**American Alligator**

**Native to:** From Florida over to Texas North into Arkansas and North Carolina

**Predators:**  When they are young wadding birds, turtles, other alligators none when they are full grown.

**Food:**  When they are young small fish, frogs, crustaceans, worms, insects as they are adults anything they want.

**Facts:**.

* Male American Alligators can grow to between 11 to 15 ft in length and weigh over 900 lb females are much smaller generally ranging between 8 and 9 feet and no more than 350 lbs.
* They one of the only two living species of Extant species of Alligator on the planet the other being the smaller Chinese Alligator.
* Alligators like most crocodilian species have extremely powerful bites producing up to and over 2000psi when they bite down.
* They are one of the few crocodilian species that can handle colder temperature swings. They can even handle being in freezing waters for a short period of time as long as the end of their nose is not frozen.
* They are apex predators of the Southern U.S. they have no natural predators but humans when they are full sized.
* Alligators are only the cause of about 3 to 5 deaths a year in the united states.
* At the beginning of the 20th Century they were hunted for their skin and their meat almost into extinction. Since being placed on the endangered species list in the early 1970’s their numbered have rebounded amazingly to the point that there is regulated hunting of them in certain parts of their range now.

**Defense Mechanisms:**

* Size
* Jaws/Bite
* Tail Whipping

**Reproduction:**

Females lay a clutch of eggs between 20 to 50 eggs during the spring months in their ranges in the wild.

**Lifespan:** Can live for about 50 to 60 yrs in the wild and their much older specimens in Captivity

**Handling Tips**

Anastasia can be a little feisty to grab at first but once you have her secured from the base of her and neck she is very calm and easy to work with she must be taped with electrical tape around her jaws when out at a program. Ally should only be handled by experienced handlers