



Bald Head Association ~ “The voice for BHI property owners”

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# BHI Questions?

## What If I See Someone Fishing in a BHI Lagoon/Pond? Call 911!

The “No Fishing” and “No Feeding” signs at BHI lagoons/ponds are there for a reason. With alligators, turtles and fish populating these fresh-water lagoons, fishing does two things — endangers wildlife from leftover fishing gear and is perceived by alligators as a source of food (they don’t know the difference between a lure and an alluring tasty bite).

The alligator in this accompanying photo would not have been able to eat without human assistance, due to discarded fishing gear getting trapped in its mouth. Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) is the agency licensed to handle a situation such as this. WRC’s John Henry Harrelson, along with the BHI Conservancy, helped rescue this alligator.

Fishing is viewed by an alligator as feeding, no matter what lure is used. Feeding any wildlife, including turtles, is unlawful in North Carolina. Just because someone thinks they can toss bread to the turtles, alligators don’t understand that the bread isn’t meant for them. Here’s the kicker. If alligators perceive humans as a source of food, this increases the chance of teaching negative behavior. WRC’s Coexist with Alligators fact sheet (available at [www.baldheadassociation.com](http://www.baldheadassociation.com); click on “Life on BHI,” then “Wildlife on BHI”) states, “Alligators can become a safety issue if they are habituated to being fed by humans. It is unlawful in North Carolina for anyone to intentionally feed an alligator. To ensure alligators keep their secretive and shy behavior, DO NOT feed them, no matter where they are seen.”



Photo by John Henry Harrelson, Coastal Regional Wildlife Biologist, Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC).

Too many people ignore these postings, which affects everyone on Bald Head Island. You, your guests or renters may only be on BHI for a short stay, but these alligators are on BHI 24/7/365. Think one person ignoring the signs and not obeying the laws doesn’t matter? Multiply one person thinking that the rules don’t apply to them times one hundred — just in one season in one year. For the good of Bald Head Island, property owners are strongly encouraged to educate their guests and renters about NC law and Village ordinances regarding no fishing and no feeding in any lagoons/ponds on BHI.

Now that you understand the importance, here’s what to do if you see anyone fishing in a BHI lagoon/pond — call 911. Tell the dispatch operator that you are on Bald Head Island. They will alert BHI’s Public Safety Department. Keep in mind, if the Public Safety Department has personnel handling other emergency calls, your call will be prioritized as required. Calling 911 creates a log and report from which Public Safety can track, gain better understanding of call types/frequencies/timing and use for training. Do not approach someone who is fishing illegally yourself. Public Safety responders are trained to deal with the situation; you are not.

And by the way, all lagoons/ponds are located on private property. If you’re fishing, you’re trespassing. BHA, The Villas and the BHI Club have authorized Public Safety to ticket anyone violating the No Fishing/No Feeding/No Boating/No Swimming policy in the lagoons/ponds with a trespassing citation. Public Safety is focused on educating violators, with a possible citation and/or arrest, if warranted. Note that the no swimming policy includes dogs, who should NEVER be allowed in the lagoons. Let’s all keep our fur babies safe!