Another Caution
On Gator Hunting

A warning against illegal hunting of alligators under any circumstances was issued today by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Jesse J. Guidry, department secretary, said reclassification of the American alligator August 10 in 52 additional Louisiana parishes by the U.S. Department of the Interior does not mean that alligators can be hunted indiscriminately by sport hunters or any other persons.

He said unauthorized hunting of alligators anywhere in Louisiana would be a violation of both state and federal laws.

Guidry said reclassification of the alligators in 52 parishes, following earlier reclassification in 12 coastal parishes, now makes it possible for controlled harvest of surplus alligators throughout the state.

He said hunting of alligators on a statewide basis would be done under rules and regulations similar to those that have applied during hunting seasons in the coastal parishes.

Under regulations adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Commission July 28, quotas have been established and landowners and trappers will be issued tags for the exact number of alligators that can be harvested from their lands.

Special provisions have been made by the department for harvesting of surplus alligators on selected lakes containing alligator habitat, and for the removal of nuisance alligators.

Hunting on the pre-selected Louisiana lakes where alligator habitat exists and gators are present will be controlled by tag allotments, with five tags being issued for each individual hunter selected by the department.

Hunters for the selected lakes will be chosen by lottery following proper application to the department by individual hunters.

In parishes where nuisance alligator problems exist, a limited number of alligators will be allowed to be removed by department designated hunters.

Alligators taken must be tagged immediately, with the tags staying on the hides in storage, shipment, and processing.

Guidry said Act 558 of the 1977 legislature makes it possible for both resident and non-resident sport hunters to take alligators; however, they can only be taken during a legally established hunting season, and only by meeting strict requirements.

Sport alligator hunters must make necessary arrangements with persons to whom tags have been issued in those parishes where hunting will take place. The cost must be worked out with the landowner and guide.

Guides, Guidry said, are those licensed hunters who have permission to take a fixed number of alligators on private lands, and who have the necessary tags.

The cost of a resident alligator hunting license is $25. The cost of a non-resident license is $150.

Guidry said that even after these requirements are met, it is the responsibility of the alligator hunter to see that his alligator goes to a federally licensed taxidermist if it is to be mounted, or to a federally licensed tanner if the hide is intended for leather goods.

He said action by the Department of the Interior marked a forward step toward practical management of Louisiana's surplus alligator populations, but it should not be construed to mean indiscriminate hunting of alligators is now allowed.

He said enforcement of alligator hunting laws will be strict and that penalties are stiff.