12 parishes set for 'gator hunt

An alligator season, opening Thursday, Sept. 4, and extending through Oct. 4 in portions of 12 coastal parishes, was established by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission at its regular monthly public meeting in New Orleans July 29.

Joseph V. Colson, secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, said the 31-day season would be closely regulated by rules and procedures adopted by the commission at the meeting.

Hunting will be permitted only in certain areas, with consent of landowners, according to specific harvest methods, and following stringent regulations, which must track provisions of the Federal Endangered Species Act.

Alligator harvesting as well as the selling of hides, meat, and parts will be closely monitored and enforcement will be strict.

Areas to be open for hunting alligators will include portions of the parishes of Cameron, Calcasieu, Vermillion, Iberia, St. Mary, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Charles, Jefferson, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, and St. Tammany.

Under regulations adopted by the commission, a quota was established for each area eligible for hunting. During the 1979 season, some 16,300 alligators were harvested. It is estimated that between 17,000 and 20,000 alligators will be taken this year.

Landowners and trappers will be issued special tags for the exact number of alligators that can be harvested from their lands.

These tags, issued by the department, must be attached to the hide immediately and remain their during storage, shipment and processing.

All hunters must be authorized by landowners and properly licensed by the department. Cost of a resident alligator hunting license is $25 and a non-resident sport hunting license is $150.

Indiscriminate hunting of alligators anywhere in Louisiana or in the designated areas out-of-season is a violation of state and federal laws.

No alligators under four feet in length may be taken. Hunting is allowed only during daylight hours, between one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.

$1.7 Million

The 16,000 alligators taken by hunters last year brought an average price of $15 per foot and an average price of $105 per skin. Total value amounted to $1,711,500 and provided an economic stimulus in the 12 parishes where hunting was allowed.