

WILD AT HEART



# Alligators - The Ultimate Lizards

By Craig Weyandt

Alligator is derived from the Spanish word “el lagarto,” which means, “the lizard.” The Florida alligator’s primary habitat is freshwater swamps and marshes, but can also be found in rivers, lakes and smaller bodies of water. They can tolerate a reasonable degree of salinity for short periods of time, being occasionally found in brackish water around mangrove swamps, although they lack the buccal salt-secreting glands present in crocodiles. Little alligators eat small invertebrates such as insects, small fish and frogs. As they grow larger, their dietary range increases to include larger prey, which consist of fish, turtles, small mammals, birds and reptiles including small alligators. When left alone, alligators will stay away from humans and pose little threat. If humans feed alligators, this will encourage the alligators to approach humans aggressively expecting food, which in turn can be extremely dangerous.

**So please do not feed the alligators!**

After all, for the last 65 million years alligators have done a pretty good job of feeding themselves. Also, alligators do not feed during the cooler months. Studies have shown that alligators generally begin to lose their appetite below 27C (80F), and stop feeding altogether below 23C (73F). They can easily last the winter on their energy reserves.

**Cool facts:**

- Alligators are really lizards
- Alligators now occupy almost every body of water in Florida
- The sex of an alligator is determined in the egg by the temperature of the nest
- Alligators hibernate during the winter months
- Alligators have between 74 and 80 teeth

Stewardship Notes

## Goal for 2004: Bring Every Course Into the Fold

By Shelly Foy

My New Year resolutions have not changed much over the past few years. I would like to spend more time with my children, start exercising regularly, be a better listener, etc. I do feel like I am making some progress each year, but always could do more.

I’m running out of time to spend more time with my children because Hunter and Elizabeth are both seniors in high school and hopefully will be off to college in 2004. Of course, since Thomas is five, we still have many years of T-ball, soccer and school plays. John and I have already determined that there will never be a day when we are alone because once Thomas is ready to go off to college we will more than likely be grandparents.

My 2004 goals for the ACSP are to reach out to each and every golf course in Florida that is not a member of the program and encourage them to join. The FGCSA and the USGA are working together to promote Audubon International’s 50 in 5 Initiative, which is to have 50% of golf courses enrolled in the program in five years. Florida is leading this push and we can’t afford to slack off now. We are planning a series of ACSP Workshops in Florida in 2004 and we encourage every golf course to make plans to attend one close by.

While you are in San Diego, don’t forget to take advantage of the many education-

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al opportunities with the ACSP. Audubon International staff will be available at Booth S7609, directly across from the USGA. A special session titled, “The Business Value of Environmental Stewardship: An Environmental MBA for Superintendents,” will be presented from 5-6 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11. Audubon staff also will be teaching two seminars, “Wildlife Management and Habitat Conservation” Tuesday, Feb. 10, all day, and

“Integrated Environmental Management” all day Wednesday Feb. 11.

The winter season is a very good time to work on your Education and Outreach for ACSP certification. Over the years we have listed many ideas in the *Florida Green*, and I would encourage you to look through some past issues if you are searching for ways to promote environmental education.

We are always looking for tips and ideas to help you. Here’s another very successful one: Craig Weyandt, golf course superintendent the Moorings Club in Vero Beach, has a regular column in the club newsletter that he calls “Wild at Heart.” Craig always includes pictures, and he has had members tell him that since he has started writing “Wild at Heart,” his article is the first thing they look for in the newsletter. They are so interesting; we will reprint them from time to time for possible use at your club.

I encourage you to make membership in the ACSP one of your New Year resolutions. All the best for a happy and prosperous 2004!

## ACSP Year in Review

**Florida Courses Joining in 2003**

- Abacoa GC
  - Banyan GC
  - Boca Greens CC
  - Card Sound GC
  - Crown Colony G&CC
  - Fiddlesticks CC
  - Forest CC
  - Ft. Lauderdale CC
  - Ft. Walton Beach GC
  - Gator Creek GC
  - Glades CC
  - Gleneagles CC
  - Grey Oaks CC
  - Kelly Plantation GC
  - LPGA International GC
  - Longboat Key Club - Harbourside
  - Longboat Key Club - Islandside
  - Maple Leaf G&CC
  - Misty Creek CC
  - Outdoor Resort GC
  - Palencia GC
  - Red Stick GC
  - Riomar CC
  - Ritz Carlton GC, Grande Lakes
  - Ritz Carlton Golf Club & Spa, Jupiter
  - Seminole GC
  - Shadow Wood Preserve
  - Six Lakes CC
  - Sugar Mill CC
  - Vasari CC
  - WCI Renaissance GC
- ACSP Certified in 2003**
- Frenchman’s Reserve
  - Hawk’s Nest GC
  - Long Marsh GC
  - Pelican Sound GC
  - Sanctuary GC