

LOUISIANA'S ALLIGATOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

2008-2009 ANNUAL REPORT



presented to

**THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL
RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT AND THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**

Prepared by

**The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries,
Office of Wildlife, Coastal and Nongame Resources Division
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Introduction

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (Department) manages the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) as a commercial, renewable natural resource. The Department's sustained use program is one of the world's most recognizable examples of a wildlife conservation success story. Louisiana's program has been used as a model for managing various crocodylian species throughout the world. Since the inception of the Department's program in 1972, over 800,000 wild alligators have been harvested, over 6.5 million alligator eggs have been collected, and over 3.5 million farm raised alligators have been sold bringing in millions of dollars of revenue to landowners, trappers and farmers. Conservative estimates have valued these resources at over \$700,000,000, providing significant, direct economic benefit to Louisiana.

This report, per R.S. 56:279 (E), provides an historical perspective; outlines the basis and philosophy of the Department's management program; reviews the federal government's oversight and approval role for management of the alligator in the United States; discusses wild, farm and nuisance alligator programs; lists research activities; and reviews the revenue and expenditure information associated with the management program and the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund. A separate report, furnished by the Department, details the activities and expenditures of the Alligator Advisory Council.

Historical Perspective

Alligators have been used commercially for their valuable leather since the 1800s. This harvest was generally unregulated throughout the 1900s, until a gradual population decline resulted in severely reduced harvests in the early 1950s. In 1962, the alligator season in Louisiana was closed, and research studies, focusing on basic life history factors, were undertaken which led to development of a biologically sound management program. Of tremendous importance was the establishment of a rigorous survey method to estimate and monitor population trends.



From 1962 through August 1972, alligators were totally protected. During this time a myriad of state and federal laws regulating harvest distribution and allocation of take, methods of harvest and possession, transportation and export of live alligators, alligator skins and their products was enacted. Similarly, in 1970 the Louisiana legislature recognized that the alligator's value, age at sexual maturity, and vulnerability to hunting required unique consideration and passed legislation providing for a closely regulated experimental commercial harvest.

The goals of the Department's alligator program are to manage and conserve Louisiana's alligators as part of the state's wetland ecosystem, provide benefits to the species, its habitat and the other species of fish and wildlife associated with alligators. The basic philosophy was to develop a sustained use management program which, through regulated harvest, would provide long term benefits to the survival of the species, maintain its habitats, and provide significant economic benefits to the citizens of the state. Since Louisiana's coastal alligator habitats are primarily privately owned (approximately 81%), our sustained use management program provides direct economic benefit and incentive to private landowners, and alligator hunters who lease land, to protect the alligator and to protect, maintain, and enhance the alligator's wetland habitats. One of the most critical components of the management program was to develop the complex set of regulations which required individual applications for each property to be considered for tag allocation, landowner permission, proof of ownership and detailed review of habitat quality related to alligator abundance, all of which combined to equitably distribute the harvest in relation to population levels.

During the period of total protection (1962-1971) alligator populations increased quickly and by 1972 the Department was ready to initiate its new sustained use management program. On September 5, 1972 the alligator season was reopened in Cameron Parish and a total of 59 hunters harvested 1,350 alligators. The season was expanded to include Vermilion Parish in 1973, Calcasieu Parish in 1975, an additional nine coastal parishes in 1979 and statewide in 1981 (Table 1). In 2008, 35,624 wild alligators were harvested by 2,360 licensed alligator hunters.

Oversight by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Five years after Louisiana closed the alligator harvest season, the alligator was listed on the federal Endangered Species Act in 1967. At this time the alligator was considered an endangered species throughout its range. In March of 1974, Louisiana petitioned the Secretary of the Interior, requesting that populations of the alligator in Louisiana be removed from the list of threatened and endangered species in Cameron, Vermilion and Calcasieu Parishes. In subsequent years, similar petitions sought to reclassify the alligator, first in nine additional coastal parishes in 1978 and then statewide in 1981. Each of these petitions was based on results of detailed scientific study and the demonstrated success of the early harvest programs.

Export of alligator skins and products out of the United States is regulated by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This treaty, which became effective in 1975, regulates the international trade in protected

species; its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) administers CITES requirements and controls for the United States. The species covered by CITES are listed on one of three Appendices, according to the degree of protection needed. Currently, the alligator is listed on Appendix II of CITES, because of their similarity of appearance to other crocodilians that are truly endangered or threatened.

In order to fulfill CITES requirements, the USFWS through a series of rulemakings, has developed a complex set of requirements with which the individual states, including Louisiana, must comply in order to be granted export approval for harvested alligators skins and products. The most critical component in these requirements is that the Department must certify, on an annual basis, that the harvest programs we administer will not be detrimental to the survival of the species. The “no detriment” finding is predicated on our assessment of the current condition of the alligator population, including trends, population estimates or indices, data on total harvest and harvest distribution and habitat suitability evaluation. Additionally, the management program must provide for a rigorously controlled harvest with calculated harvest level objectives. All alligators and eggs harvested must be taken from specifically identified properties and all hides individually tagged (with approved, serially marked CITES export tags furnished by the USFWS). The USFWS requires strict accountability for each tag allocated to the harvester, requiring all unused tags be returned at the close of the season.

Wild Alligator Management Program

In 1970, the Louisiana State Legislature (Act 550) gave the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries full authority to regulate the alligator season in Louisiana. Since that time, the Department has annually inventoried alligator nest production throughout coastal Louisiana in order to assess the status of alligator populations (Figure 1). Results of annual alligator nest surveys are compiled to provide estimates of nest density (acres per nest) by parish and by habitat type (brackish, intermediate, or fresh). Private and publicly owned lands (State and Federal Refuges, and Wildlife Management Areas) are compiled separately.



In June/July 2008, over 2,800 miles of transects were flown, surveying 135,000 acres of wetland habitat. The sampling intensity covers approximately 3.4% of 2.3 million acres of private coastal wetlands, and 3.4-10.8% of some 622,000 acres of public coastal wetlands. During summer 2008 we estimated that 43,437 alligator nests were present in the coastal marsh habitats. Coastal habitats have significantly recovered from the devastating hurricanes in 2005 and the subsequent drought in 2006.

Nest density and alligator population estimates are combined with a detailed review of harvest parameters and a general assessment of environmental factors observed during each survey to determine final harvest level objectives. Over 50 individual alligator harvest quotas are developed annually in order to distribute the harvest in relation to alligator abundance in the various habitats across the state. A listing of the 2008 wild alligator harvest quotas is appended as Exhibit 1. In the best habitat one alligator is harvested per 55 acres, while in the poorer habitats one alligator is harvested per 500 acres.

Alligator hunters annually submit a description of the property on which they have permission to hunt. The Department assesses the habitat quantity and quality and determines the number of alligators that can be harvested by each hunter. This methodology ensures that alligators are harvested in proportion to their population levels and that the harvest will not negatively impact populations at any location. The currently approved quota system represents an allowable wild alligator harvest, which coupled with the state authorized wild alligator egg harvest program represents a level of population utilization currently unparalleled in the world of crocodilian management.

Under this sustained use alligator program, over 800,000 wild alligators have been harvested since 1972 (Table 2). The annual harvest takes place in September to specifically target the adult males and immature segments of the alligator population. Adult females, which typically inhabit interior marshes in September, would be more susceptible to harvest if the season was scheduled during the spring or summer. During the 2008 wild season, a total of 31,774 alligators were harvested, averaging 7.5 feet in length (Figure 2), with an estimated value of \$11.5 million.

In 1999, the Department initiated the "Bonus Alligator Harvest Program" designed to better utilize alligators in the 4'-5' size classes. Starting in 1999, trappers were issued an additional quantity of "bonus" tags to be used on alligators less than 72 inches in length. The number of "bonus" tags issued is approximately 12% of the trapper's regular quota. In 2008, we harvested an additional 3,850 bonus alligators which averaged 6.0 feet in length, valued at nearly \$1.2 million.

Each year the alligator program staff works closely with landowners and alligator hunters to provide assistance regarding alligator management on their respective properties. We have provided numerous habitat base maps to landowners for their use in participation of both the wild and alligator egg harvest programs. Harvest reports summarizing average lengths and size class frequency distribution of harvested alligators are available upon request.

Farming/Ranching Program

Early alligator farms in Louisiana were generally small, family owned operations; and often run more as a hobby/curiosity than a commercial enterprise. Extensive studies done by Department biologists showed alligators could be efficiently cultured and grown in captivity. Egg ranching (collection of alligator eggs from the wild) proved more economical and successful than captive breeding; private egg collections were first permitted, on a limited basis, in 1986.



Louisiana's alligator ranching program increased dramatically between 1986 and 1990. To ensure wild alligators were not depleted as a result of egg collections, and to ensure future recruitment of sub-adult alligators to the breeding population, the Department currently requires a quantity of juvenile alligators equal to 12% of the eggs hatched by the rancher be returned to the wild within two years of hatching.

A variable return rate was established based on the estimated survival rates for wild juvenile alligators. Using the relationship of survival between size classes, we extrapolated return rates based on expected survival rates for alligators from 36 to 60 inches. More alligators must be returned if the average total length is smaller, and fewer animals are required if the average length is larger. Close monitoring of the survival of these alligators will continue for many years.

Enormous effort has been made by the Department to monitor the fate of the alligators released to the wild. In 2008-2009 we released a total of 54,584 farm raised alligators into the wild to maintain wild alligator populations. Each alligator released is measured, sexed, tail-notched, tagged and recorded prior to release to the same area where the farmers had originally harvested the eggs. Although it is costly to the ranchers to fulfill the "returns to the wild" obligation, it is an integral necessity of the program, considering the large number of eggs

collected. In 2008, 530,579 wild alligator eggs were collected producing 459,887 hatchling alligators (Table 3).



Currently there are 59 licensed farms in Louisiana. On farm inventory as of December 2008 was 731,909 alligators (Figure 3). During the 2007 tag year (September 2007 through August 2008) a total of 305,086 farm alligators were harvested, averaging 24.79 cm belly width (4.08 feet in length) (Figure 4). The total estimated value of these alligators was \$59.0 million (Table 4). Although the data are still being compiled as skins are exported out of Louisiana, an estimated 290,000 farm-raised alligators were harvested during the 2008 tag year.

Louisiana's wild and farm alligator skins are exported throughout the world (Figure 5). Approximately 84% of the wild harvested alligator skins are exported to France, Italy and Singapore. Nearly 97% of the farm alligator skins produced in Louisiana are exported abroad.

Beginning late winter and continuing into spring and summer of 2009, worldwide economic recession significantly impacted world trade in raw and tanned alligator skins and manufactured products. Price and demand for farm-raised alligator skins dropped precipitously during this period. The drop in price and demand coincided with the economic recession and with tanners implementing stricter quality standards. Throughout this period many farmers were unable to sell any skins; several farmers exported skins for crust tanning and later sale. Two of the largest alligator skin tanneries in the world made recommendations to the Department and alligator industry participants, urging actions which would act to reduce existing inventories of both live on-farm alligators and alligator skins. As of June 2009 many farmers decided to forego egg collections in July 2009 thereby reducing on-farm inventories of live alligators during the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

In order to better meet the needs of the alligator industry, the Department sponsors meetings for all segments of the industry (farmers, hunters, and landowners) which gives the industry participants an opportunity to prioritize and discuss the current issues facing the state's alligator industry. The Department also created a specific e-mail address (LAalligatorprogram@wlf.louisiana.gov) for the alligator program to provide additional and easier methods for alligator industry participants and the general public to ask questions and request information. Alligator program staff continues to compile and update contact information, including e-mail addresses, which are used to promptly notify participants of available and arising program information. In addition to the on-site visits, the staff communicates with farmers on a regular basis to schedule releases, hide inspections, live animal inspections, coordinate farm transfers, alligator egg collection permits, and to issue and follow up on CITES harvest tags.

In the spring of 2007 the Department bid out the sale of alligator eggs from three additional Wildlife Management Areas (Maurepas Swamp, Manchac and Pearl River). This brings the total to four Department owned areas where qualified licensed alligator farmers are allowed to collect alligator eggs to provide stock for their farms. The total allowed alligator egg harvest quota for these areas is 31,500. The Department and the alligator industry's goal is to maintain and grow alligator production through a system of sound wildlife management practices and regulation including expansion of the wild alligator egg collection program.

The Department contracts with the LSU School of Veterinary Medicine to provide various services to the alligator industry. On numerous occasions the staff arranged for transportation of sick or problem alligators and sample skins from farms to the LSU Vet School for necropsy or skin evaluation. One of these contracts provides for the availability of a veterinarian to respond to farm related problems. Farmers know they can contact the program staff or Dr. Nevarez and get a rapid response to their problem. We also arranged collection and delivery of alligator research specimens to numerous graduate students and university faculty.

Despite setbacks from Hurricanes Rita and Ike, numerous wildlife groups, including university and graduate students, were hosted at Rockefeller Wildlife Refuge for educational purposes; as were professional representatives from domestic and international organizations. Presentations were made at various civic organizations and captive alligators were often loaned out for educational purposes.

An alligator program newsletter entitled "*Gator Notes*" was first developed in April 2005, and is emailed to alligator industry personnel periodically. The newsletter provides a description of current alligator program activities, harvest statistics, research activities and reminders for due dates for hunting applications, alligator egg collection permits, license renewals and reporting requirements. The newsletter is now available on line at www.lagatorprogram.com.

Nuisance Alligator Program

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries manages a statewide nuisance alligator control program. The nuisance program is designed to remove problem alligators in order to avoid potential human/alligator conflicts. Through the process of nuisance alligator hunter appointments and annual renewals the Department maintains a statewide network of qualified nuisance alligator hunters. Nuisance alligator complaints are phoned into various Department offices, where complaints are recorded and then forwarded to a nuisance alligator hunter in the vicinity of the complaint. Nuisance hunters respond promptly and catch and remove the alligator as deemed necessary. Hunters are allowed to harvest the nuisance alligator and to process the meat and skin of the alligator for commercial sale. This process provides for immediate response to problem alligators and for payment to the nuisance alligator hunter, thereby minimizing the program operating costs to the Department.

During the winter and spring of 2009, the worldwide economic recession had a devastating impact on price and demand for alligator skins. Nuisance hunters were unable to sell large skins at profitable levels and had no sales for small (under 6' total length) alligator skins. In June 2009, the Department instituted a policy change which allows for nuisance alligator hunters to charge the complainant a fee of \$30.00 when they catch and remove a nuisance alligator under 6' in length. Depending on market conditions next fiscal year, further nuisance alligator policy changes may be necessary to ensure that appointed nuisance alligator hunters remain in the nuisance alligator program.

During 2008-2009, a total of 65 nuisance alligator hunters were enrolled in the program; annually the nuisance hunters respond to an estimated 5,000 complaints and harvest approximately 2,500 alligators.

Research Activities

The following list provides a summary of the various research and monitoring projects that the alligator program staff conducted and/or participated in during the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

Monitoring

1. Evaluation of survival, growth, and reproduction in farm released alligators---This activity involves numerous projects related to survival analysis, growth and reproductive success (farm-released vs. native wild). Due to the recent reduction of the 14% release rate to 12%, it is imperative to monitor survival closely. The 12% return rate started with the 2007 permits (releases "due" in 2009). Although some growth information has been published we plan to evaluate growth rates in more detail; we now have "retraps" that were captured 10-15 years since release, and this is undoubtedly one of the largest mark-recapture projects currently in progress. Staff from the LSU Department of Experimental Statistics assists with annual evaluation of survival based on farm "retraps" recovered in September harvests. We are also evaluating dispersal of animals from release sites.

2. Coast wide nest survey---The annual coastal nesting survey is essential for monitoring our alligator population, and is used annually to determine wild alligator and wild alligator egg harvest quotas (for the adult harvest each September as well as egg ranching quotas). This is an integral part of our required “finding of no detriment” needed for export authority. This survey was of particular interest in summer 2006, providing valuable information to evaluate the impact of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and the worst drought in 111 years that occurred in fall/winter/spring of 2005-06. We anticipate similar such needed information in late June/early July 2009, due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike striking in September 2008.

3. Evaluation of statewide harvest program---We continue to analyze size class frequency distribution, average size, sex ratios, etc. for alligators harvested each year. This project, coupled with coast wide nest survey will be continued as long as a harvest program is in place. Data generated from these projects provides the basis for evaluating the impact of our current harvest strategies, and for establishment of annual wild harvest quotas.

4. Evaluation of alligator nest density---LDWF biologists work with selected cooperating alligator farmers to gain access to their GPS data from annual egg collections. This study will facilitate comparisons between our coast wide nest survey and estimates of nest density as recorded by the farmer during egg collections. Some farmers have advised staff of reduced nest production on selected wetlands; this study will allow us to evaluate nest distribution and density changes over time. Data from 2006 was particularly important for comparisons due to the massive impacts of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in late 2005. We anticipate similar such needed information in 2009, due to Hurricanes Gustav and Ike striking in 2008.

5. WNV (West Nile Virus)---The Department, in conjunction with LSUSVM, continues to monitor occurrence of WNV on alligator farms in Louisiana. Initial mortality related to WNV occurred in fall/winter 2003. Aggressive mosquito control on farms has reduced on farm mosquito populations and seems to have reduced the incidence of WNV in 2008-2009. Studies have determined that WNV exposure is a predisposing factor in development of “PIX/LPSA” skin lesions. We also collected samples (colon and liver) from wild alligators in August/September 2008 during the sanctioned harvest, to screen for WNV in wild alligators.

Contracts

1. Diagnostic services - LSUSVM (Dr. Nevarez)---Dr. Nevarez is contracted to provide diagnostic services as needed for the alligator industry. Farmers may consult with Dr. Nevarez at any time for assistance with any alligator husbandry or disease issue. Our staff often assists with logistics and transport of alligators/samples to LSUSVM in Baton Rouge for evaluation.

2. LSU Experimental Statistics---The LSU Department of Experimental Statistics is under contract to provide technical statistical expertise for numerous alligator projects; most importantly the evaluation of survival of farm-released alligators, population trends from nesting survey data, and more recently with hide grade/length correlations.

3. Hurricane effects on alligator physiology---We initiated a new study to determine the effects of high salinities seen in the marsh after Hurricane Rita, by collecting blood samples from wild alligators to measure stress hormone (plasma corticosterone) and electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride) and osmolality; as well as general body condition and behavior of the alligators. The superimposed drought in winter of 2005-2006 made interpretation of results difficult. A manuscript was prepared by LDWF staff and presented by Dr. Lance at the IUCN's Crocodile Specialist Group Meeting in Montlimar, France in June 2006; updated and completed findings have been submitted for publication in the scientific literature in early 2009. A paper on this work was presented at the SICB meeting in San Antonio in January 2008 and at the Crocodile Specialist Group Meeting in Bolivia in June 2008.

4. Evaluate the health status of farm released alligators---A total of 250 alligators originating from 10 different farms (April – June 2009) were sampled to evaluate their overall health at the time of release. Study results indicate that the release alligators are healthy, that West Nile virus remains the most important infectious disease for captive reared alligators and that continued surveillance is necessary. Alligators brought into Louisiana from Georgia for release were found to be of poorer health than Louisiana reared alligators and further release of these animals should be closely monitored and these were sampled four times in 2009. Continuation of this study is planned for 2009-2010.

5. Determine the use of antibiotics on alligator farms in Louisiana and determine the pharmacokinetic disposition and tissue distribution of tetracycline after single-dose administration---Phase I of this project was completed with some difficulties encountered in achieving therapeutic levels of tetracycline in alligators. Several trials were conducted in order to determine dosage rates. In 2008-2009 this research continued to determine tissue distribution levels and elimination rates. Final results indicated that due to high level of variability in the concentration of tetracycline in alligator tissues and plasma, tetracycline is not a recommended antibiotic to be administered orally to captive reared alligators. In 2009-2010, a pilot study will be conducted to determine the appropriate dose of the antibiotic trimethoprim sulfadiazine administered orally to alligators.

Other Research

We spent considerable effort to testing telemetry units for practical methods to attach to juvenile alligators and test range of reception. This may be helpful in monitoring the survival of farm-released alligators. Our biological staff constructed an outside holding pen to test the telemetry unit attachment on wild and farm alligators. Unfortunately the pen was damaged by Hurricane Ike in September 2008 and alligators escaped; however the few recaptured held the telemetry units snugly in place.

We initiated a new study with Dr. Karen Sears and her graduate students to evaluate embryonic development of alligator limbs in summer 2008. Dr. Dan Janes from Harvard University continued molecular biology work on alligator embryos provided by LDWF; as did other collaborators and university professors and graduate students. Numerous samples were shipped prior to Hurricane Ike, avoiding loss of research samples when the lab and storage

buildings washed away. In summer 2007 we similarly assisted Dr. Matt Bonnan and his graduate students with samples for differential limb scaling studies; a study was published in 2009 in *The Anatomical Record*.

We are currently collaborating on projects with Dr. Mark Merchant (unfunded) to evaluate anti-microbial properties of alligator plasma. Although diseases are generally rare in alligators, this work may help on the rare occasion of disease in farmed alligators, in terms of evaluating cause and treatment options. Dr. Merchant has published several manuscripts co-authored by Department biologists, and a paper on his work was presented at the Crocodile Specialist Group Meeting in Bolivia in June 2008. We assisted in the expansion of this work with a collaborator of his from LSU's Chemistry Department evaluating peptides.

We are evaluating nest site fidelity by female alligators using DNA "retraps" (additional samples collected in summer 2007) and prepared and published a manuscript on these results in *The Southeastern Naturalist*.

We have several years of data on alligator dispersal (caught live on Rockefeller, and subsequently harvested "off" Rockefeller). Several have migrated very long distances (20-35 miles) which is important data to consider in evaluating our farm "release to the wild" program. Additional data collected in September 2007 and 2008 will help us evaluate effects of Hurricane Rita and severe drought on alligator displacement. A manuscript is nearly complete and ready to submit for possible publication.

We published a manuscript with Dr. Steven Gabrey on the effects of nutria removal on alligator diet/food habits. This was of extreme importance as we continue to try to control vegetative loss by invasive nutria to maintain marsh wetlands.

We worked closely with a graduate student to assist with her study on the seasonal ultrastructure of the female alligator reproductive system. We collected samples in both 2006 and 2007. She made several presentations at international conferences and the findings were published in the *Journal of Morphology*.

We completed a manuscript on use of ultrasound to evaluate reproductive status in female alligators, which was published in *General and Comparative Endocrinology*.

We worked with anatomists in evaluating sources of calcium for eggshell development. Several abstracts were published and presentations made at international conferences. A full manuscript is currently being prepared.

We continued to support and collaborate with a post-doctoral research associate and a PhD student with their work on oxygen levels in developing alligator embryos. Several abstracts were published and presentations made at scientific conferences. A full paper was published in *The Journal of Experimental Biology*. Associates from UC Irvine were hosted at Rockefeller in June 2009 to collect additional embryos, as well as cardiovascular structures and limbs from a range of sizes of alligators for several studies.

Our research efforts have been hampered in large part by lack of holding facilities for alligators. We had a small functioning laboratory, but the tremendous physical plant losses due to Hurricane Rita and Ike have limited our progress. Our biological staff constructed a cover/awning to the semi-repaired holding tanks, which has helped. Initial work done to supply adequate heat to holding tanks was completed in spring 2009.

Revenue and Expenditure Information

In recognizing that the Louisiana alligator industry is a vital aspect of Louisiana's economy and recognizing the many, varied national and international impediments to industry development, and the need to develop and maintain a total alligator conservation program, the Louisiana legislature established the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund in 1991 (R.S. 56:279). This Act established a dedicated source of revenue intended to help defray the costs of the alligator program within the Coastal and Nongame Resources Division of the Department. The specific goals of the legislation are:

1. To provide salaries and financial support including associated indirect costs for the following positions, to provide a minimum of two full-time technical positions (biologists) and eight nontechnical positions such as computer operators, secretaries, and wildlife specialists existing within the Coastal and Nongame Resources Division of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.
2. To assist with funding for law enforcement activities associated with the alligator farm industry when surplus funds are available and recommended by the Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council.
3. To assist with funding marketing programs recommended by the Louisiana Alligator Advisory Council when surplus funds are available.
4. To actively fund research on all aspects involved with alligator conservation and to develop the techniques needed to enhance the commercial alligator industry.
5. To assist in funding management of the alligator population through proper management, harvest and farm facility management.

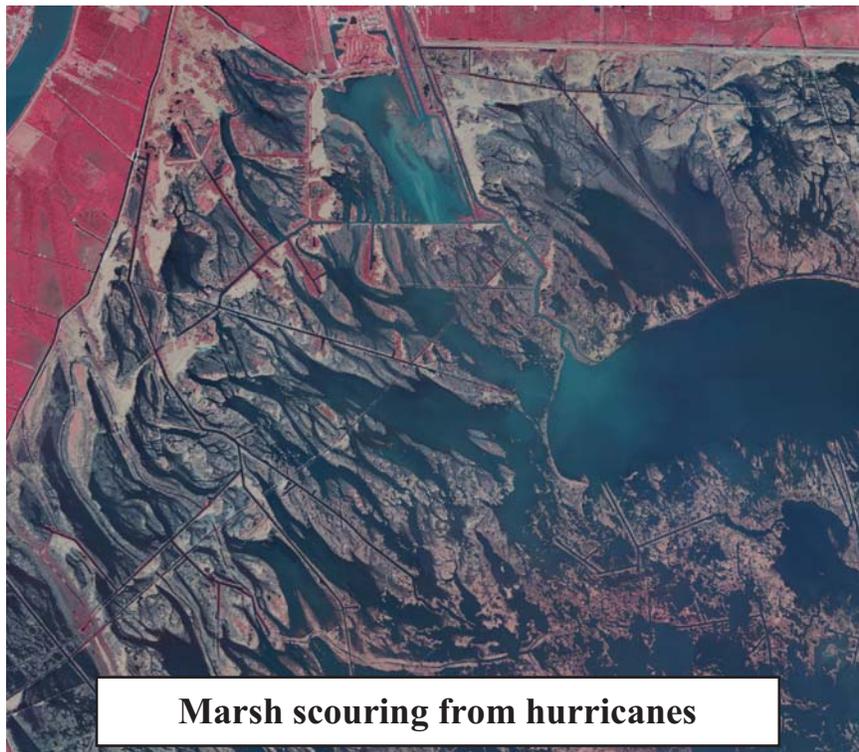
This legislation provides all the enabling language required to establish the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund including sources of income, investing of the fund, and expenditures from the fund. Further R.S. 56: 253 establishes the alligator hide tag fee and the alligator shipping label fee, specifies the details of collection of these fees, and establishes that these fees shall be no more than \$4.00 per hide or live alligator. R.S.56:256, provides for the collection of a \$0.25 severance tax on each alligator hide taken within the state. R.S. 56:279 C (1) provides that all revenues received by the state from tag fees, alligator shipping label fees, and from the severance tax on alligator skins shall be credited to the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund. During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, \$1,511,488 was deposited into the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund. The alligator industry should be applauded for supporting these legislative endeavors to create a self-generated source of revenue to develop and maintain the state's alligator management program. Annual income and expenditure data for the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund is reported in Table 5.

Table 6 summarizes the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund expenditures by the alligator management program for the 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 fiscal years. Expenditures by the alligator management program totaled \$1,236,203 in 2008-2009. Currently the alligator program staff consists of 6.5 biologists, 4 wildlife technicians, and 1.5 administrative coordinators. Additionally, in 2008-2009 we supplemented the permanent staff with three wildlife technicians, hired as WAE appointments to assist in various facets of the alligator management program.

All expenditures from the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund are provided for in R.S. 56:279. The Department carefully approves and monitors all expenditures to ensure compliance with all legal requirements. The Department's fiscal office can produce a variety of expenditure and budget reports upon request.

Hurricane Impacts

Coastal Louisiana was impacted by devastating hurricanes in 2005 and 2008. In both of these years, storm surges inundated coastal marshes with high salinity waters across virtually the entire coast of Louisiana; which is prime alligator habitat. Some direct alligator mortality was observed; but overall long-term impact of these storms on alligator habitat remains to be seen. Direct physical damage to wetlands through scour, scrapes, erosion, and rolling has been noted, and high salinities were accentuated by lower than usual winter rainfall after the storms, which might have tempered the deleterious salinities. Effects of these storms on the subsequent wild alligator harvest were significant in 2006; but harvest numbers in 2007 and 2008 returned to pre-storm levels.



Marsh scouring from hurricanes

Results of the 2006 coastal nest survey indicated significant habitat damages in southwest Louisiana and extreme southeast Louisiana resulting from Hurricanes Rita and Katrina respectively. Nest production in 2006 was the lowest on record since 1986. During the fall and winter of 2006-2007 marsh water levels returned to near normal and the habitat recovered significantly. In 2007, coastal alligator nest production increased dramatically as wetland habitats and alligator populations recovered. Alligator farmers collected near record numbers of wild alligator eggs in 2007. In 2008, nest production was excellent and farmers collected a record of 530,579 wild alligator eggs. Hurricanes in the fall of 2008 will likely, once again, impact coastal nest production in 2009.

Habitat Concerns

One threat or potential limiting factor to Louisiana's alligator population is habitat loss. Because the vast majority of Louisiana's alligators are in the coastal parishes, saltwater intrusion and wetlands/marsh deterioration from numerous causes are very real threats. Additionally, the combined impact of recent hurricanes will likely result in long term reduction of alligator habitat quality in coastal Louisiana.

Vast resources by numerous state and federal agencies have been expended to attempt to limit these losses. Projects to restore/enhance marshes include construction of earthen terraces (to reduce wave action and turbidity), "breakwaters" and protection levees along coastlines, and freshwater diversions. Alligators benefit directly from these efforts to maintain/enhance wetlands. The freshwater diversion projects (Davis Pond and Caernarvon) shift water from the Mississippi River in hopes of re-establishing more favorable salinity conditions for numerous fish and wildlife species. Some preliminary data suggests alligator nesting has improved in the areas enhanced by lower marsh salinity levels. It is critical that habitat changes are monitored, mapped and incorporated periodically into the alligator program. This will ensure that our harvest programs are adjusted accordingly for corresponding alligator population and habitat changes.

Summary

Louisiana's alligator management program has clearly illustrated that controlled sustained use of the species is feasible. The wild harvest has been in place for 37 years and the egg ranching program for 23 years and may appear to operate unchanged every year. However, constant adaptations are made to try to improve both programs. Constant requests by user groups (farmers, egg ranchers, trappers, landowners, buyers, dealers and other industry personnel) are received and considered as the Department strives to safely manage the alligator resource to the benefit of many user groups with varied interests.

Louisiana's alligator industry is unique. It has recognized the necessity of establishing a self-generated revenue source to provide the necessary regulatory and management efforts to effectively manage the alligator resource. The Department will continue to protect the alligator

resource while striving to ensure long term, sustainable harvest programs. During 2008-2009 the Department, through the use of the Louisiana Alligator Resource Fund, has worked toward achievement of the goals established by the Louisiana Legislature.



Figure 1. Louisiana Coastal Marsh Alligator Nest Production, 1970-2008

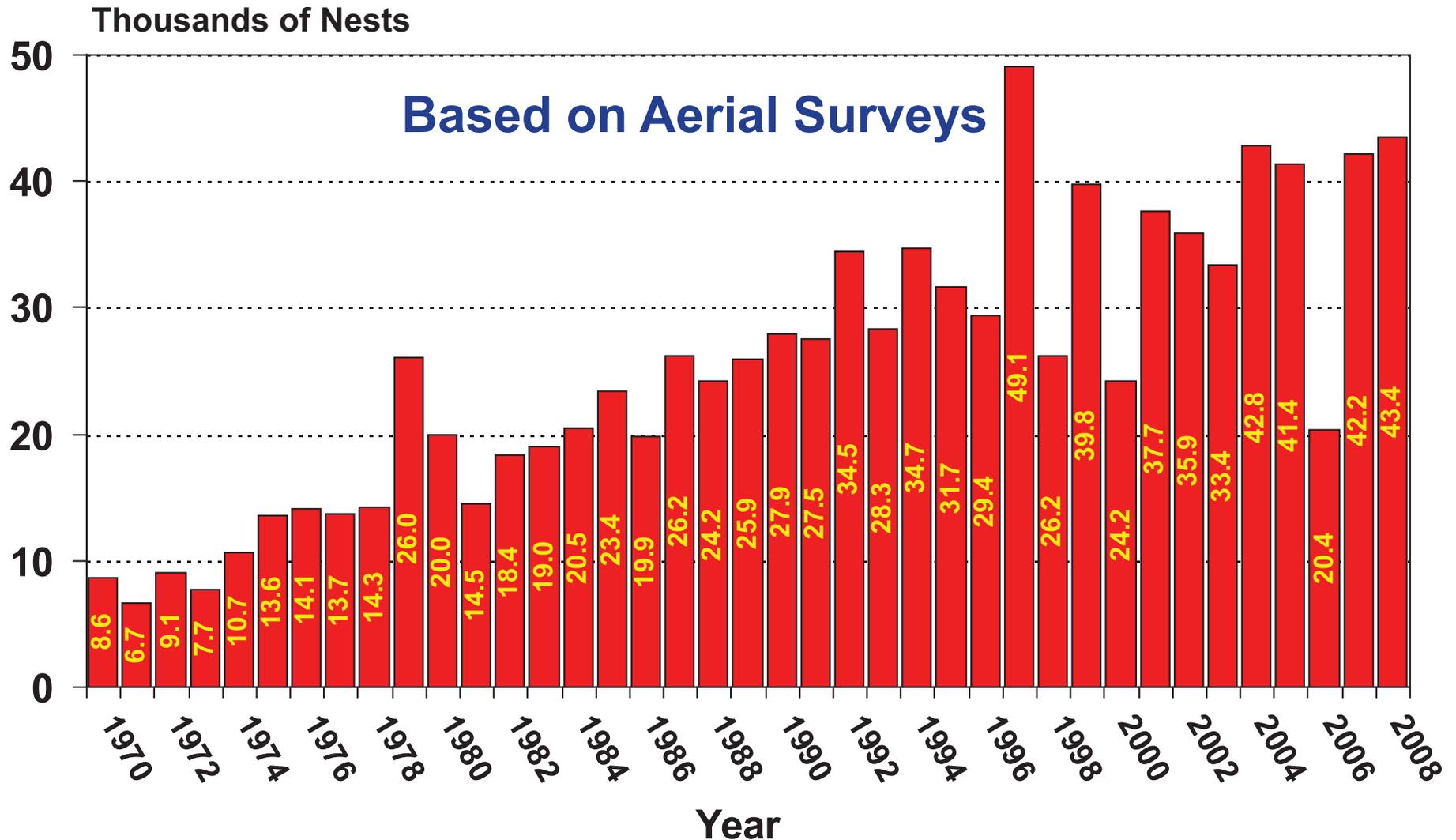
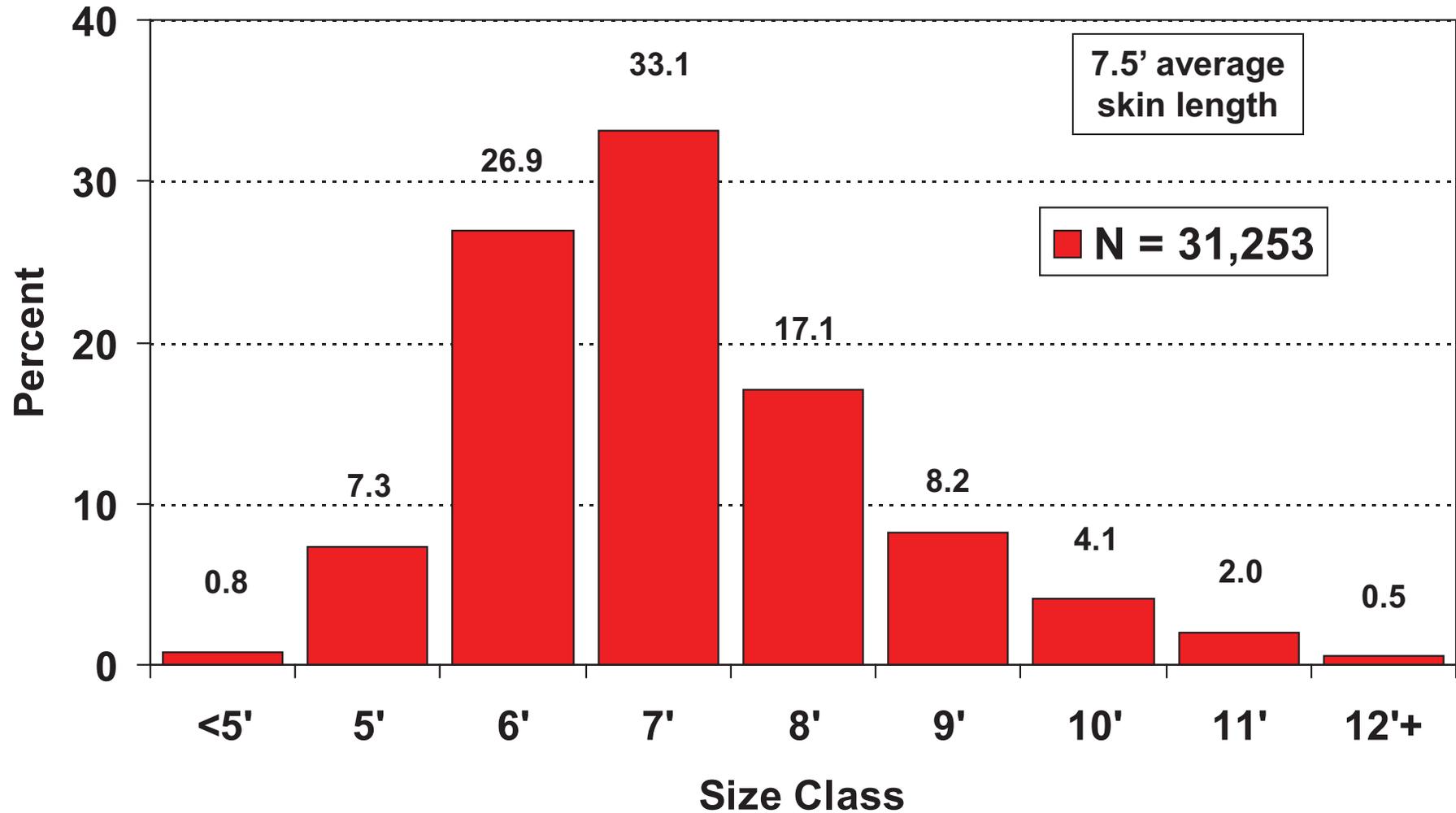
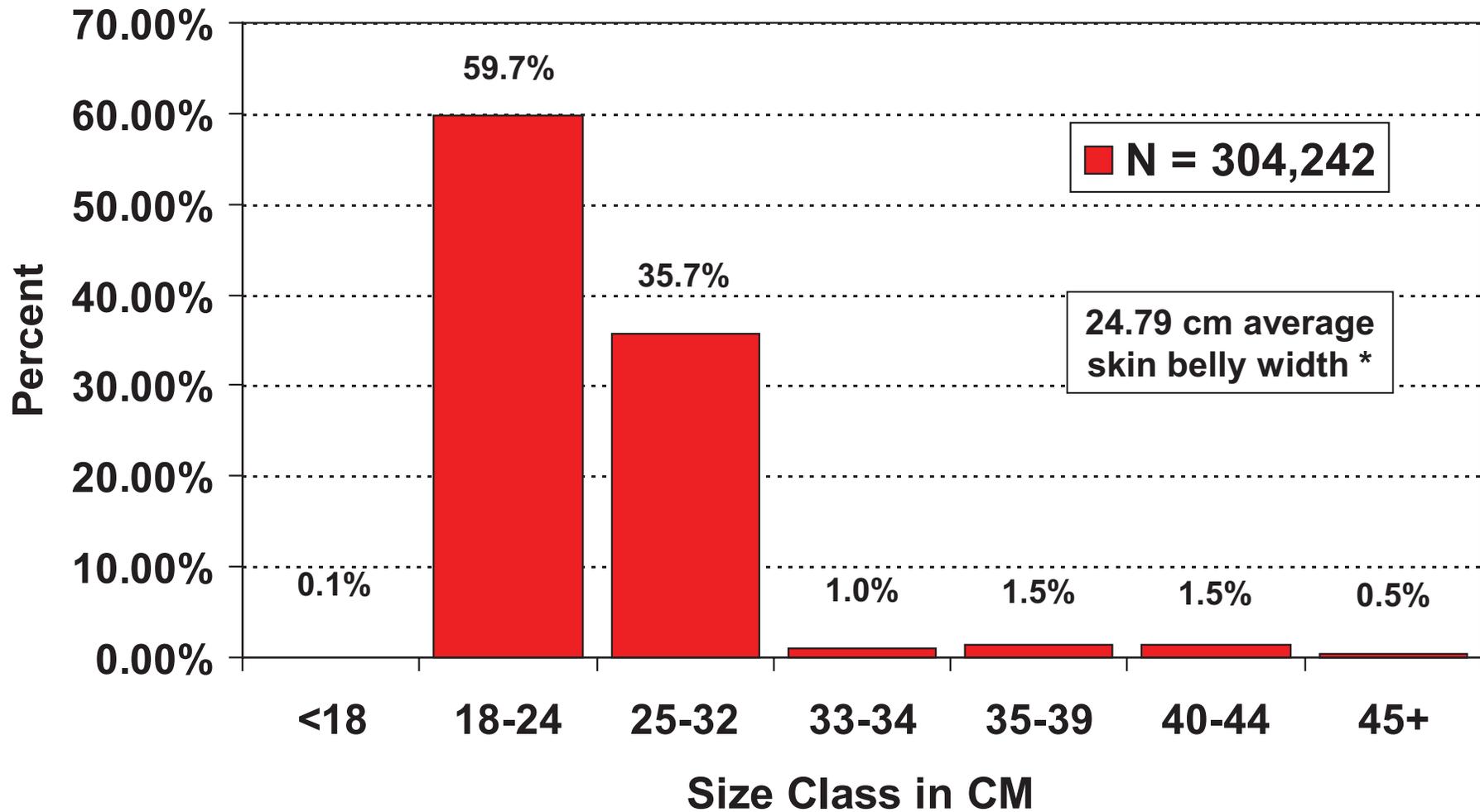


Figure 2. Louisiana Wild Alligators Harvested, 2008 Regular Harvest Skin Lengths



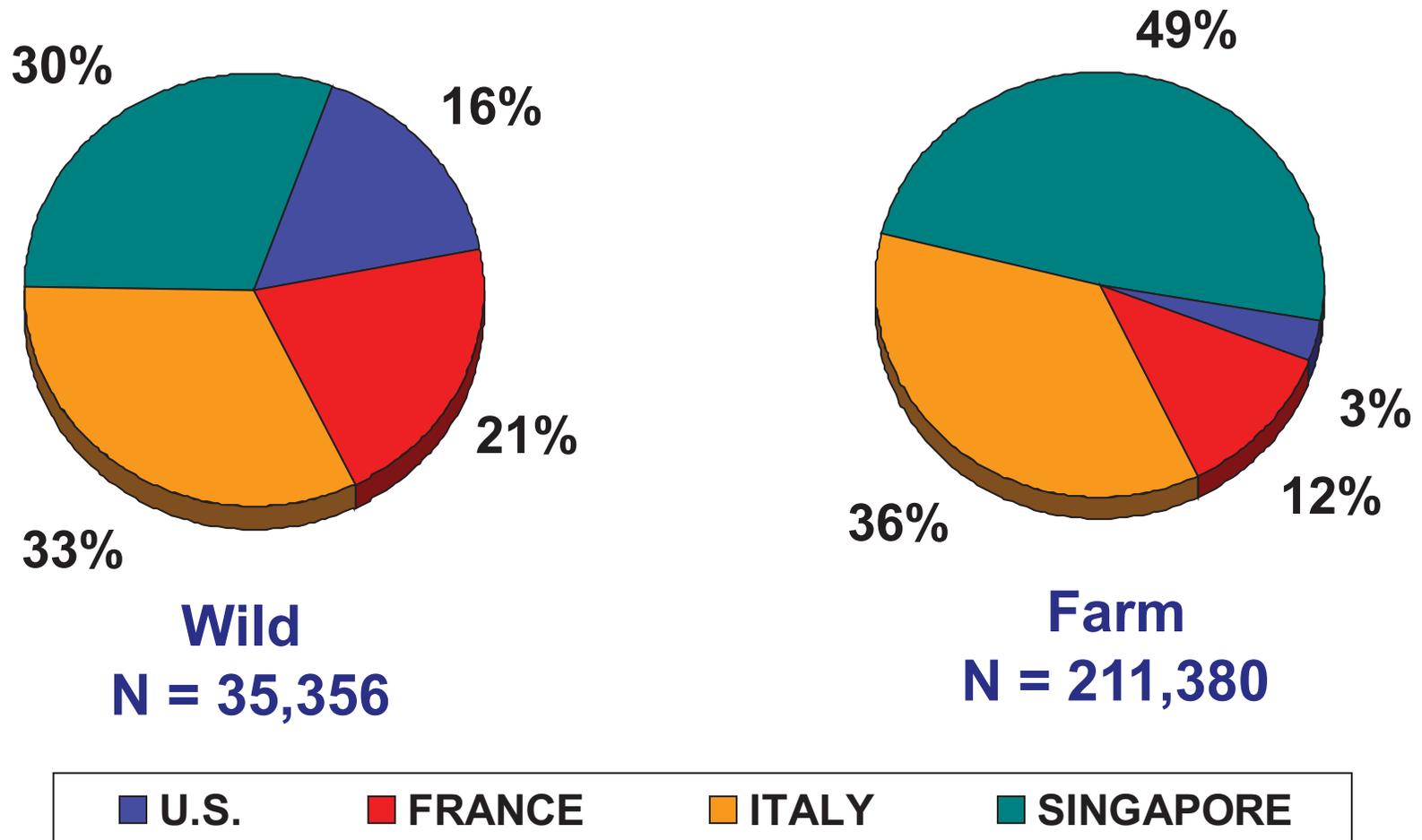
Updated 10/5/09

Figure 4. Louisiana Farm Alligators Harvested, 2007 Skin Belly Widths



* Skin Lengths Averaged Approximately 49 Inches, 2007 Tag Year, Updated 11/17/09

Figure 5. Receivers of Louisiana's 2008 Raw Alligator Skins *



* 2008 Tag Year for Wild and Farm, Updated October 2009

Table 1. Louisiana Alligator Season Dates, Area Open, Harvest Level and Tag Cost, 1972-2008

Year	Season Dates	No. of Days	Parishes	Tag Fee	
				Amount	Paid By
1972	5 Sept – 17 Sept	13	Cameron	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1973	10 Sept – 28 Sept	19	Added Vermilion	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1975	20 Sept – 19 Oct	30	Added Calcasieu	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1976	9 Sept – 8 Oct	30	No change	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1977	1 Sept – 30 Sept	30	No change	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1979	7 Sept – 7 Oct	31	Coastwide ¹	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1980	4 Sept – 4 Oct	31	No change	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1981	31 Aug – 30 Sept	31	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1982	4 Sept – 3 Oct	30	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1983	10 Sept – 9 Oct	30	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1984	8 Sept – 7 Oct	30	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1985	31 Aug- 30 Sept	31	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1986	6 Sept – 6 Oct	31	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1987	5 Sept – 5 Oct	31	Statewide	\$5.00 ²	hunter/farmer
1988	10 Sept – 10 Oct	31	Statewide	\$2.00/tag	hunter/farmer
1989	9 Sept – 8 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	hunter/farmer
1990	1 Sept – 30 Sept	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	hunter/farmer
1991	31 Aug – 29 Sept	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	hunter/farmer
1992	10 Sept – 4 Oct	25	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	hunter/farmer
1993	11 Sept – 10 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
1994	3 Sept – 2 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
1995	2 Sept – 1 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
1996	7 Sept – 6 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
1997	6 Sept – 5 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
1998	2 Sept – 1 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
1999	1 Sept – 30 Sept	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2000	30 Aug – 30 Sept	32	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2001	29 Aug – 30 Sept	33	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2002	28 Aug – 30 Sept	34	Statewide	\$2.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2003	3 Sept – 2 Oct	30	Statewide	\$2.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2004	1 Sept – 30 Sept	30	Statewide	\$3.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2005 ³	14 Sept – 30 Oct	46	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2006	6 Sept – 5 Oct	30	Statewide	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
2007 ⁴	29 Aug – 27 Sept	30	East Zone	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
	5 Sept – 4 Oct	30	West Zone		
2008 ⁴	27 Aug – 25 Sept	30	East Zone	\$4.00/tag	fur dealer/shipper
	3 Sept – 2 Oct	30	West Zone		

¹ Added Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Charles, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard and St. Tammany

² Per issuance, regardless of number

³ Opening date was postponed and season was extended due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

⁴ State was divided into alligator hunting zones (east and west) from 2007 to present

Table 2. September Wild Alligator Harvest in Louisiana, 1972-2008 ¹

Year ²	Commercial Hunters	Tags Issued	Number Taken	Percent Success	Avg T. L. in Feet	Skin Value		Meat ⁴	
						Avg/foot	Total	Amount (lbs)	Value
1972	59	1,961	1,350	68.8	6.92	\$8.10	\$75,670	3	3
1973	107	3,243	2,921	90.1	7.58	\$13.13	\$290,714	3	3
1975	191	4,645	4,420	95.2	7.51	\$7.88	\$261,570	3	3
1976	198	4,767	4,389	92.1	7.09	\$16.55	\$515,003	3	3
1977	236	5,760	5,474	95	7.35	\$12.23	\$492,061	3	3
1979	708	17,516	16,300	93	6.92	\$15.00	\$1,691,940	100,089	\$125,000
1980	796	19,134	17,692	92.5	6.59	\$13.00	\$1,515,674	100,089	\$125,000
1981	913	15,534	14,870	95.7	6.92	\$17.50	\$1,800,757	100,089	\$125,000
1982	1,184	18,188	17,142	94.2	6.82	\$13.50	\$1,578,264	100,089	\$125,000
1983	945	17,130	16,154	94.3	6.92	\$13.00	\$1,453,214	100,089	\$125,000
1984	1,104	18,386	17,389	94.6	6.99	\$21.00	\$2,552,531	100,089	\$125,000
1985	1,076	17,466	16,691	95.6	7.09	\$21.00	\$2,485,123	150,133	\$675,000
1986	1,207	23,267	22,429	96	6.92	\$23.00	\$3,569,800	310,275	\$1,395,000
1987	1,370	24,635	23,892	97	7.09	\$40.00	\$6,775,771	500,444	\$2,250,000
1988	1,545	24,111	23,526	98	7.25	\$48.00	\$8,187,048	600,533	\$3,000,000
1989	1,769	25,492	24,846	97.4	7.25	\$50.00	\$9,006,675	747,448	\$3,000,000
1990	1,916	25,920	25,644	98.9	7.25	\$57.00	\$10,597,383	701,063	\$3,000,000
1991	2,001	24,646	24,011	97.4	7.45	\$32.00	\$5,724,222	684,109	\$2,935,000
1992	1,696	25,551	24,313	95.2	7.25	\$23.00	\$4,054,193	687,835	\$2,951,520
1993	1,702	24,805	23,991	96.7	7.25	\$23.00	\$4,000,499	687,615	\$2,889,000
1994	1,774	27,694	27,120	97.9	7.35	\$37.00	\$7,375,284	771,610	\$3,243,000
1995	1,877	28,931	28,442	98.3	7.35	\$41.00	\$8,570,997	809,088	\$3,400,000
1996	1,947	26,578	25,793	97.0	7.41	\$25.00	\$4,778,153	734,793	\$3,967,800
1997	1,973	29,900	29,085	97.3	7.08	\$18.00	\$3,706,592	828,423	\$4,473,000
1998	1,888	30,198	28,639	94.8	7.08	\$15.00	\$3,041,462	804,679	\$4,350,000
1999 regular	1,902	33,239	32,064	96.5	7.17	\$22.00	\$5,057,775	909,398	\$4,881,000
1999 bonus		3,348	3,206	95.8	5.75	\$15.50	\$285,735	44,335	\$237,250
2000 regular	1,941	31,999	30,532	95.4	7.17	\$27.00	\$5,910,690	1,061,903	\$5,702,419
2000 bonus		3,299	3,146	95.4	5.75	\$23.00	\$416,059	56,785	\$303,801
2001 regular	1,916	32,669	31,867	97.5	7.33	\$22.00	\$5,138,872	732,941	\$3,298,235
2001 bonus		3,402	3,281	96.4	5.83	\$20.00	\$382,565	75,463	\$339,584
2002 regular	1,955	31,757	30,451	95.9	7.25	\$16.00	\$3,532,316	700,373	\$3,151,679
2002 bonus		3,370	2,932	87.0	5.83	\$16.00	\$273,497	67,436	\$303,462
2003 regular	1,873	30,513	28,555	93.6	7.17	\$13.00	\$2,661,612	656,765	\$2,955,443
2003 bonus		3,290	3,026	92.0	5.83	\$13.00	\$229,341	69,598	\$313,191
2004 regular	1,859	31,530	30,406	96.4	7.17	\$22.50	\$4,905,248	699,338	\$3,147,021
2004 bonus		3,705	3,518	95.0	5.83	\$22.50	\$461,474	80,914	\$364,113
2005 regular	1,933	32,487	27,668	85.2	7.25	\$34.50	\$6,920,459	636,364	\$2,863,638
2005 bonus		4,078	3,507	86.0	5.83	\$34.50	\$705,380	80,661	\$362,975
2006 regular	1,872	28,501	27,316	95.8	7.42	\$39.00	\$7,904,704	628,268	\$2,827,206
2006 bonus		3,710	3,538	95.4	6.00	\$39.00	\$827,892	81,374	\$366,183
<u>2007 regular</u>	2,051	33,498	31,127	92.9	7.50	\$38.50	\$8,987,921	715,921	\$3,221,645
<u>2007 bonus</u>		4,226	3,884	91.9	6.00	\$38.50	\$897,204	89,332	\$401,994
<u>2008 regular</u>	2,222	36,299	31,774	87.5	7.50	\$34.50	\$8,221,523	730,802	\$3,288,609
<u>2008 bonus</u>		4,425	3,850	87.0	6.00	\$34.50	\$796,950	88,550	\$398,475

¹ Does not include Salvador WMA harvests from 1972-2003 and Marsh Island experimental, nuisance, and farm harvests from 1972-present.

² The bonus tag program was initiated in 1999 to increase the overall number of wild alligators harvested without putting any additional pressure on the 6' and over portion of the wild population.

³ Sale of meat not permitted; La. Health Department regulations first allowed meat sales in 1979.

⁴ Bone in from 1979-1984, deboned from 1985-present.

Subject to change, numbers updated December 7, 2009.

Table 3. Louisiana Alligator Ranching, 1986-2008

Year	Total Eggs Permitted	Number Collected	Percent Collected	Number Hatched	Alligators Returned to Wild
1986	2,903	2,903	100.0%	1,985	none
1987	19,641	18,041	91.9%	13,782	none
1988	90,305	64,887	71.9%	50,394	1,680
1989	265,051	181,819	68.6%	137,323	7,078
1990	366,055	293,412	80.2%	231,434	6,088
1991	333,451	198,089	59.4%	165,054	44,405
1992	297,125	164,892	55.5%	133,463	35,531
1993	279,405	155,891	55.8%	123,666	28,512
1994	362,835	266,408	73.4%	223,011	21,633
1995	402,830	314,371	78.0%	261,428	20,749
1996	467,545	279,237	59.7%	233,076	40,919
1997	476,115	377,636	79.3%	321,641	48,171
1998	539,216	280,870	52.1%	240,118	36,733
1999	574,731	382,611	66.6%	332,428	44,169
2000	593,625	279,217	47.0%	236,313	39,559
2001	616,465	354,636	57.5%	294,405	48,288
2002	639,145	354,523	55.5%	304,448	32,716
2003	651,207	357,757	54.9%	307,805	50,657
2004	619,730	397,569	64.2%	350,661	47,431
2005	694,694	507,315	73.0%	441,298	35,752
2006	739,844	272,295	36.8%	225,201	40,694
2007	766,115	501,175	65.4%	426,480	62,081
2008	801,679	530,579	66.2%	459,887	48,578
Total	10,599,712	6,536,133	61.7%	5,515,301	741,424

Table 4. Farm Alligator Harvest in Louisiana, 1972-2007 ¹

Year ¹	No. Farms		No. Skins	Avg T. L.	Skin Value		Meat ³	
	Licensed	Sold Skins	Sold	in Feet	Avg/foot	Total	Amount (lbs)	Value
1972	8	3	35	5	\$8.10	\$1,418	²	²
1973	8	5	103	6.33	\$13.13	\$8,561	2	2
1975	8	3	83	5.5	\$7.88	\$3,597	2	2
1976	8	3	360	5.75	\$16.55	\$34,259	2	2
1977	8	4	376	5.25	\$12.23	\$24,142	2	2
1980	8	1	191	4.67	\$13.00	\$11,596	957	\$3,342
1981	8	3	360	4.67	\$17.50	\$29,421	1,801	\$6,300
1982	8	1	113	4	\$13.50	\$6,102	452	\$1,582
1983	14	6	1,449	4.58	\$13.00	\$86,273	7,253	\$25,357
1984	12	7	2,836	4.25	\$21.00	\$253,113	11,354	\$39,704
1985	15	12	4,430	4.25	\$21.00	\$395,378	17,736	\$79,740
1986	22	15	5,925	4.5	\$23.00	\$613,238	26,687	\$119,983
1987	30	23	10,670	4.42	\$24.00	\$1,131,874	48,060	\$216,067
1988	47	38	27,749	4.25	\$36.00	\$4,245,597	111,094	\$554,980
1989	83	68	66,737	3.98	\$32.00	\$8,499,624	300,877	\$1,202,362
1990	123	80	88,424	4.03	\$24.00	\$8,552,369	397,732	\$1,786,059
1991	134	91	118,976	4.13	\$15.00	\$7,370,563	536,379	\$2,380,000
1992	125	85	128,026	4.04	\$12.00	\$6,206,700	578,289	\$2,566,000
1993	101	70	121,700	3.87	\$17.00	\$8,006,643	388,010	\$1,720,000
1994	89	62	136,126	3.67	\$20.00	\$9,991,648	277,780	\$1,197,000
1995	83	50	125,460	3.88	\$20.00	\$9,735,696	331,395	\$1,323,000
1996	81	51	161,845	3.91	\$15.50	\$9,808,616	511,668	\$2,297,900
1997	75	36	169,988	3.74	\$16.75	\$10,648,898	542,332	\$2,435,700
1998	73	38	154,399	3.79	\$17.00	\$9,947,928	490,990	\$2,209,455
1999	64	35	187,570	3.64	\$17.00	\$11,606,832	552,693	\$2,487,119
2000	66	35	219,827	3.81	\$20.50	\$17,169,588	659,481	\$2,967,665
2001	63	32	180,391	3.79	\$20.50	\$14,015,479	541,173	\$2,435,279
2002	62	32	237,808	3.73	\$23.50	\$20,845,060	713,424	\$3,210,408
2003	61	32	277,604	3.81	\$24.00	\$25,384,110	832,812	\$3,747,654
2004	58	32	297,371	3.87	\$26.00	\$29,921,470	892,113	\$4,014,509
<u>2005</u>	55	31	256,377	3.91	\$38.00	\$38,092,495	769,131	\$3,461,090
<u>2006</u>	57	29	272,473	4.05	\$42.50	\$46,899,415	817,419	\$3,678,386

Year ¹	No. Farms		No. Skins	Belly Width	Skin Value		Meat ³	
	Licensed	Sold Skins	Sold	in cm's ⁴	Avg/cm	Total	Amount (lbs)	Value
<u>2007</u>	62	29	305,086	24.79	\$7.25	\$54,832,344	915,258	\$4,118,661

1 Tag year extends from September of the year designated to the next September (example: 1997 = 9/97 to 8/98).

2 Sale of meat not permitted; La. Health Department regulations first allowed meat sales in 1979.

3 Deboned from 1980-present.

4 Average total length for 2007 is 4.08'.

— Subject to change, numbers updated December 7, 2009.

Table 5. Alligator Resource Fund Income, Expenditures, and Balance, FY 2003-2009

	FY 2003 ¹	FY 2004 ¹	FY 2005 ¹	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
Severance Tax	64,630	66,006	83,732	76,166	77,224	78,112	80,485
Interest Earned	47,379	25,498	38,120	72,961	93,166	80,489	32,371
Shipping Label Fees	100,540	91,232	94,900	69,196	9,800	74,192	126,608
Collection Permit Fees	12,628	1,588	5,850	3,050	3,150	6,175	2,650
Alligator Hide Tag Fees	620,438	528,054	884,266	1,095,344	1,235,580	1,249,788	1,295,270
Res. Alligator Hunter Licenses							56,025
N/R Alligator Hunter Licenses							18,900
Misc income					22		
Reduction by Executive Order				-79,847			-100,821
Total Revenue	845,615	712,378	1,106,868	1,236,870	1,418,942	1,488,756	1,511,488
Less Expenditures	-1,263,509	-1,076,078	-1,165,338	-1,230,310	-1,317,939	-1,577,739	-1,543,289
Net annual income	-417,894	-363,700	-58,470	6,560	101,003	-88,983	-31,801
Add balance from prior year	2,455,046	2,037,153	1,673,453	1,614,983	1,621,543	1,722,546	1,633,563
YEAR-END BALANCE	2,037,152	1,673,453	1,614,983	1,621,543	1,722,546	1,633,563	1,601,762

¹ Due to the reduction in the alligator hide tag fee, ARF expenditures exceeded ARF income, thereby resulting in a net annual loss of revenue in the ARF.

Table 6. Alligator Management Program Expenditures for Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

Budget Category	2008	2009
Personal Services	\$887,754	\$953,812
Travel	\$25,507	\$10,942
Operating Services	\$69,068	\$42,134
Supplies	\$106,349	\$97,521
Professional Services	\$2,310	\$28
Other Charges	\$73,614	\$57,550
Acquisitions	\$86,876	\$19,301
Major Repairs	\$18,420	\$7,454
Interagency Billings	\$32,532	\$47,461
Totals	\$1,302,430	\$1,236,203

EXHIBIT 1

2008 MARSH ALLIGATOR TAG ALLOTMENT BY PARISH

	Tag Allotment/Marsh Type		
	Brackish	Intermediate	Fresh
^(A) Cameron	1:170	1:85	1:95
Calcasieu	1:250	1:110	1:80
Jeff Davis			1:90
^(B) Vermilion West	1:70	1:70	1:125
^(B) Vermilion East	1:175	1:175	1:75
Iberia		1:120	1:120
St. Mary		1:65	1:65
Terrebonne	1:125	1:55	1:55
Lafourche	1:140	1:55	1:80
St. Charles	1:75	1:75	1:65
St. John the Baptist		1:55	1:55
Jefferson	1:200	1:55	1:55
Orleans	1:400	1:400	
^(C) Plaquemines West	1:250	1:150	1:55
^(D) Plaquemines East	1:400	1:100	1:55
Plaquemines Delta	1:225	1:175	1:160
St. Bernard	1:400	1:100	
St. Tammany	1:125	1:75	1:75
Tangipahoa		1:60	1:120

Cypress-Tupelo Swamp	1:160	
Dewatered Marsh	1:500	
Transitional Marsh ^(E)	1:400	(except transitional marsh in Plaquemines East will be issued at the rate of 1 tag: per 300 acres)

^(A)Marsh between Calcasieu Lake/Calcasieu River and Mermentau River will be issued at the rate of 1 tag:225 acres in intermediate marsh and 1 tag:400 acres in brackish marsh.

^(B)The dividing line for Vermilion East and West is the Vermilion River Cutoff (4-mile cut).

^(C)Marsh west of Mississippi River.

^(D)Marsh east of Mississippi River.

^(E)Marsh areas which are characterized by a generally declining alligator population caused by degradation of habitat.

2008 BONUS TAG ISSUANCE

Special experimental Bonus tags for alligators in the less than 6' (<6') size classes will be issued to each hunter, based upon his 2008 regular tag allocation. Bonus tags will be issued according to the following table:

Number of 2008 Regular Tags Allocated	Number of Experimental Bonus Tags to be Issued
1-9	1
10-18	2
19-27	3
28-36	4
37-45	5
46-54	6
55-63	7
64-72	8
73-81	9
82-90	10
91-99	11
100-108	12
109-117	13
118-126	14
127-135	15
136-144	16
145-153	17
Continue in increments of 8 tags	

Special considerations:

1. Bonus harvest should come from less than 6' (<6') size alligators.
2. Bonus alligators must be tagged according to Department regulations with a special experimental Bonus tag (color = yellow).
3. Hunter compliance with this experimental program is voluntary; compliance will be monitored through computer analysis of harvest data. Non-compliance may impact allocation of bonus tags for the alligator season in 2009.

**2008 NON-MARSH ALLIGATOR TAG ALLOTMENT BY ZONE AND PARISH
LAKE REGION**

ZONE	PARISH	HABITAT	ACRES OF HABITAT	TAG ALLOTMENT	REMARKS
Minden	Bienville/ Bossier/ Webster	Lake Bistineau	1,720	30	Public Lake (Experimental Lottery Harvest)
	Caddo	Wallace Lake	2,000	20	
	Bossier	Black/Cypress Lake	400	30	
	Caddo	Cross Lake	500	30	
	Bienville	Kepler Lake	250	20	
SUB TOTAL			4,870	130	
Monroe	Ouachita	Bayou Desaird	580	5	Public Lake (Experimental Lottery Harvest)
	Jackson	Caney Lake	5,000	10	
	Ouachita/ Morehouse	Bartholomew Lake	405	5	
SUB TOTAL			5,985	20	
Tioga	Rapides	Cotile Lake	400	10	Public Lake (Experimental Harvest)
	Grant	Nantachie Lake	800	5	Public Lake (Experimental Harvest)
	Natchitoches	Cane River Lake	1275	10	Public Lake (Experimental Harvest)
	Lasalle	Dewey Wills WMA	8,000	25	Highest Bidder Basis
SUB TOTAL			10,475	50	

**2008 NON-MARSH ALLIGATOR TAG ALLOTMENT BY ZONE AND PARISH
LAKE REGION**

ZONE	PARISH	HABITAT	ACRES OF HABITAT	TAG ALLOTMENT	REMARKS
Ferriday	Concordia	Three Rivers WMA	4,500	60	Experimental Lottery Harvest
		Red River WMA	3,500	50	Experimental Lottery Harvest
		Lake Concordia	800	15	Public Lake (Experimental)
	Tensas	Big Lake WMA	1,000	15	Experimental Lottery Harvest
		Buckhorn WMA	300	10	Experimental Lottery Harvest
		Lake St. Joseph	800	20	Public Lake (Experimental)
		Lake Bruin	2,800	10	Public Lake (Experimental)
		Lake St. John	200	20	Public Lake (Experimental)
	Caldwell	Beouf WMA	2,200	35	Experimental Lottery Harvest
	SUB TOTAL			16,100	235
Lake Charles	Evangeline	Chicot Lake	1,625	20	State Parks (Experimental Harvest)
	Vernon	Anacoco Lake	1,000	5	Public Lake(Experimental Harvest)
SUB TOTAL			2,625	25	

**2008 NON-MARSH ALLIGATOR TAG ALLOTMENT BY ZONE AND PARISH
LAKE REGION**

ZONE	PARISH	HABITAT	ACRES OF HABITAT	TAG ALLOTMENT	REMARKS
Opelousas	Avoyelles	Grassy Lake WMA	1,000	25	Highest Bidder Basis
		Spring Bayou WMA	5,000	92	Highest Bidder Basis
		Pomme-de-Terre WMA	800	6	Highest Bidder Basis
	Iberia/St. Martin	Attakapas WMA	26,300	25	Highest Bidder Basis
	Assumption	Elm Hall WMA	2,843	15	Experimental Lottery Harvest
Opelousas	St. Martin/Iberville	Sherburne COE Lands	3,300	33	Experimental Lottery Harvest
	Iberville/St. Martin	Sherburne WMA	11,780	12	Experimental Lottery Harvest
SUB TOTAL			51,023	208	
LAKE REGION TOTALS			91,078	668	Experimental Harvests

**2008 NON-MARSH ALLIGATOR TAG ALLOTMENT BY ZONE AND PARISH
CYPRESS-TUPELO SWAMP REGION**

ZONE	PARISH	ACRES OF HABITAT	TAG ALLOTMENT	ACRES/TAG	REMARKS
Opelousas	Iberville	29,880	187	160	Tag allotment based upon review of prior years harvest statistics, night counts and alligator model.
	Lafayette	1,200	8	160	
	Pointe Coupee	1,000	6	160	
	W. Baton Rouge	7,040	44	160	
SUB TOTAL		39,120	245	160	
Baton Rouge	Ascension	40,320	252	160	Tag allotment based upon review of prior years harvest statistics, night counts and alligator model.
	E. Baton Rouge	2,000	13	160	
	Livingston	66,720	417	160	
	Tangipahoa	36,181	226	160	
SUB TOTAL		145,221	908	160	
New Orleans	St. Charles	39,340	246	160	Tag allotment based upon review of prior years harvest statistics, night counts and alligator model.
	St. James	76,960	481	160	
	St. John	104,320	652	160	
SUB TOTAL		220,620	1,379	160	
New Iberia - Bourg	Assumption	98,560	616	160	Tag allotment based upon review of prior years harvests statistics, night counts and alligator model.
	Iberia	31,550	197	160	
	Lafourche	112,350	702	160	
	St. Mary	60,190	376	160	
	Terrebonne	43,014	269	160	
SUB TOTAL		345,664	2,160	160	
SWAMP TOTAL		750,625	4,692	160	

ATCHAFALAYA BASIN ALLIGATOR HABITAT

REGION	ACREAGE	DESCRIPTION
A. Henderson Lake	15,000	Bounded on the west by the West Guide Levee, on the North by Little Fordoche Bayou, on the east by the Haha Bay and Gim Slough and on the south by La. Hwy. 3177.
B. Crook Chen Cove- Buffalo Cove	32,000	Beginning at the northwest corner of Attakapas W.M.A.: A line north along Lake Fausse Point Cut to Bayou Benoit; west to the West Guide Levee, north to the East-West Canal located approximately 3 miles south of Catahoula, La.: East approximately 2 miles to canal; southeast on the same canal to Bayou Crook Chene; east to the main channel of the Atchafalaya River; south to the north boundary of Attakapas W.M.A.; west to point of beginning.
C. Spike Bay-Berry Lake	8,000	Beginning at a point 1-1/2 miles northwest of Bayou Sorrel Landing; west along canal 5 miles; south along Spike Bay for 2 miles; east to intersect Bayou Sorrel then continue east along Bayou Sorrel to East Guide Levee; north to point of beginning.
D. Upper Grand River Flats	12,000	Beginning at Upper Grand River Landing; north along East Guide Levee approximately 9 miles to a canal running northwest; northwest along that canal 2-1/2 miles to King's Ditch; south approximately 5 miles to include Billy Little Lakes; southeast approximately 4 miles to intersection of Upper Grand River and Little Tensas Bayou, east along Upper Grand River to point of beginning.
E. Bayou Pigeon-Belle River-Flat Lake	140,000	Beginning at Bayou Pigeon Landing; south along East Guide Levee to Morgan City (excluding Flat Lake); north-northwest along east side of the main channel of Six Mile Lake approximately 10 miles to 21-Inch Canal; northeast on 21-Inch Canal to Bayou Boutte; north on Bayou Boutte to the east boundary line of Attakapas W.M.A.; then north along its east boundary to Grand Lake; north along the east bank of Grand Lake to Keelboat Pass; northeast along Keelboat Pass and Flat Lake Pass to intersection of Williams Canal and a canal running southwest-northeast; northeast along that canal to intersection of Intracoastal Canal (East Guide Levee); south to Bayou Pigeon Landing.
TOTAL ALLIGATOR HABITAT WITHIN BASIN TYPE	207,000	Tags may be issued at the rate of one tag per 500 acres of habitat.

2008 NON-MARSH ALLIGATOR TAG ALLOTMENT BY REGIONS

REGION	ACRES OF HABITAT	ALLOTMENT	ACRES/TAG	REMARKS
Public Lakes/Non-Coastal WMAs	91,078	668	80*	Includes public lakes and non-coastal Wildlife Management Areas. *Tag allotment may vary depending on alligator populations.
Cypress-Tupelo Swamp	750,625	4,692	160	Swamp habitat outside the Atchafalaya Basin.
Atchafalaya Basin	207,000	414	500	That portion of the Atchafalaya Basin determined to be Cypress-Tupelo swamp containing permanent water as determine by aerial observations as well as approximately 400 miles of travel by boat during April-June, 1985.
GRAND TOTAL	1,048,703	5,774		

*Additionally: Any private cypress-lake region habitat or coastal marsh alligator habitat determined by Department personnel to have a reproducing population may be issued tags at the rate of one tag per 80 acres of habitat; exceptionally dense alligator populations on a localized area may be issued tags at the rate of 1 tag per 25 acres of habitat (requires coordination and annual evaluation with Fur and Refuge Division personnel).

Approved by:



Robert J. Barham, Secretary
La. Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries

7-15-2008

DATE