



# Know Before You Go

## Preparing to Visit a National Forest

### Alligators

On the Atlantic Coast, alligators can be found from Florida to coastal North Carolina. Alligators are also found in the Upper Coastal Plain, which includes the Central Savannah River Area of Georgia and South Carolina. As top predators, they are important in controlling prey numbers. Using their tails and snouts to wallow out the muck and push out the vegetation, large alligators construct and maintain gator holes. During the dry season, these gator holes remain filled with water and create a refuge when the surrounding shallow water has dried up. These water holes are an important means of survival for many other animals. Be careful around alligators, they can attack you.



### Safety Checklist

- Alligators should never be approached.
- Don't swim in areas inhabited by alligators.
- Avoid swimming at night or dusk.
- Avoid shorelines with thick vegetation.
- Never feed, entice or approach an alligator.
- Never throw food, such as bait, in the water or on shore.
- Do not allow pets to swim in areas with alligators. Pets resemble the alligator's natural prey, and may attract them.
- It is illegal to possess, handle or harass an alligator.
- Stay in restricted, designated swimming areas.

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