White alligator with green stripe found

By The Associated Press

MONROE — Another white alligator has been found, but this one has a green stripe down its back.

Unlike the rare white alligators now owned by Audubon Zoo in New Orleans, the new one is about 75 percent white. And it has white eyes, unlike the blue eyes of the 17 male white gators in New Orleans.

The Louisiana Purchase Gardens and Zoo in Monroe bought the striped gator Thursday from a southern Louisiana breeder, director Stan Lockridge said.

Also in the deal is a black alligator — making an unusual pair, contrasted to the normal dark green gators found throughout southern Louisiana swamps.

Lockridge said the black and white gators are about 3½ years old — close to the same age as the New Orleans white gators. They came from the same area where the other white gators were found, Lockridge said.

Jake Yelverton, zoo curator, said the pair had been hatched and raised by John Ducote at the J.D. Gator Farm in Hessmer, south of Marksville.

Yelverton said the eggs were taken from a nest in the wild according to regulations for alligator farmers. Ducote quietly raised them for 3½ years before deciding to sell them.

"The white one shows a lot of characteristics of the other whites," Yelverton said. "The eyes are strange — clear, but with a kind of bluish tint. The black one is very dark, and the belly is the color of charcoal, he said.

"The eye color is more normal," he said, "but it is a black alligator. I've never heard of one before. It is definitely a deviation from the normal color."

Lockridge said there has been discussion with Audubon Zoo about breeding the white gator, if the new one turns out to be female.

"We know it has the white gene, but the white eyes lead us to believe it may be from a different litter than the other white gators," he said.

"We hope to unveil them at the zoo next month," Lockridge said.