Hunters Net
Over 16,000 Gators

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — During Louisiana's recent one-month alligator hunt, more than 16,000 were killed and their hides produced up to $1.8 million for trappers, says the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Allen Ensminger, chief of the department's fur division, said Tuesday the success of the season was due to both the removal of the alligator from the endangered species list in nine more parishes and the international market for hides.

Ensminger told the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission that the department will seek authority to open the alligator hunt in more Louisiana parishes.

Three Louisiana parishes had been opened to limited gator hunting in previous years, but the hunt was allowed in 12 more this year, from Sept. 7 to Oct. 7.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this month gave approval for trappers to sell hides and hide products on the international market for the first time in several years.

Ensminger said the skins are now selling for $15 a foot.

He estimated there are now between 400,000 and 500,000 alligators in Louisiana.