

by Ellen Lawrence

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New York, New York

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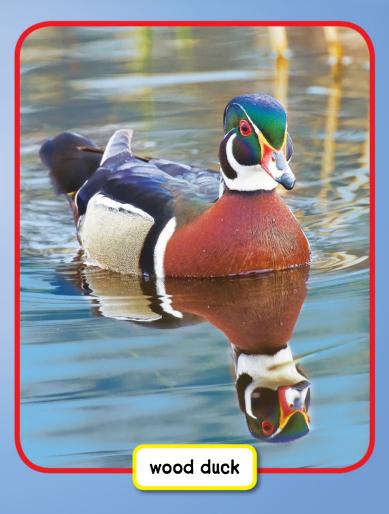
Contents

Mealtime!	4
An Alligator's World	6
Meet an American Alligator	8
Swamp Life I	0
On the Hunt I	2
Gator Holes I	4
Huge Nests I	6
Squeaking Babies I	8
Growing Up in the Swamp 2	0
Science Lab	22
Science Words 2	23
Index 2	24
Read More	24
Learn More Online2	24
About the Author 2	24

Mealfime!

It's evening in the Atchafalaya (*uh*-chaf-uh-LYE-uh) **Swamp**, and a duck is paddling in a shallow lake.

- Suddenly, an American alligator shoots out of the water.
- It snaps at the bird with its huge jaws.
- The terrified duck flaps its wings and escapes.
- Slowly, the alligator sinks back beneath the water to wait for its next meal.





An alligator is a type of **reptile**. This group of animals includes crocodiles, turtles, lizards, and snakes.

American alligator



An Allgator's World

American alligators live in warm areas in the southern United States.

They make their homes in rivers, lakes, and swampy areas like the Atchafalaya.

In a swamp, most of the land is covered by water.

Alligators spend a lot of time in the water, but they also live on damp, muddy land.





The American alligator is the largest reptile in the United States.

20

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How would you describe an American alligator to someone who has never seen one?

Ware Kanto

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