

**NATION**

North Carolina

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# Huge 400-pound alligator captured in North Carolina on 'suspicion of being a dinosaur'

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USA TODAY

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A massive offender with "scaly intentions" was nabbed by authorities after he was spotted loitering "near the double yellow line" on a roadway in North Carolina.

"Pepe the Gator," weighing almost 400 pounds and measuring 10 feet in length was caught loitering off the pavement in Jacksonville, around 120 miles south of Raleigh, with witnesses saying, "he was just chilling and snapping (and) clearly ignoring the 'no loitering or lounging on roadways' sign," Onslow County Sheriff's Office said in a [post on Facebook](#).

## A dinosaur?

The prehistoric perp "has been cited for Suspicion of Being a Dinosaur without Proper Papers, Public Loitering with Intent to Sunbathe, and Obstructing Traffic," the sheriff's office said.

Pepe was eventually captured and taken to a boat ramp on Camp Geiger, a few miles away, and released back into the wild on the same day, sheriff's office spokesperson Trevor Dunnell told USA TODAY.

No injuries were reported, except for Pepe's pride when he "refused to be cuffed," authorities said.

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## Alligators are common in North Carolina

American alligators occur naturally in North Carolina, according to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, and can be found inhabiting bay lakes, rivers, creeks, marshes, swamps and ponds. The state is the "northern extent of the alligator's range, and they generally become less common as you move from south to north along the NC coast," says the wildlife commission.

Adult male alligators can weigh up to 500 pounds and can reach 13 feet in length, the wildlife commission said, while females generally grow to less than 9 feet and weigh up to 200 pounds. These wild animals are shy and secretive in nature, according to the commission.

Feeding, touching, harming, harassing, or poaching an alligator is illegal in North Carolina, according to the [North Carolina Wildlife Federation](#). The department recommends being vigilant in areas where alligators have been spotted and maintaining a safe distance of at least 50 feet in case of an encounter.

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