**The Florida Alligator**

Artist Statement

**By Stephani Cintora**

I chose to paint the Florida Alligator because it plays an important role in the wetlands environments. They keep the balance in the web of life in fresh water and estuary ecosystems.

Alligators sit at the top of the food chain and are predators that help keep other animal populations in balance. By digging holes and leaving trails through the marshes, they create pools for fish and marine invertebrates, lizards, and spiders. As you can see, they are necessary in our environment.

**The Florida Key Deer**

Artist Statement

**By Elizabeth Mendoza**

I painted the Florida Key Deer because it is important to its ecosystem. They eat more than 150 species of plants keeping their environment trimmed and encourages new growth. The most important part of their diet are the mangrove trees and thatch palm.

Their feeding activity can directly and indirectly affect many plants and animals in their habitat.