



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## press release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release May 15, 1981

Megan Durham 202/343-5634

ALLIGATORS IN LOUISIANA PROPOSED FOR RECLASSIFICATION  
FROM "THREATENED" SPECIES TO LESS RESTRICTIVE STATUS

Alligators are doing so well in Louisiana that the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to change their legal status in most of the State from "threatened species" to a less restrictive status under the Endangered Species Act. The change would allow the State of Louisiana to permit a strictly regulated alligator harvest in 52 parishes where collecting the animals had been prohibited.

A limited alligator harvest is already permitted in 12 parishes of Louisiana, so the effect of the proposed action would be to give the State the option to allow alligators to be harvested throughout Louisiana.

"We have thoroughly examined data provided by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and have concluded that alligator populations throughout the State have grown as large as the available habitat will permit and are now stable," said Dr. Eugene Hester, acting deputy director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "Although the evidence indicates that the alligator is no longer biologically threatened in Louisiana, the proposed reclassification will allow for careful monitoring of harvest and trade of Louisiana alligators so that these activities will not become a threat to alligators in other States where they are still classified as endangered or threatened."

Hester said the alligator's status has improved because of the success of strong State and Federal efforts to protect and manage alligators. Louisiana

over

