a pole, arrow shaft, or spear.

Snatch Hooks: Snatch hooks also have been used as a legal and effective method for attaching a restraining line to harvest an alligator. A snatch hook is a weighted treble hook attached to a restraining line that is hand-held or used in conjunction with a fishing rod and reel and high-test line. The hook is typically cast over the alligator or over the area where he last submerged. The hook is then retrieved until it contacts the alligator, at which point it is set with a strong pull. The line should be kept tight until the animal fatigues and can be approached, as the hook often falls out if the line is allowed to go slack.

Baited Wooden Pegs: Baited wooden pegs less than two (2) inches in length have been used as a legal and effective method for attaching a restraining line to take an alligator. A baited wooden peg is attached to a restraining line that is hand-held or used with a fishing rod and reel and high-test line. The baited peg is typically thrown or cast near the alligator or near the area where it last submerged. The line of a baited wooden peg cannot be terminated with a float. The end of the line must be attached to the boat or hand-held.

Snares: Wire snares attached to a restraining line loosely mounted (using a small rubber band or piece of tape) to the end of a pole (see diagram on page 11) are most commonly used to secure the alligator once it has been harpooned and brought under control near the boat. Snares must be hand-held or attached to a hand-held device like a pole, and cannot be left unattended.

Bang Sticks: Bang sticks have been used as an effective tool for humanely killing alligators attached to a restraining line. Bang sticks or power heads are devices typically used by divers to kill fish. They discharge a firearm cartridge by contact and are effective for killing alligators. For a humane kill, the shot should be centered immediately behind the skull cap and angled toward the brain. It is recommended that the bang stick be used in compliance with the safety recommendations of the manufacturer. The bang stick should be discharged below the waterline when killing an alligator to reduce the potential for aerial dispersal of bullet and bone fragments. Keep in mind that the alligator must be attached to a restraining line using methods such as those described previously before it is legal to use a bang stick to kill an alligator. **Because it is difficult to ensure that all of the shot is removed from the alligator meat during processing, some alligator meat processors may not accept alligator carcasses if the alligator was killed with a bang stick using a shotshell.**

*** **WARNING** ***

A bang stick is a firearm under the laws of Florida, and should be treated at all times with the respect due such a device. While these materials are offered to familiarize participants with the appropriate and safe use of a bang stick, the Commission cannot warrant that such use will be safe under all circumstances, nor is this brief description intended as a substitute for the degree of experience and knowledge necessary to safely utilize such a device. Improper use of a bang stick, as with any firearm, can result in serious personal injury or death. In the event you choose to utilize a bang stick to harvest alligators, you should select a model that the manufacturer deems appropriate for such use, and should at all times comply with manufacturer safety recommendations and specifications for use.

Capture Method: Several methods are legal to use to attach a restraining line to an alligator. Individual trappers have their favored methods that work best for them; however, there is no "best" method. There are a few common steps in all effective hunting techniques. Alligators are invariably hunted after dark (although some trappers use snatch-hooks on submerging animals during twilight hours). Alligators are located at night by their reflective eye-shine that is a characteristic red glow. Alligators should be approached quietly keeping the beam of the spotlight directly in or just above their eyes. The restraining line can be attached using the trapper's preference of the techniques mentioned previously. Pulling too hard on the restraining line (except with snatch-hooks) will often cause it to pull loose. The alligator should be retrieved with moderate pressure applied to the line. A snare should be cautiously attached to the alligator when it is adjacent to the boat. It is best to use a snare that has been attached to a pole with a rubber band or piece of tape so that it will "break-away" upon pulling it secure around the animal's neck. The animal will eventually tire after it has struggled against the snare rope. When subdued, the animal can be killed by lowering the head beneath the water and discharging a bang stick at the base of the skull. The bang stick should be aimed at the brain, angled slightly forward from the rear of the skull. The improper placement and discharge of the bang stick can occasionally only render the alligator temporarily unconscious. Never, therefore, assume that any alligator is dead. Carefully pull the alligators snout up against the side of the boat (to the edge of the gunnel), press the top of the snout closed with a stick to secure. Never place your hand or foot next to an alligators jaw because they can snap sideways very quickly and cause serious injury. A rope or cable snare (tossed or guided by a stick rather than your hand) can be used to temporarily secure the jaw. Some trappers use large electrical ties; however, these can easily slip off the tapered snout (as can the rope snare or any material). The jaw should finally be secured with several wraps of high quality duct tape or electrical tape. The spinal cord should be severed at the base of the skull before pulling the alligator in the boat. Remember, the jaws should always remain taped shut when handling or transporting an "apparently" dead alligator. **NEVER ASSUME AN ALLIGATOR IS DEAD AND DOES NOT NEED TO BE SECURED PROPERLY.**

NOTE: IT IS NOT LEGAL TO USE BAITED HOOKS, GIG-EQUIPPED BANG STICKS, OR FIREARMS TO TAKE ALLIGATORS DURING THE STATEWIDE HARVEST.

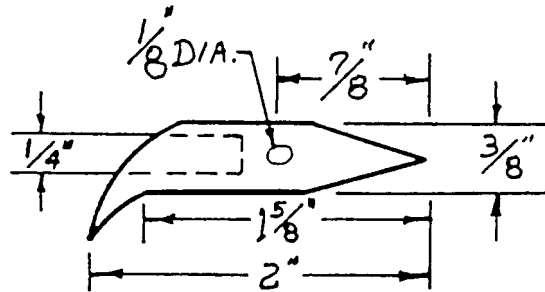
TECHNIQUES FOR KILLING AN ALLIGATOR HUMANELY

Humane Killing: Commission rule requires that all alligators taken during the statewide harvest must be killed immediately upon capture. Participants in the statewide alligator harvest are directly responsible for complying with this requirement. Participants also have an ethical obligation to ensure that alligators are killed in a humane manner that results in immediate loss of consciousness and destruction of the brain. This is accomplished by use of a bang stick as described on the preceding page, followed by severing the spinal cord at the base of the skull and immediately inserting a small diameter metal shaft into the brain cavity to pith and destroy the brain. It is important to remember to secure the alligator's mouth as described above **before** attempting to sever the spinal cord.

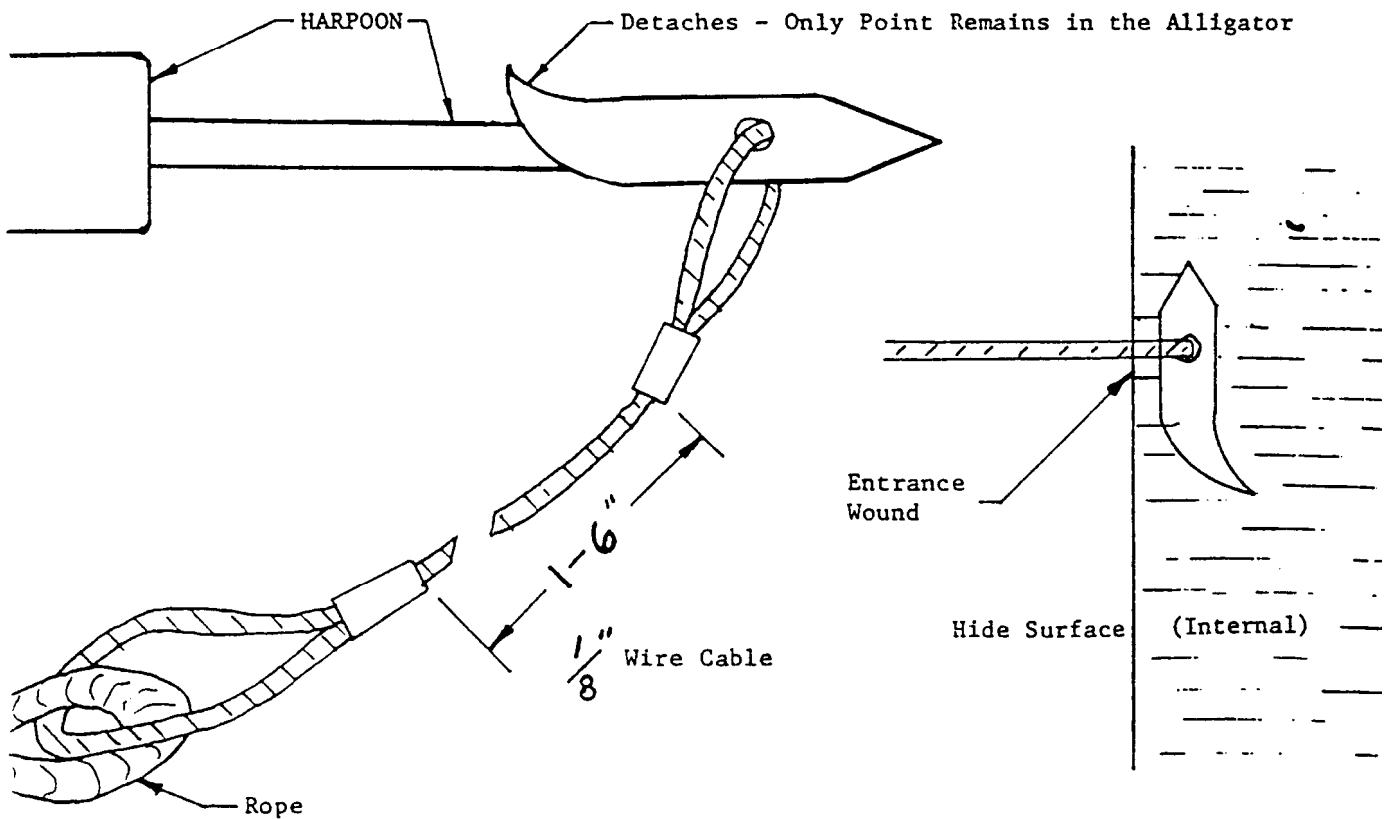
COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

- Q. What devices can the licensed trapper or his agent use to hunt alligators?
A. Trapping with hand-held snares, harpoons, gigs, snatch hooks, artificial lures, baited wooden pegs (less than 2 inches), manually-operated spears, spearguns, crossbows, and bows with projectiles attached to a restraining line will be permitted. Firearms and gig-equipped bang sticks are prohibited.
- Q. What size alligators will the licensed trapper be allowed to take?
A. Only non-hatchling alligators (those with a snout to vent length greater than nine (9) inches in length) may be taken, which includes any alligator longer than 18 inches in total length.
- Q. Can alligators captured by a licensed trapper or his trapping agent be kept alive until processing?
A. No, all alligators taken under permit must be killed and tagged immediately upon capture.
- Q. Can alligators be released after capture?
A. No, all alligators must be killed immediately upon capture. Removing capture devices from alligators can cause eventual mortality, therefore you should only attempt capture on those alligators that you wish to take. **Catch and release alligator trapping is not allowed.**
- Q. Can I use firearms on private lands with a county-wide permit?
A. No, the use of firearms is prohibited regardless of where you hunt.

DIAGRAM OF COMMONLY USED HARPOON POINT



3/8" Round Stock
Butt Angled & Flared



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Alligators can harbor very infectious bacteria that requires immediate and special treatment if you are bitten. The following article is provided to inform you about this bacterium, the seriousness of alligator bites, and the importance of receiving treatment if bitten.

Alligator bites and related infections

A. Clark Raynor, M.D.; Hal G. Bingham, M.D.; H. Hollis Caffee, M.D. and Paul Dell, M.D.

ABSTRACT: *Two cases of serious alligator attacks and injuries are described. With the return of alligators in increasing numbers and man's continued encroachment on the natural habitat and environment, alligator attacks appear to be increasing. Certainly, one would be well advised to avoid provoking the alligator and treat the animal with cautious respect. A gram negative organism, Aeromonas hydrophila, which is endemic in Florida's lakes and ponds, and especially eutropic areas, has been described and should be considered in alligator bites and other water related injuries.*

Alligator bites are infrequent but reports in the literature^{1,2} are increasing. An alligator may bite at random but usually it is in courtship or an attempt is being made to protect its young.^{3,4} The two cases reported in this paper may have been from attacks when the alligator was attempting to protect its young. One attack occurred near a backyard golf course pond and the other in a university owned and operated lake. Both attacks involved the upper extremities and the patients saved themselves by fighting back either with their contralateral upper extremity or both lower extremities. Both cases also cultured *Aeromonas hydrophila* which is found frequently in eutropic lakes and ponds and may cause serious or fatal infections unless recognized and treated appropriately.

The Authors

A. CLARK RAYNOR, M.D.; HAL G. BINGHAM, M.D.; H. HOLLIS CAFFEE, M.D.; PAUL DELL, M.D.

Dr. Raynor is in the private practice of plastic and reconstructive surgery at Stuart. Dr. Bingham is Professor of Surgery (Plastic), Dr. Caffee, Associate Professor of Surgery (Plastic), and Dr. Dell, Associate Professor of Surgery (Orthopedics) at the University of Florida Medical Center in Gainesville.

Report of Cases ● Case 1.—The 20-year-old, white, male college student sustained severe wounds of the right upper extremity from an alligator who attacked him three or four times as he attempted to swim out to a capsized boat in Lake Wauberg of the University of Florida. The patient was rescued by a nearby sailboat crew and subsequently brought to Shands Hospital about five miles away.

He was stabilized in the emergency room and the initial evaluation demonstrated a completely avascular right hand that remained attached to the forearm by a few flexor tendons, median nerve, and ulnar artery and nerve. The distal 6-8 centimeters of the right radius and ulna just proximal to the wrist joint and overlying soft tissue were absent. He also had sustained a compound-comminuted fracture of the distal half of the humerus just to the supracondylar region with open skin and muscle over 5-6 centimeters with bone protruding (Figs. 1, 2, 3).

Debridement of nonviable forearm muscle, skin, and tendons was carried out initially by the Plastic Surgery Service. The distal radial metaphyseal fragment was approximated to the remaining diaphysis and reduction maintained with an external fixator by the Orthopedic Service. The

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Fig. 1.—X-ray of right hand with transected and dislocated distal radius and ulna.



Fig. 2.—X-ray of right hand in lateral projection with dislocated and absent distal radius and ulna.

humeral fracture was irrigated and debrided and alignment maintained by traction through an olecranon pin following revascularization of the hand (Figs. 4, 5).

Vein grafts were harvested from the dorsum of the right foot and microvascular reapproximation of the radial artery with vein graft interposition was accomplished. The ulnar artery did not demonstrate flow until the radial artery was revascularized. Upon completion of the artery revascularization, the hand improved in color and temperature. Vein reconstitution was next accomplished on the volar side of the wrist with two vein grafts. Flow was demonstrated in both veins before closure of the soft tissue in a circumferential manner with the remaining distal and proximal tissue.

Postoperatively, the patient did well with adequate vascular flow to the hand. Gram negative rod organisms grew out in culture and isolation demonstrated *Pseudomonas*, *Serratia*, and *Aeromonas hydrophila*.⁵ The patient had been placed on Kefzol and tobramycin which appeared to give satisfactory coverage. Hyperbaric oxygenation was considered for treatment of possible anaerobic organisms but none grew on culture.

A second-look operation was done six days later and although there was some drainage, no evidence of induration, cellulitis, or gas was seen. At approximately ten weeks post-injury, there is little roentgenographic evidence of bony healing of both the radius and humerus.

Case 2.—The patient, a 71-year-old, white male, was attacked by an alligator while cleaning a ditch bank in his back yard located on the golf course in Port St. Lucie, Florida. The patient had observed the alligator in that area and, in fact, had fed it on occasions. Reportedly, some young alligators had been seen in the vicinity indicating a probable nest nearby. The attack came with lightning rapidity causing multiple lacerations of the face and neck regions with a large right frontal-parietal flap exposing the skull. The left wrist was dislocated and unstable with a near-circumferential laceration exposing the extensor and some of the flexor tendons. The extensor carpi radialis and flexor carpi ulnaris were partially transected and the extensor pollicis longus was completely avulsed with the muscle belly exposed in the wound (Figs. 6,7). The remaining

extensor tendons were redundant from the stretch of the hand.

Fortunately, the patient had the foresight to gouge the alligator's eyes with his right hand while the left hand was being held in the alligator's mouth, facilitating release and escape into his yard.

Following appropriate resuscitative measures in the emergency room at Martin Memorial Hospital, the patient underwent debridement and closure of multiple facial wounds with open reduction, debridement and closure of the left wrist injury. On the fifth postoperative day, a wound infection was noted underlying the dorsal skin which cultured *Aeromonas hydrophila* and *Enterobacter*.



Fig. 3.—X-ray of distal right humerus comminuted just proximal to the epicondyle.



Fig. 4.—Replanted right hand—approximately six weeks post-bite.



Fig. 5.—Replanted right hand—demonstrating the Hoffman apparatus approximating the proximal carpal bones to the radius.

Continuous catheter irrigation with gentamycin solution as well as intravenous gentamycin therapy was instituted for six days with marked improvement (Fig. 8). Edema and stiffness of the joints proved to be difficult problems necessitating physical therapy, Jobst insufflation treatments, appliances, splints, and Jobst glove to rehabilitate the hand.

Approximately two months following the injury, the patient underwent intravenous Solu-Medrol therapy under tourniquet control with manipulation of the joints. Marked improvement in the edema and range of motion followed and at five months post-injury, satisfactory function was noted with approximately 15 degrees of limitation in MP extension and near normal PIP function. Wrist extension was limited to 15-20 degrees but was pain-free. The patient ultimately was able to return to playing golf but left the yard work to more qualified individuals.

Discussion • The alligator population in the Sun Belt has varied over the years, depending upon state law and permission to hunt them. In Florida, a "come-back" has been witnessed in alligators because of restricted hunting laws. More recently



Fig. 6.—Dislocated and unstable left hand with extensive lacerations and avulsions.

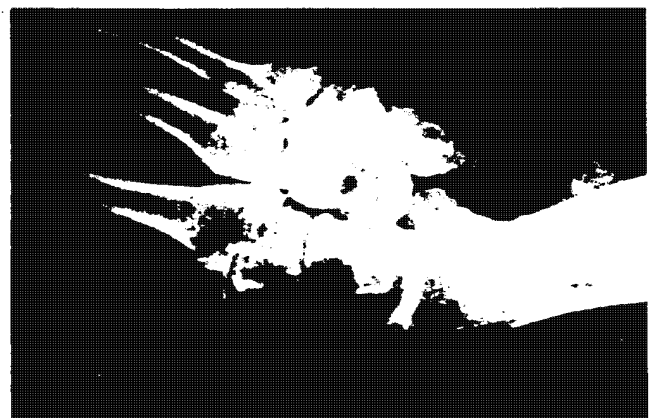


Fig. 7.—X-ray of left hand showing dislocation and angulation.



Fig. 8.—Wound infection with antibiotic catheter irrigation at 11 days post-injury.

selected individuals have been allowed to hunt in overpopulated areas. In Florida, rangers of the State Game and Wildlife Department have always been called upon to relocate alligators that have become a nuisance. It is well known that small animals are unsafe in areas where alligators are known to be.

Reported attacks seem to be increasing. Recently on the Loxahatchee River a large alligator crawled over the legs of a man to swallow a large German shepherd dog with lightning speed.⁶ Once provoked, the reptile is quite vicious and with its powerful jaws can easily transect extremities or torsos. The trick is to prevent the alligator from opening its mouth; the muscles elevating the jaw are weak. When alligators are on display, the "caretakers" make a special point of approximating the jaws of the animal by grasping them with their fists. They also avoid the powerful tail which can lash or whip around with significant force.

The micro organisms that grow in a gator's mouth are typically gram negative belonging to the salmonella species or a marine organism called *Aeromonas hydrophila*.^{7, 8} Other organisms cultured yielded *Clostridium* species, enterococci and *Citrobacter*.⁹

In studies on reptiles, the *Aeromonas* is found to be endemic in alligators' mouths and surrounding waters, but usually causes little harm unless their environment changes. Salmonellosis is usually subclinical in reptiles and probably is saprophytic with 94% of all reptiles harboring salmonella. When the environment does change, such as eutrophication of lakes and ponds with low dissolved oxygen content and enriched organic waste, these *Aeromonas* organisms which are considered part of the normal flora of most water systems become pathogenic for both warm and cold blooded vertebrates.¹⁰ Although infections caused by *Aeromonas hydrophila* are commonplace among

fish and amphibians, this organism is not commonly appreciated as being a significant human pathogen. *Aeromonas* infections have followed injuries incurred in fresh and salt water and also alligator bites.^{11, 13} The gram negative organism has many morphologic biochemical similarities to the Enterobacteriaceae, especially *Serratia* and *Escherichia coli*. The *Aeromonas* species are members of the vibrionaceae family and are facultative anaerobic asporogenous flagellative gram negative rods.¹⁴

Aeromonas infection may present as bullae with areas of erythema and cellulitis at the site of injury and even distant sites. Large areas of necrosis rapidly develop in these areas with progressive cutaneous and subcutaneous necrosis and separation. This organism is reported to have been responsible for many severe infections after the commercial jet plane crash in the Florida Everglades. Antibiotic therapy should include an aminoglycoside if *Aeromonas* is suspected. Though uncommon, another organism that presents with almost identical clinical picture of infection is the noncholera vibrio species, particularly *Vibrio vulnificus* and *Vibrio alginolyticus*, which are usually found in the coastal marine environment.¹⁵

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● Dr. Bingham, Div. Plastic Surgery, Shands Hospital, Gainesville 32601.

BOAT SAFETY AND REGISTRATION
CHAPTERS 327 AND 328, FLORIDA STATUTES

All vessels operated in the State of Florida must comply with the requirements of chapters 327 and 328 of the Florida Statutes. These statutes adopt all federal boating safety regulations.

The possession of licenses or permits issued by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to take or possess alligators **does not** relieve any boat or operator from compliance with the boating safety and registration statutes.

Boating safety information is available in printed publications and on the Internet. You may contact the Commission's Regional Office in your area if you would like to receive any publications or have questions regarding boating safety or boat registration requirements. Information can also be found on the Commission website at: <http://myfwc.com/boating>.

NORTHWEST REGION:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
3911 Highway 2321
Panama City, FL 32409-1658
(850) 265-3676

NORTHEAST REGION:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
1239 S.W. 10th Street
Ocala, FL 34474-2797
(352) 732-1225

NORTH CENTRAL REGION:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
3377 E. US Hwy. 90
Lake City, FL 32055
(386) 758-0525

SOUTHWEST REGION:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
3900 Drane Field Road
Lakeland, FL 33811-1299
(863) 648-3200

SOUTH REGION:

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
8535 Northlake Blvd.
West Palm Beach, FL 33412
(561) 625-5122

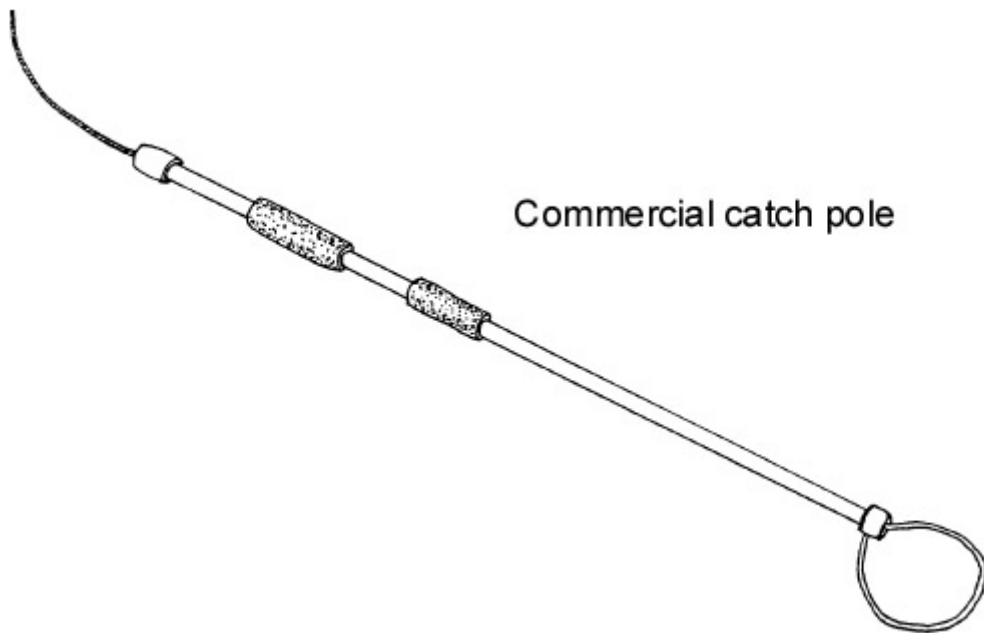
SECTION THREE: HARVESTING YOUR ALLIGATOR

✓ REQUIREMENTS

✓ TIPS

✓ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

✓ HARVEST REPORT FORM



Key to Success: All captured alligators must be killed, so choose your alligator carefully.

Submit harvest report forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator

REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ You must be in possession of your trapping license, permit, and CITES tags while engaging in hunting activities.
- ✓ You are not allowed to search for alligators prior to legal hunting hours if you have harvest equipment readily accessible in your possession. If you are on your harvest area prior to legal hunting hours, your harvest equipment must be disassembled and stowed away. **Daily hunting hours are from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 a.m.**
- ✓ Alligators may only be taken from 5:00 p.m. on August 15 until 10:00 a.m. August 22 (period 1), from 5:00 p.m. on August 22 until 10:00 a.m. August 29 (period 2), from 5:00 p.m. on August 29 until 10:00 a.m. September 5 (period 3), and from 5:00 p.m. on September 5 until 10:00 a.m. September 12 (period 4). All participants also will be allowed to trap alligators from 5:00 p.m. September 12 until 10:00 a.m. November 1 if they have any unused tags after their assigned period. Daily hunting hours within each period are from 5:00 p.m. until 10:00 a.m.
- ✓ Only non-hatchling alligators may be taken (those with a snout to vent length greater than nine (9) inches, approximately 18 inches total from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail).
- ✓ Alligators may only be taken in the area specified in the alligator harvest permit.
- ✓ Alligators shall be killed immediately upon capture. It is illegal to release any alligator once it has been attached to a restraining line.
- ✓ Immediately upon killing the alligator, a CITES tag, and mercury tag if issued, must be locked through the skin of the carcass within six (6) inches of the tip of the tail. **You should verify that the tag is secured by firmly pulling on the lock mechanism.** The tag(s) must remain attached to the alligator hide at all times until tanned, taxidermy mounted, or exported from the state. No person shall possess any untagged alligator carcass or hide.
- ✓ An alligator harvest report form (FWC Form 1001AT, supplied with your permit) must be completed by the permit holder within 24 hours of taking each alligator and prior to the transfer to a permitted alligator processing facility. A copy of the alligator harvest report form must accompany the alligator carcass until processing. **An online form can be used at MyFWC.com/alligator.**
- ✓ The permit holder shall return alligator harvest report forms and unused CITES tags to: **Alligator Management Program, 620 S. Meridian Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399** for receipt no later than November 15. **Permit holders SHOULD NOT rely on any other person to return these items to the Commission; it is the responsibility of the permit holder to return completed forms or unused CITES tags. We recommend that you return these items using a trackable delivery service to document the receipt of the package by the Commission.** To avoid damage to your package and ensure receipt of its contents, please use a cardboard or padded envelope when returning your unused CITES tags.
- ✓ **You are highly encouraged submit your completed forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator.**

- ✓ The permit holder is solely responsible for the return of completed harvest report forms and unused CITES tags. **Participation in the statewide alligator harvest program will be denied for one year to permit holders who fail to return unused CITES tags or completed alligator harvest report forms. FWC Officers will take appropriate enforcement action (including the possibility of misdemeanor charges) on permit holders who do not return harvest report forms or unused CITES tags.**
- ✓ Please review Rule 68A-25.042, F.A.C., in Section Six on page 35 for other rule requirements.

TIPS

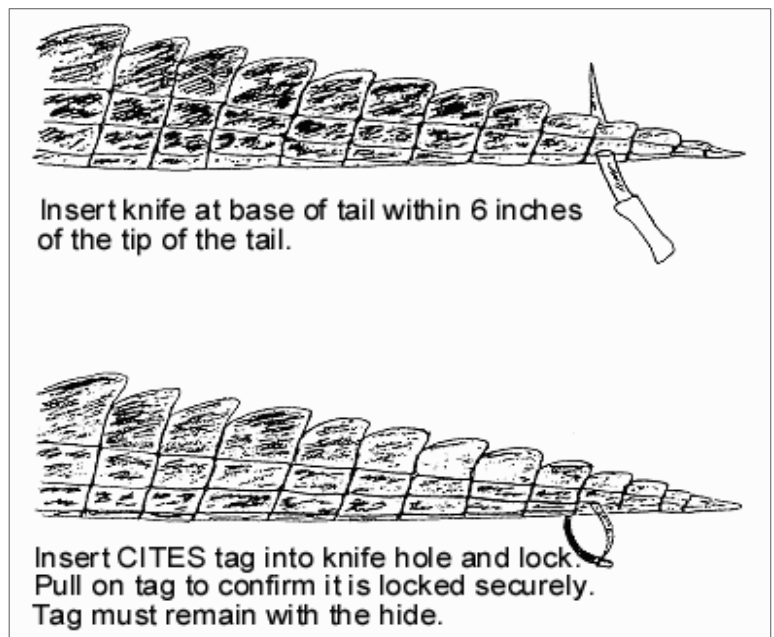
- ✓ It may be difficult to cut through an alligator's hide, so take your time and be careful not to cut yourself. Also, be sure to bend and lock your CITES tag across the underside of the tail to enable the skinning of the hide on the tail.
- ✓ When you return to the boat ramp, you should fill out a harvest report form. Please be sure to read and follow the directions carefully and completely. A sample of this form and directions is provided on pages 24 and 25.
- ✓ To maintain meat and hide quality, take necessary steps to cool your harvested alligator to 45° F (7° C) within four (4) hours after killing.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

- Q. Is there any required paperwork to be completed once the licensed trapper harvests an alligator?
- A. Yes, an alligator harvest report form must be completed by the licensed trapper within 24 hours of taking each alligator and prior to the transfer to a permitted processing facility. A copy of the form shall accompany the alligator hide at all times. The permit holder shall submit a legible copy of the alligator harvest report form to the **Alligator Management Program, 620 S. Meridian Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399** for receipt no later than November 15. To avoid mailing costs and the potential for lost mail, we **highly encourage you to submit these forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator.**

- Q. Who is responsible for returning unused CITES tags to the Commission following the harvest?
- A. All unused CITES tags shall be returned **by the permit holder** to the **Alligator Management Program, 620 S. Meridian Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399** no later than November 15. It is a violation for any person to possess any unused CITES tag after November 15. **To avoid damage to your package and ensure receipt of its contents, please use a cardboard or padded envelope when returning your tags, and we recommend that you use a trackable delivery service.**

- Q. Where do I tag my alligator?
- A. By rule, you must lock one of your CITES tags (and mercury tag, if issued) through the skin of the alligator carcass within six (6) inches of the tip of the tail (see diagram).



ALLIGATOR HARVEST REPORT FORM

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Carefully read instructions on reverse side prior to completing this form.
Please print. Press firmly - you are making 3 copies

SECTION A - TRAPPER

- Name of alligator trapping licensee: _____
[Last] [First] [M.I.]
- Alligator trapping license number: ATL - _____
- Alligator CITES tag number: FLM _____ Alligator mercury tag number: MER- _____
(If issued with harvest permit)
- Harvest date: ____ / ____ / ____
- County: _____
- Location: _____
- Carcass length: _____ feet and _____ inches
- Disposition of carcass [circle one]: Processed Discarded Transferred to: _____
- Sex [circle one]: Male Female Unknown
- Meat yield: _____ lbs. [Record zero (0) here if the meat is to be processed for sale at a permitted processing facility or if the carcass is discarded and meat is not retained by anyone.]
- The information provided in SECTION A above is correct: _____
Signature of Licensed Trapper Date

SECTION B - PROCESSOR

- Name of receiving processing facility permittee: _____
[Last] [First] [M.I.]
- Processing facility permit number: APP - _____
- Signature verifies receipt of the above carcass: _____
Signature of Licensed Processor Date
- Disposition of carcass [circle one]: Processed Discarded Transferred to: _____
- Sex [circle one]: Male Female Unknown
- Meat yield from alligator with tag number listed in **A3** above: _____ lbs.
- The information provided in sections 4 through 7 are correct: _____
Signature of Licensed Processor Date

FOR CONTRACTED NUISANCE ALLIGATOR TRAPPER USE ONLY:

SNAP Harvest Permit/Dispatch Number: _____ Special Use Permit Disposition [circle one]: CR CK NC
Area type (if different than SNAP permit): _____ CR location: _____
GPS Location (hddd.dddd) Capture.: N _____ W _____ Release: N _____ W _____

WHITE - Commission

PINK - Processing facility

YELLOW - Trapper

INSTRUCTIONS

How to complete and submit copies of the Alligator Harvest Report Form
Statewide and Private Lands trappers are highly encouraged to complete this form online at:
www.MyFWC.com/alligator

- WHITE **Statewide Trappers:** The WHITE copy must be forwarded to the **FWC Alligator Management Program, 620 S. Meridian Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399**, no later than November 15 of the calendar year of harvest. *Statewide trappers **SHOULD NOT** rely on processors to forward the harvest report form to the Commission; it is the responsibility of the trapper to return the form to the address above or submit the form online.*
- Private Lands Trappers:** The WHITE copy must be forwarded to the **FWC Alligator Management Program, 620 S. Meridian Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399**, no later than January 15 of the calendar year following harvest.
- Nuisance Alligator Trappers:** The WHITE copy must be forwarded to the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program coordinator by the 15th of the following month the alligator was harvested.
- PINK Receiving processing facility permittee retains this copy for 1 year, as required by Rule 68A-25.052, F.A.C.
- YELLOW Alligator trapping licensee retains this copy.

SECTION A

This section must be completed by the trapper within 24 hours of taking an alligator from the wild and prior to the transfer of the alligator carcass to another person or processor.

1. Provide full name (last name first) of the alligator trapping licensee.
2. Give the alligator trapping license number.
3. Record the number of the CITES tag that is attached to the hide and, if attached, the number of the mercury tag.
4. Date the alligator was taken.
5. County where the alligator was taken.
6. General location from which the alligator was taken (that is, the name of the lake or river, the name of the harvest unit if taken in statewide harvest, or the property name if taken on private lands).
7. Measure carcass length along the underside in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail. Record length to the nearest inch.
8. Circle "Processed" if the hide or meat was removed from the carcass for personal consumption (record the weight of the meat in 10.). Circle "Discarded" if the carcass was discarded without being skinned or removing any meat. If the carcass was transferred to a processor or another person, for example, an alligator trapping agent, enter the processor's or person's name in the blank provided.
9. Indicate sex of the alligator, if known.
10. Record total pounds of meat produced and packaged from the carcass. Record zero (0) here if the meat is to be processed at a permitted processing facility or if the carcass is discarded and meat is not retained by anyone.
11. Provide the licensed alligator trapper's signature to confirm the information provided is correct.

Alligator meat that is not processed in a permitted processing facility under Rule 68A-25.052, F.A.C., and is kept for personal consumption may not be sold, and such meat must be packaged and labeled in indelible ink with the CITES tag number and license holder's name.

SECTION B

This section must be completed **only** if the carcass is transferred to a licensed and permitted alligator processing facility. Note that Rule 68A-25.052, F.A.C., prohibits the sale of any alligator meat not packaged in such a facility.

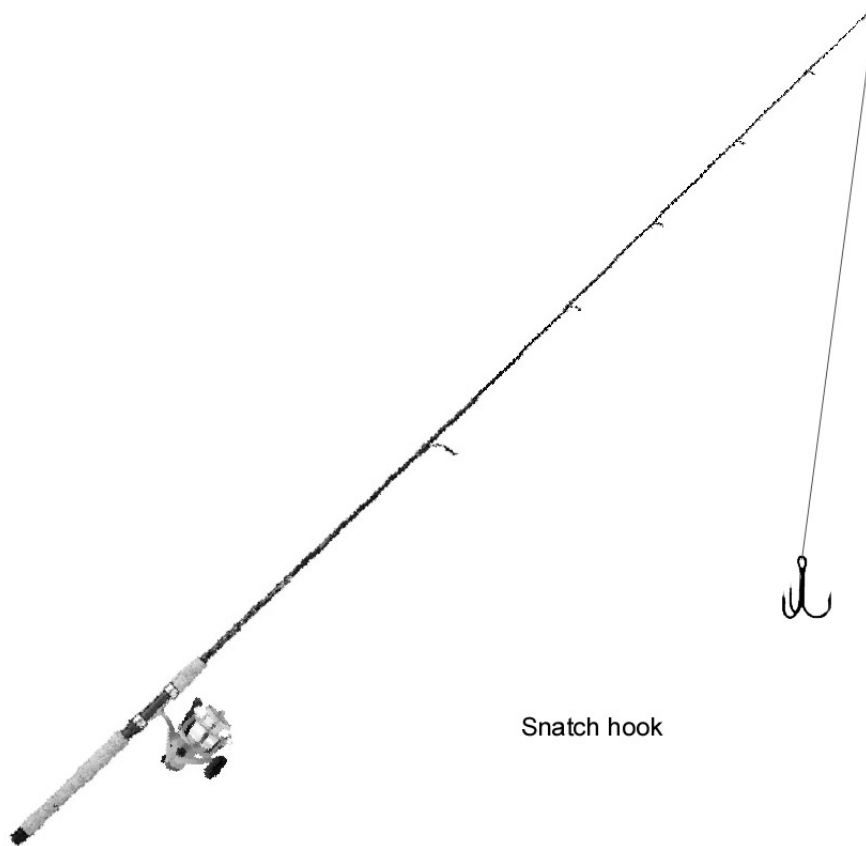
1. Provide full name (last name first) of the alligator processing facility permittee.
2. Give the processing facility permit number.
3. Provide the licensed alligator processor's signature to confirm receipt of the alligator carcass.
4. Indicate disposition of carcass. *Note: Alligator processors may transfer legally acquired, tagged, unskinned alligator carcasses and skinned alligator carcasses with the CITES tag number recorded on an attached tag to other permitted processors. However, alligator meat may only be sold if processed from alligator carcasses skinned in a permitted alligator processing facility. Receipt of the carcass shall be documented on a separate Alligator Harvest Report Form in Sections A-3 and B-1 through B-3, and the receiving processor shall complete sections B-4 through B-7 upon processing. A copy of the Alligator Harvest Report Form completed by the processor shall accompany the carcass until processing.*
5. Indicate sex of the alligator.
6. Indicate number of pounds of meat packaged from the alligator with the tag number listed above.
7. Provide the licensed alligator processor's signature to confirm information provided is correct.

SECTION FOUR: PROCESSING YOUR ALLIGATOR

✓ REQUIREMENTS

✓ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

✓ LIST OF PROCESSORS



Key to Success: For each alligator taken, an alligator harvest report form must be completed within 24 hours. The easiest way to do this is online at MyFWC.com/alligator.

REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Any person may possess unskinned alligator carcasses with CITES tags attached, and skinned alligator carcasses with the CITES tag number and, if applicable, mercury tag number recorded on an attached tag.
- ✓ An alligator harvest report form must be completed prior to transferring the carcass to a processor. The processor must sign the form to indicate receipt of the carcass and shall further complete the form upon processing the carcass to indicate the amount of meat packaged. You may allow the processor to submit your harvest report form, **but the permit holder will be held responsible for receipt of the harvest report form by the Commission. Permit holders are highly encouraged to submit these forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator.**
- ✓ **The sale of meat from alligators taken from the Holey Land WMA and the Everglades and Francis S. Taylor WMA harvest units is prohibited. If the meat is not discarded, meat packages must be permanently and visibly labeled "NOT FOR SALE, Recommend: NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION."**
- ✓ All alligator meat that is not discarded and not processed for sale shall be packaged and labeled to indicate the CITES tag number and license holder's name in indelible ink on each package.
- ✓ Skinned alligator carcasses may only be sold if skinned in a permitted alligator processing facility and alligator meat may only be sold if processed from carcasses skinned in a permitted alligator processing facility and packaged in such a facility.
- ✓ Meat processed for sale must be packaged in a sealed, tamper-proof package (a package that must be permanently and noticeably altered if opened to remove or add meat), and each package must be permanently labeled to indicate the name of the processor processing the alligator(s), the CITES tag number(s) from the alligator(s) from which the meat was taken, the date packaged, and the number of pounds of meat enclosed.
- ✓ The feet, viscera, or skeletal parts may be retained or transferred provided that all transfers, with the exception of retail sales to the consumer, must be documented in writing to indicate the kind and quantity of items and date transferred and the name and address of each recipient, and such records must be maintained for a period of one year.
- ✓ Manufactured goods wholly or partly composed of alligator hide, organs, teeth, or skull, or other skeletal material may only be sold in accordance with the following:
 - documentary evidence of the source of acquisition of the product held for sale must be maintained until the products are sold.
 - no person may sell a product manufactured in the form of a stuffed baby crocodylian less than three feet in length as measured from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail.
- ✓ Please review Rules 68A-25.042 and 68A-25.052, F.A.C., in Section Six on pages 35 and 37, respectively, for other rule requirements.

Submit harvest report forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator

PROCESSING YOUR ALLIGATOR

- ✓ Skinning and processing your own alligator can be very difficult for a beginner. Therefore, we have provided a listing of alligator meat processors that you may wish to contact. Also, if you wish to sell your meat, your alligator must be processed at a permitted and licensed alligator processing facility, and the meat must be packaged in accordance with Commission rules in such a facility.
- ✓ Becoming a licensed, permitted processor requires either getting approval of a currently permitted facility for your use, or having your own facility approved. Note that getting your facility approved requires an inspection by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and generally takes at least six (6) weeks.
- ✓ If you are not familiar with processing alligators, we encourage you to attend one of our training and orientation seminars for an introduction to alligator processing.
- ✓ Because it is difficult to ensure that all of the shot is removed from the alligator meat during processing, some alligator meat processors may not accept alligator carcasses if the alligator was killed with a bang stick using a shotshell. If you plan on using shotshell bang sticks and selling your carcass to a processor, we encourage you to contact the processor in advance to avoid any problems.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

- Q. What can I do with the meat and hides from harvested alligators?
- A. Alligator meat may be processed by anyone if the meat is kept for personal consumption and not sold. If you wish to sell meat from harvested alligators, you must have the alligators processed at a licensed alligator processing facility. **The sale of meat from alligators taken from the Holey Land WMA and the Everglades & Francis S. Taylor WMA harvest units is prohibited.** A list of licensed processing facilities and their locations is on page 29.
- Q. If the licensed trapper sells alligators to a licensed processing facility, who is responsible for meat records?
- A. Once the proper portion of the alligator harvest report form has been completed and the alligators are transferred to the licensed facility, the facility owner assumes responsibility for the alligators, meat, and hides.
- Q. Can a licensed trapper sell the meat from legally harvested alligators?
- A. Yes, but only if the meat is processed and packaged in a permitted and licensed alligator processing facility.
- Q. Is the licensed processor required to keep records of alligator meat sold?
- A. Yes, with the exception of retail sales to the consumer, he must keep a record of the name of the seller and buyer, date of sale, and amount sold.
- Q. Can the licensed trapper keep the skull from alligators they take?
- A. The skulls and other skeletal parts of alligators may be kept or they may be transferred or sold. Records must be kept indicating to whom skulls and/or other skeletal parts were transferred.

ALLIGATOR MEAT PROCESSORS*

All American Gator Products		201 N.W. 4 th Ave.	Hallandale, FL 33009	954-894-8003
Bellevue Meats & Seafood		5726 S.E. Abshier Blvd.	Bellevue, FL 34420	352-812-9446
Boston, Jr., James O.	Boston's Processing	Elder Rd. & I-4	Lake Monroe, FL 32771	407-402-2983
Brooks Brothers Alligator Farm		P.O. Box 1480	Christmas, FL 32709	407-568-0134
Brooks, Shane	Shane Brooks Alligator Farm	P.O. Box 1480	Christmas, FL 32709	407-568-0138
Brooks, Wayne	Wayne Brooks Alligator Farm	P.O. Box 1480	Christmas, FL 32709	407-568-3720
B & W Meats		23901 S.E. 177TH. Ave.	Hawthorne, FL 32640	352-368-8619
Calcaterra, Paul	Paul Calcaterra Farms	33285 Highway 441 N.	Okeechobee, FL 34972	863-763-1656
Cassels, Douglas R.		P.O. Box 71	Lochloosa, FL 32662	352-481-4805
Davison, Carl		6009 Pinetree Drive	Fort Pierce, FL 34982	772-201-5787
Douglas Jr., Jimmy	J.L.'s Alligator Processing	C.R. 468 & 503	Coleman, FL 33521	352-748-5816
Douglas, Johnny		6088 E. SR 44	Wildwood, FL 34785	352-748-5716
Fagan, J.M., Jr.	M&D Gator Products	20808 Hines Road	Dade City, FL 33523	352-583-2704
Fisherman's Dock		11610 San Jose Blvd.	Jacksonville, FL 32223	904-287-4218
Haley Michael	Haley's Gator Meat	8755 Batten Road	St. Augustine, FL	904-813-3977
Kent, Sr., James M.	Kent's Fur & Seafood	267 Marlin Street	Port St. Joe, FL 32456	850-229-6682
Lightsey, Rickie		502 N.E. 6th Ave.	Okeechobee, FL 34972	863-763-3688
Lucas, Curtis Eugene	C&H Gators	1881 Stone Rd.	Pierson, FL 32180	386-749-2452
Lusby, Christopher D.		137 Theo Lane	Lake Placid, FL 33852	863-441-0613
McAlpin, Judson	McAlpins Nuisance Animal	196 Hilliardville Rd.	Crawfordville, FL 32327	850-926-8620
Sultan, Shane L.		33285 Hwy. 441 N.	Okeechobee, FL 34972	954-925-0981
Mills, Gary	Gary & Carols	P.O. Box 665	Hernando, FL 34442	352-220-9622
Padrick, Grayson	Central Florida Trophy Hunts	1655 Alligator Lane	Cocoa, FL 32926	321-632-8995
Parker Island Gator Farm and Processing		1775 County Road 29	Lake Placid, FL 33862	863-465-3161
Parlier, Terry K.	Parlier Wildgame Processing	10701 Fox Hole Rd.	Clermont, FL 34711	407-656-3723
Perkins, Dennis		P.O. Box 1220	LaBelle, FL 33975	863-675-0220
Regel, Wallace D.	Regel Gator Processing	810 5th Street, S.W.	Naples, FL 34117	239-455-2598
Sloan, Preston	Chloe's Gator Processing	2981 W. New York Ave.	Deland, FL 32724	386-804-6758
Townsend & Sons		3024 Fort Denaud Rd.	LaBelle, FL 33935	863-675-1796
Williams, David P.		23901 S.E. 177 th . Ave.	Hawthorne, FL 32640	352-368-8619
Worden, Mary		2901 Hookers Point Rd.	Clewiston, FL 33440	863-983-5437

* All processors listed were licensed to process alligators at the time of printing, but please confirm with the processor of your choice that their licenses are current before entering in a contract or transferring your alligators to them. Go to <http://MyFWC.com/alligator> for periodic updates to this list.

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SECTION FIVE: CARING FOR YOUR ALLIGATOR SKIN

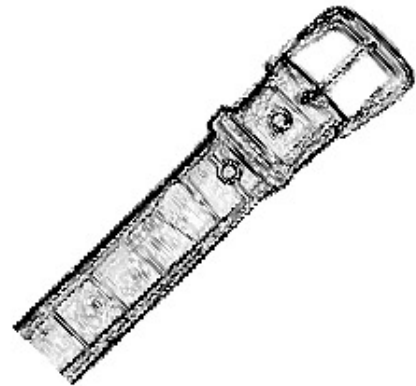
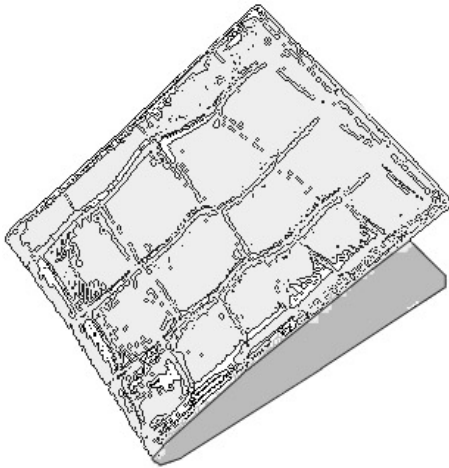
✓ REQUIREMENTS

✓ TIPS

✓ QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

✓ SKIN CURING AND STORAGE

✓ LIST OF FUR AND HIDE DEALERS



Key to Success: Any unused CITES tags must be returned to the Commission by November 15. To avoid damage to your package and ensure receipt of its contents, use a cardboard or padded envelope when returning your tags, and we recommend that you use a trackable delivery service.

Submit harvest report forms online at MyFWC.com/alligator

REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Alligator hides with CITES tag attached may be possessed by and transferred to any person.
- ✓ Only licensed fur and hide dealers may purchase your hide. For your convenience, we have included a listing of licensed dealers who you may wish to contact. You also may take your hide to a taxidermist or tannery.

TIPS

- ✓ Now that you've processed your alligator, great care must be given to the skin in order to preserve its value and quality. Page 32 describes in detail how to properly prepare and store your alligator hide. Following this guidance carefully will ensure that your hide retains its value and quality.

COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND THEIR ANSWERS

- Q. To whom may the licensed trapper sell the hides from alligators he has harvested?
A. Hides may only be sold to licensed fur and hide dealers.
- Q. Can the licensed trapper keep the hide from an alligator he takes?
A. Yes, the hides of alligators may be kept for personal use.
- Q. Can I freeze my alligator hide?
A. Hide buyers may be reluctant to purchase a frozen alligator hide, but for personal use hides can be frozen. Skin, scrape, and salt the hide using the instructions on the following page, and freeze the hide in a large air-lock bag, preferably with as much air removed as possible.

ALLIGATOR SKIN CURING AND STORAGE

After alligators have been skinned, the hide should be scraped thoroughly using a knife, beehive tool, or appropriate object. After scraping, salt hides with approximately one inch of white, fine grade table or mixing salt (available at most feed and seed stores). Rub salt into the hide thoroughly. Roll hides tightly and store in a cool place. After three (3) to five (5) days, repeat the salting procedure above discarding the old salt. Reroll hides tightly and band with a one-inch rubber band or other rubber tubing. Store rolled hides in a cool, dry place.

An alternative to the above curing and storage procedure is to utilize a brine solution. Many trappers have experienced alligator hide storage problems due to "red heat" or other factors which affect the value of skins. Due to market conditions, trappers must often hold skins for extended periods of time which increases the possibility of hide quality problems developing. Although salt normally acts as a preservative which retards spoilage, some types of organisms can still persist. This is particularly true under warm, humid conditions, which are ideal for bacterial growth. The most common problem experienced with stored alligator hides is "red heat." It is caused by a bacteria that is salt tolerant and produces a red pigment which identifies its presence. This bacteria deteriorates the hide and connective tissue which holds the scales to the skin, causing scale slippage. When this occurs, the hide often cannot be properly tanned, and therefore, buyers may deduct 50% or more from the hide's price. In an effort to solve the problem of hide loss due to the combined effects of extended storage and "red heat," several hide curing and storage treatments were examined by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The method found to be most effective, safe, and economical, was a brine solution. Alligator hides were kept in a brine solution for up to one year without "red heat" developing. In addition, the hides remained more supple, suffered less shrinkage, and are viewed as more attractive by hide graders and buyers. For these reasons, the use of brine solutions for alligator hide storage is highly recommended.

INGREDIENTS

10 gallon covered plastic trash can

10 pounds salt

3 ounces bleach

5 gallons water

In order for brine solutions to be effective, they must be carefully prepared and maintained. A plastic or other non-corrosive covered container of sufficient size should be used. Heavy, 10 gallon plastic garbage cans and 48 quart ice chests work well for this purpose. For smaller hides, a covered plastic 5 gallon bucket can be used; just cut the brine solution formula in half. The brine solution *must* remain saturated with salt. Too little salt in solution will cause the loss of skins. Fill container half full of water, add salt, and bleach to drum and mix thoroughly. After complete mixing, a 2 or 3 inch layer of salt should remain on the bottom. The bleach will assist in keeping bacterial growth to a minimum. Alligator hides are sensitive to many chemicals which may affect the tanning process. When it comes to chemicals, more is not better. Beware: DO NOT add formaldehyde or other chemicals which may affect the hide. Hides should be properly scraped and salted with a one inch layer of salt, tightly rolled, and secured with a rubber band prior to placing in the brine. When submersing a hide in the brine, it should be rotated to allow most of the air pockets to escape. If properly salted, the layer of salt in the rolled skin will act as a wick to draw the brine solution throughout the skin. All hides should be entirely submersed in the brine at all times. Each time a hide is added to the brine, a few pounds of salt should be sprinkled over the top. This is important to maintain the saturated solution.

The brine container should be kept tightly covered to keep insects and airborne contaminants from entering. When skins are to be delivered for sale, they must be removed from the brine and entirely resalted prior to being shipped or placed in refrigeration. The brine should be discarded and a new solution made after each use. Disposal of the salt brine should be done conscientiously since it can be harmful to plants and aquatic animal life.

FUR AND HIDE DEALERS*

All Scrap Recycling	3052 S.W. 27 th Ct.	Cape Coral, FL 33914	239-282-0478
Bad to the Bone Taxidermy	3498 Laurel Road E.	Nokomis, FL 34275	941-375-1052
Breedlove, Charles (Tony)	3188 S.E. CR 21-B	Melrose, FL 32666	352-475-3159
Brooks Brothers Alligator Farm	26205 E. Hwy. 50	Christmas, FL 32709	407-568-3720
Ceballos, Dale J.	6045 Oak Street	Scottsmoor, FL 32775	321-268-0817
Columbia Impex	6073 N.W. 167 th St., #C14	Miami, FL 33015	305-819-7116
Dunaway, Grant	2531 County Road 830	Felda, FL 33930	863-675-7492
Hachey, Sandra L.	6202 Quail Ridge Dr.	Lakeland, FL 33813	863-816-6939
John Walker Taxidermy	44024 W. Lake Dr.	Deland, FL 32720	352-669-6446
Kent's Fur and Seafood Company	267 Marlin St.	Port St. Joe, FL 32456	850-229-6682
Merwin, Jack	6501 Nassau St.	St. Augustine, FL 32080	904-471-0389
Slaughter, Henry	381 Dayton Blvd.	Melbourne, FL 32904	954-873-1957

* All dealers listed were licensed to purchase alligator hides at the time of printing, but please confirm with the dealer of your choice that their licenses are current before entering in a contract or selling your alligator hides to them. Go to <http://MyFWC.com/alligator> for periodic updates to this list.

5/26/11

**SECTION SIX:
ALLIGATOR REGULATIONS**

- ✓ **FOLLOWING ARE THE MORE IMPORTANT
REGULATIONS RELATED TO THE
STATEWIDE ALLIGATOR HARVEST***



* Updated regulations can be found at <http://www.flrules.org>.

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68A-25.042 Regulations Governing Statewide Alligator Trapping, Permitting, Taking and Sale.

No person shall take non-hatchling alligators from the wild except as provided herein and under other applicable rules of the Commission.

(1) Establishment of alligator management units and harvest quotas:

(a) Management units comprised of specified wetlands, lakes, rivers or other water bodies that may be reasonably grouped for the purposes of study, analysis or management and that are suitable for harvest based on habitat characteristics, accessibility, and estimated alligator densities shall be established by the executive director or his designee.

(b) Annual harvest quotas for each management unit shall be established by the executive director, or his designee, and shall be based upon an evaluation of on-site habitat or population inventories for each management unit. The harvest quota for a management unit shall be based on the best estimate of the number of alligators that can be removed from the unit without long-term adverse impacts on population levels.

(2) Harvest permit issuance:

(a) Harvest permits may be reserved for specific harvest units and harvest periods through the Commission's Total Licensing System beginning at the designated time and date each year by:

1. Paying for an alligator trapping license as required by Section 379.3451, F.S., and \$10 for each CITES tag, pursuant to Section 379.3752, F.S., issued with harvest permits; or
2. Providing evidence of possession of an alligator trapping license valid through the last day of the designated harvest season and paying \$30 for each CITES tag, pursuant to Section 379.3752, F.S., issued with harvest permits.

(b) Applicants for a harvest permit shall:

1. Be 18 years of age or older by August 15 in the current application year.
2. Not have been convicted of any violation of Section 379.409 or 379.3015, F.S., or rules of the Commission relating to the illegal taking of any crocodylian species:
 - a. For a period of five (5) years preceding the date of application; or
 - b. For a period of ten (10) years preceding the date of application if such conviction involved the taking of an endangered crocodylian species.

(c) Permits shall be issued upon determination that the applicant meets the requirements of this subsection.

(d) CITES tags shall be issued with each harvest permit, except that harvest tags bearing the letters "MER" shall also be issued with harvest permits for management units for which the best available scientific data indicates the average mercury concentrations in alligators therein exceeds the Federal limit for legal sale of the meat.

(e) Harvest permits shall be valid only for the management unit and harvest period indicated thereon, and harvest permits and their associated harvest tags, if issued, and CITES tags are not transferable.

(f) The number of harvest permits issued per person shall be determined by the executive director or his designee.

(3) Alligator trapping requirements:

(a) Alligators may only be taken in accordance with the provisions of the alligator harvest permit.

(b) Alligators may be taken from 5pm until 10am each day during the harvest period specified in the harvest permit. Harvest periods shall be from 5pm on September 12 until 10am on November 1, and from either 5pm on August 15 until 10am on August 22, or 5pm on August 22 until 10am on August 29, or 5pm on August 29 until 10am on September 5, or 5pm on September 5 until 10am on September 12, except as otherwise provided in the harvest permit.

(c) Only non-hatchling alligators may be taken.

(d) Alligators may be taken only by the use of artificial lures or baited, wooden pegs less than two (2) inches in length attached to hand-held restraining lines or restraining lines attached to a vessel occupied by the permittee and hand-held snares, harpoons, gigs, snatch hooks, and manually operated spears, spearguns,

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crossbows and bows with projectiles attached to restraining lines. The use of baited hooks, gig-equipped bang sticks, or firearms for taking alligators is prohibited except that bang sticks are permitted for taking alligators attached to a restraining line. Notwithstanding Rule 68A-4.002, F.A.C., a light may be used in conjunction with these methods of take.

(e) Any persons actively participating in the taking of alligators as provided herein shall possess an alligator trapping license or alligator trapping agent's license. However, for the purposes of this provision, the taking of alligators does not include the activities of driving the vessel or the use of a light.

(f) Alligators may only be taken in the area specified in the alligator harvest permit.

(g) Any person possessing a valid alligator trapping or trapping agent's license pursuant to Section 379.3751, F.S., may take alligators as provided in the harvest permit but only in the presence of the permittee.

(h) Alligators shall be killed immediately upon capture.

(i) Immediately upon killing, a CITES tag issued by the Commission and a harvest tag, if issued, shall be locked through the skin of the carcass within six (6) inches of the tip of the tail. The CITES tag shall remain attached to the alligator hide until the hide is tanned, taxidermy mounted, or exported from the state. The harvest tag, if issued, shall remain attached to the alligator until processing. CITES tags may not be altered to compromise the locking mechanism in any way and shall be used only one time. The possession of any alligator hide not tagged as prescribed herein is prohibited, and such hide shall be subject to seizure and forfeiture to the Commission under the provisions of Section 379.338, F.S.

(j) An alligator harvest report form (FWC form 1001AT, effective April 30, 2000) provided by the Commission shall be completed by the permittee within 24 hours of taking each alligator and prior to the transfer of the carcass to another person. The permittee shall submit a legible copy of the alligator harvest report form to the Commission for receipt no later than 14 days after the expiration date of the harvest permit.

(k) Tags issued under this section shall remain the property of the Commission until affixed as provided herein. Tags issued pursuant to this section may be possessed only by the permittee or his licensed agents prior to use. The permittee shall be strictly liable in ensuring that possession of unused tags is limited to persons authorized under this rule.

(l) All unused CITES tags shall be returned by the permittee to the Commission no later than 14 days after the expiration date of the harvest permit. It shall be a violation of this section for any person to possess any unused CITES tag(s) issued pursuant to this section 14 days after the expiration date of the harvest permit. Permits may be denied, pursuant to Rule 68A-5.004, F.A.C., to applicants who have previously failed to return unused tags and complete forms as specified herein.

(4) Alligator processing and sale of parts.

(a) Alligator meat not discarded shall be processed or sold in accordance with Rule 68A-25.052, F.A.C.

(b) Commission personnel shall be granted access to collect biological data on and specimens from any alligators taken under the provisions of this rule, provided that specimens shall only be taken when necessary for the management of the species.

(5) Nothing herein shall prohibit the executive director from establishing special restrictions or exemptions from this rule for the purpose of conducting experimental alligator harvests on designated areas pursuant to Rule 68A-9.002, F.A.C.

Rulemaking Authority Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const. Law Implemented Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.3012, 379.3751 FS. History—New 5-5-88, Amended 2-14-89, 4-11-90, 4-14-92, 4-29-93, 7-1-94, 3-30-95, 4-1-96, 9-15-96, 4-12-98, Formerly 39-25.042, Amended 4-30-00, 5-13-02, 4-11-04, 3-30-06, 3-19-08, 3-12-09, 7-20-09, pending.

68A-25.052 Regulations Governing the Processing of Alligators and the Sale of Alligator Meat and Parts.

(1) Meat from legally acquired alligators that is not discarded and not processed for sale shall be packaged and labeled to indicate the CITES tag number and license holder's name in indelible ink on each package.

(2) Meat from alligators taken pursuant to Rule 68A-25.042, F.A.C., to which harvest tags have been affixed bearing the letters "MER" as part of the tag numbers may not be sold for human consumption and if not discarded must be permanently and visibly labeled "NOT FOR SALE, Recommend: NOT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION."

(3) Alligator meat may only be sold if imported or if processed from carcasses skinned in a permitted alligator processing facility and processed and packaged in such a facility as provided in this section.

(4) Alligator processing facilities may be established and operated only under permit from the executive director and shall be licensed as required by Section 379.3751, F.S. The criteria for issuance of an alligator processing facility permit are as follows:

(a) Persons may indicate their intent to establish an alligator processing facility when submitting their alligator trapping, alligator farming, or alligator processing license application, or if already licensed under Section 379.3751, F.S., they may submit a written request for an alligator processing facility permit to the Commission at least 30 days prior to the proposed date of operation. Such application or written request shall include a copy of the current food permit from the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the proposed facility.

(b) The executive director shall not issue an alligator processing facility permit or shall revoke said permit for any person who has been convicted of any violation of Section 379.409 or 379.3015, F.S., or the rules of the Commission relating to the illegal taking of any crocodylian species:

1. For five (5) years following such conviction; or
2. For ten (10) years following, if such conviction involves the taking of an endangered crocodylian species.

(5) Provisions for the operation of alligator processing facilities:

(a) Alligator processors and their designated employees as provided by permit may receive and possess legally acquired, tagged, unskinned alligator carcasses and skinned alligator carcasses with the CITES tag number and, if applicable, the harvest tag number recorded on an attached tag for processing of meat and hides provided:

1. For alligators taken pursuant to Rules 68A-25.003, 68A-25.032, and 68A-25.042, F.A.C., the alligator harvest report form (FWC form 1001AT, effective April 30, 2000) shall be completed and signed immediately upon receipt, and shall be further completed upon processing to indicate the amount of meat packaged. A copy of the harvest report form shall accompany the carcass until processing.

2. Written records of the number, source, and disposition of all alligator carcasses received, bought, sold, or transferred, including copies of Alligator Harvest Report Forms (FWC form 1001AT), shall be maintained for a period of one year following sale, transfer, or disposal of the carcass, meat, hides, or parts thereof.

(b) Commission personnel shall be granted access to any permitted facility to collect biological specimens from and data on any alligators possessed under this subsection, provided that specimens shall only be collected when necessary for the management of the species.

(c) Processing and storage facilities and all Commission required records shall be subject to inspection by Commission personnel during reasonable hours.

(d) Meat processed or re-processed for sale must be packaged in a sealed, tamper-proof package (a package that must be permanently and noticeably altered if opened to remove or add meat). Each package must be permanently labeled to indicate the name of the processor processing the alligator(s), the CITES tag number(s) from the alligator(s) from which the meat was taken, the date packaged, and the number of pounds of meat enclosed. Each package and label shall be used to package meat only one time.

(6) Provisions for the sale of alligator meat:

(a) Written records of all alligator meat sales, with the exception of retail sales to the customer, shall be maintained for a period of one year following sale, and shall include the name of the seller and buyer, date of sale, and amount sold. Such records shall be open to inspection by Commission personnel during reasonable hours.

(b) All alligator meat purchased shall remain in the original package until the meat is re-processed or prepared for consumption, and packages shall be used to package meat only one time.

(c) Packages containing lawfully acquired alligator meat packaged and labeled in accordance with this rule may be shipped in intrastate or interstate commerce.

(7) Provisions for the importation of alligator meat to Florida:

(a) Meat must be acquired and processed in accordance with the applicable health and sanitation requirements and laws of the state of origin.

(b) All imported alligator meat shall be shipped in a tamper-proof package.

(c) Each package of imported alligator meat shall be labeled with a seal to identify the state of origin, the processor, the number of pounds of meat enclosed, and the date packaged.

(8) The feet, viscera or skeletal parts of lawfully acquired alligators may be retained or transferred provided that all transfers, with the exception of retail sales to the consumer, shall be documented in writing to indicate the kind and quantity of items and date transferred and the name and address of each recipient, and such records shall be maintained for a period of one year.

(9) Manufactured goods wholly or partly composed of alligator hide, organs, teeth, or skull, or other skeletal material may only be sold in accordance with provisions of Rule 68A-25.002, F.A.C.

(10) These requirements shall not be construed to supersede the regulatory authority of any federal, state or local entity regarding the processing or handling of food products, but shall be deemed supplemental thereto. Alligators processed hereunder shall be handled and processed in compliance with all applicable sanitation and permit requirements of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the county health department of the county in which the facility is located, and any other federal, state, or local authorities.

Specific Authority Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const. Law Implemented Art. IV, Sec. 9, Fla. Const., 379.3012, 379.3751 FS. History—New 5-5-88, Amended 2-14-89, 4-11-90, 4-1-96, 9-15-96, 6-1-97, 4-12-98, 4-15-99, Formerly 39-25.052, Amended 4-30-00, 3-30-06.



Key to Success: All completed alligator harvest report forms or unused CITES tags MUST be received by the Commission by November 15. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in criminal misdemeanor charges and denial of alligator harvest permits for one year.



Key to Success: Thoroughly read your alligator harvest permit provisions and all correspondence sent to you.



Key to Success: Do not rely on others to return completed harvest report forms or unused CITES tags.



Key to Success: Use the online alligator harvest report form at MyFWC.com/alligator to avoid mailing costs or mishandled or lost mail.



Key to Success: The Alligator Management Program uses e-mail correspondence to update permit holders on important alligator hunting information and to offer participants the opportunity to provide input. To ensure that you receive these messages, verify that your e-mail address is correct by going to <http://www.fl.wildlifelicense.com>. You will need your Social Security Number, Florida Driver's License number, or Customer ID number to log into the system. If you need to make changes to your e-mail address or other personal information, call 888-HUNT-FLORIDA (486-8356) or 888-FISH-FLORIDA (347-4356).

