

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

STATE: GEORGIA

PROJECT NUMBER: _____

STUDY NUMBER: _____

Project Title: Statewide Wildlife Survey

Section Title:

Study Title: Alligator Harvest and Hunt Data in Georgia

Period Covered: July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

A. ACTIVITY

Summary:

All alligator harvest report forms were forwarded to the Region VI Game Management Office for analysis. The number of alligators harvested, average length of alligators harvested, longest alligator harvested and hunter success rate were determined by zone and statewide for the 2016 alligator hunting season.

Contents:

Georgia Alligator Hunt Results: 2016-2017

Background:

Alligator hunting provides Georgia sportsmen and sportswomen an opportunity to utilize a sustainable natural resource. Historically, the alligator population reached its lowest point in the late 1960's. This decline was due to inadequately controlled harvests and poaching. Protection derived from the alligator's listing as endangered by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1967 and the amended Lacey Act in 1969 resulted in a gradual, but significant increase in the alligator population in Georgia and other southeastern states. This increase led the USFWS to reclassify the alligator to "Threatened by Similarity of Appearance" in 1987. This reclassification allowed states greater flexibility in managing alligators while still maintaining some federal controls on exports of alligator hides. The alligator is now listed as a game animal in Georgia with a legislated harvest season set by the Board of Natural Resources.

Objectives:

To determine the alligator harvest and success rate by zone and statewide in Georgia and determine the method most utilized by hunters.

Procedures:

Hunters are selected by being drawn from quota applications submitted during the summer prior to the hunt season. The selected hunters are issued temporary harvest tags and provided information on hunting zones, alligator hunting techniques, and Georgia alligator hunting rules and regulations. Successful alligator hunters are required to take the alligator hide or the alligator carcass to a Game Management office to have a CITES tag attached in order for them to have the hide tanned, sell the hide, or have the alligator mounted. They are required at that time to fill out an Alligator Harvest Report Form, which includes important hunt data such as date harvested, method utilized, body of water where taken, number of assistants during hunt, length, sex, and weight of alligator.

All Game Management offices are required to forward all alligator harvest report forms to the Alligator Program Coordinator at the Region VI Game Management office for analysis.

B. TARGET DATES FOR ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Job A.

Goals	Date of Achievement
Annual report – September 1, 2017	November 29, 2016

C. SIGNIFICANT DEVIATIONS:

Completely early

D. FINDINGS:

Job A.

More than eleven thousand people applied for the 1,000 alligator permits available. Applicants were residents of many other states besides Georgia and showed that there was continued national interest in hunting alligators in Georgia.

Alligator hunters were chosen for one of ten different approved hunting zones. The counties in these zones can be seen in the footnotes for Table 1 and ranged from 6 to 16 counties within a zone. The number of counties (86) available for hunting during the 2016 alligator season remained the same as the 2015 season. The number of permits

available varied from zone to zone based on estimated alligator population densities and amount of public water available for hunting and ranged from 30 to 220. The number of alligators harvested per zone ranged from 6 to 54 and can be seen in Table 1. Hunter success rates based on the number of alligators harvested divided by the number of permits available ranged from 11 % (zone 4) to 39 % (zone 9) with an overall success rate of 25 %. The average length of alligators harvested can be seen in Table 1 (100") and ranged from 89" in zone 5 to 138" in zone 1A. The longest alligator harvested by zone can also be seen in Table 1 and ranged from 134" to 162". The most popular method of hunting and harvesting alligators was with a snag hook followed second by the use of archery equipment. The percentage of males in the harvest was 69.

Comparisons of the previous twelve seasons can be seen in Table 2. The percent success for the eleven seasons was much lower than anticipated with a combined success rate of 25%. Comparisons between zones can be seen in Tables 3-10. The zones with the lowest overall success rate are zones 4 and 5 (11 and 17%) and the zones with the highest overall success rates are zones 7 and 9 with 36% success and zone 9 with 39% success. These rates can probably be attributed to the density of alligators within the zones and the amount of public water available for hunting. The remaining zones have success rates ranging from 19% to 28%. The zone with the longest average length was the newest zone 1A at 138", which has a minimum size for harvest of 96" (8'). The zones with the shortest average length were zones 3 and 5 with an overall 89" average. All other information concerning zone comparisons by year can be seen in tables 3-10.

Analysis of successful hunters' harvest forms shows the average for days hunted was three with a minimum of one day and maximum of twenty-eight days hunted. The average number of assistants accompanying the hunter was two with a minimum of zero assistants and a maximum of six. Chart 1 shows the disposition of alligator hides from the 2016 season. The majority of successful hunters kept their alligator hide for personal use. Chart 2 shows the percentage of alligators harvested on public (83%) versus private (17%) lands during the 2016 season. Chart 3 shows the percentage use of weapon type by successful alligator hunters. A snag hook was the number one method of harvest followed closely by archery equipment. Chart 4 shows the percentage by week of alligator harvest throughout the season which ran from sunset on August 19 until sunrise on October 3 for the 2016 hunting season.

E. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Annual alligator harvest data is needed for continued management of Georgia's alligator resource and annual analysis and yearly comparisons should continue.

F. Prepared by: Greg Waters, Senior Wildlife Biologist

Submitted by: Greg Waters, (signed)
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Date: November 28, 2016

Table 1. Alligator harvest data for the 2016 alligator hunting season.

Zone*	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length “	Longest “
1	35	7	20	124”	141”
1A	30	6	20	138”	162”
2	220	52	24	108”	162”
3	60	17	28	89”	138”
4	85	9	11	106”	152”
5	100	17	17	89”	134”
6	80	15	19	102”	141”
7	150	54	36	101”	148”
8	160	40	25	92”	135”
9	80	31	39	95”	139”
TOTAL	1000	248	25	100”	162”

- Zone 1 – Clay, Early, Quitman, Randolph, Stewart, Terrell, Webster, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Marion & Muscogee Cos.; Zone 2 – Baker, Decatur, Grady, Miller, Mitchell & Seminole Cos.; Zone 3 – Crawford, Crisp, Dooly, Dougherty, Houston, Lee, Macon, Peach, Schley, Sumter, Taylor & Worth Cos.; Zone 4 – Berrien, Brooks, Colquitt, Cook, Irwin, Lanier, Thomas, Tift, Turner & Lowndes Cos.; Zone 5 – Ben Hill, Bibb, Bleckley, Coffee, Dodge, Jeff Davis, Laurens, Montgomery, Pulaski, Telfair, Treutlen, Twiggs, Wheeler, Wilcox & Wilkinson Cos.; Zone 6 – Atkinson, Bacon, Brantley, Camden, Charlton, Clinch, Echols, Pierce, & Ware Cos.; Zone – 7 Appling, Glynn, Long, McIntosh, Tattnall, Toombs & Wayne Cos.; Zone 8 – Bryan, Bulloch, Candler, Chatham, Effingham, Evans & Liberty; Zone 9 – Glascock, Richmond, Washington, Jefferson, Burke, Johnson, Emanuel, Jenkins & Screven.
- 69% were male; 25% were female; 6% unknown sex

Table 2. Alligator harvest data for the 2003-2016 alligator hunting seasons.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003	184	72	39	97”	144”
2004	300	101	34	100”	158”
2005	500	161	32	98”	162”
2006	500	185	37	95”	160”
2007	550	192	35	100”	160”
2008	551	173	31	104”	163”
2009	700	193	28	103”	161”
2010	850	306	36	101”	165”
2011	850	219	26	102”	160”
2012	850	247	29	99”	161”
2013	850	247	29	98”	167”
2014	850	238	28	100”	159”
2015	1121	326	29	102”	169”
2016	1000	248	25	100”	162”
TOTAL	9656	2908	30	100”	169”

Table 3. Alligator harvest in zone1 for 2003-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003	10	3	30	90"	103"
2004	15	8	53	110"	158"
2005	35	11	31	111"	138"
2006	35	22	63	104"	152"
2007	40	21	53	109"	151"
2008	40	8	20	114"	153"
2009	55	17	31	113"	160"
2010	65	28	43	102"	162"
2011	65	22	34	111"	160"
2012	65	26	38	110"	161"
2013	65	27	42	95"	150"
2014	65	25	38	107"	156"
2015*	35	10	28	108"	138"
2016	35	7	20	124"	141"
TOTAL	625	235	37	106"	162"

*a separate zone (1A) was created out of zone 1 and is only comprised of Lake Walter F. George

Table 4. Alligator harvest in zone 1A for 2015-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. Length	Longest
2015	33	12	36	120"	169"
2016	30	6	20	138"	162"
TOTAL	63	18	28	125"	169"

This zone created in 2015 for joint alligator management with Alabama DNR.

Table 5. Alligator harvest in zone 2 for 2003-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003	52	30	60	98"	138"
2004	50	24	48	98"	151"
2005	70	23	39	101"	162"
2006	70	28	40	99"	160"
2007	85	37	44	110"	160"
2008	85	35	41	108"	160"
2009	115	44	38	102"	161"
2010	140	51	36	108"	165"
2011	140	46	33	102"	154"
2012	140	40	28	96"	148"
2013	140	60	43	104"	150"
2014	140	50	36	117"	159"
2015	250	91	36	104"	154"

2016	220	52	24	108"	162"
TOTAL	1697	611	36	105"	165"

Table 6. Alligator harvest in zone 3 for 2004-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2004	15	5	33	112"	144"
2005	35	8	23	85"	109"
2006	35	9	26	89"	122"
2007	40	10	25	97"	134"
2008	40	10	25	101	163"
2009	50	3	6	115"	142"
2010	60	20	33	104"	138"
2011	60	10	17	93"	144"
2012	60	11	18	83"	123"
2013	60	16	27	95"	151"
2014	60	11	18	96"	157"
2015	71	12	17	100"	150"
2016	60	17	28	89"	138"
TOTAL	646	142	22	96"	163"

Table 7. Alligator harvest in zone 4 for 2003-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003	10	3	30	85"	120"
2004	40	7	18	91"	115"
2005	60	8	13	96"	132"
2006	60	9	15	87"	127"
2007	60	10	17	93"	133"
2008	60	10	17	93"	138"
2009	75	12	16	97"	149"
2010	85	24	28	87"	128"
2011	85	13	15	102"	133"
2012	85	18	21	93"	128"
2013	85	16	19	94"	126"
2014	85	24	28	92"	120"
2015	94	19	17	104"	168"
2016	85	9	11	106"	152"
TOTAL	969	182	19	94"	168"

Table 8. Alligator harvest in zone 5 for 2004-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2004	30	1	10	92"	92"
2005	35	8	23	97"	134"
2006	35	6	17	107"	148"
2007	45	13	27	98"	139"
2008	45	6	13	102"	146"
2009	60	11	18	104"	150"
2010	70	16	23	105"	146"
2011	70	7	10	104"	152"
2012	70	15	21	91"	138"
2013	70	18	26	99"	150"
2014	70	5	7	95"	132"
2015	109	20	18	92"	149"
2016	100	17	17	89"	134"
TOTAL	809	143	18	97	152

Table 9. Alligator harvest in zone 6 for 2003-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003*	*	2	*	124"	144"
2004	50	25	50	95"	132"
2005	80	21	28	87"	128"
2006	80	30	38	82"	135"
2007	80	31	39	87"	109"
2008	80	15	19	104"	147"
2009	85	19	22	102"	144"
2010	100	34	34	95"	133"
2011	100	30	30	96"	146"
2012	100	23	23	104"	150"
2013	100	24	24	91"	138"
2014	100	21	21	88"	111"
2015	86	27	31	96"	127"
2016	80	15	19	102"	141"
TOTAL	1121	317	28	94"	150"

* zone shared counties with current zone 7

Table 10. Alligator harvest in zone 7 for 2003-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003	62	14	23	94"	138"
2004	50	16	32	104"	149"
2005	85	36	42	104"	141"
2006	85	40	47	101"	139"
2007	90	33	37	100"	132"
2008	90	43	48	100"	138"
2009	110	50	45	100"	135"
2010	130	59	45	99"	148"
2011	130	46	35	98"	140"
2012	130	51	39	93"	148"
2013	130	37	28	110"	151"
2014	130	55	42	95"	150"
2015	165	67	41	102"	154"
2016	150	54	36	101"	148"
TOTAL	1537	601	39	99"	154"

Table 11. Alligator harvest zone 8 for 2003-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2003	50	20	40	97"	134"
2004	50	15	30	103"	147"
2005	100	46	46	96"	145"
2006	100	41	41	95"	141"
2007	110	37	34	98"	144"
2008	111	46	41	105"	149"
2009*	90	26	29	106"	143"
2010	120	53	44	103"	150"
2011	120	26	22	107"	144"
2012	120	45	38	100"	146"
2013	120	20	17	110"	151"
2014	120	33	28	94"	150"
2015	185	54	29	98"	144"
2016	160	40	25	92"	135"
TOTAL	1556	502	32	100"	151"

*Nine counties were separated into another zone.

Table 12. Alligator harvest zone 9 for 2009-2016.

Year	# Permits	# Harvested	% Success	Avg. length	Longest
2009	60	11	18	101"	139"
2010	80	21	26	107"	150"
2011	80	19	24	102"	136"
2012	80	24	30	110"	141"
2013	80	29	36	97"	157"
2014	80	14	18	96"	145"
2015	93	14	15	115"	142"
2016	80	31	39	95"	139"
TOTAL	633	163	26	102"	157"

Chart 1. Disposition of hunter harvested alligator hides from the 2016 alligator season (percentage).

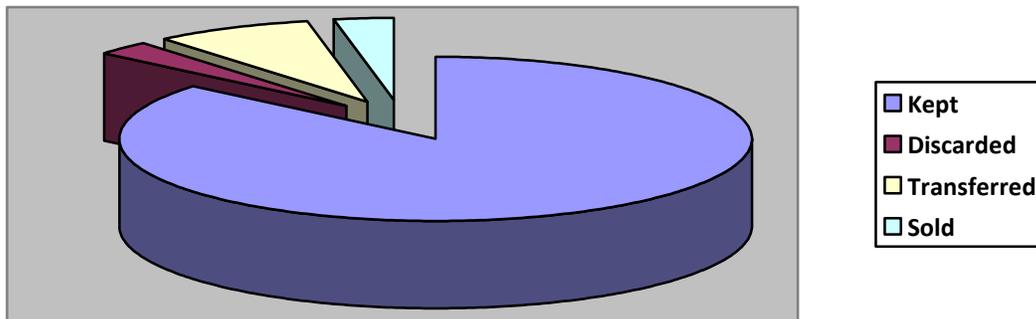


Chart 2. The percentage of hunter harvested alligators from public versus private land for the 2016 season.

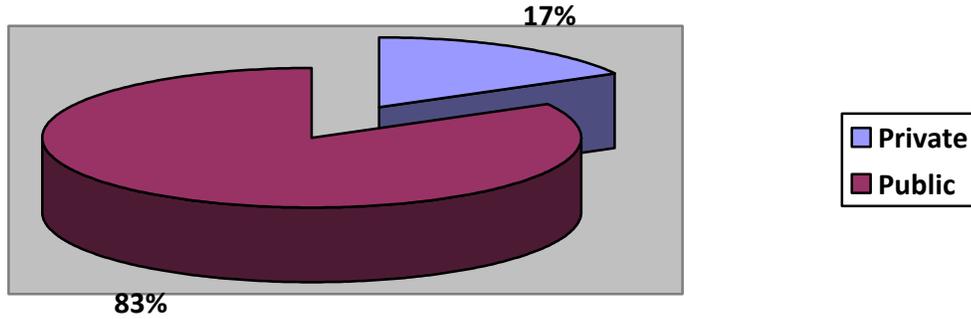


Chart 3. Percentage of weapon type used to harvest alligators in 2016.

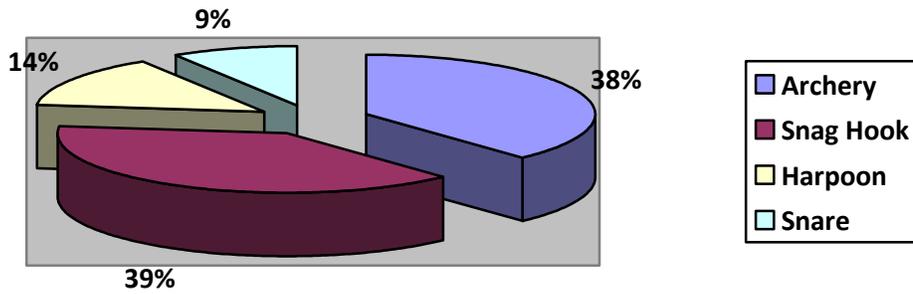


Chart 4. Percentage of alligator harvest by week for the 2016 season.

