

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 132

BY REPRESENTATIVES BROWN, BACALA, BOURRIAQUE, FISHER, FREEMAN,
LARVADAIN, RISER, ROMERO, AND THOMPSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Alligator Advisory Council, and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to study and make recommendations relative to alligator markets and populations and commercial, recreational, and nuisance hunting in this state.

WHEREAS, in 1967 the American alligator was listed as an endangered species under federal law; and

WHEREAS, in the 1970's the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries began implementing conservation measures to increase the alligator population in this state; and

WHEREAS, there were under seven thousand alligator nests in coastal marsh habitats in this state in the 1970's, but through conservation efforts that number had risen to nearly sixty-five thousand by 2021; and

WHEREAS, the wild population of alligators has grown from less than one hundred thousand to over two million in the last fifty years; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries must be recognized and commended for their outstanding work to restore this species in what has been called one of the greatest conservation stories in the United States; and

WHEREAS, today Louisiana has an estimated population of over two million wild alligators and another one million farm-raised alligators; and

WHEREAS, by comparison, Florida has an estimated population of one million three hundred thousand alligators, just over one third of the population in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the population of wild alligators in the state has recovered so well that they are now becoming a problem; and

WHEREAS, more nuisance alligators are being reported in residential areas than ever before; and

WHEREAS, commercial fishermen are experiencing increasing damage to their traps, nets, and other gear from alligators; and

WHEREAS, the conservation measures put in place many years ago to help restore a healthy population must now be reduced in order to protect Louisiana citizens and fishermen; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries issues a limited number of tags each year based on the acreage of the property with which the tags are associated; and

WHEREAS, while the tags should still be issued for the purposes of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the department should modify the formula used to calculate the number of tags issued for individual properties so that many more tags can be issued for commercial hunting; and

WHEREAS, from 1999 to 2009 the state operated a bonus tag program for hunters that inadvertently caught alligators six feet and under; and

WHEREAS, the program was suspended after several natural disasters adversely impacted alligator nesting; and

WHEREAS, the alligator markets fluctuate due to a host of factors, however, this industry is a critical component to the economy and culture of this state; and

WHEREAS, a market analysis of the alligator industry would provide significant benefit in the decision-making process.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the Alligator Advisory Council, and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission to jointly study and compile data relative to alligator markets and populations and commercial, recreational, and nuisance hunting in this state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the speaker of the House of Representatives and the president of the Senate by February 1, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the chairman of the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission, and the chairman and the program manager of the Alligator Advisory Council.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE