

LOUISIANA  
WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES  
COMMISSION

# Recreational Alligator *Hunting Season*

*Proposed Rule — LAC 76:V.703*

One Team • One Sportsman • One Louisiana



# What this Notice of Intent does

## LAC 76:V.703 — Recreational Alligator Hunting Season

### PURPOSE

*“The proposed Rule creates a controlled recreational harvest opportunity for resident hunters, separate from the existing commercial alligator program, based upon availability of alligator resource and increasing public recreational opportunity.”*

### STRUCTURE OF § 703

1. Purpose
2. Definitions
3. General Rules
4. Licenses, Permits and Fees
5. Wild Harvest Methods
6. Recreational Alligator Season Lottery
7. Recreational Alligator Harvest Zones (A–H)
8. Tagging and Reporting Requirements

## LEGISLATIVE INTENT

# The Louisiana Legislature signaled a desire for increased alligator harvest

### HCR 132 — 2023 Regular Session

#### *Urging a market analysis and hunting study*

- Directs LDWF, the Alligator Advisory Council, and the Commission to study alligator markets and populations and commercial, recreational, and nuisance hunting.
- Finds wild population has grown from <100,000 to over 2 million in 50 years — 'recovered so well that they are now becoming a problem.'
- Cites more nuisance alligators in residential areas than ever and gear damage to commercial fishermen.
- Recommends modifying tag-issuance formula so 'many more tags can be issued for commercial hunting.'

### SB 229 — 2024 Regular Session

#### *Reducing the return of alligators to the wild*

- Caps the required return of live alligators to the wild at a maximum rate of 5% at 48 inches total length, set by Commission rule.
- Places the return responsibility on the special-permit egg-collection holder and the landowner who owns or leases the nesting habitat.
- Converted to a Study Resolution (SR 105) to study and make recommendations regarding the management of alligator populations.

# Two signals pointing to the same policy direction

HCR 132 (2023) + SB 229 (2024) together show a clear legislative direction:

*Expand the harvest. Reduce protections calibrated to a recovered population. Create a recreational opportunity.*

- 1 Increase commercial harvest**  
HCR 132 recommends modifying the tag-per-acre formula so 'many more tags can be issued for commercial hunting.'
- 2 Reduce live returns to the wild**  
SB 229 caps the required live-return rate at 5% at 48 inches — preventing return of more alligators onto the land.
- 3 Create a recreational opportunity**  
HCR 132 tasks LDWF and the Commission with studying and making recommendations on recreational hunting — a foundation the 2026 session then built on.

# The statutes authorizing this rule

## SB 244 — Sen. Allain | R.S. 56:256

### *Authorizes a special recreational season*

- Commission may establish a special recreational alligator season, independent of the commercial season.
- Commission may set the season by area; establish harvest quotas or tag allotments per area.
- Commission may prescribe residency, methods of taking, and harvest hours.
- Recreational hunters must hold a basic hunting license, an alligator hunting license, and department-issued recreational harvest tags.
- Establishes Violation = Class Three.

## HB 767 — Rep. Riser | R.S. 56:268 & 3002

### *Creates the lottery, license fees, and revenue deposit*

- Commission SHALL promulgate rules establishing a lottery for selection and issuance of harvest tags.
- \$50 nonrefundable entry fee per lottery application; tags may issue to eligible winners at no cost.
- All lottery revenue and auction proceeds are deposited into the Conservation Fund.
- Resident alligator license: \$25/year.
- Nonresident alligator license: \$150/year.
- Effective only upon enactment of SB 244.

*Together, SB 244 and HB 767 supply the statutory authority and revenue mechanics implemented by the proposed LAC 76:V.703.*

# Five features that define the recreational program

## SEPARATION

### Separate from commercial

Recreational harvest runs on its own track. Properties already issued commercial harvest tags are excluded from recreational eligibility.

## LOTTERY

### Limited lottery tag issuance

Up to 5,000 recreational hunting opportunities per season — 10,000 recreational hide tags — distributed through a lottery open to Louisiana residents 16+.

## GEOGRAPHY

### Eight zones, statewide

Recreational harvest distributed across Zones A through H, covering all 64 parishes. Tag allotment per zone is set by the department each season.

## REPORTING

### Mandatory reporting

Immediate tag attachment on harvest; validation within 72 hours via department portal, LA Wallet, phone, or LouisianaOutdoors.com.

## NO-COMMERCE

### Strict no-commerce rule

Alligators, hides, meat, and parts taken under a recreational hide tag may not be sold, bartered, or commingled with commercial-tag alligators.

# General Rules — what a hunter can and cannot do

## MUST

- Be a properly licensed recreational alligator hunter with department-issued hide tags during open season.
- Carry valid recreational hide tags for the season and zone being hunted, plus written evidence of land ownership or landowner permission.
- Dispatch an alligator before releasing it from any taking device; properly attach the recreational hide tag immediately upon possession; remove the alligator from the harvest area.
- Dispose of alligator carcass remains sanitarily by cremation, burial, or LDWF-recommended method.
- Make reasonable efforts to retrieve any hooked, wounded, or killed alligator and protect edible meat from waste.

## MUST NOT

- Sell, barter, or commingle recreationally-taken alligators, hides, meat, or parts with commercial-tag alligators. Processors must not accept recreational tags for commerce.
- Transfer, sell, assign, gift, loan, or convey a recreational hide tag — tags are nontransferable.
- Conduct, advertise, or participate in any for-hire guided alligator hunt using a recreational hide tag.
- Intentionally take a white or albino
- Wantonly waste an alligator — includes failing to retrieve, intentionally abandoning edible meat, or taking without intent to reduce to possession.
- Dispose of carcass remains in public lands, rights-of-way, or waterbodies.

Source: NOI v3 CLEAN, § 703.A.3 (Subparagraphs a–n). Violation classes shown on a later slide.

# Licenses, lottery, and eligibility

## LICENSES, PERMITS & FEES

### RESIDENT

**\$25**

Recreational Alligator  
Hunting License

### NONRESIDENT

**\$150**

Nonresident Recreational  
Alligator Hunting License

- Expire annually on December 31.
- A recreational hunter must possess a basic hunting license, the recreational alligator hunting license, valid recreational hide tag(s), and written proof of land ownership or permission.

## RECREATIONAL SEASON LOTTERY

**5,000**

*hunting opportunities*

**10,000**

*recreational hide tags*

- Eligibility: bona fide residents age 16+ who are hunter-education certified.
- Nonresidents may participate only in the physical presence of the lottery-winning hunter.
- Successful applicants receive 2 recreational hide tags per awarded zone application.

# Wild harvest methods

## ALLOWED

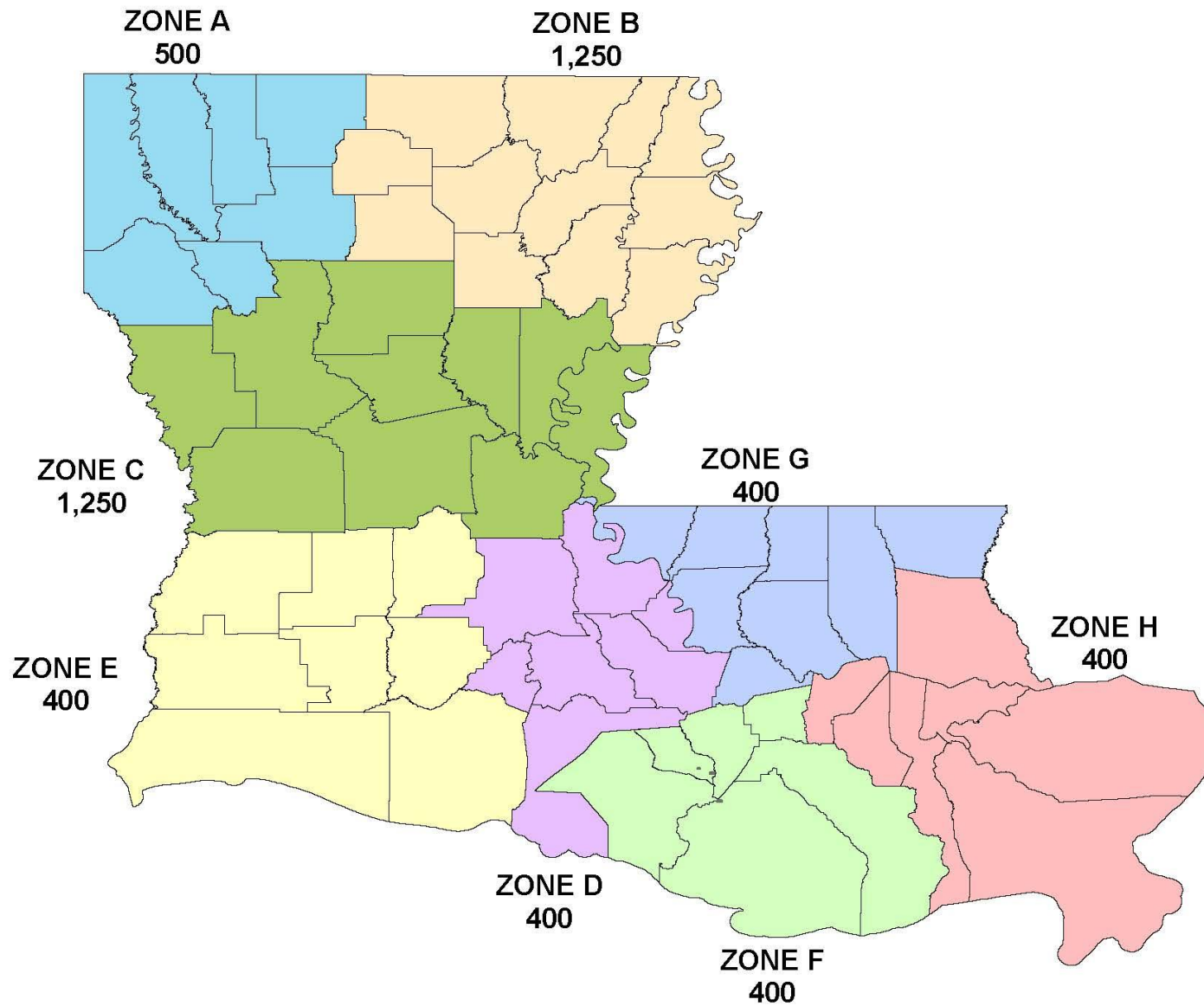
- Hook and line, or snatch hook only — anchored, tethered, or originating from immovable eligible property with written landowner permission.
- Daylight hours only.
- A firearm or bang stick may be used to dispatch an alligator after it has been taken on hook and line. Dispatch may be done from a boat once secured to the line.
- Up to two (2) lines per unused tag. All lines must be labeled with the hunter's LDWF customer number on weatherproof material.
- Hooks require a line rated at least 300 pound test, securely attached, with the other end anchored to eligible property.

## PROHIBITED

- Pole hunting is prohibited.
- Free shooting is prohibited.
- Taking outside of daylight hours or outside the special season designated by the Commission.
- Taking without valid licenses or tags, or by illegal methods.
- Exceeding the two-lines-per-unused-tag limit, or using lines not rated to 300-pound test.
- Leaving baited lines in the water outside the authorized 24-hour pre-season window or past sunset on the last day of the season.

*NOI note: There are no size restrictions on wild alligators taken during the recreational season. — § 703.A.5.b.*

# Year 1: Recreational Opportunities by Zone



SEASON & YEAR 1 ALLOCATION

# October 1 – October 31 | All eight zones

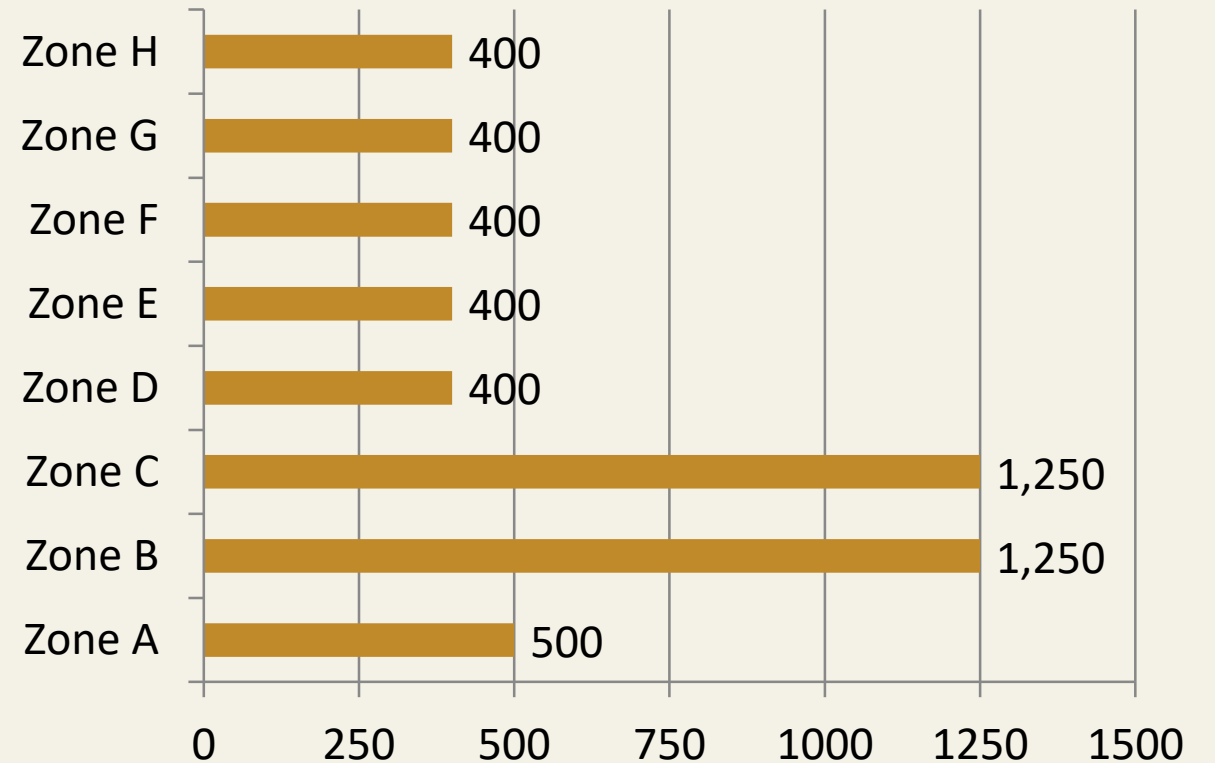
OPEN SEASON — ALL ZONES

# October 1

*through*

# October 31

Year 1 Opportunities by Zone



Source: NOI § 703.A.7.b (season dates); LDWF Year 1 Recreational Hunt Map (11-18-25) for allocations.

# Tagging and reporting requirements

## IMMEDIATELY

### Attach & lock the hide tag

Upon harvest, attach the recreational hide tag in the alligator's tail and lock it with the tag's locking device. Factory-defective tags must be reported to the department.

## WITHIN 72 HOURS

### Validate the harvest

Report the recreational hide tag number, length of the alligator, date of harvest, and parish of harvest to LDWF.

## FOUR CHANNELS

### How to validate

LDWF web portal • LA Wallet • toll-free validation line • [www.louisianaOutdoors.com](http://www.louisianaOutdoors.com).

## CONSEQUENCE

### Fail to validate = future lottery ban

Hunters who fail to validate harvested alligators will be prohibited from future participation in the recreational alligator hunting lottery.

# Penalty classes referenced in the NOI

Violations of the proposed rule carry differentiated penalty classes. The NOI ties each specific subparagraph to a class under Title 56.

## CLASS TWO

### Sanitary disposal

- Improper disposal of alligator carcass remains — including in public lands, rights-of-way, or waterbodies.
- Each improperly disposed carcass is a separate violation; also subject to littering penalties and restitution for cleanup.

## CLASS THREE

### Conduct, gear, & licensing

- Transfer of shipping of hides, meat, or parts without a possession tag; any shipping outside the United States.
- Guided, for-fee, or outfitter hunt.
- Wanton waste.
- Illegal methods of take.
- Failure to remove alligators daily or remove hooks/lines once quota is reached.
- Take outside the season, at night, or without the required licenses and tags.

## CLASS FOUR

### Tagging, no-commerce, and out-of-season / ineligible property

- Untagged alligators or hides —confiscation.
- Failing to dispatch and immediately tag, or remove, a harvested alligator.
- Commercial sale, barter, or commingling of recreationally-taken alligators.
- Sale of a nontransferable recreational hide tag.
- Hunting out-of-season, at night, or on ineligible property — triggers license revocation, confiscation, 5-year lottery forfeiture, and civil restitution.
- Dispatching or removing alligators from hook and line / snatch hook outside daylight hours.

Penalty classes track the subparagraphs of NOI § 703.A.3, § 703.A.5, and § 703.A.6.

# From Notice of Intent to Final Rule

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Comments may be submitted to:

**Jeb Linscombe, Alligator Program Biologist**

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries  
200 Dulles Drive, Lafayette, LA 70506

*Email: [jlinscombe@wlf.la.gov](mailto:jlinscombe@wlf.la.gov)*

*Authorization: The secretary is authorized to file the fiscal and economic impact statement and the Notice of Intent, compile public comments, and — after Commission consideration — prepare and transmit a summary report to legislative oversight and promulgate the final rule.*

## PATH TO FINAL RULE

WLF Commission Approval – May Meeting

Publication in State Register – May 20

Public Comment Period – June 26

Legislative Oversight – 30 Days

Final Rule Publication – August 20