Gator season monitored

An alligator season, opening Thursday, September 4, and extending through October 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 provision of the Federal Endangered Species Act.

All 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, Vermilion, 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 there 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 nonresident 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.

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.

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A dilemma is faced by veterans and widows on the protected VA pension law when there is a question as to their need for aid and attendance, a physical condition so severe that additional VA benefits may be paid.

However, only veterans and widows receiving VA pension under the Improved Pension Law 95-588 may receive the additional A.A. benefits. The question arises, “Do I give up protection under the old law by filing for Aid and Attendance under the new law...”

The answer is easy according to Joseph E. Carlin, Vermilion Parish Service Officer with the La. Dept. of Veterans’ Affairs. He can file a claim for you on VA Form 21-6897 with a medical statement which you may secure from your physician, and can request that you be considered for the new pension only if you are found in need for A.A. and if the decision will result in higher pension benefits.

Mr. Carlin’s office is located in the Courthouse in Abbeville, La. and open Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30.
Respectfully submitted,
LA. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS’ AFFAIRS
Joseph E. Carlin
JOSEPH E. CARLIN
Vermilion Parish Service Claims Officer