HLS 23RS-349 ORIGINAL

2023 Regular Session

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 132

BY REPRESENTATIVE BROWN

WILDLIFE & FISHERIES: Directs the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to increase the number of tags available for commercial alligator hunting, reinstate the bonus tag program, and increase opportunities for recreational alligator hunting

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2	To direct the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to increase the number of tags issued for
3	commercial alligator hunting, to reinstate the bonus tag program, and to increase
4	opportunities for recreational alligator hunting.
5	WHEREAS, in 1967 the American alligator was listed as an endangered species
6	under federal law; and
7	WHEREAS, in the 1970's the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries began
8	implementing conservation measures to increase the alligator population in this state; and
9	WHEREAS, there were under seven thousand alligator nests in coastal marsh
10	habitats in this state in the 1970's, but through conservation efforts that number had risen to
11	nearly sixty-five thousand by 2021; and
12	WHEREAS, the wild population of alligators has grown from less than one hundred
13	thousand to over two million in the last fifty years; and
14	WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries must be recognized
15	and commended for their outstanding work to restore this species in what has been called
16	one of the greatest conservation stories in the United States; and
17	WHEREAS, today Louisiana has an estimated population of over two million wild
18	alligators and another one million farm-raised alligators; and
19	WHEREAS, by comparison, Florida has an estimated population of one million three
20	hundred thousand alligators, just over one third of the population in Louisiana; and

1 WHEREAS, the population of wild alligators in the state has recovered so well that 2 they are now becoming a problem; and 3 WHEREAS, more nuisance alligators are being reported in residential areas than ever 4 before; and 5 WHEREAS, commercial fishermen are experiencing increasing damage to their 6 traps, nets, and other gear from alligators; and 7 WHEREAS, the conservation measures put in place many years ago to help restore 8 a healthy population must now be reduced in order to protect Louisiana citizens and 9 fishermen; and 10 WHEREAS, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries issues a limited number of 11 tags each year based on the acreage of the property with which the tags are associated; and 12 WHEREAS, while the tags should still be issued for the purposes of the Convention 13 on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the department 14 should modify the formula used to calculate the number of tags issued for individual 15 properties so that many more tags can be issued for commercial hunting; and 16 WHEREAS, from 1999 to 2009 the state operated a bonus tag program for hunters 17 that inadvertently caught alligators six feet and under; and 18 WHEREAS, the program was suspended after several natural disasters adversely 19 impacted alligator nesting; and 20 WHEREAS, the bonus tag program should be reinstated as it would help commercial 21 alligator hunters and serve as an additional population control measure; and 22 WHEREAS, currently recreational alligator hunting is only available for those who 23 obtain a sport fisherman license and accompany a commercial alligator hunter or guide; and 24 WHEREAS, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries should explore ways to 25 increase opportunities for recreational alligator hunting as an additional measure to control 26 the population. 27 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby 28 direct the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to increase the number of tags available for 29 commercial alligator hunters. 30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall 31 reinstate the bonus tag program for alligators six feet and under.

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries shall increase opportunities for recreational alligator hunting.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alligator Advisory Council shall make recommendations to the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries on the best ways to accomplish these goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission shall promulgate any rules necessary to accomplish these goals.

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.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 132 Original

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