

Popular Dog Park on Gator Alert

Several alligators have visited Fleet Peeples Dog Park, on the shores of Lake Baldwin in South Florida, in recent weeks.

Mark Edward Nero

The city of Winter Park, Fla., is warning dog owners to use caution after an alligator was recently captured at a popular dog park.

Due to sightings at the 23-acre Fleet Peeples Park, located on the shores of Lake Baldwin, the city has put up signs instructing people never to leave their dogs or small children unattended.

The park is hugely popular among dog owners due to it being the only one in the city where dogs are permitted to roam leash free during the week. On weekends, when leashes are required during certain hours, the park often attracts hundreds of dogs and their owners.

Winter Park spokeswoman Clarissa Howard said that a gator over 4 feet in length was spotted on April 5 and captured a day later, but there remains a possibility of more being in the area, and that warning signs will remain up for the time being.

Howard also said that the captured alligator probably became more aggressive after being fed by humans. Feeding gators is dangerous, she said, because the creatures then tend to lose their fear of humans, and are particularly drawn to small dogs. So never feed a gator, she said.

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