LOUISIANA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
The voice of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources since 1940.

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November 24, 2026

Mr. Jacob Tuttle
Regional Hunt and Fish Coordinator
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
718 Juliette Road
Round Oak, Georgia 31029

Submitted by email to jacob_tuttle@fws.gov

RE: Support for the Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) proposing recreational American alligator hunting on seven Louisiana National Wildlife Refuges

Dear Mr. Tuttle:

The Louisiana Wildlife Federation (LWF) writes in support of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) proposal to open seven Louisiana national wildlife refuges, including Bayou Sauvage Urban, Big Branch Marsh, Black Bayou Lake, D'Arbonne, Delta, Tensas River, and Upper Ouachita, to recreational American alligator hunting. Established in 1940, LWF is a statewide nonprofit organization representing more than 10,000 members and 23 affiliate organizations of hunters, anglers, birders, and outdoor enthusiasts dedicated to the conservation of Louisiana's wildlife and natural resources. We encourage the Service to adopt the proposal.

LWF supported the creation of Louisiana's recreational alligator season in the 2025 legislative session as a straightforward way to expand public recreational opportunity on a resource the state manages well. That season has now run once. This Fall, roughly 3,600 licensed hunters took about 1,800 alligators under the state's lottery and tag system, and it worked as intended. Extending the same opportunity to these refuges is the logical next step.

Louisiana's alligator is one of the best wildlife-management success stories in the country. The state has run a regulated commercial harvest since 1972, and today the population is robust and, across much of its range, at carrying capacity. The animal is managed, not merely protected, through a combination of commercial and recreational harvest, egg collection, and habitat work, all built on decades of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries data. A regulated harvest is the premise the entire program rests on, and the species plainly sustains it.

These federal refuges have simply been left outside that system. They have never had the commercial or recreational harvest outlet that the surrounding private and state lands have had

for decades, and the predictable result is that alligators concentrate on them. Opening a limited, tag-based recreational season brings these lands into the same proven management framework that governs the rest of the Louisiana landscape, rather than leaving them as islands apart from it.

A managed harvest also takes pressure off refuge and state staff. In overpopulated areas, staff spend time and money responding to nuisance-alligator complaints and conflicts, effort that a regulated public harvest helps relieve. Redirecting that resource toward a controlled season is a better use of limited staff and a benefit to neighboring landowners.

Finally, the proposal fits these multi-use lands. The seven refuges already serve hunters, anglers, birders, and other visitors, and a short, lottery-limited alligator season, with hunter and tag numbers set refuge by refuge in coordination with LDWF, fits alongside those existing uses without displacing them. The structure the Service has outlined, running the hunts through the state's licensing and lottery system with harvest limits set jointly with LDWF, would keep the harvest sustainable and consistent with how Louisiana already manages the species.

For these reasons, LWF supports the proposal and urges the Service to adopt it and to coordinate closely with LDWF on tag levels and season structure. This is a sensible expansion of public opportunity on public land, built on a management system that has already proven it works.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. We are available to provide additional information at the Service's request.

Respectfully submitted,



Rebecca Triche
Executive Director
Louisiana Wildlife Federation