

MEDIA RELEASE

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Flint RiverQuarium Welcomes Albino Alligator June 18

A special visitor will debut at the Flint RiverQuarium this Thursday evening. The highlight of this month's Third Thursday program, from 5 to 8 p.m., will be a newly acquired four-and-a-half-foot rare albino alligator. The RiverQuarium's ghostly guest is one of fewer than 100 albino alligators in the world. It is on loan from the National Mississippi River Museum in Dubuque, Iowa, and will join the RiverQuarium's other juvenile alligators for a stay of several months.

Albinism occurs naturally in the wild and in many different animals. It is caused when the pigment cells that produce black coloring don't exist or don't work, so the skin may look off-white or even yellow. True albinos have red or pink eyes because blood shows through the colorless irises. Albino alligators cannot survive in the wild because they cannot camouflage themselves with their surroundings. Also, because the lack of pigment in their skin leaves them extremely photosensitive, they are easily sunburned. The alligator exhibit at the Flint RiverQuarium will be adapted with shade cloth to accommodate the sensitive visitor.

As part of this summer's Australia-themed Third Thursday program, the entire Flint RiverQuarium facility will be open until 8 p.m. on Thursday, June 18, with a reduced admission price of \$5 per person after 5 p.m. After-hours activities include live-animal presentations and hatchery feedings, a craft for children, two screenings of the latest large-format film, *Australia: Land Beyond Time*, at the Imagination Theater, a 10% discount on new and renewing memberships and a 20% discount on all Gift Shop purchases. Third Thursdays continues July 16.

The Flint RiverQuarium is southwest Georgia's premier aquarium, featuring more than 1,000 animals that call the Flint River watershed home. The Flint RiverQuarium is located at 101 Pine Avenue in downtown Albany, Georgia. Regular operating hours are Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

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