



Resolution No. 5, 2015

SUBJECT: COMMERCIAL HARVEST OF RAZORBACK MUSK TURTLES

WHEREAS, the Razorback musk turtle (*Sternotherus carinatus*) is native to Louisiana, southeastern Texas, southeastern Oklahoma, southern Arkansas, southern Mississippi, and a small portion of southwestern Alabama; and

WHEREAS, the Razorback musk turtle is found primarily in Louisiana, inhabiting lakes and slow-moving streams nearly statewide (except in the southern coastal regions); and

WHEREAS, relatively little is known about the species' abundance in different native habitats (Lindeman 2008); and

WHEREAS, Razorback musk turtles are often kept as pets because of their small size, sweet temperament, and ease of handling; and

WHEREAS, the insatiable demand for turtles as food, medicine or pets in China has decimated wild turtle populations throughout Asia, thereby resulting in dramatically increased U.S. exports to that region; and

WHEREAS, information from the USFWS Law Enforcement Management Information System database, which tracks all US animal and animal part exports, shows a significantly increasing trend of Razorback musk turtle exports from 1,242 in 2003 to 47,704 in 2011, 81,431 in 2012, 76,495 in 2013 and 196,398 in 2014; and

WHEREAS, in Texas, state regulations adopted in 2007 prohibit the commercial trade of Razorback musk turtles; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana allows the commercial harvest of non-protected turtle species, but there are no limits or restrictions on the taking of Razorback musk turtles from the wild.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation respectfully requests the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to monitor and report the commercial harvest of Razorback musk turtles in Louisiana, and to assess the impact of increasing exports of the Razorback musk turtle on the sustainability of its wild population.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Louisiana Wildlife Federation supports rules or restrictions on commercial harvest of Razorback musk turtles in Louisiana as necessary to maintain a sustainable wild population.

Adopted by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation in Convention Assembled, August 22, 2015 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.