

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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ALLIGATOR REMOVED FROM ENDANGERED LIST IN LOUISIANA

"The alligator is being removed from the endangered species list in three parishes (counties) of Louisiana where its populations have achieved a healthy balance," Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed said today.

"Final formal action on this will be published in the Federal Register in the near future," he said.

This decision comes after a proposal was published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Federal Register on July 8, 1975. Public comments through September 8 were solicited, received, considered, and made a part of the record on this issue.

The Fish and Wildlife Service began a review of the status of the American alligator in July 1974 throughout the 10 Southern States where it is found. The report suggests that population levels in parts of Alabama, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas are high and in many areas are considered to be ecologically secure. The survey also found that the populations in Cameron, Vermilion, and Calcasieu Parishes in Louisiana were neither endangered nor threatened and that it would be appropriate to return primary management and protection responsibilities to the State. The populations in the other three States of Oklahoma, Arkansas, and North Carolina where the reptile is found are still considered endangered.

In those parishes of Louisiana where the alligator is no longer endangered, these reptiles could be hunted in accordance with State and Federal regulations. The marketing of these hides would be strictly controlled under State and Federal licensing and marking systems which would ensure that only alligators from the three Louisiana Parishes will be taken and that only legally taken hides can be marketed. These regulations also prohibit the export from the United States of legally taken hides.

The forthcoming action on alligators will only involve the Louisiana populations in Cameron, Vermilion, and Calcasieu Parishes. Additional separate actions on alligators throughout the rest of their Southern United States range will be taken within the coming weeks when a new study has been concluded on alligator populations in light of public comments.