

Lafayette

P A S S A G E

What About the Gators?

We humans have shared Florida's waterways with alligators for centuries. But for safety's sake:

- Don't swim in the lakes.
- Alligators favor small prey: closely supervise your children and pets.
- Never feed alligators. "Fed" alligators may become aggressive.
- What to do if you find yourself boat to snout with an alligator? Stop, back up, and give the animal time to swim away.



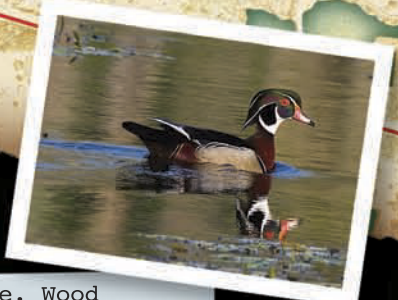
Enjoy the many pairs of osprey nesting and fishing in the Lafayette chain of lakes.



Piney Z Lake is the most productive of Lafayette's segments for fishing. In 1996, it was pumped dry, exposing its bottom for the first time in half a century. Two feet of accumulated muck were scraped off the bottom and sculpted into five spoil islands and six earthen "fishing fingers." Now bream and bass can construct the beds they need for egg-laying in the enhanced, sandy bottom.



Iridescent purple gallinules commonly nest on Lake Lafayette. Watch for them skating from lily pad to lily pad, picking aquatic insects from undersides of floating leaves.



Waterfowl hunting is a traditional activity on Lake Lafayette. Wood ducks, blue- and green-winged teal, or ring-necked ducks are prized. Duck hunting takes place in late September, and from mid-November through January. During these times, be aware that hunters may be about, especially at dawn and dusk. Wear brightly-colored clothing if you paddle during hunting seasons.



Keep your eyes open for endangered wood storks, Florida's largest native wading bird. The L. Kirk Edwards Wildlife and Environmental Area was established to protect and sustain the Lake Lafayette wood stork colony (the largest in northwest Florida).