

‘GATORS GALORE!®

by Dan Pemble, Kissimmee, FL. – December 31, 2019

To date I've written a variety of articles about my wildlife observations from vantage points within the Kissimmee Bay Country Club (KBCC) residential subdivision; however, I have just realized that I've never written anything at all about the many alligators that reside amongst us in most all of the KBCC's ponds! So, here we go!

A FEW GATOR FACTS (as paraphrased from several web sites)

- The alligator population in Florida is estimated to be 1.3 million and they inhabit all 67 counties wherever there are rivers, streams, lakes, and ponds.
- From the known-power behind their jaws to the agility that alligators demonstrate in the water, local residents and tourists alike continue to be fascinated by the sight of these creatures.
- Alligators are generally afraid of humans – unless they have been “conditioned” by humans who illegally feed them! Humans who persist in feeding wild alligators may indeed teach alligators that humans themselves are a source of food! Penalties for illegally feeding wild alligators include monetary fines and possible jail time!
- Although it is always wise to be vigilant and keep yourself and children and pets away from the edges of waters known to have alligators, alligators seldom bite people and fatalities are rare. According to the Florida Wildlife Commission (FWC), for a 10-year period, there has been an average of 7 unprovoked bites per year. In fact, the likelihood of being bitten is 1 in 3.1 million. FWC data covering 1948-2019 reveals that in the period there were 413 alligator bite incidents and 25 resulted in fatalities.



Typical Kissimmee Bay advisory signs

KISSIMMEE BAY 'GATOR PHOTOS

(taken by Dan & Sadhana Pemble)



A Huge 'Gator just past the 14th green



A 6-foot-long "youngster"



BEWARE! Someone is watching you!



Oh yes! I too am watching you!

“NUISANCE ‘GATORS”

The Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission manages a Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program (SNAP) to address citizen’s complaints about alligators.

Generally, an alligator 4-feet or more in length may be considered a nuisance if a person believes it poses a threat to people (including children), pets, or property; if this is the case, you may call the SNAP hotline at **866-392-4286** and your complaint will be investigated.

I hope this article has been of some interest and benefit to you.

