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History of American Alligator Regulations in the U.S.A.

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- 1800-1870: Alligators hunted without regulation for skins in Louisiana. No reports of extensive skin trade in Florida, but it is likely that a certain amount occurred¹
- 1870-1943: Alligator hunting poorly regulated. The commercial skin trade in Louisiana and Florida flourishes. In Florida, hunting seasons regulated by county governments.
- 1944: Alligator hunting in Florida regulated by the new Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Only alligators four feet and larger can be legally harvested. Poor compliance.
- 1950: Alligator completely protected in Florida. Poor compliance.
- 1952: Hunting reinstated in Florida. Limited to 8 ft. and larger alligators by permit only. Poor compliance. Populations decline.
- 1961: Florida prohibits the hunting of alligators after the 1961 season due to declining numbers.
- 1962: Louisiana prohibits the hunting of alligators due to declining numbers.
- 1967: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service classifies the American alligator as an endangered species. No regulations are passed to enforce this classification.
- 1962-1970: Illegal alligator hunting continues throughout the Southeastern U.S.
- 1969: The Lacey Act, prohibiting the interstate transport and export of illegally taken wildlife, is amended to include reptiles.
- 1969: The Mason-Smith Act is enacted by the State of New York, banning the sale of endangered species and their products. This shut down the biggest center of trade for alligator products in the U.S.A. Alligator skins are still exported to foreign markets.
- 1970: The Lacey Act is enforced and several high-profile cases are made. Defendants are fined and serve jail time.
- 1970: Louisiana gives the La. Department of Wildlife and Fisheries the full authority to regulate the alligator as a commercially harvested species.
- 1970-1972: Illegal harvest of alligators is effectively curtailed and alligator populations show signs of a rapid recovery.
- 1972, 1973: Louisiana conducts experimental commercial alligator harvests on 1-2 parishes.

¹ Joanen, T., and L. McNease. 1987. The management of alligators in Louisiana, U.S.A. Pages 33-42 in Webb, G. J. W., S. C. Manolis, and P. J. Whitehead, eds., *Wildlife management: crocodiles and alligators*. Surrey Beatty and Sons, Chipping Norton, NSW, Australia.

- 1973: The Endangered Species Act goes into effect on December 28, 1973. All alligator populations classified as endangered.
- 1975: Alligators are reclassified from endangered to Threatened due to Similarity of Appearance (Threatened/SA) in certain Louisiana parishes. Limited hunts are allowed in these parishes.
- 1975: The American alligator is classified as an Appendix I species during the Convention for the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and export of skins is prohibited.
- 1977: Alligators reclassified from Endangered to Threatened in Florida and certain counties in Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, and Louisiana.
- 1977: Florida initiates a nuisance alligator control program that allows contracted hunters to kill problem alligators and sell their skins.
- 1979: Alligator populations in a group of La. Parishes reclassified from Threatened to Threatened/SA.
- 1979: Sale of alligator meat is authorized by the federal government.
- 1979: The American alligator is changed from Appendix I to Appendix II during the (CITES). Alligator skins can be legally exported.
- 1981: Statewide alligator trapping season in La. Florida initiates experimental harvests of large alligators and eggs
- 1983: Texas alligator population is reclassified to Threatened/SA
- 1984: Texas implements limited harvest of alligators
- 1985: Florida alligator population is reclassified to Threatened/SA. Florida expands its experimental harvests
- 1987: The American alligator is classified as Threatened/SA range-wide.
- 1988: Florida implements statewide alligator harvest program.