

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** George Warthen, Director, Hunting and Game Management  
**Date:** May 14, 2020  
**Subject:** Final Rule – Private Lands Alligator Egg Collections

---

**Purpose:**

Obtain final approval for draft rule amendments to Rule 68A-25.032, Florida Administrative Code (FAC), that would increase access to the alligator egg resource on permitted properties.

**Why:**

Program participants, other interested stakeholders, and staff are seeking program improvements that would provide more flexibility to landowners managing the alligator resource on their property while ensuring sustainability of permitted activities.

**Top Points:**

- 1) Program participants would like to collect eggs from all alligator nests observed on a permitted property.
- 2) Currently, participants are authorized to collect 50% of the alligator nests observed, which is based on research indicating this rate of collection is sustainable.
- 3) Enhanced monitoring of alligator nesting will help ensure higher collection rates are sustainable. Collections will be reduced to 50% of all nests if surveys show declines of 20% or greater from baseline figures.

**Affected Parties:** Alligator farmers, private landowners, and Certified Wildlife Biologists involved in egg collections under the Private Lands Alligator Management Program.

**Summary:** Staff has engaged private lands alligator management program participants (landowners, permittees, Certified Wildlife Biologists) and other interested stakeholders to assess any needed program changes to allow collection of more than 50% of observed nests. The following changes to increase participation options and improve accountability were identified.

- 1) Allowing the collection of all observed alligator nests from a qualifying property, which will be monitored for sustainability by comparing annual collections against an established average of nests from recent nest surveys.
- 2) Providing more options to participants for how nest collection quotas are established.
- 3) Approving other people (beyond Certified Wildlife Biologists) to conduct alligator nest surveys who meet specific experience requirements.
- 4) Requiring participants to immediately notify the FWC when possession of retained eggs is transferred to a person not listed on the egg collection permit.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Approval of the proposed final rule as advertised following the February 2020 Commission meeting.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

George Warthen, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management  
Harry J. Dutton, Game Management and Public Hunting Section Leader