

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Alligator Bites¹ on People in Florida

Last Updated: September 2016

NOTE: These statistics are the latest figures available and may not include recent incidents that are still undergoing investigation.

| YEAR | Major ² | Fatal | Minor ³ | Total |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 2016 | 7 | (1) | 0 | 7 |
| 2015 | 9 | (1) | 0 | 9 |
| 2014 | 9 | (0) | 1 | 10 |
| 2013 | 8 | (0) | 7 | 15 |
| 2012 | 3 | (0) | 7 | 10 |
| 2011 | 5 | (0) | 1 | 6 |
| 2010 | 6 | (0) | 0 | 6 |
| 2009 | 6 | (0) | 2 | 8 |
| 2008 | 5 | (0) | 1 | 6 |
| 2007 | 6 | (1) | 8 | 14 |
| 2006 | 8 | (3) | 4 | 12 |
| 2005 | 8 | (2) | 1 | 9 |
| 2004 | 9 | (2) | 3 | 12 |
| 2003 | 9 | (1) | 1 | 10 |
| 2002 | 8 | (0) | 5 | 13 |
| 2001 | 11 | (3) | 5 | 16 |
| 2000 | 8 | (0) | 5 | 13 |
| 1999 | 5 | (0) | 5 | 10 |
| 1998 | 3 | (0) | 2 | 5 |
| 1997 | 4 | (1) | 1 | 5 |
| 1996 | 4 | (0) | 2 | 6 |
| 1995 | 9 | (0) | 4 | 13 |
| 1994 | 5 | (0) | 6 | 11 |
| 1993 | 8 | (2) | 4 | 12 |
| 1992 | 5 | (0) | 1 | 6 |
| 1991 | 5 | (0) | 5 | 10 |
| 1990 | 3 | (0) | 10 | 13 |
| 1989 | 4 | (0) | 5 | 9 |
| 1988 | 6 | (1) | 3 | 9 |
| 1987 | 3 | (1) | 6 | 9 |
| 1986 | 3 | (0) | 10 | 13 |
| 1985 | 4 | (1) | 2 | 6 |
| 1984 | 5 | (1) | 0 | 5 |
| 1983 | 5 | (0) | 1 | 6 |
| 1982 | 4 | (0) | 3 | 7 |
| 1981 | 5 | (0) | 3 | 8 |
| 1980 | 4 | (0) | 0 | 4 |

| YEAR | Major ² | Fatal | Minor ³ | Total |
|----------------|---------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1979 | 2 | (0) | 0 | 2 |
| 1978 | 6 | (1) | 0 | 6 |
| 1977 | 13 | (1) | 1 | 14 |
| 1976 | 2 | (0) | 0 | 2 |
| 1975 | 4 | (0) | 0 | 4 |
| 1974 | 4 | (0) | 0 | 4 |
| 1973 | 3 | (1) | 0 | 3 |
| 1972 | 3 | (0) | 0 | 3 |
| 1971 | 3 | (0) | 0 | 3 |
| 1968 | 0 | (0) | 0 | 0 |
| 1959 | 0 | (0) | 0 | 0 |
| 1958 | 1 | (0) | 0 | 1 |
| 1952 | 1 | (0) | 0 | 1 |
| 1950 | 1 | (0) | 0 | 1 |
| 1948 | 1 | (0) | 0 | 1 |
| Totals: | 263 | (24) | 125 | 388 |

1. All bites reported in this summary table are considered unprovoked bites. Unprovoked bites are defined as bites on people by wild alligators, which were not provoked by handling or intentional harassment.

2. Major bites are those in which the victims' injuries required medical care, beyond first aid, to treat wounds. This column includes fatal bites.

3. Minor bites are those in which the victims' injuries were superficial and required no treatment or only first aid.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission: Fatal Alligator Bites

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1. Sharon Holmes, 16, female, was killed by an 11'3" male alligator while swimming at dusk in a lake at Oscar Scherer State Park, Sarasota County, on Aug. 16, 1973. The alligator was killed, and body parts from the victim were found in its stomach. The alligator had recently moved into the lake and was reportedly to have been fed by visitors to the park.
2. George Leonard, 52, male, was seized on the arm by an alligator while swimming in the Peace River Canal, Charlotte County, on Sept. 28, 1977 at 8:35 p.m. A 7 ft. alligator, which had appeared in the canal the day of the bite, severed the victim's arm at the elbow. Leonard died three days later of complications from the bite.
3. Phillip Rastrelli, 14, male, was killed while swimming across the Hidden River Canal off Bessie Creek in Martin County on Sept. 10, 1978 at noon. The alligator was an 11-foot healthy male.
4. Robert Crespo, 11, male, was killed while swimming in a canal in St. Lucie County on Aug. 6, 1984 at 4:30 p.m. The alligator was 12' 4", aged and in poor health.
5. Paul Mirabito, 27, male, disappeared while diving and harassing small alligators in the Wellington C27 canal near West Palm Beach on May 4, 1985. His body was recovered 2 days later with severe injuries to the neck and puncture wounds on the arm. The medical examiner concluded that the cause of death was drowning, but noted evidence of bleeding around the wounds, indicating the bites occurred prior to drowning.
6. George Cummings III, 29, male, was killed while snorkeling in the Wakulla River on July 13, 1987 at 2 p.m. The alligator was an 11-foot healthy male.
7. Erin Glover, 4, female, was seized and killed by an alligator while walking along the shore of Hidden Lake, Charlotte County on June 4, 1988 at 6:10 p.m. The alligator was a 10' 7" male.
8. Bradley Weidenhamer, 10, male, was killed while wading in the Loxahatchee River at Jonathan Dickinson State Park in Martin County on June 19, 1993. The alligator was an 11' 4" male.

9. Grace Eberhart, 70, female, was killed at Lake Serenity in Sumter County on Oct. 3, 1993. The circumstances surrounding her death are unknown, but she died of a broken neck caused by an alligator bite to the throat and head. Several alligators may have been involved in the incident. The largest measured 9' 7" long.
10. Adam Binford, 3, male, was killed at Lake Ashby in Volusia County on March 21, 1997. The child strayed outside the roped-off swimming area in a county park to pick some lily pads when an 11-foot alligator attacked him. Splashing dogs in the area may have attracted the alligator. His body was recovered the next day about a mile from the site of the incident.
11. Samuel Wetmore, 70, male, was killed in a pond near his residence in Venice in Sarasota County. He was found on May 4, 2001, and the county medical examiner determined that he died from multiple trauma and loss of blood. An 8' 4" alligator was removed and destroyed.
12. Alexandria Murphy, 2, female, was killed at Lake Cannon in Polk County on June 23, 2001. She wandered 700 feet from her fenced backyard where she had been playing when last seen by her mother. A 6' 6" alligator was removed and destroyed.
13. Robert Steele, 82, was killed near his house on Rabbit Road in Sanibel on Sept. 11, 2001. Steele was walking his terrier on a narrow path that ran between two wetland areas close to J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge when a 10' 9" gator seized him and dragged him into the water, severing his leg. FWC officers destroyed the alligator. Another six-foot alligator was also removed.
14. Brian Griffin, 12, male, was killed while swimming near a boat ramp in the Dead River in Lake County on June 18, 2003. The male alligator that attacked and drowned Griffin was 10' 4" long and weighed 339 lbs. That alligator and several other large alligators were captured destroyed.
15. Janie Melsek, 54, female, was seized by an alligator while landscaping near a pond along Poinciana Circle, Sanibel on July 21, 2004. Melsek survived the attack, but died later of an infection related to the wounds. The alligator that attacked Melsek was a 12' 3" male, which was removed and destroyed.
16. Michelle Reeves, 20, female, was killed while swimming after midnight in a retention pond at the Lee Memorial Health Park in Lee County on Sept. 26, 2004. Reeves was visiting the area during a college break. The 7' 11" male alligator that attacked her was removed and destroyed.
17. Donald Ray Owen, 56, was found dead in Six Pound Pond near Lakeland in Polk County with multiple alligator bites and the left arm amputated below the elbow. The medical examiner determined that the victim was bitten prior to dying on March 11, 2005. Circumstances of the incident are uncertain because there were no witnesses. The 9' 8" male alligator responsible for the attack was caught and destroyed.

18. Kevin Murray, 41, male, was killed while swimming in a canal in Port Charlotte on July 15, 2005. The 12' 2" male alligator that attacked him was removed and destroyed.

19. Yovoy Suarez-Jimenez, 28, female, was killed by an alligator at the North New River Canal in Sunrise on May 10, 2006. Circumstances of the attack are uncertain because no witnesses were present. The 9' 6" male alligator that attacked her was caught and destroyed.

20. Judy Cooper, 42, female, was killed by an alligator in a canal in the East Lake Woodlands subdivision in Oldsmar on May 13, 2006. Circumstances of the attack are uncertain because of no witnesses. The 8' 5" female alligator responsible for the attack was caught and destroyed.

21. Annmarie Campbell, 23, female, was seized and drowned by an alligator in Juniper Run in the Ocala National Forest on May 14, 2006 while snorkeling. Campbell had separated from others in her party, and was alone when the attack occurred. Companions found her in the jaws of the alligator less than 30 minutes after the attack and forced the alligator to release her by assaulting its head. The 11' 5" male alligator was captured four days later and destroyed.

22. Justo Antonio Padron, 36, male was seized and drowned by an alligator as he was swimming across a pond at the Miccosukee Indian reservation in west Miami on November 8, 2007. Eyewitnesses watched as Padron disappeared under water, while trying to elude police. His body was later recovered at the bottom of the pond by divers. A 9'4" alligator and a 7'6" alligator were removed from the pond, the larger of which was believed to be responsible for the attack.

23. James Okkerse, 61, male, was killed while snorkeling in Blue Spring Run in Orange City on Oct. 19, 2015. The 12' ½" male alligator responsible for the attack was captured and destroyed.

24. Lane Graves, 2, male, was killed at the Seven Seas Lagoon in Orange County on June 14, 2016, while playing near the water's edge. Six alligators were subsequently captured and destroyed including two alligators in the 7-8 foot size range in close proximity to the location of the attack. Based on the totality of the evidence, experts are confident that the alligator responsible for the attack was removed.

For additional information concerning alligators, please contact the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program at 1-866-FWC-GATOR (392-4286).