



February 4, 2010

To: Kings Point Boards of Directors

From: Dana Lin Phillips
Master Association Manager

Subject: 2010 Cold Snap – Fish and Alligators

January air temperatures anywhere in Florida do not generally drop below 50°F (10°C), but in January we observed water temperatures below 50°F in South Florida. Nearly all of our non-native tropical fish species are stressed when water temperatures drop below about 55°F (13°C), so we expected to see record fish kills throughout the state during these times. Tilapia, peacock bass and other cichlid species are particularly vulnerable to cold temperatures. Additionally, any fish species can be stressed by temperatures that drop more quickly than about 1°C per day. Expect to see dead fish despite the warming trend we are experiencing, because it may take several days for the fish to float to the surface. In most cases, carrion-eating birds will eat a few dead fish, however if fish remain along the shoreline for more than a day, please call my office. We will have the fish removed by the lake maintenance technician.

Alligators are a natural part of Florida's wetlands' ecosystems. Spring is approaching. Alligators begin eating again when water temperatures warm to above 70 degrees. Large alligators feed most actively during the evening hours. Alligators that are larger than six feet present the greatest hazard to humans and pets. Smaller gators, four feet or less in length, pose little threat to people, but their bite contains bacteria that can cause severe infection. **As a precaution, DON'T swim, walk dogs, or allow small children, along the shoreline of waters that are known to contain large alligators, especially at night or at dusk.**

March is alligator mating season. Because alligators sometimes need to move great distances to meet their survival needs, they often show up in undesirable locations such as driveways, garages, backyards. Your property is usually a temporary resting place for the animal. More than likely the alligator will leave on its own in search of more suitable habitat.

Alligators that are large (longer than four feet) are classified as a "nuisance" if they are actively causing problems or posing a threat to public safety. When the State receives a call, the Licensed Trapper is automatically called to the property. The State does not allow relocation of large alligators; the reptile is euthanized and its meat and hide are harvested. However, smaller alligators can be relocated, at the discretion of the Trapper. People should not report an alligator that is simply sunning itself on a bank or swimming in a lake, just doing what alligators normally do. Alligators are territorial and have favorite areas for sunning, so you may see the same one in the same spot every day. They may hold their mouths open to regulate their body temperature but that is not an aggressive act. Non-aggressive gators will normally move away from people, when approached. But, to be safe, NEVER get closer than 15 feet (5 meters) to an alligator. If it hisses or opens its mouth in defense, you should back away even farther. If there's no immediate danger, the best thing to do is leave the alligator alone. For more information and regulations regarding Florida wildlife, go to www.myfwc.com.

Please remind all residents and visitors that feeding alligators in Florida is against the State law. Hand-fed alligators lose their natural fear and see people as a food source. Violators should be reported.