

Pair of rare albino alligators hatched in Florida

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It's believed that there are fewer than 200 albino alligators in the world, and a pair recently hatched at Wild Florida, a gator and wildlife safari park.

The albino reptiles, one of nature's rarities, have skin that is completely white, not the typical green. Wild Florida showed off the baby gators on social media.

"It'll shock you when you see how cool they look," said Sam Haught, owner and co-founder of Wild Florida. "And it helps people gain a little deeper interest in alligators instead of seeing them as a mindless eating machine."

The newborns were part of an 18-egg batch from their aptly named albino parents Snowflake, a 27-year-old, 8-foot-long female, and Blizzard, a 16-year-old, 10-foot-long male.

It's the second pair of albino babies born to Snowflake and Blizzard, who were acquired in 2017 by Wild Florida.

The facility said the newborns are only the second set of albino alligators born at an attraction anywhere in the world. "In the wild, albinos would almost never survive," Haught said.

The hatchlings were placed in an incubator on April 30 along with the other eggs to increase their chances of survival. Average incubation time for [alligator](#) eggs is 60 days, depending on the temperature of the nest.

Haught said it is tough for albino alligators to survive in the wild for myriad reasons, including the fact they have little or no camouflage due to their lack of pigmentation.

"The reason why there's so few of them is because if you can imagine a 6-inch glowing white lizard swimming around in the swamp, it's like Skittles," Haught said. "Just about everything eats [baby] alligators in the swamp, from birds to fish and even other alligators, and sometimes even the mom."

Albino alligators need extra care because they could die from overexposure to the sun, Haught said.

"Because of their albino skin they get sunburned really easily. And they don't know they're albino. So, they'll sit out in the sun all day and get sunburned and kill themselves, basically."

Albino alligators must live in a climate-controlled environment.

"We have to make sure that they stay warm in the cooler months here in Florida, and also don't get too hot in the warmer months," Haught said.

Wild Florida also houses its newborn albino gators in isolation away from their mothers.

"We can't actually leave the babies in with the mother because she would accidentally eat them," he said. "That would be tragic."

Albino alligators also have poor eyesight, Haught said.

Albino alligators were bred infrequently in Louisiana years ago, Haught said. The albino population with its roots in Louisiana are suspected to have spawned from the mating of two non-albino alligators.

The albinos that were found in the area were typically sold to zoos or private collectors, he said.

Haught said the surviving albino gators nowadays are born in captivity.

The [albino](#) alligators born at the facility last year live by themselves in an 800-gallon aquarium in the gift shop. Eventually, they'll move to another exhibit and the newborns will occupy the aquarium.

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