

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From:** Diane Eggeman, Director, Hunting and Game Management  
**Date:** December 6, 2017  
**Subject:** Alligator Management Egg Collection on Public Waters

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**Purpose:**

Provide the Commission a brief overview of the Alligator Management Program and an update on the ongoing program review activities with an emphasis on limited participation in alligator egg collections on public waters.

**Summary:**

The Alligator Management Program (AMP) was implemented in 1988 and has seven major components designed to provide for recreational and commercial use of the alligator resource, while addressing public safety concerns: 1) the Statewide Alligator Harvest Program, 2) the Statewide Nuisance Alligator Program, 3) the Private Lands Alligator Management Program, 4) the Alligator Farming Program, 5) the Public Waters Alligator Egg Collection Program, 6) the Statewide Alligator Hatchling Collection Program, and 7) the Crocodile Response Program.

As part of FWC's business culture practice of evaluating programs for continuous improvement, a natural-resources consulting firm with specialties in policy development and review was selected to complete an independent program evaluation of the AMP. This review evaluated more specifically: 1) program purpose, goals, and objectives; 2) program elements; 3) staffing and funding; and 4) allocation of the alligator resource. Using the Wildlife Governance Principles as a guide, the program review focused on whether the program is contemporary, effective, efficient, flexible, and consistent; ensures sustainability of and equitable access to the alligator resource; and reflects a high level of transparency, fairness, and stakeholder involvement. The review was completed in July 2017. Although the review concluded that the AMP was well developed and adaptive, a number of opportunities for improvement were identified. Those program improvement opportunities are being evaluated and, as possible, incorporated into annual work plans. Any substantive AMP changes would be provided in future updates.

In addition to this external review, AMP staff has engaged Alligator Farm Program participants and other stakeholders in a review to assess any needed farming program improvements to address concerns. The focus of participant and stakeholder concerns are: 1) expanding the limited participant access to alligator eggs collected from public waters (currently limited to 30 qualifying alligator farmers); 2) fairly allocating the public waters alligator eggs to participating farms; 3) instituting a preference point system to award newly created participation slots; 4) increasing the number of public waters alligator eggs available for collection; and 5) the AMP committing to reassessing participation opportunities every five years. Staff has held several meetings with participants and stakeholders, including limited-30 farmers and farmers who are not part of that group. Regarding possible program improvements, a consensus within the alligator industry appears close at hand. Next steps include continuing stakeholder meetings in an effort to reach consensus on the primary issues, publically vet any possible changes, and bring an update and any rule changes (if needed) back to the Commission in time to be in effect for the 2018 egg collection season.

**Staff Recommendation:**

This presentation is for informational purposes and any direction the Commission may want to provide staff.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Harry J. Dutton, Game Management and Public Hunting Section Leader