

News Release

A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Closure of Lee Road Boat Ramps to Bank Fishing Due to Visitors Feeding Alligators

A number of nuisance and aggressive alligators have recently been observed at the Lee Road Boat Ramp on the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Most alligators are, by nature, nervous of human activity and will usually avoid close contact with people. However, if alligators are fed by people, some will lose their natural fear and will begin to approach when they see people. These alligators can be very dangerous and are termed “nuisance gators”. Anglers feeding alligators while they are fishing is one of the main contributing factors to this problem, which has created a threat to the safety of our visitors. Unfortunately, several nuisance alligators have been removed and euthanized within the last month. The maximum penalty for feeding alligators could be up to one year in jail and a \$100,000 fine, as well as the loss of the alligator.

Effective Thursday, September 27, 2018 an area 100 yards south of the Lee Road Boat Ramp to 100 yards north of the Lee Road Boat Ramp will be closed to bank fishing until Friday, November 2, 2018. The bank fishing closure includes the fishing platform, boat dock, and boat ramp areas. The Lee Road Boat Ramp area will remain open to non-fishing uses such as hiking, biking, canoeing, photography, wildlife observation, and boat launching. The A, B, and C impoundments will remain open to bank fishing during this time.

On national wildlife refuges, wildlife comes first. Refuges are set aside for the protection of wildlife and their habitat first and foremost, however, we also want to provide a variety of safe outdoor experiences for visitors to observe and photograph wildlife, hunt and fish, and learn about the natural resources through environmental education and interpretation. Please call 1-800-307-5789 to report instances of feeding alligators and other wildlife violations while at the refuge.

The Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge was established under a License Agreement with the South Florida Water Management District in 1951 as an inviolate sanctuary for migratory birds. The vision of the refuge is to serve as an outstanding showcase for ecosystem management that restores, protects, and enhances a portion of the unique north Everglades biological community. This public asset provides for the enjoyment and enhanced quality of life for present and future generations. To learn more about the refuge visit: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/arm_loxahatchee/ Connect with our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ARMLoxahatcheeNWR/>

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.

