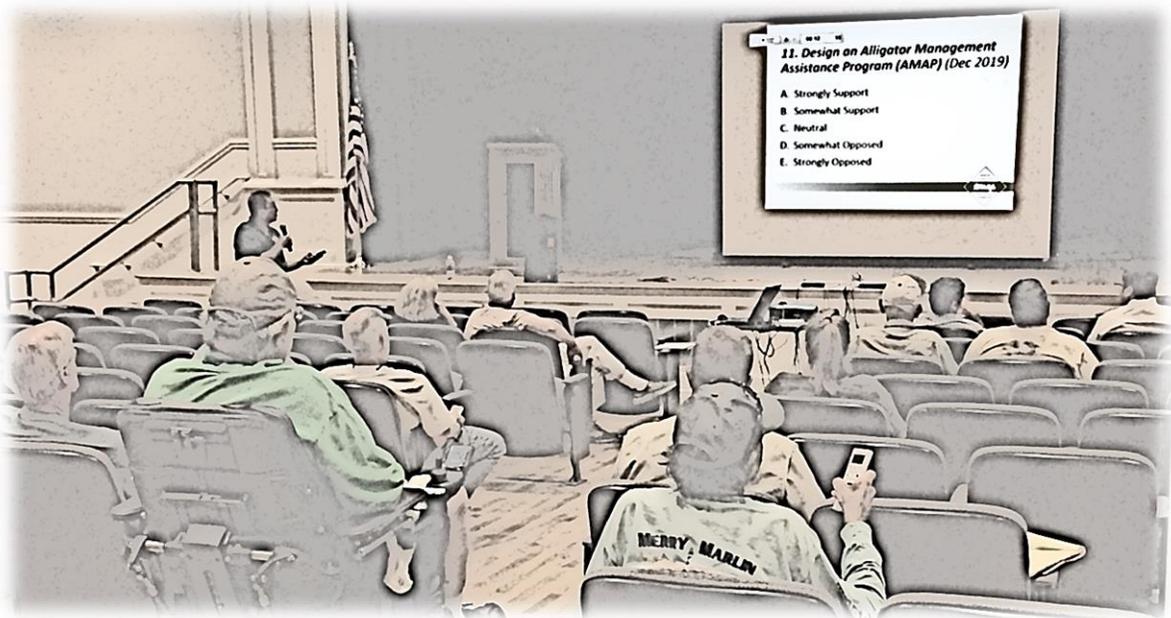


Summary of Public Input

on the

Draft

Alligator Management Plan



Alicia Davis and Allen Boynton

June 2017

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| I. Executive Summary..... | 2 |
| II. Background Information..... | 3 |
| III. Data Combined from Public Forum and Online Survey Results | 4 |
| IV. Public Forum Results..... | 11 |
| A. iClicker© Data | 12 |
| V. Online Survey Results | 26 |
| A. Multiple-Choice Answers | 26 |
| B. Open-Ended Answers..... | 30 |
| 1. Comments regarding Section III: Plan Goals (pages 9-10 of the draft AMP)..... | 30 |
| 2. Comments regarding Section IV: Plan Strategies (pages 10-21 of the draft AMP)..... | 43 |
| 3. Comments regarding Section V: Implementation Plan (pages 22-23 of the draft AMP) | 49 |
| 4. General Comments on the draft AMP | 53 |
| VI. Emails..... | 62 |
| VII. Comments on the NC Alligators iNaturalist Project Page..... | 65 |
| VIII. Mailed Letters..... | 65 |

I. Executive Summary

Agency staff held three public forums in eastern North Carolina in early November of 2016 to receive public input on management of American alligators. This input (summarized in a document that can be downloaded at www.ncwildlife.org/alligator) was considered by The Alligator Task Force (ATF) members as they developed a draft version of the Alligator Management Plan. The draft plan was published on the agency's website for public review in early May 2017 and announced in a press release distributed to over 200 media outlets and featured in the agency's e-newsletter (N.C. Wildlife Update), reaching over 700,000 subscribers. This news release listed dates and locations of six public forums that were held in June 2017. It also provided links for readers to download the draft plan and to provide input through an online survey if they were not able to attend a forum. A phone number, email, and mailing address were also made available for individuals to ask questions or provide comments.

Herein we provide a summary of the input received through the public forums, online survey responses, emails, and mailed letters. Over two hundred participants in six public forums (91) and online surveys (150) provided responses indicating degree of support for plan goals, strategies, and objectives. Letters were received from three (NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society, NC Wildlife Federation, Carteret Wildlife Club) of the seven organizations that wrote to oppose adoption of the 2015-2016 alligator hunting season rule proposal. Those letters are included in this summary. The ATF Chair met with another two of the seven groups that expressed concerns about the 2015-2016 proposal. Both organizations (NC Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Alligator Alliance) expressed support for the ATF approach being used to create the Alligator Management Plan. It is important to recognize that this summary represents the opinions of only those individuals that chose to attend the forums, take the online survey, or send us comments by mail or email. These comments are more representative of those with an avid interest in alligators or alligator management than they are of the average citizen. Most respondents identified themselves as primarily interested in hunting (34%), public safety (27%), or perpetuation of the species (24%).

Every plan element received substantially more support than opposition from respondents. The three plan elements that received the highest degree of support were the Education and Outreach public safety strategy (87% support) and two associated objectives: Identify communities with frequent human-alligator interactions (89% support) and Implement public education program emphasizing public safety, prohibitions on illegal take and feeding, and alligator ecology and management (89% support). Although supported by most respondents, plan elements with the lowest degree of support were the Potential Changes to Laws/Rules legal strategy (65% support), and three objectives: Complete development of technical materials to help public land managers develop watchable wildlife viewing areas for alligators (64% support), Complete development of a watchable wildlife alligator viewing location on a game land (65% support), and Complete assessment of cultural carrying capacity by county in AMU 1 (65% support).

Although public input was divided regarding the wisdom of hunting alligators (Plan Goal E1, Pg. 5), conversations at forums, online survey responses, and emails and letters demonstrated support for sustainable hunting. In the authors' opinion, respondents were more supportive of hunting when population research results demonstrated long-term sustainability of alligator populations being hunted.

II. Background Information

As directed in a resolution signed by the Commissioners, the Executive Director of the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission appointed 15 various stakeholders—private landowners, Commission staff, and scientists—to serve on an ATF. The primary goal of the ATF was to develop an Alligator Management Plan (AMP) for the state that includes:

- Evaluation of all available biological information on alligators in North Carolina,
- Identification of knowledge gaps and additional research needed on alligator population demography, historical changes in alligator habitats, and public attitudes and opinions on alligator conservation,
- Identification of areas where alligators may be over-populated and recommend biological and social strategies to address alligator management issues in these areas,
- Recommendations of geographical management zones,
- Recommendations for metrics to establish the number of permits per year that could be issued for opportunities to harvest alligators by hunting where sustainable and consistent with local alligator population, habitat, and social conditions, and
- Recommendations on a framework for gathering public input on the North Carolina Alligator Management Plan.

The ATF was appointed by Director Gordon Myers in June 2016 and held three meetings before submitting in April 2017a draft AMP to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. The Commission reviewed the draft and published it online for review on May 9, 2017.

III. Data Combined from Public Forum and Online Survey Results

Staff gauged degree of support for specific parts of the draft AMP by asking the same questions in both the public forums and the online survey. In general, support for plan elements was higher in forum responses than in online survey responses. This may well have been due to social desirability bias, the tendency of survey respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favorably by others. The online forum responses may well be a more accurate representation of those with an avid interest in alligators or alligator management.

| Although more than one of the following options may apply to you, what is your <u>primary</u> interest in alligator management? | | | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Public Safety | Hunting | Commercial Use | Watching/ Photographing | Perpetuation of the species in NC |
| Forums | 91 | 25% | 30% | 2% | 15% | 27% |
| Survey | 150 | 29% | 37% | 1% | 11% | 23% |
| Total | 241 | 27% | 34% | 2% | 12% | 24% |

| Plan Goal A: Maintain viable populations of alligators in NC | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 91 | 70% | 13% | 11% | 3% | 2% |
| Survey | 146 | 61% | 11% | 13% | 3% | 12% |
| Total | 237 | 65% | 12% | 12% | 3% | 8% |

| Plan Goal B: Conduct research to support science-based management of alligators | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 94 | 79% | 12% | 7% | 1% | 1% |
| Survey | 145 | 57% | 17% | 12% | 6% | 8% |
| Total | 239 | 66% | 15% | 10% | 4% | 5% |

| Plan Goal C: Promote public safety through management of alligator populations | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 93 | 80% | 12% | 5% | 2% | 1% |
| Survey | 144 | 65% | 10% | 11% | 4% | 9% |
| Total | 237 | 71% | 11% | 9% | 3% | 6% |

| Plan Goal D: Provide comprehensive information about alligators and alligator management | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 90 | 86% | 11% | 3% | - | - |
| Survey | 144 | 60% | 15% | 16% | 2% | 6% |
| Total | 234 | 70% | 14% | 11% | 1% | 4% |

| Plan Goal E1: Provide opportunities for public enjoyment of alligators through <u>hunting</u> | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 96 | 56% | 15% | 8% | 7% | 14% |
| Survey | 146 | 62% | 12% | 3% | 1% | 23% |
| Total | 242 | 60% | 13% | 5% | 4% | 19% |

| Plan Goal E2: Provide opportunities for public enjoyment of alligators through <u>wildlife viewing</u> | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 91 | 58% | 22% | 13% | 1% | 5% |
| Survey | 146 | 51% | 14% | 18% | 8% | 9% |
| Total | 237 | 54% | 17% | 16% | 5% | 8% |

| Population Management Strategies: Management Units | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 79 | 53% | 23% | 15% | 4% | 5% |
| Survey | 111 | 44% | 22% | 15% | 9% | 10% |
| Total | 190 | 48% | 22% | 15% | 7% | 8% |

| Population Management Strategies: Population Goals | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 84 | 60% | 25% | 6% | 1% | 8% |
| Survey | 112 | 45% | 23% | 16% | 6% | 10% |
| Total | 196 | 51% | 24% | 12% | 4% | 9% |

| Population Management Strategies: Population Management | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 89 | 61% | 19% | 7% | 6% | 8% |
| Survey | 112 | 46% | 24% | 10% | 10% | 11% |
| Total | 201 | 52% | 22% | 8% | 8% | 9% |

| Habitat Management Strategies: Habitat Conservation | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 83 | 67% | 17% | 11% | 2% | 2% |
| Survey | 116 | 59% | 21% | 11% | 3% | 5% |
| Total | 199 | 63% | 19% | 11% | 3% | 4% |

| Habitat Management Strategies: Permit Review | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 75 | 72% | 13% | 13% | - | 1% |
| Survey | 116 | 43% | 24% | 16% | 6% | 11% |
| Total | 191 | 54% | 20% | 15% | 4% | 7% |

| Habitat Management Strategies: Alligator Management Assistance Program (AMAP) | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 82 | 68% | 17% | 5% | 6% | 4% |
| Survey | 113 | 45% | 20% | 18% | 9% | 8% |
| Total | 195 | 55% | 19% | 12% | 8% | 6% |

| Public Safety Strategies: Alligator Removal | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 72 | 58% | 24% | 8% | 6% | 4% |
| Survey | 123 | 50% | 26% | 8% | 7% | 9% |
| Total | 195 | 53% | 25% | 8% | 6% | 7% |

| Public Safety Strategies: Education and Outreach | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 85 | 82% | 9% | 6% | 1% | 1% |
| Survey | 121 | 65% | 19% | 7% | 2% | 6% |
| Total | 206 | 72% | 15% | 7% | 2% | 4% |

| Science Strategies: Research | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 81 | 80% | 15% | 4% | - | 1% |
| Survey | 120 | 49% | 23% | 18% | 3% | 8% |
| Total | 201 | 62% | 20% | 12% | 1% | 5% |

| Science Strategies: Surveys and Monitoring | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 74 | 84% | 8% | 7% | - | 1% |
| Survey | 118 | 51% | 23% | 14% | 4% | 8% |
| Total | 192 | 64% | 17% | 11% | 3% | 5% |

| Legal Strategies: Potential Changes to Laws/Rules | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 72 | 58% | 17% | 7% | 6% | 13% |
| Survey | 119 | 44% | 16% | 18% | 3% | 20% |
| Total | 191 | 49% | 16% | 14% | 4% | 17% |

| Other Conservation Strategies: Conservation Incentives | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 77 | 84% | 9% | 5% | - | 1% |
| Survey | 116 | 43% | 21% | 22% | 7% | 7% |
| Total | 193 | 60% | 16% | 16% | 4% | 5% |

| Other Conservation Strategies: Collaboration with Other Organizations | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 70 | 83% | 9% | 7% | - | 1% |
| Survey | 114 | 40% | 27% | 23% | 2% | 8% |
| Total | 184 | 57% | 20% | 17% | 1% | 5% |

| Objective 1: Adopt and publish online Alligator Management Plan for NC (Nov 2017) | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 66 | 89% | 6% | - | - | 5% |
| Survey | 128 | 62% | 17% | 13% | 4% | 4% |
| Total | 194 | 71% | 13% | 9% | 3% | 4% |

| Objective 2: Identify communities with frequent human-alligator interactions (Feb 2018) | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 63 | 89% | 8% | 3% | - | - |
| Survey | 129 | 67% | 18% | 12% | 1% | 2% |
| Total | 192 | 74% | 15% | 9% | 1% | 1% |

| Objective 3: Implement public education program emphasizing public safety, prohibitions on illegal take and feeding, and alligator ecology and management (Feb 2018) | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 70 | 94% | 1% | 3% | 1% | - |
| Survey | 129 | 64% | 22% | 6% | 5% | 3% |
| Total | 199 | 74% | 15% | 5% | 4% | 2% |

| Objective 4: Refine and adopt response guidelines, including third party involvement, to alligators causing public safety or property damage problems (Feb 2018) | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 74 | 82% | 12% | 4% | 1% | - |
| Survey | 129 | 56% | 19% | 18% | 2% | 5% |
| Total | 203 | 66% | 17% | 13% | 2% | 3% |

| Objective 5, 9, 13: Assess local government interest in population reduction hunts (May 2018, 2019, 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 72 | 63% | 15% | 13% | 4% | 6% |
| Survey | 130 | 51% | 16% | 12% | 8% | 14% |
| Total | 202 | 55% | 16% | 12% | 6% | 11% |

| Objective 6, 10, 14: Complete population reduction hunt(s) where appropriate per requests of local government(s) (Oct 2018, 2019, 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 66 | 62% | 18% | 9% | 5% | 6% |
| Survey | 131 | 53% | 16% | 10% | 3% | 18% |
| Total | 197 | 56% | 17% | 10% | 4% | 14% |

| Objective 7: Identify and map important alligator habitat and target areas for conservation attention (Feb 2019) | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 71 | 90% | 4% | 6% | - | - |
| Survey | 129 | 59% | 18% | 16% | 4% | 3% |
| Total | 200 | 70% | 13% | 13% | 3% | 2% |

| Objective 8: Develop first approximation of the number and extent of metapopulations of alligators (Mar 2019) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 69 | 84% | 10% | 6% | - | - |
| Survey | 129 | 57% | 19% | 19% | 3% | 2% |
| Total | 198 | 66% | 16% | 15% | 2% | 2% |

| Objective 11: Design an Alligator Management Assistance Program (AMAP) (Dec 2019) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 71 | 79% | 8% | 6% | 4% | 3% |
| Survey | 129 | 47% | 22% | 18% | 10% | 4% |
| Total | 200 | 58% | 17% | 14% | 8% | 4% |

| Objective 12: Complete development of a watchable wildlife alligator viewing location on a game land (Feb 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 75 | 52% | 23% | 9% | 5% | 11% |
| Survey | 128 | 46% | 14% | 17% | 10% | 13% |
| Total | 203 | 48% | 17% | 14% | 8% | 12% |

| Objective 14: Complete an assessment of cultural carrying capacity by county in AMU 1 (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 74 | 68% | 18% | 7% | 4% | 4% |
| Survey | 127 | 32% | 22% | 30% | 9% | 7% |
| Total | 201 | 45% | 20% | 21% | 7% | 6% |

| Objective 15: Complete study to determine economic values of alligators in North Carolina (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 73 | 68% | 18% | 7% | 4% | 4% |
| Survey | 129 | 43% | 16% | 21% | 9% | 12% |
| Total | 202 | 53% | 17% | 15% | 6% | 8% |

| Objective 16: Complete study to evaluate usefulness of alligator survey techniques in North Carolina (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 71 | 69% | 21% | 6% | 3% | 1% |
| Survey | 128 | 37% | 23% | 23% | 9% | 8% |
| Total | 199 | 48% | 23% | 17% | 7% | 6% |

| Objective 17: Complete study to improve estimates of vital rates and age-class distributions for metapopulations in AMU 1 (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 48 | 79% | 19% | 2% | 0% | 0% |
| Survey | 127 | 43% | 19% | 24% | 7% | 8% |
| Total | 175 | 53% | 19% | 18% | 5% | 6% |

| Objective 18: Complete study to investigate spatial ecology of alligators with emphasis on interchange between metapopulations and fate of relocated alligators (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 73 | 70% | 15% | 12% | 3% | 0% |
| Survey | 129 | 39% | 17% | 27% | 9% | 9% |
| Total | 202 | 50% | 16% | 22% | 6% | 5% |

| Objective 19: Complete development of technical materials to help public land managers develop watchable wildlife viewing areas for alligators (Jun 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 73 | 53% | 22% | 11% | 5% | 8% |
| Survey | 129 | 42% | 16% | 20% | 13% | 9% |
| Total | 202 | 46% | 18% | 17% | 10% | 9% |

| Objective 20: Review and adjust as needed the alligator population goals (increase, maintain, decrease) for each Alligator Management Unit (AMU) (Jun 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 71 | 82% | 10% | 7% | 0% | 1% |
| Survey | 131 | 47% | 21% | 15% | 6% | 11% |
| Total | 202 | 59% | 17% | 12% | 4% | 8% |

| Objective 21: Review and revise as needed metrics for number of recreational hunt permits to hunt alligators where biologically sustainable and socially acceptable (Jun 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Forums | 67 | 84% | 3% | 10% | 1% | 1% |
| Survey | 128 | 51% | 17% | 7% | 5% | 20% |
| Total | 195 | 62% | 12% | 8% | 4% | 13% |

IV. Public Forum Results

Attendance at each public forum was as follows:

| # | Date | Forum Location | Attendance |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------|
| 1 | Monday, June 5 | Hampstead (Pender Co.) | 22 |
| 2 | Tuesday, June 13 | Dublin (Bladen Co.) | 7 |
| 3 | Wednesday, June 14 | Bolivia (Brunswick Co.) | 31 |
| 4 | Thursday, June 15 | Jacksonville (Onslow Co.) | 6 |
| 5 | Tuesday, June 20 | New Bern (Craven Co.) | 20 |
| 6 | Wednesday, June 21 | Washington (Beaufort Co.) | 12 |
| Total | | | 98 |



A. iClicker© Data

Interactive technology (iClicker©) was used during the presentations to allow attendees to anonymously answer questions presented by agency staff. The use of this technology has been well received by our constituents at other public forums regarding bear and deer management. It enables the audience to actively participate in the forums by selecting their answers with wireless handheld i>clicker© remotes. In addition, it effectively allowed us to demonstrate where consensus or disagreement occurred between our constituents.

It is important to recognize that this summary of the six meetings represents the opinions of only those individuals that attended the meetings. Some answers to questions could have been influenced by the presentations and the discussions that occurred at each meeting. The data presented below are not and should not be interpreted as statistically valid representations of citizen opinions in each locality. It is most appropriate to view these meetings as focus groups which provided insight to areas of potential consensus or disagreement among stakeholders about alligator management. These meetings gave private citizens an opportunity to voice their interests and concerns about alligators in their communities and provided the ATF with public input on specific goals, strategies, and objectives presented in the draft Alligator Management Plan.

In this section, we provide the audience’s answers to specific questions asked during the meetings. Staff asked each of the following questions at every forum, except for Questions 7 and 41, because of technical difficulties at the Bolivia forum.

| Question 1. How far did you travel to get to this meeting? | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Venue | Responses | <10 miles | 10-25 miles | 26-50 miles | 50-100 miles | >100 miles |
| Hampstead | 18 | 50% | 28% | 22% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 43% | 14% | 29% | - | 14% |
| Bolivia | 14 | 21% | 57% | 21% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 5 | 60% | 20% | 20% | - | - |
| New Bern | 13 | 46% | 23% | 31% | - | - |
| Washington | 11 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 68 | 51% | 26% | 21% | - | 1% |

| Question 2. Did you attend one of the 3 public forums in November? | | | |
|---|------------------|------------|------------|
| Venue | Responses | Yes | No |
| Hampstead | 21 | 24% | 76% |
| Dublin | 6 | - | 100% |
| Bolivia | 22 | 23% | 77% |
| Jacksonville | 5 | - | 100% |
| New Bern | 16 | 25% | 75% |
| Washington | 9 | - | 100% |
| Total | 79 | 18% | 82% |

| Question 3. Although more than one of the following options may apply to you, what is your primary interest in alligator management? | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|---------------|------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Public Safety | Hunting | Commercial Use | Watching/ Photographing | Perpetuation of the species in NC |
| Hampstead | 19 | 32% | 37% | - | - | 32% |
| Dublin | 7 | 14% | 43% | - | 14% | 29% |
| Bolivia | 31 | 23% | 26% | 6% | 10% | 35% |
| Jacksonville | 5 | - | 40% | - | 20% | 40% |
| New Bern | 17 | 41% | 12% | - | 24% | 24% |
| Washington | 12 | 17% | 42% | - | 42% | - |
| Total | 91 | 25% | 30% | 2% | 15% | 27% |

This type of forum offered us an opportunity to assess our audience’s knowledge about North Carolina alligators. Although alligators have been studied extensively in other states, the knowledge that has been acquired regarding alligator populations in lower latitudes doesn’t always hold true for the populations here because this is the northern extent of their range, where the transition area occurs between environments alligators can and cannot tolerate.

We presented the following information in an interactive question-and-answer format that allowed each audience member to submit answers using the i>clicker© remotes before the correct answers (highlighted in green) were revealed and discussed in further detail. Most of these questions were also asked at the public forums held in November 2016.

| Question 4. Alligators are a native species in NC? | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|
| Venue | Responses | True ✓ | False |
| Hampstead | 21 | 86% | 14% |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - |
| Bolivia | 31 | 84% | 16% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - |
| New Bern | 18 | 83% | 17% |
| Washington | 12 | 58% | 42% |
| Total | 95 | 83% | 17% |

On occasion when communicating with agency staff, people have incorrectly referred to alligators as “invasive species.” This term refers to non-native species that cause harm to the ecosystem in which they colonize, but American alligators are native to North Carolina and play important ecological roles in our natural environment.

| Question 5. On average, how long do wild alligators live? | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Venue | Responses | 0-9 years | 10-19 years | 20-29 years | 30-39 years ✓ | 40+ years |
| Hampstead | 20 | 5% | 10% | 15% | 25% | 45% |
| Dublin | 7 | - | 14% | - | 14% | 71% |
| Bolivia | 31 | - | 6% | 42% | 29% | 23% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | - | - | 33% | 33% | 33% |
| New Bern | 18 | - | 6% | 17% | 22% | 56% |
| Washington | 11 | - | 9% | 27% | 9% | 55% |
| Total | 93 | 1% | 8% | 26% | 24% | 42% |

Most of the forum attendees were familiar with how long alligators can live. Few wild alligators (especially in hunted populations) are expected to live past their 30s, but it's not uncommon for them to live longer than 50 years in captivity. The record for the oldest known American alligator—at least 80 years old—is currently held by a captive male in a Serbian zoo, where it has been living since it arrived “fully grown” in 1937.

| Question 6. Alligators are sexually mature when they attain what length? | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| Venue | Responses | 4 feet | 5 feet | 6 feet ✓ | 7 feet | 8 feet |
| Hampstead | 21 | - | 19% | 43% | 10% | 29% |
| Dublin | 7 | 14% | 29% | 29% | - | 29% |
| Bolivia | 31 | 13% | 16% | 65% | 3% | 3% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 17% | 17% | 50% | - | 17% |
| New Bern | 18 | - | 11% | 67% | 22% | - |
| Washington | 12 | 33% | 17% | 25% | 17% | 8% |
| Total | 95 | 11% | 17% | 52% | 9% | 12% |

Most people knew the length at sexual maturity, which is determined by size—not age—in alligators. Both sexes grow much more quickly in the first few years of life, then female growth rate slows considerably in comparison to males. Social dynamics also play an important role and may further extend the amount of time required for individuals to reach sexual maturity. For example, a male may be sexually mature at 6 or 7 years of age in Texas, but may not have the social status to breed for several more years.

| Question 7. Alligators are sexually mature at what age in NC? | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|---------------|-----------|
| Venue | Responses | 2-3 years | 4-6 years | 6-10 years | 15-18 years ✓ | 20+ years |
| Hampstead | 22 | 5% | 18% | 50% | 27% | - |
| Dublin | 7 | - | 57% | 43% | - | - |
| Bolivia | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | - | 17% | 33% | 50% | - |
| New Bern | 18 | 11% | 22% | 50% | 17% | - |
| Washington | 12 | - | 83% | 17% | - | - |
| Total | 65 | 5% | 35% | 42% | 18% | - |

The audience's answers to this question were on par with what is known about alligators in lower latitudes. Because there are considerably fewer months that are warm enough for alligators to feed (and, therefore, grow) in North Carolina compared to states farther south, it takes alligators longer to reach the minimum size necessary for sexual maturation. In the only study to date that has investigated the age of sexual maturity in North Carolina alligators, NC State University's Zoology Department estimated that sexual maturity occurs at 15 years for males and 18 years for females¹. Similarly, a recent publication based on 35 years of observations of a population of alligators in South Carolina reported the mean earliest age of sexual maturity to be 11.6 years for males and 15.8 years for females.²

¹ Doerr, Phillip D. and Jay D. Hair. 1983. Status of the American alligator in North Carolina. Report: North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA.

² Wilkinson, Philip M., Thomas R. Rainwater, Allan R. Woodward, Erin H. Leone, and Cameron Carter. 2016. Determinate growth and reproductive lifespan in the American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*): Evidence from long-term recaptures. *Copeia* 104(4): 843-852.

| Question 8. Alligators care for their young for several years after they hatch? | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|
| Venue | Responses | True ✓ | False |
| Hampstead | 20 | 40% | 60% |
| Dublin | 7 | 14% | 86% |
| Bolivia | 31 | 32% | 68% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 17% | 83% |
| New Bern | 18 | 44% | 56% |
| Washington | 11 | 45% | 55% |
| Total | 93 | 35% | 65% |

Most respondents did not know that alligators are unique among reptiles in the level of maternal care that they provide for their offspring. After depositing her eggs in a constructed nest, the female closely guards it from predators for more than two months during incubation. The pod of young alligators usually stays near the female for at least 2 years, during which the young will call out when threatened and she will come to their aid. Her protection is crucial to their survival, as they are most vulnerable to predation during this early stage of life by large fish, birds, mammals, snakes, and even bullfrogs, as well as larger alligators.

Throughout the rest of the forums, staff gave a presentation and facilitated discussions about each of the goals, strategies, and objectives presented in the draft Alligator Management Plan. Then, the audiences were asked to indicate their level of support for each of these key elements of the draft plan.

| Question 9. Plan Goal A: Maintain viable populations of alligators in NC | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 81% | 19% | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 6 | 67% | 17% | 17% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 65% | 12% | 15% | 4% | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 70% | 10% | 10% | 10% | - |
| Washington | 12 | 50% | 17% | 25% | - | 8% |
| Total | 91 | 70% | 13% | 11% | 3% | 2% |

| Question 10. Plan Goal B: Conduct research to support science-based management of alligators | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 28 | 75% | 11% | 11% | 4% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 85% | 5% | 10% | - | - |
| Washington | 12 | 25% | 50% | 17% | - | 8% |
| Total | 94 | 79% | 12% | 7% | 1% | 1% |

| Question 11. Plan Goal C: Promote public safety through management of alligator populations | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 81% | 10% | 5% | - | 5% |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 29 | 76% | 14% | 7% | 3% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 19 | 74% | 21% | 5% | - | - |
| Washington | 12 | 83% | - | 8% | 8% | - |
| Total | 93 | 80% | 12% | 5% | 2% | 1% |

| Question 12. Plan Goal D: Provide comprehensive information about alligators and alligator management | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 81% | 8% | 12% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 90% | 10% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 11 | 82% | 18% | - | - | - |
| Total | 90 | 86% | 11% | 3% | - | - |

| Question 13. Plan Goal E1: Provide opportunities for public enjoyment of alligators through <u>hunting</u> | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 52% | 14% | 5% | 14% | 14% |
| Dublin | 7 | 71% | - | - | - | 29% |
| Bolivia | 30 | 50% | 20% | 10% | 3% | 17% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 67% | 17% | - | 17% | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 45% | 20% | 10% | 10% | 15% |
| Washington | 12 | 83% | - | 17% | - | - |
| Total | 96 | 56% | 15% | 8% | 7% | 14% |

| Question 14. Plan Goal E2: Provide opportunities for public enjoyment of alligators through <u>wildlife viewing</u> | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 57% | 24% | 14% | - | 5% |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | - | 17% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 42% | 31% | 12% | - | 15% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 55% | 25% | 15% | 5% | - |
| Washington | 12 | 75% | 8% | 17% | - | - |
| Total | 91 | 58% | 22% | 13% | 1% | 5% |

| Question 15. Population Management Strategies: Management Units | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 18 | 61% | 22% | 11% | - | 6% |
| Dublin | 5 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 42% | 12% | 27% | 8% | 12% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 50% | 50% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 17 | 47% | 47% | - | 6% | - |
| Washington | 7 | 57% | - | 43% | - | - |
| Total | 79 | 53% | 23% | 15% | 4% | 5% |

| Question 16. Population Management Strategies: Population Goals | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 21 | 57% | 29% | - | 5% | 10% |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 23 | 43% | 26% | 13% | - | 17% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 67% | 33% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 65% | 20% | 10% | - | 5% |
| Washington | 8 | 75% | 25% | - | - | - |
| Total | 84 | 60% | 25% | 6% | 1% | 8% |

| Question 17. Population Management Strategies: Population Management | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 22 | 64% | 18% | - | - | 18% |
| Dublin | 5 | 80% | - | - | 20% | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 46% | 15% | 19% | 8% | 12% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 60% | 30% | 5% | 5% | - |
| Washington | 10 | 70% | 20% | - | 10% | - |
| Total | 89 | 61% | 19% | 7% | 6% | 8% |

| Question 18. Habitat Management Strategies: Habitat Conservation | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 59% | 29% | 6% | 6% | - |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | - | - | 17% | - |
| Bolivia | 25 | 68% | 8% | 16% | - | 8% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 60% | 25% | 15% | - | - |
| Washington | 9 | 78% | 11% | 11% | - | - |
| Total | 83 | 67% | 17% | 11% | 2% | 2% |

| Question 19. Habitat Management Strategies: Permit Review | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 14 | 71% | 21% | 7% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 22 | 64% | - | 32% | - | 5% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 19 | 68% | 26% | 5% | - | - |
| Washington | 7 | 86% | - | 14% | - | - |
| Total | 75 | 72% | 13% | 13% | - | 1% |

| Question 20. Habitat Management Strategies: Alligator Management Assistance Program (AMAP) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 81% | 6% | - | 6% | 6% |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | - | - | 14% | - |
| Bolivia | 24 | 63% | 13% | 13% | 4% | 8% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 40% | 45% | 5% | 10% | - |
| Washington | 9 | 89% | 11% | - | - | - |
| Total | 82 | 68% | 17% | 5% | 6% | 4% |

| Question 21. Public Safety Strategies: Alligator Removal | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 19 | 58% | 21% | 11% | - | 11% |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 21 | 48% | 24% | 14% | 10% | 5% |
| Jacksonville | 5 | 60% | 40% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 18 | 56% | 28% | 6% | 11% | - |
| Washington | 3 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 72 | 58% | 24% | 8% | 6% | 4% |

| Question 22. Public Safety Strategies: Education and Outreach | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 20 | 75% | 15% | 10% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 27 | 78% | 7% | 7% | 4% | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 20 | 90% | 10% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 5 | 80% | - | 20% | - | - |
| Total | 85 | 82% | 9% | 6% | 1% | 1% |

| Question 23. Science Strategies: Research | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 20 | 80% | 15% | 5% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 27 | 85% | 7% | 4% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 17 | 65% | 29% | 6% | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 75% | 25% | - | - | - |
| Total | 81 | 80% | 15% | 4% | - | 1% |

| Question 24. Science Strategies: Surveys and Monitoring | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 88% | 6% | 6% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 24 | 83% | - | 13% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 16 | 63% | 31% | 6% | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 74 | 84% | 8% | 7% | - | 1% |

| Question 25. Legal Strategies: Potential Changes to Laws/Rules | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 18 | 61% | - | 17% | 6% | 17% |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | - | 17% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 23 | 61% | 17% | 4% | - | 17% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 50% | 33% | - | 17% | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 40% | 33% | - | 13% | 13% |
| Washington | 4 | 75% | 25% | - | - | - |
| Total | 72 | 58% | 17% | 7% | 6% | 13% |

| Question 26. Other Conservation Strategies: Conservation Incentives | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 19 | 74% | 16% | 11% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 81% | 8% | 8% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 87% | 13% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 77 | 84% | 9% | 5% | - | 1% |

| Question 27. Other Conservation Strategies: Collaboration with Other Organizations | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 81% | 6% | 13% | - | - |
| Dublin | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 23 | 74% | 9% | 13% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 93% | 7% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 75% | 25% | - | - | - |
| Total | 70 | 83% | 9% | 7% | - | 1% |

| Question 28. Objective 1: Adopt and publish online Alligator Management Plan for NC (Nov 2017) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 9 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 27 | 81% | 7% | - | - | 11% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 13 | 92% | 8% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 66 | 89% | 6% | - | - | 5% |

| Question 29. Objective 2: Identify communities with frequent human-alligator interactions (Feb 2018) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 11 | 91% | - | 9% | - | - |
| Dublin | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 21 | 81% | 14% | 5% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 87% | 13% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 63 | 89% | 8% | 3% | - | - |

| Question 30. Objective 3: Implement public education program emphasizing public safety, prohibitions on illegal take and feeding, and alligator ecology and management (Feb 2018) | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 15 | 93% | - | 7% | - | - |
| Dublin | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 24 | 88% | 4% | 4% | 4% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 70 | 94% | 1% | 3% | 1% | - |

| Question 31. Objective 4: Refine and adopt response guidelines, including third party involvement, to alligators causing public safety or property damage problems (Feb 2018) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 75% | 25% | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 77% | 12% | 12% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 80% | 13% | - | 7% | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 74 | 82% | 12% | 4% | 1% | - |

| Question 32. Objective 5, 9, 13: Assess local government interest in population reduction hunts (May 2018, 2019, 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 56% | 13% | 19% | - | 13% |
| Dublin | 7 | 71% | 29% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 24 | 63% | 13% | 17% | - | 8% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 67% | 33% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 53% | 13% | 13% | 20% | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 72 | 63% | 15% | 13% | 4% | 6% |

| Question 33. Objective 6, 10, 14: Complete population reduction hunt(s) where appropriate per requests of local government(s) (Oct 2018, 2019, 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 38% | 25% | 19% | - | 19% |
| Dublin | 7 | 57% | 29% | - | 14% | - |
| Bolivia | 20 | 80% | 15% | 5% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 5 | 80% | 20% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 50% | 14% | 14% | 14% | 7% |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 66 | 62% | 18% | 9% | 5% | 6% |

| Question 34. Objective 7: Identify and map important alligator habitat and target areas for conservation attention (Feb 2019) | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 88% | 6% | 6% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 23 | 87% | - | 13% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 93% | 7% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 71 | 90% | 4% | 6% | - | - |

| Question 35. Objective 8: Develop first approximation of the number and extent of metapopulations of alligators (Mar 2019) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 63% | 25% | 13% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 22 | 82% | 9% | 9% | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 93% | 7% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 69 | 84% | 10% | 6% | - | - |

| Question 36. Objective 11: Design an Alligator Management Assistance Program (AMAP) (Dec 2019) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 81% | 6% | 6% | - | 6% |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 25 | 72% | 4% | 12% | 8% | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 13 | 69% | 23% | - | 8% | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 71 | 79% | 8% | 6% | 4% | 3% |

| Question 37. Objective 12: Complete development of a watchable wildlife alligator viewing location on a game land (Feb 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|-----------|------------------|------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 41% | 24% | 18% | 6% | 12% |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | - | 14% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 27 | 44% | 22% | 11% | - | 22% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 67% | 33% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 43% | 36% | - | 21% | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 75 | 52% | 23% | 9% | 5% | 11% |

| Question 38. Objective 14: Complete an assessment of cultural carrying capacity by county in AMU 1 (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 35% | 41% | - | 12% | 12% |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 25 | 56% | 24% | 16% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 87% | - | 7% | 7% | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 74 | 68% | 18% | 7% | 4% | 4% |

| Question 39. Objective 15: Complete study to determine economic values of alligators in North Carolina (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 69% | 19% | 6% | 6% | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 25 | 56% | 36% | 4% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 80% | 7% | 13% | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 73 | 73% | 19% | 5% | 1% | 1% |

| Question 40. Objective 16: Complete study to evaluate usefulness of alligator survey techniques in North Carolina (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 56% | 19% | 13% | 6% | 6% |
| Dublin | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 25 | 60% | 28% | 8% | 4% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 50% | 50% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 71 | 69% | 21% | 6% | 3% | 1% |

| Question 41. Objective 17: Complete study to improve estimates of vital rates and age-class distributions for metapopulations in AMU 1 (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 59% | 41% | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 86% | 7% | 7% | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 48 | 79% | 19% | 2% | - | - |

| Question 42. Objective 18: Complete study to investigate spatial ecology of alligators with emphasis on interchange between metapopulations and fate of relocated alligators (May 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 17 | 53% | 35% | 12% | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | - | 14% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 24 | 58% | 8% | 25% | 8% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 83% | 17% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 93% | 7% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 75% | 25% | - | - | - |
| Total | 73 | 70% | 15% | 12% | 3% | - |

| Question 43. Objective 19. Complete development of technical materials to help public land managers develop watchable wildlife viewing areas for alligators (Jun 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 16 | 38% | 25% | 13% | 19% | 6% |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | - | 14% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 26 | 42% | 19% | 19% | - | 19% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 67% | 33% | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 57% | 36% | - | 7% | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 73 | 53% | 22% | 11% | 5% | 8% |

| Question 44. Objective 20: Review and adjust as needed the alligator population goals (increase, maintain, decrease) for each Alligator Management Unit (AMU) (Jun 2020) | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 14 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 25 | 64% | 12% | 20% | - | 4% |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 15 | 93% | 7% | - | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 71 | 82% | 10% | 7% | - | 1% |

| Question 45. Objective 21: Review and revise as needed metrics for number of recreational hunt permits to hunt alligators where biologically sustainable and socially acceptable (Jun 2020) | | | | | | |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Venue | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Hampstead | 13 | 77% | 8% | 8% | - | 8% |
| Dublin | 7 | 86% | 14% | - | - | - |
| Bolivia | 23 | 83% | - | 13% | 4% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| New Bern | 14 | 79% | - | 21% | - | - |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - | - | - |
| Total | 67 | 84% | 3% | 10% | 1% | 1% |

| Question 46. Is this type of forum helpful? | | | | |
|--|------------------|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| Venue | Responses | Yes | No | Not Sure |
| Hampstead | 16 | 94% | 6% | - |
| Dublin | 7 | 100% | - | - |
| Bolivia | 22 | 91% | 9% | - |
| Jacksonville | 6 | 100% | - | - |
| New Bern | 13 | 92% | - | 8% |
| Washington | 4 | 100% | - | - |
| Total | 68 | 94% | 4% | 1% |

V. Online Survey Results

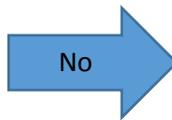
This message displayed to respondents at the beginning of the survey:

This anonymous survey will take approximately 10-20 minutes to complete, depending on how much you choose to write in the optional open-ended questions. Although the draft Alligator Management Plan is 40 pages long, this survey focuses on Sections III, IV, and V (pages 9-23). Please note that "I did not read this section" and "Neutral" are 2 of the 6 options that are available on the multiple choice questions. We greatly appreciate your effort to complete all of the questions in these sections of the survey. This survey will be available until **June 25th**.

Your answers will help us better understand your perspective and your opinion on how alligators should be managed in North Carolina. Thank you in advance for your time and participation.

A. Multiple-Choice Answers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Are you a North Carolina resident (or own property in North Carolina)? | |
| No | 1 |
| Yes | 149 |



| |
|-------------------------------------|
| Where do you live (city and state)? |
| Pittsburgh, PA (1) |



| | |
|--|---|
| What county do you live in (or own property, if out-of-state resident)? | |
| Inside of alligator range (114) | Outside of alligator range (34) |
| Beaufort (3), Bertie (2), Bladen (2), Brunswick (11), Carteret (11), Chowan (1), Columbus (8), Craven (8), Cumberland (2), Currituck (1), Duplin (4), Hyde (2), Jones (2), Lenoir (1), New Hanover (24), Onslow (17), Pamlico (2), Pender (8), Robeson (1), Washington (4) | Alamance (1), Buncombe (1), Durham (1), Franklin (2), Gaston (2), Granville (1), Guilford (2), Halifax (2), Harnett (3), Johnston (2), Lee (2), Mecklenburg (1), Moore (1), Pitt (4), Rowan (1), Stanly (1), Wake (6), Yadkin (1) |

| Although more than one of the following options may apply to you, what is your primary interest in alligator management? | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Responses | Public Safety | Hunting | Commercial Use | Watching/ Photographing | Perpetuation of the species in NC |
| 150 | 29% | 37% | 1% | 11% | 23% |

In addition to the five options shown in the following tables, survey respondents were also given the option "I did not read this section." These responses were excluded from the results presented in this summary.

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following goals from Section III: Plan Goals (pages 9-10 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Plan Goal A: Maintain viable populations of alligators in NC | 146 | 61% | 11% | 13% | 3% | 12% |
| Plan Goal B: Conduct research to support science-based management of alligators | 145 | 57% | 17% | 12% | 6% | 8% |
| Plan Goal C: Promote public safety through management of alligator populations | 144 | 65% | 10% | 11% | 4% | 9% |
| Plan Goal D: Provide comprehensive information about alligators and alligator management | 144 | 60% | 15% | 16% | 2% | 6% |
| Plan Goal E1: Provide opportunities for public enjoyment of alligators through <u>hunting</u> | 146 | 62% | 12% | 3% | 1% | 23% |
| Plan Goal E2: Provide opportunities for public enjoyment of alligators through <u>wildlife viewing</u> | 146 | 51% | 14% | 18% | 8% | 9% |

The next 6 blocks of questions pertain to **Section IV: Strategies** (pages 10-21 of the draft Alligator Management Plan).

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following sections of Strategy A: Population Management Strategies (pages 10-13 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Management Units (pages 10-11) | 111 | 44% | 22% | 15% | 9% | 10% |
| Population Goals (pages 11-12) | 112 | 45% | 23% | 16% | 6% | 10% |
| Population Management (pages 12-13) | 112 | 46% | 24% | 10% | 10% | 11% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following sections of Strategy B: Habitat Management Strategies (pages 13-14 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Habitat Conservation (page 13) | 116 | 59% | 21% | 11% | 3% | 5% |
| Permit Review (page 13) | 116 | 43% | 24% | 16% | 6% | 11% |
| Alligator Management Assistance Program (AMAP) (page 14) | 113 | 45% | 20% | 18% | 9% | 8% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following sections of Strategy C: Public Safety Strategies (pages 14-15 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Alligator Removal (page 14) | 123 | 50% | 26% | 8% | 7% | 9% |
| Education and Outreach (page 15) | 121 | 65% | 19% | 7% | 2% | 6% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following sections of Strategy D: Science Strategies (pages 15-18 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Surveys and Monitoring (pages 15-16) | 123 | 51% | 24% | 16% | 4% | 4% |
| Research (pages 16-17) | 120 | 49% | 23% | 18% | 3% | 8% |
| Recommended Surveys, Monitoring, and Research (pages 17-18) | 118 | 51% | 23% | 14% | 4% | 8% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following sections of Strategy E: Legal Strategies (pages 18-19 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Recommended Changes to Law (pages 18-19) | 119 | 44% | 16% | 18% | 3% | 20% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following sections of Strategy F: Other Conservation Strategies (pages 19-21 of the draft Alligator Management Plan). | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| Conservation Incentives (page 19) | 116 | 43% | 21% | 22% | 7% | 7% |
| Collaboration with Other Organizations (pages 19-21) | 114 | 40% | 27% | 23% | 2% | 8% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following Objectives and Completion Dates from Table 3: Implementation schedule for draft Alligator Management Plan objectives (page 23). | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| 1: Adopt and publish online Alligator Management Plan for NC (Nov 2017) | 128 | 62% | 17% | 13% | 4% | 4% |
| 2: Identify communities with frequent human-alligator interactions (Feb 2018) | 129 | 67% | 18% | 12% | 1% | 2% |
| 3: Implement public education program emphasizing public safety, prohibitions on illegal take and feeding, and alligator ecology and management (Feb 2018) | 129 | 64% | 22% | 6% | 5% | 3% |
| 4: Refine and adopt response guidelines, including third party involvement, to alligators causing public safety or property damage problems (Feb 2018) | 129 | 56% | 19% | 18% | 2% | 5% |
| 5, 9, 13: Assess local government interest in population reduction hunts (May 2018, 2019, 2020) | 130 | 51% | 16% | 12% | 8% | 14% |
| 6, 10, 14: Complete population reduction hunt(s) where appropriate per requests of local government(s) (Oct 2018, 2019, 2020) | 131 | 53% | 16% | 10% | 3% | 18% |
| 7: Identify and map important alligator habitat and target areas for conservation attention (Feb 2019) | 129 | 59% | 18% | 16% | 4% | 3% |
| 8: Develop first approximation of the number and extent of metapopulations of alligators (Mar 2019) | 129 | 57% | 19% | 19% | 3% | 2% |
| 11: Design an Alligator Management Assistance Program (AMAP) (Dec 2019) | 129 | 47% | 22% | 18% | 10% | 4% |
| 12: Complete development of a watchable wildlife alligator viewing location on a game land (Feb 2020) | 128 | 46% | 14% | 17% | 10% | 13% |
| 14: Complete an assessment of cultural carrying capacity by county in AMU 1 (May 2020) | 127 | 32% | 22% | 30% | 9% | 7% |
| 15: Complete study to determine economic values of alligators in North Carolina (May 2020) | 129 | 43% | 16% | 21% | 9% | 12% |
| 16: Complete study to evaluate usefulness of alligator survey techniques in North Carolina (May 2020) | 128 | 37% | 23% | 23% | 9% | 8% |
| 17: Complete study to improve estimates of vital rates and age-class distributions for metapopulations in AMU 1 (May 2020) | 127 | 43% | 19% | 24% | 7% | 8% |
| 18: Complete study to investigate spatial ecology of alligators with emphasis on interchange between metapopulations and fate of relocated alligators (May 2020) | 129 | 39% | 17% | 27% | 9% | 9% |
| 19: Complete development of technical materials to help public land managers develop watchable wildlife viewing areas for alligators (Jun 2020) | 129 | 42% | 16% | 20% | 13% | 9% |

| Please indicate your level of support for each of the following Objectives and Completion Dates from Table 3: Implementation schedule for draft Alligator Management Plan objectives (page 23). | | | | | | |
|--|-----------|------------------|------------------|---------|------------------|------------------|
| | Responses | Strongly Support | Somewhat Support | Neutral | Somewhat Opposed | Strongly Opposed |
| 20: Review and adjust as needed the alligator population goals (increase, maintain, decrease) for each Alligator Management Unit (AMU) (Jun 2020) | 131 | 47% | 21% | 15% | 6% | 11% |
| 21: Review and revise as needed metrics for number of recreational hunt permits to hunt alligators where biologically sustainable and socially acceptable (Jun 2020) | 128 | 51% | 17% | 7% | 5% | 20% |

B. Open-Ended Answers

1. [Comments regarding Section III: Plan Goals \(pages 9-10 of the draft AMP\)](#)

Respondent #1

Hampstead, NC (Pender Co.)

“It is time for a science-based, controlled, regulated hunting season with the dual goals of public safety and ensuring a stable, sustainable population of alligators. I do not want them "wiped out," but I don't want them in my front yard or garage either. About May 1st I saw one in Nixon Creek, less than 200 yards from my home. My grandchildren play next to that creek. Local residents know of alligator presence in that creek years ago as well.”

Respondent #4

Four Oaks, NC (Johnston Co.)

“I grew up in the Florida Everglades, worked for 6 years with the Florida Game and Fish Commission, and have participated in alligator hunts. If the population supports it, I would be interested in an opportunity to hunt alligators in NC. I also believe that public awareness educational efforts are needed to show the public what alligators are really like to have around. I have had myriad experiences with alligators and find them useful to the ecosystem, for public enjoyment, and hunting. In other words, people really need to understand their temperament as well as behaviors; at least they aren't crocodiles (thank goodness). I've dealt with them as well. Best wishes.”

Respondent #6

Pinehurst, NC (Hyde Co.)

“There seems to be no reason that would indicate that a manged hunting season would be detrimental to the long term alligator population.”

Respondent #7

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

"In North Carolina I'm not sure if alligator reproduction is at a rate to support a harvest for a hunting season with a bag limit like for deer or squirrels. I think the regulations for the take of alligators should be more regulated and targeted for the express purpose of dealing with a problem alligator that exceeds a certain size, say larger than ten feet. I think the take of alligators should be handled by a drawing for a permit for a specific location targeting a specific alligator larger than ten feet. I think that then time for the harvest of an alligator should be a 72 hour window set by the NCWRC. This would allow alligators of the size that can reproduce, greater than six feet, to exist and reproduce until they reach ten feet and don't create an issue. I think the drawing of a permit would also allow the NCWRC to generate funds for the management of alligators. (Plan Goal C and Plan Goal E1)"

Respondent #8

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"I am not in favor of alligator hunting and prefer relocation of an alligator to another area, as needed."

Respondent #9

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"I disagree with line 278, which states that creating public enjoyment of alligators (through hunting) will increase public support of alligators. Allowing alligators to be hunted will decrease the public's respect of the species, in my opinion, and lessen the desire to protect it and conserve it. The public's perception of alligators will be encouraged to change to one of prey instead of a species that needs our protection."

Respondent #10

Sanford, NC (Lee Co.)

"A NC alligator season is long overdue - Neighboring states are way ahead - lets stop studying everything to death – we know we have an abundant - long term viable population - open this opportunity up to NC residents"

Respondent #20

Sanford, NC (Lee Co.)

"My in-laws live within a 1/2 mile radius of alligator populations in Columbus County. We are opposed to hunting as the dangers to humans who frequent the areas where alligators live for viewing purposes are at high risk from hunters. There is no way to safely reduce the interactions of the alligator watchers and humans hunting them."

Respondent #21

Angier, NC (Harnett Co.)

"Line 277 - too often commercial harvests take precedence over recreational harvests, see Blue Fin Tuna. Let's not let that happen here, please."

Respondent #22

Fuquay Varina, NC (Wake Co.)

"Alligators are not a "Game Species", and the NC Wildlife Commission should not be spending(wasting) dollars on these pests while quail and pheasants go wanting (and ignored).

Alligators are nothing but accidents waiting to happen, should be designated as "Non Game" and declared open season at all times, as Coyotes are. Efforts should be directed to REMOVING alligators from the State of North Carolina. The Wildlife commission needs to REFOCUS on game species and forget about protecting dangerous pests. Maybe someone will wake up when their grandchild is eaten by one of these dangerous reptiles."

Respondent #23

Ocean Isle Beach, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"266-267: Safety is Key. Over the years, I have seen more and more Gators. As both the Gator and People populations grow, there are many more interactions. I would hate for these to take the life of a pet, or worse, a human (mostly a child). We also often Visit Lake Waccamaw, and I feel it is only a matter of time (short time) before someone gets seriously hurt, or even killed by a Gator..."

Respondent #24

Raleigh, NC (Wake Co.)

"I'm 19 years old and I am originally from Raleigh NC but I now spend my time in Swansboro, NC. I have always wanted to gator hunt in NC and I will do anything I have to in order to manage and preserve the gator population. Thanks for giving NC the great opportunity!"

Respondent #26

Whiteville, NC (Columbus Co.)

"I personally don't like Plan Goal C. Public safety sounds great and has its place but not here with alligators. I don't think any of this management plan should be aimed at public safety. That just sounds like people should be scared of them for some reason and that's nonsense. Its not like we have people dying of gator attacks each year. The best thing for the public is education which can be included in (Plan Goal D). When the public is not educated properly it becomes impossible for them to act in a common sense fashion. Without education, what tends to happen is a lot of negative BS and unfortunately it spreads like grass fire from one uneducated dummy to another. I don't know of anywhere that has a higher risk of a human/gator or pet/gator interaction than Lake Waccamaw. Most locals there and around the general area have learned to respect and enjoy them. The alligators definitely make the lake and swamps that much more special. Education Education Education! Lets learn to live with them and enjoy there presence in a sustainable way!!!"

Respondent #28

Youngsville, NC (Franklin Co.)

"This is the dumbest idea since the wolves in the swamp. Do everything available to keep the gators out of NC and the waters safe for public/private citizens. Do not use any budget money or man power to bring or allow alligators in NC."

Respondent #32

New Bern, NC (Craven Co., but own property in Pamlico & Jones Co. too)

"Goal A, i think it is important to maintain a health population of alligators to help manage the high number of beaver, nutria and muskrats in the waters around property i own, especially in Jones County on the Trent River where we have a very high nutria population. While we don't see many alligators up

there we have at least one there now that is large and hopefully eats a lot of nutria. I hired a trapper who caught 39 nutria in less than 30 days.”

Respondent #36

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“The reason why I support Goal C the most is because the alligator population seems to be growing a lot; they are penetrating our coastal marinas and other areas where we and our summer guests enjoy the Intracoastal Waterway. Please consider a manner in which to relocate alligators from these areas.”

Respondent #38

Wallace, NC (Duplin Co.)

“There are no conflicts between alligators and humans. Only fabrications of fear are at root here.”

Respondent #43

Leland, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“Please leave the Alligators alone. They are not over-populated and are harmless. This sounds like a money making scheme.”

Respondent #44

Ayden, NC (Pitt Co.)

“Plan Goal A: I believe the Alligator should be allowed to be here. But, I do not believe the species should be allowed to expand in population numbers, endangering areas where children and fools play.

Plan Goal B: I have seen what "Science Based" management has done to resources and access to them over the years and I do not like 80% of what I have viewed as "only for those that can afford the new laws". I could elaborate for some time over this but I won't. I do agree in the research values totally for any species, to keep around but not for your best informed management reasons and decisions. I do understand this was a draft.

Plan Goal C: Children are my concern. Parents, not directly related to the outdoor life will not bother to know anything about these creatures as they expand into home areas as well people expanding into their areas. Fools, well, you can not control what they will do. Alligators are a threat to anyone, even those that know a lot about them. I am 68 years old in June. My close encounters with them has increased dramatically over the last years as an avid outdoorsman. And, I almost did not make it away from most of these encounters alive. I know where and how they live. They are everywhere most fisherman (especially those in Bass Boats need to be informed very well) and hunters too, would never expect. And so on.

Plan Goal D: I agree completely. The public, in general, (not just the hunters and fisherman and water sports types-I have seen people skiing not more than a couple hundred yards from several very large alligators-you tell them and they laugh in disbelief) should be totally informed (what to do and not to do, especially relating to taking care of children in areas close and very close to them. These close encounters will grows quickly over the next few years.

Plan Goal E: Oh yea. I am absolutely sure there is a commercial interest for money. And, it may be the only thing driving this survey. I sure hope not. As for viewing, I totally disagree with the viewing. Viewing allows the viewer to become complacent, thinking they are not that bad, so when see them

elsewhere they let their guard down. Especially the children. Most will not know how fast they are. people will see them as "They just lie around."

I apologize for the rant. I know that you perform a very good service. I have my opinions about what I have seen from people and what your beliefs and services can not or will not do for them. And you will not do for those less fortunate, allowing for the same and equal access."

Respondent #46

Moyock, NC (Currituck Co.)

"Harvest the gators. Duck hunting and swimming much better without them."

Respondent #51

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"I would love to see north Carolina have a hunting season for gators. States South of us have started and I am seeing more gators than I have seen in the past. We could have a drawing for tags much like swans. If the state wildlife folks think we have an over abundance of gators, we could start with adding them to our big game license and the state could determine and change as needed the number of animals hunters could take each season. As populations increase and decrease in the future the wildlife commission could increase or decrease the number of animals that could be taken each year to maintain a viable population for future generations to enjoy. I like to watch, photograph and eat gators. I enjoy watching them hunt for food. They are amazing creatures and if the commission feels we have adequate numbers in NC then I feel licensed hunters in NC should have the opportunity to harvest a few each year much like we do with deer, turkey, bear and other game animals."

Respondent #52

Greensboro, NC (Guilford Co.)

"I strongly support the hunting of alligators and the reduction of their population in NC as a public safety issue.

I also strongly support the elimination of coyotes.

I have personally seen what the reintroduction of coyotes has done to the pets and wildlife in my neighbourhood.

I have friends in SC that have Alligators in their neighbourhoods. The outcomes are avoidable by reduction of Alligators in NC."

Respondent #53

Lumberton, NC (Robeson Co.)

"I strongly support increasing populations of alligators in NC, as they are very beneficial to our native ecosystems, and pose relatively low dangers to humans compared to other wildlife species, and are considerably less dangerous than crocodiles in other countries. I support setting up a hunting program as long as it doesn't negatively affect populations. I think depredation management for problem alligators should focus more on capture and relocation than removal through lethal means when possible until populations are up more than they are now. I frequently fish and swim in areas inhabited by the American alligator and would like to see them more often in their natural habitat. I also support alligator breeding programs to release them back in to their natural habitat to increase populations."

Respondent #56

Carolina Beach, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Alligators present in the vicinity of our property and Marina are inhibiting the use of the water by swimmers, kayaks, and paddle boarders.

The local on the water restaurant is feeding the Alligators as are the fishing boats at the City Docks of Carolina Beach which alters their natural habitat and keeps them around.

All of the Residents of Carolina Bay, and I am sure others, would like to see the Alligators trapped and relocated, or permission granted to hunt them and remove them from this area."

Respondent #57

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.) and Stella, NC (which is on Onslow/Carteret County Line)

"Nuisance Alligators in Eastern NC have historically been relocated to NC Gamelands. This is not fair for NC Hunters that use these Gamelands especially for those that duck hunt with dogs on these said Gamelands. Holly Shelter & White Oak River are two public hunting lands that are dangerous for retrievers."

Respondent #58

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"While we live on the creek, we have never experienced property damage or more than very distant sighting of alligators. I purposely purchased property on the creek so that I could enjoy nature, and am strongly opposed to public opportunities to hunt the gators. Lines 265-267 address increased human populations, these populations are choosing to live near nature, and built/bought with the hope of doing so. I do not wish to see hunters in my back yard as this would make me feel more unsafe than the alligators ever had. Our neighborhood values the gators, shares photographs of their sighting and is STRONGLY opposed to hunting. Line 273 - increasing education, yes, teach communities that we are in alligator territory, and not to feed them or otherwise engage with the alligator population."

Respondent #60

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I would love to be able to see alligators, I've heard of one being spotted on the golf course, but he/she has never confronted the golfers and is instead something people drive by to see and enjoy."

Respondent #62

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"Public safety is most important, more so than propagating species"

Respondent #63

Carolina Beach, NC (New Hanover)

"(Line 268) I believe there needs to be an increase in awareness of how to deal with alligators and the regulations about feeding them, in areas with lots of tourists.

We have a constant visitor in the basin of Carolina Beach, in and around the marshes. We imagine they stay close because there is food to be had between the tourists and the fishing boats."

Respondent #69

Elizabethtown, NC (reside in Bladen Co.; own property in Bladen, Columbus, Sampson Counties)

"I believe that the commission should develop and implement alligator harvest plans that are science based and supported. Policy/regulations should maintain the population at a healthy level, minimize the possibility of human/gator interactions that could be harmful to people, maximize public benefit for viewing and photography, and allow for a hunting harvest. Follow the science."

Respondent #70

Greensboro, NC (Guilford Co.)

"I would like to see the alligator introduced in more areas where possible, expanding habitats."

Respondent #71

Pollocksville, NC (Jones Co.)

"I THINK FOR HUNTING REASON ALLIGATORS SHOULD THIN OUT IN OVER POPULATION IN AREA SUCH AS TRENT RIVER BASIN AN CATFISH LAKE AN THE GREAT LAKES AREAS IN SOUTHEASTERN NC."

Respondent #73

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"I would like to enjoy hunting mature alligators. And keep a healthy thriving population of alligators in our state! Lottery of so many tags per area ? Thanks for all your work keeping our natural resources protected!"

Respondent #74

Whiteville, NC (Columbus Co.)

"Plan Goal C : The number of larger alligators at Lake Waccamaw is alarming. I've been around the area 35 years and the number have just increased dramatically. Personally I have had gators bit the boat as I unload at the wildlife landing on Bella Coola road. There is just too many large gators (over 8 foot) laying out sunning any pretty day. With this many large adults they are thousands of juveniles in the canal, as I bike around the lake I see hundreds on a sunny day. Controlled management is needed, locals are killing them because the state refuses to admit there is a problem at Lake Waccamaw. Any resident if they are honest will admit there is a problem, its just a matter of time before someone is attacked and killed by a alligator with no fear of humans. Sad but true!"

Respondent #75

Southport, NC (Brunswick Co.); also own property in Duck, NC (Dare Co.)

"Lines 336 -342. Unless research shows that there is an OVER population of alligators I absolutely do not support hunting under any conditions. I would much prefer to continue as we do today by removing problem alligators individually. I do support education of people (including through wildlife viewing) to promote public safety."

Respondent #76

Cary, NC (Wake Co.)

"It is my understanding that alligator hides are valuable. IF hunting will be allowed in NC, there should be a way for hunters to sell the hides in NC. NCWildlife should offer on-line videos of how to properly

skin and preserve an alligator hide. Would baiting be allowed? (I think it should if you want hunters to be successful). Would night hunting be allowed? (I think it should).

I would live to hunt and kill and alligator, but I want to be assured there is a sustainable population in NC before hunting is allowed. I don't think there are enough gators in NC to have to worry about public safety other than for toddlers, but that should be a natural with good parenting."

Respondent #78

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

"it is time for a season numbers have risen to dangerous numbers it is a matter of time before a bad accident accures do not wait and be after the fact...plan goal e-1"

Respondent #79

Fairview, NC (Buncombe Co.)

"I am commenting regarding Plan Goal C and E1 on pages 9 and 10 of the draft plan.

Folks need to learn to live with alligators. NC does not have enough gators for any kind of hunting season.

Hunting alligators in NC nearly wiped them out in past decades and it has taken them longer to come back than Georgia or South Carolina. I am opposed to any hunting seasons."

Respondent #81

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

"In our area, the population appears to be self managed by nature for a viable co-existence with the human community."

Respondent #87

Wallace, NC (Duplin Co.)

"Why don't we just hunt, kill and fish everything to extinction and then we won't have to go through this overkill for nothing! I am really quite sick of someone trying to make a deal over nothing. This is an overkill, pure and simple! We have better things to do."

Respondent #90

Roper, NC (Washington Co.)

"Alligators are a non-native species in northern NC, just like fire ants and stink bugs - just because global warming is opening up year round habitat it doesn't mean alligators population shouldn't be controlled like other pest or dangerous species."

Respondent #95

Hampstead, NC (Pender Co.)

"I also am involved of maintaining a large piece of property along the costal Pender/Onslow line that has creek front, frontage on the intracoastal waterway, ponds, etc. Very common to see an alligator except for the most extreme cold days. Even in what are considered the winter months. They move slower but do t seem to "hibernate"."

Respondent #99

(Onslow Co.)

“Public educated via school systems, easy access apps., NC public TV,

Our area near Holly Ridge has experienced a population boom near our coastal back waters.”

Respondent #100

Trenton, NC (Jones Co.)

“E1..I am not opposed to them being safely managed and kept away from the public and populated areas. My fears are for humans, children and family pets especially. Not knowing what to always be watchful for and alert of. They are fast and dangerous creatures that is how they have survived on this earth for so many years. They have little enemies except humans.”

Respondent #101

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“I do not think the alligators should be hunted at all and although they live very close to me they show no threat and I feel more could be gained from viewing opportunitys for tourists. BUT THE MAIN REASON I AM WRITING IS BECAUSE WE NEED TO GET RID OF THE Coyotes WHICH KEEP KILLING OUR PETS INCLUDING CATS AND DOGS IN THE CITY!”

Respondent #103

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

“262 - I think the State is much too slow in their reaction to what seems to me as an explosive growth of the alligator population. The general conclusion of the citizens of Lake Waccamaw that I have discussed the population increase with is of the same opinion. We believe that much more attention must be placed on public safety and population reduction.”

Respondent #104

Merrimon, NC (Carteret Co.)

“My father hunted alligators to supplement his income in the 60's and 70's and the amount of alligators taken did not damage or deplete the population. I agree with the legal taking of alligators (plan goal E1) so that they do not become a problem or danger to people.”

Respondent #105

(Stanly Co.)

“don't go to sleep with this matter get on the matter today not in 3 years”

Respondent #106

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover, NC)

“Birth control of animals/ rather than hunting and slaughtering them...

Removing them from some areas and relocating them”

Respondent #107

Cedar Point, NC (Carteret Co.)

“While I am typically a tree hugging animal lover with a degree in biology. I am a strong believer in the fewer alligators the better. I have witnessed the overgrowth of the species in Florida and now appears to be SC. I do NOT want to see the prolific growth of the species in NC.”

Respondent #108

New Bern, NC (Craven Co.)

“We have far more needs for other things than to spend time on alligators, This smells of another back door way to control people and their property under the guise of alligator management. I guess that is to be expected from liberals using other people's money. It's disgusting. leave the alligators alone and they will be just fine. If they get into yards and such, control them by shooting them. Their numbers will hardly know it happened.”

Respondent #110

Richlands, NC (Onslow Co.)

“A properly managed hunting season is the best method for control.”

Respondent #111

Maysville, NC (Onslow Co.)

“I am an avid bass fisherman who has fished all the river systems in eastern NC. From the Chowan to the Cape Fear. I am strongly concerned primarily with the White Oak and New River. There is an alligator population in both rivers. There is not a large enough population in these rivers to support even a one week hunting period. I strongly support a continued hunting ban on these 2 river systems. I have also seen alligators in the Chowan, Roanoke, Neuse and Cpe Fear rivers. The only river that might support legalized hunting is the Cape Fear, but only for a short period of time.”

Respondent #112

Oriental, NC (Pamlico Co.)

“I want to kill off the entire alligator population. I cannot even swim in Dawsons Creek anymore or let my grand kids. I want ALL alligators dead on Dawsons Creek !!!”

Respondent #113

Leland, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“I believe you are doing what is best as the human population is ever increasing in our area. I thank you for letting me read this draft. I see alligators every day where I walk in the woods and so enjoy them. I have been worried that you might let the human race win and make all the alligators disappear. Please leave plenty of woods and refuge for the alligators in those to Units. That is the only way the alligators

will be able to survive. And guard those designated safe places so that humans don't come in and make it harder for the alligators. Thank you”

Respondent #114

New Bern, NC (Craven Co.)

“Way to many gators . Population has exploded in last 5 years. Hold a lottery per county . 1 tag per hunter every hunter allowed 1 set only bank set / limb line . All gators large or small count . No release option .”

Respondent #117

Carolina Beach, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“plan C: We live on the canal at Carolina Beach and we have alligators the water. They swim and come up in the water at our dock and stare us down. We can not use the water now because of safety issues with the alligators present. Our children and dogs are not safe to swim in the water. I have contacted the Town of Carolina Beach and talked with NC Wildlife officers. They have informed me there is nothing they can do. The Town of Carolina Beach said they were not responsible. I also asked the Town of CB to post signs for safety. THE NC WILDLIFE OFFICER TOLD ME THEY COULD DO NOTHING UNLESS THE ALLIGATOR CRAWLED ONTO OUR DOCK OR HURT SOMEONE OR WAS HUGE IN SIZE. Also we live near the CB marina and the people that work on the boats are feeding the alligators their fish scrapes. I addressed this with the officers and they told me they were aware of this.”

Respondent #118

Oak Island, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“Education is the key. Importance of habitat, feeding and harvesting to keep numbers in safe range.”

Respondent #120

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

“I'm opposed to creating any type of "wildlife sanctuary" or creating enclosed areas for alligators. I've been living with the alligators for nearly 8 years and I still find it amazing that they are right by the side of the road. Those of us who live here know where to find them and respect them. I think promoting respect for them, not feeding them and not approaching them is most important. I do not think we should be removing the large gators. We are living in their environment not the other way around. I am strongly opposed to allowing hunting of alligators. I can see that getting easily out of hand.”

Respondent #123

Creedmoor, NC (Granville Co.)

“Plan Goal E1 has my total support. I have spent many days on the Cape Fear river and several other coastal areas and have been very surprised in the amount of alligators. In the 10 years I've lived in NC I have seen alligators not only increase in numbers but in areas I've never seen them before far from the Cape Fear river and coastal areas. Green Swamp Game Land has alligators, I've even seen them as far as Robeson County.”

Respondent #126

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“While public safety is stated as a reason to allow hunting of alligators, I have never once heard of anyone being attacked by an alligator in NC. I know of one case in FL at Disney, but that is very rare. Do we really need to protect ourselves from them or is it the other way around, which is far more likely?”

Respondent #127

Belville, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“Don't these hunters have enough game to kill without adding alligators to the list?”

Respondent #128

Boiling Spring Lakes, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“I live on Boiling Spring Lakes and would like to enjoy water sports, swimming, boating, etc and want the alligators removed from the large lake (Patrician Lake) so that my family can swim and enjoy the lake. I would also like the option of killing nuisance alligators without penalty from the local authorities or wildlife administration.”

Respondent #130

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Line 249 - The definition of viable population is vague. Alligators are a part of living in this area. We see them all of the time when fishing and playing golf.

Line 262 - Public safety and alligators are the responsibility is the person involved. The alligator is only doing what it knows to do which is eat, rest and reproduce. Negative interaction with alligators in this area usually the result of the act of a person not the alligator.

Line 275 - This is not Florida or Louisiana. NC does not have the alligator population or historical alligator problems that would justify a hunting season. The requests for recreational and commercial will only open the excuse for the illegal killing of alligators. There are too many people that take illegal limits on legal species now ie, deer, fish, etc. The only thing that stops this on alligators is the fact that you currently cannot molest an alligator. I understand the need for removal of nuisance alligator or ones that represent a safety issue, However, a person for example moving on to a golf course and complaining that they can see an alligator does not represent a safety issue and the alligator should be left alone.”

Respondent #131

Havelock (really Adams Creek/Harlowe), NC (Craven Co.)

“I live on a creek which has seen a few alligators over the years. I like seeing them; however, I have neighbors who will shoot them and snakes on sight. Even if they are very small (less than 3 feet) and over 50 feet away! I would like to see people educated into what alligators do for the environment they also enjoy and not fear them (and snakes) so much.”

Respondent #132

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Alligators are historically non native to North Carolina, compete with native species, are a public hazard and nuisance, and should be hunted to extinction along with Coyotes.”

Respondent #134

Supply, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"A.

I have seen disregard for following regulation on hunting other animals and feel some hunters will abuse hunting alligators if opened up as well. Also, afraid the species will suffer if no longer protected.

C

Gators in our area are not nuisance, but public training about the animal is neededin other words, they get a bad wrap"

Respondent #136

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"I am strongly for hunting alligators, they are everywhere in the Cape Fear area, which includes our Waterway. We cannot enjoy simple things such as paddle boarding or swimming because there are so many gators around here. It's time to start looking out for humans!"

Respondent #137

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

"There is no overpopulation of alligators in Onslow County I spend 3 days a week on New River fishing and they are only observed occasionally but when they are observed they are very shy and disappear quickly if a hunting season is opened Hunters are going to go straight for the 12 to 14 Footers who have lived on this planet for close to a century they are very private animals and need to be left alone"

Respondent #139

Reside in Trent Woods, NC (Craven Co.); also own property in New Bern, NC (Craven Co.)

"Allow the alligator population to live peacefully in the Croatan Forest and its lakes. Any alligators, especially an over-population of them in the Trent and Neuse rivers, are a threat to human activity in those waters."

Respondent #141

Stella, NC (Carteret Co.)

"Implementing recreational hunting control procedures for alligators will greatly reduce the threat of alligator human interaction. The alligator population has greatly increased in the last 10 years with no control procedures in place. The only viable option for population control is implementing recreational hunting control procedures."

Respondent #144

Hampstead, NC (Pender Co.)

"I work New River, from Sneads Ferry to Jacksonville...we used to only see alligators up in the creeks near New River Airstation. In the past few years we have begun to see alligators all the way up to the ICW and have seen them in New River Inlet. Their population has seemed to explode in the past several years and I fear if a hunting season isn't opened on them it will only be a matter of time before a small child is attacked by one."

Respondent #146

Falkland, NC (Pitt Co.)

“I do not see that Management Plan item E (line 275), wildlife viewing and hunting (shooting) can be compatible.”

Respondent #148

Carthage, NC (Moore Co.)

“Plan Goal E2: I also believe we should be aloud to own alligators for personal enjoyment.”

Respondent #149

Gastonia, NC (Gaston Co.)

“As long as a population can be maintained and does not put the population in nc at risk I am in support of a management program. I am a lifetime license holding in nc. Thanks”

2. [Comments regarding Section IV: Plan Strategies \(pages 10-21 of the draft AMP\)](#)

Respondent #1

Hampstead, NC (Pender Co.)

“I oppose the \$300-\$500 fee for the use of a Nuisance Alligator Removal Agent...”

Respondent #4

Four Oaks, NC (Johnston Co.)

“In addition to my previous comments, I also have conducted depredation harvesting while employed with Florida Game and Fish and found the Nuisance Agent program to be a viable methodology for targeted population control.”

Respondent #7

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

“When alligators are declared a nuisance and moved will they be moved to suitable habitat that is not occupied to populate those areas? To replace the population that would be removed from urban areas in population reduction hunts. Hopefully the desire to hunt alligators will be implemented slowly and preferably in the urban areas first where alligators are not desirable before allowing any hunting in areas that are better for populations to grow.”

Respondent #8

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Protection for our wildlife is needed as our community grows.”

Respondent #9

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“I disagree that what is proposed in line 379 would even be possible. I applaud the idea that younger and female alligators would be maintained by "prudent hunting," but it is nearly impossible to

determine the gender of an alligator by sight, so allowing hunting would make it impossible to maintain female alligators. (Reference line 111 which states that "external sexual characters are minimal for the alligator.") Thus, I believe that allowing the hunting of alligators would be harmful to alligator populations. That would, in turn, be harmful to the ecosystems where alligators are found. Alligators control certain mammal populations and help bird populations thrive (lines 159-169.) Hunting would likely decrease alligator populations by decreasing the number of females, in turn throwing off the balance of the ecosystems where they reside."

Respondent #10

Sanford, NC (Lee Co.)

"Stop with the collaborations - Incentives - stop bringing in non relevant subjects - NC has plenty of Gators – presently NCWRC is preventing NC citizens from hunting alligators - get to it already"

Respondent #21

Angier, NC (Harnett Co.)

"Line 613 - 1. what is the burden of proof. A life threatening encounter with a gator can happen without warning and occur in an instant."

Respondent #22

Fuquay Varina, NC (Wake Co.)

"I wish that NO FUNDS be spent from my tax support or my Pittman-Robertson excise tax by the NC Wildlife Commission to study, inform or protect Alligators in the state of North Carolina. They are NOT native and they DO NOT BELONG in civilized society. I wish the Commission would use my tax dollars and other funds to support and promote GAME SPECIES ONLY! I believe that was the original intent of Pittman-Robertson (i.e. to promote game species). I don't know how the Wildlife Commission can justify wasting dollars on non-game species while legions of hunters are quitting the sport, because of lack of viable small game populations. The NC Wildlife Commission Needs to RE-Examine their mission!!"

Respondent #28

Youngsville, (Franklin Co.)

"Kill or remove every last one of these creatures. I do not want them in NC"

Respondent #29

Windsor, NC (Bertie Co.)

"I strongly support changes to current law (621-622).Establishing a sustainable hunting program will improve public safety, NCWRC income as well as the local economy in affected areas."

Respondent #38

Wallace, NC (Duplin Co.)

"No need to spend money on nonsense. We have co-existed this long."

Respondent #39

Hubert, NC (Onslow Co.)

"I agree with the premise of AMU's but disagree with the allocation of counties. I believe splitting the current proposal shown in Figure 3 PG 11, described on PG 10 Lines 296-303 should be changed. AMU #1 should consist of Brunswick, Pender, Columbus, and New Hanover counties. A second AMU #2 should be created consisting of Onslow, Carteret, Craven, and Pamlico counties. AMU #3 would consist of all other counties displayed as white in Fig 3. This would give managers a more refined ability to manage Alligator populations. Population distribution from one county to the next can vary drastically but not only that, the ability to access populations is burdened by development and other criteria not expressed in this ATF document."

Respondent #44

Ayden, NC (Pitt Co.)

"Strategy A: This being a draft I would wait to see for a judgement here. In particular-how you gather information. Someone or a small group from the same area wanting to gain monetarily can say they are all over the place. I should be allowed to take or we should be. I also know of counties you are not included in the AMU 1 area. Very lacking here. Just my opinion. AMU 2: Totally disagree. Do not be reactionary.

Strategy B: I've seen the same alligators in very salty waters for long periods of time way north of Beaufort county and west of Pamlico county. State and federal biologists review permit applications is a concern I have because of the things or results I know of in the past. Alligator Management Assistance Program: Landowners. Landowners. Landowners are not the only ones in the counties that should have a very major input.

Strategy C: Alligators would only be euthanized if they have been shown to be aggressive towards humans. They are aggressive at anytime especially during nesting around the month of March. The entire public should be advised as to the removal permits and procedures and also included in the options to help remove them, if they are deemed capable.

Strategy D: I strongly agree the population is increasing. Public surveys of fisherman and hunters in particular can add tremendously to the accuracy of the reports.

Strategy E: It should be mandatory that a person or group should either have consumed the meat or passed it on to a service for the needy or not allowed a permit.

Strategy F: I've seen wetlands allowed to be destroyed and nothing done. Now you are going to pay them to restore it? It should be restored at their cost because they destroyed it."

Respondent #45

(Wake Co.)

"I feel it is imperative to put in place the process to take alligators. They will only continue to reproduce, have no natural predator and will continue to impact our society as we know it."

Respondent #46

Moyock, NC (Currituck Co.)

"Educate people. Harvest gators. Monitor and evaluate populations to support effective mgt."

Respondent #52

Greensboro, NC (Guilford Co.)

"I am strongly in favour of the reduction of alligator populations in NC thru hunting and other humane methods.

They do in fact pose a long term threat to other wildlife populations and humans and their pets.

I am a long time NC resident. The recent years increase in alligator populations poses future threats to NC.

I have friends in SC that have to coexist with alligators. There is still time to avoid those problems. Denial is not just a river thru Egypt.ps I have seen first hand how that coyote thing worked out for other wildlife and pets in my neighbourhood..."

Respondent #53

Lumberton, NC (Robeson Co.)

"Public information should be increased to educate the public on the low risks alligators present to humans to decrease fear levels associated with alligators and inform the public on their benefits to wetlands and ecosystems as well as their benefits as far as a consumable resource for humans if their populations are maintained, as well as educating the public on coexisting with alligators."

Respondent #56

Carolina Beach, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Definatly want to see an increase in resources for Alligator Removal or an ease in the Hunting Permit process to allow a town or Citizen of a town to obtain and hunt a problem alligator."

Respondent #57

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.) and Stella, NC (which is on Onslow/Carteret County Line)

"Hunters will pay for Alligator Hunting Permits, these funds can be put towards Grassland Preserve Program & other programs that benefit the American Alligator habitat."

Respondent #58

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I am unsure what constitutes the removal of alligators due to human habitation (424) - this may be too broad to protect the alligators.

I strongly oppose the hunting of alligators."

Respondent #59

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I do not support the hunting of alligators. They are considered rare here and are a joy to see. Human populations have moved into their territory, that is part of the attraction to rural North Carolina. I want the species protected, not hunted."

Respondent #60

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I have lived here for 13 years and have really wanted to see an alligator. I do not see the alligators as a threat, rather a part of nature expected to be found in NC and something I value. I do not support the hunting of alligators as the population has not become problematic."

Respondent #61

Emerald Isle, NC (Carteret Co.)

"Much of the strategies has to do with removal of alligators when people complain. People need to be educated about alligators rather than fear them. Much the same as snakes - many people are afraid of snakes without understanding how important they are. Alligators are not something to fear, they are something to not feed and not to provoke. They are part of living in North Carolina. Instead of goals of reducing the population of alligators, I'd like the opportunity to view them and photograph them."

Respondent #67

Bolivia, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Considerably greater research needs to be done to determine if there are any needs to open a harvest season. Alligators are considered a keystone species and provide aquatic habitat for other creatures (161-163). NC species are slower to reproduce (136). Recent study shows that populations are likely stable or increasing slightly (208). General Assembly has directed the agency to conserve all native species (253-254)."

Respondent #74

Whiteville, NC (Columbus Co.)

"Research pg. 16-17: There has been enough time wasted just ride around two or three sunny days. Researchers keep saying need more information where are you gathering your information, its not where there is a alligator problem like Lake Waccamaw. Enough wasting time, action is what is needed."

Respondent #75

Southport, NC (Brunswick Co.); also own property in Duck, NC (Dare Co.)

"line 592-597. I am adamantly opposed to any type of recreational hunting for this 'threatened' species. Nowhere in this document does it indicate any reason to have a hunting season. There is no mention of an increasing percentage or specific number of safety incidents, problem areas or negative impacts of existing alligator populations. It sounds like this draft proposes a hunting season without specifying why exactly and where exactly it is needed. Without this type of specific documentation and without information on how any hunting season would be managed specifically, I object to hunting for recreational purposes."

Respondent #79

Fairview, NC (Buncombe Co.)

"I oppose changing the law to legally hunt alligators. We do not have the robust populations you find further south."

Respondent #87

Wallace, NC (Duplin Co.)

“Let's spend time on something worthwhile. When did someone in NC have an alligator just come up and harass people?”

Respondent #93

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“The problem with current wildlife and fisheries is a lack of effective monitoring and oversight. Need more boots in the ground to deter those who think they are above the law or do not respect our wildlife and fisheries”

Respondent #103

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

“625 It seems that the 2015 -16 proposal should have been approved. However, I believe it should have been for sixty days and five per permit allowed.”

Respondent #108

New Bern, NC (Craven Co.)

“no studies and so called research. This would only be a spring board to invent some sort of "problem" and then of course the need for a "solution".”

Respondent #112

Oriental, NC (Pamlico Co.)

“No More alligators. Kill them all.”

Respondent #113

Leland, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“All of it makes sense.”

Respondent #120

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

“I'm on the fence regarding research mostly because I don't see how anyone can get an accurate assessment of the alligators driving down the road with a flashlight. The amount of alligators in the depths of the swamps would still remain a mystery. I'm strongly opposed to any type of alligator hunting season.”

Respondent #126

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Because the alligator is a threatened species, why not relocate them from overpopulated areas to less populated areas instead of killing them?”

Respondent #128

Boiling Spring Lakes, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“I have not had the opportunity to read the reports, but strongly urge removal of alligators or killing as necessary alligators from the large lake (Patrician Lake) at Boiling Spring Lakes”

Respondent #132

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Put a bounty on alligators for hunters to take species. This is the most economical approach without spending state effort and resources that could be utilized on worthwhile management.”

Respondent #137

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

“Leave alligators alone as they are private animals and do not want to be bothered there is no overpopulation problem on New River in Onslow County if there were an overpopulation problem they would be all over the place you'd see them all the time and you don't”

3. [Comments regarding Section V: Implementation Plan \(pages 22-23 of the draft AMP\)](#)

Respondent #1

Hampstead, NC (Pender Co.)

“Ultimately this is a question of balance. Sure, let's have a sustainable population of a fascinating reptile. Let's not allow them to crawl up our driveways. The best way to manage alligators and preserve their habitat is may be to advocate for zero-growth development. As long as we keep building homes in the alligator's habitat, we are going to have conflicts.”

Respondent #7

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

“It would be beneficial to have the maximum amount of data on all aspects of alligator ecology before entertaining hunts.”

Respondent #8

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Do not recommend hunting!”

Respondent #10

Sanford, NC (Lee Co.)

“21 questions that do not matter. You act as though this is a mystery. Other states are enjoying the revenue - other states allow good ethical sport hunting - enough of the NCWRC dreaming up ways to waste money and time studying what???? Anyone who spends time outdoors in eastern NC knows we have a harvest-able surplus of alligators – stop acting surprised and create a season.”

Respondent #17

Burgaw, NC (Pender Co.)

"[Objective #]21. The time delaying the season is too long. We know we have too many. Every year I see more and more. Because they dump them in Holly Shelter Game Lands from all over the eastern part of the state that has too many and they end up in the local creeks and rivers. I am 45 years old and have watched the population explode over my lifetime it is only a matter of time before we lose a human because they have lost their fear of man. Most don't even sound when they see a human, that means they dive under the water. So we are at a crossroads and it is time to do something about it. Please don't wait like you did with the Flathead Catfish and let it take over the freshwater systems and destroy the bream fishing as they did. Or the Coyote problem that is destroying our Whitetail Deer ."

Respondent #22

Fuquay Varina, NC (Wake Co.)

"Forget all the manpower and dollars to be WASTED with any and ALL studies. Put that money into quail and pheasant development programs.

Declare OPEN SEASON on Alligators, the same as for Coyotes. Responsible citizens will take care of the encroaching Alligator populations.

Next the NC Wildlife Commission will be wanting to study Pythons and Boa Constrictors!!"

Respondent #28

Youngsville, NC (Franklin Co.)

"Keep NC free of alligators"

Respondent #29

Windsor, NC (Bertie Co.)

"Heavy emphasis should be put on public safety over local government input. If human/alligator encounters are high in an area then a sustainable hunting program should be implemented even if local government does not offer its support."

Respondent #32

New Bern, NC (Craven Co., but own property in Pamlico & Jones Co. too)

"I think hunting should be allowed in counties with a healthy population of alligators on a limited basis and private land owners should be able to remove a "nuisance" alligator or one that is a safety concern to the people, property or livestock."

Respondent #38

Wallace, NC (Duplin Co.)

"Don't waste money. Let them be!"

Respondent #43

Leland, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Alligator should be viewed, NOT KILLED."

Respondent #46

Moyock, NC (Currituck Co.)

“Use other Univ research on gator mgt don't waste money reinventing the wheel.”

Respondent #52

Greensboro, NC (Guilford Co.)

“I am strongly in favour of using hunting and other humane methods to significantly reduce Alligator populations in NC.

I am strongly against the notion that we should sustain intentionally any levels of Alligator Populations.

They are a apex level predator. In the past they existed in very small numbers in NC. They were not a problem.

SC has used the management model. It allowed for the explosive expansion of the alligator population with negative consequences. Are the same game "management " professionals that brought us Coyotes in NC bringing us " alligator management"?”

Respondent #54

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“I do not like the time line. It's time to get started sooner”

Respondent #57

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.) and Stella, NC (which is on Onslow/Carteret County Line)

“Strongly opposed to releasing Alligators on Gamelands with waterfowl impoundments. This hurts waterfowl population, specifically young offspring as well as retrievers during waterfowl season.”

Respondent #58

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

“Strongly oppose the hunting of alligators until more studies have been done to study the populations.”

Respondent #59

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

“More research needs to be done before the population is hunted. Please study the alligator populations more before allowing hunting. The rare alligator we spot was one of our primary reasons for relocating to this property, we enjoy watching nature and STRONGLY oppose the hunting of the gator. I would need to see more evidence of the population growing to an unhealthy rate before I supported it in the future. I am not opposed to hunting animals in general, but I am not convince the alligator population is problematic and at a rate that warrants hunting.”

Respondent #60

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

“I do not support the changes in the law to support alligator hunting.

I also oppose the idea of collecting data if the sole purpose is to justify the hunting of the alligator.”

Respondent #61

Emerald Isle, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I do not view alligator hunting as socially acceptable. More research is needed on their populations. For example, a lot of the research to date has been self reporting - the same alligator is spotted by several homeowners, each of which files a siting report. The population data may not be accurate, and this needs to be determined before hunting is considered. Creeks and ponds are part of our ecosystem, and alligator populations belong here. Hunting is not socially acceptable and in my opinion not enough evidence has been provided to suggest they are biologically sustainable as well."

Respondent #67

Bolivia, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Sufficient long-term information for successful management is lacking (258). Expansion of agency outreach efforts should help reduce negative human interactions (269). Funding for the addition of agents to manage a control program not available (379). Study of the effects of salt water intrusion and alligator population needs to be conducted (397)."

Respondent #75

Southport, NC (Brunswick Co.); also own property in Duck, NC (Dare Co.)

"I support research, education, wildlife enjoyment via viewing, incentives to preserve alligator habitat and maintain viable numbers. I DO NOT support recreational hunt permits in any way shape or form. If research shows that numbers need to be reduced I would still prefer that government agencies are utilized (as deer reduction is done near metropolitan cities)."

Respondent #79

Fairview, NC (Buncombe Co.)

"Opposed to Objective 21"

Respondent #85

Oriental, NC (Pamlico Co.)

"Socially acceptable should not be a parameter"

Respondent #87

Wallace, NC (Duplin Co.)

"Hogwash!"

Respondent #100

Trenton, NC (Jones Co.)

"Allow sensible hunters to take alligators to thin out over populated areas and areas that are a threat to human safety or farmer livestock. We have enough gun happy hunters already out there hunting other wildlife other times of the year. Please if it passes, give it to the most sensible and safe hunters possible for their own safety and the safety of other humans. Also so the alligators are killed right away and don't suffer or get mangled up before they die. Do it legally."

Respondent #101

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"I strongly oppose hunting alligators"

Respondent #107

Cedar Point, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I am strongly opposed to using state funds to create areas to watch alligators. I believe this gives too many people a false sense of security and an interest in feeding alligators. There are many places in SC and Florida where if someone has a strong interest, they can go to watch alligators. I would prefer that any monies would be used for maintaining/decreasing populations and education on decreasing human/alligator interactions e.g. feeding."

Respondent #112

Oriental, NC (Pamlico Co.)

"Open hunting season on gators so as to hunt them to complete disappearance !!!"

Respondent #113

Leland, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Makes sense except for the #15. Economic. Just take care of the alligators. There is no profit for the state with all the moneys being extended to all of these studies. It is a financial losing proposition. Just make sure the alligators are safe after all this time and money is spent on this project."

Respondent #137

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

"Leave alligators alone they don't bother anybody"

4. [General Comments on the draft AMP](#)

Respondent #1

Hampstead, NC (Pender Co.)

"You need to clarify and publicize the laws on how residents can defend themselves if actually threatened by an alligator. If I feel I am in danger, or the lives of my grandchildren are in danger, I want clear knowledge of what my legal options are. What constitutes a "threat" may be subjective but I am not going to gamble with the safety of my grandchildren."

Respondent #2

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

"As 40 plus year residents of Lake Waccamaw, we have seen the proliferation of alligators and are especially worried about public safety - especially of our 2 and 4 year old grandchildren who we are afraid to let swim in the lake. In addition, I am President of Take the Lake which has swimming across LKW as one of its challenges, and have seen a severe decline of the number of participants in the swim event because of alligator fear. We appreciate your efforts and encourage you to act with all reasonable speed before a tragedy occurs. Thank you."

Respondent #4

Four Oaks, NC (Johnston Co.)

"I would enjoy the opportunity to hunt alligators in NC and have experience with such hunts and with depredation agent activities in Florida. I think that many of the practices there would be of benefit to the study of and potential for hunting alligators in NC."

Respondent #7

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

"I agree with all that has been discussed. I just would like to make sure the legal hunting of alligators is rushed into with the level of illegal take that goes on in the state. This aspect should be highly considered. Many alligators are killed and captured that impacts the states population."

Respondent #9

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"To summarize, based on the biology and ecology of alligators, (lines 159-169 and line 379,) I believe that the hunting of alligators should not be allowed. Conservation of, education about, and management of alligator populations for the good of the species and the safety of the public should be carried out. This should include relocation of alligators that pose a threat to public safety. I believe that if hunting alligators were allowed, the alligator populations would be severely damaged, thus causing harm to the ecosystems that contain them."

Respondent #10

Sanford, NC (Lee Co.)

"Get it done already. How many years behind SC? How many years behind GA?"

Respondent #12

Bahama, NC (Durham Co.)

"I'd like to see NC step up and implement a alligator hunting season. Alligator populations are stable if not expanding. GA and SC both have seasons and are doing well. In 2015 it seemed the nuisance alligator hunters tried to undercut a potential season by focusing on the dangers of alligator hunting. This is nonsense. I've hunted alligators in SC and its no more dangerous than any other hunting when a common sense approach is used. Thanks"

Respondent #13

Surf City, NC (Pender Co.)

"There are alligators in the intracoastal creeks in surf city, topsail island. They are bold and sit in my yard under my bird feeder to catch birds. I wish I could attach pic. They have eliminated the family of otters we used to have. I am fearful to kayak, or even walk in my property. A child started wading in the water behind my home and came within five feet of an alligator before I warned him. (He lost a shoe running away from it, it could have been a foot!) We are not allowed to fence our properties and I am fearful for people and my pets. They linger around the yacht club and I have heard that they linger nearby because there is a seafood market and they wait for scraps. Please allow for removal/control of these animals, as shooting in a populated area seems dangerous too."

Respondent #15

Raleigh, NC (Wake Co.)

“I really want to see the native alligator population growth increase to a manageable number to be able to promote both wildlife viewing and responsible harvesting.”

Respondent #16

Oak Island, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“Alligator's should be kept in check. They have been here for centuries or longer. Why do we put so much work into protecting them? ”

Respondent #19

Hubert, NC (Onslow Co.)

“As a fellow fm louisiana, I'am in favor of proper management. While preserve long the specis.”

Respondent #21

Angier, NC (Harnett Co.)

“I support this effort.”

Respondent #22

Fuquay Varina, NC (Wake Co.)

“FORGET IT! Use the limited dollars available to propagate GAME SPECIES. The demise of game birds in North Carolina is testament to a FAILURE of the NC Wildlife Commission, a Failure of mission and a failure to address the concerns of dog owners and upland shooters statewide. The demise of gamebirds in this state did not happen overnight! The Wildlife commission has been caught asleep at the wheel on this issue. The whole commission should be ashamed this happened. They should also be ashamed to be misdirecting dollars to nonsense like Alligator studies!”

Respondent #28

Youngsville, NC (Franklin Co.)

“I will vote against any and all members that support having alligators in NC”

Respondent #29

Windsor, NC (Bertie Co.)

“I am in full support of the establishment of a sustainable hunting program in NC.”

Respondent #34

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Guidance must be given to property owners on how to deal with the increased danger of gators leaving their habitat and adopting your backyard.”

Respondent #36

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“Please provide the public with a manner in which to make authorities aware of alligators. If we have to see them as a nuisance first they may cause harm to the folks enjoying the coastal areas. Golf courses and other public areas are also a concern. Would prefer population reduction before incidents happen.”

Respondent #37

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

“I live on the New River, and spend a lot of time on the River, boating, fishing and Hunting, early duck hunting season is always a challenge in the creeks, due to increased numbers of alligators. I watch a lot of unsuspecting boaters pulling small children behind their boats in tubes,, we live in an area where the Public should be educated on the dangers that lurk in the waters, there have been several cases of Large dogs eaten up by alligators, its just a matter of time before the odds even up. I believe we need to reduce and control the population, (I paddle board the New River, and have come face to face several times (in populated areas with VERY LARGE ALLIGATORS, lucky for me they were not hungry. with the City of Jacksonville establishing their own parks and recreation down town on the water, the number of kayaks, stand up paddle boards and other water activities will increase, I have seen many alligators swim and in some cases hang out for several days at a time close to the new water front park..”

Respondent #40

Harnett, NC (Bladen Co.)

“I think that once the population has been determined in an area, if it is biologically possible hunting should be allowed.

With a permitted quota system available to LAND OWNERS first, it could also generate some income for the property owner.

A financial incentive for the property owner would encourage good stewardship of the habitat and protection of the valued species from unauthorized harvest.”

Respondent #41

Burlington, NC (Alamance Co.)

“Open the hunting of alligators. Population is sustainable.”

Respondent #45

(Wake Co.)

“Alligators should be hunted in NC”

Respondent #52

Greensboro, NC (Guilford Co.)

“The alligator management plan is actually a plan which fosters the expansion of the alligator population in NC.

NC should not spend any valuable wildlife conservation funds on the management of alligators other than to reduce the current Alligator population. Alligators are an apex predator that was not a problem

until recently because it's numbers were small and there were few north of Wilmington. That has radically changed thru "conservation management professionals ideas"

ENOUGH. By the way, how did that coyote management thing work out?"

Respondent #54

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"This plan should have been in place years ago. If the commission didn't vote it down we would be in a much better place as a state and learning much more about the gators."

Respondent #56

Carolina Beach, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Please help with the Alligator Problem at Carolina Beach!"

Respondent #57

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.) and Stella, NC (which is on Onslow/Carteret County Line)

"Thank you for considering an Alligator Hunting Season. I am 100% for the legal taking of an overpopulated animal in southeastern NC.

Maybe relocate some nuisance Alligators farther inland to increase NC per Capita Populations. Way over populated on the coast but inland numbers being low make NC numbers appear lower than they are."

Respondent #58

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I strongly oppose the hunting of alligators in Carteret County."

Respondent #59

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"I oppose the hunting of alligators. I support the protection of the habitats as well as the opportunity for the public to enjoy the observation of the gators rather than the killing of them. More research on the populations is needed before hunting is permitted."

Respondent #60

Cape Carteret, NC (Carteret Co.)

"Oppose the hunting of alligators."

Respondent #61

Emerald Isle, NC (Carteret Co.)

"Research and provide opportunities to enjoy the alligator and learn about the alligator - not to hunt the alligator."

Respondent #67

Bolivia, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"After reading the report I can not identify a reason for a hunting season on alligators. It is more a public education issue and relocation action is necessary. The potential so called sportsman that wants this harvesting has be watching to much "Swamp People" and probably is already unlawfully hunting them."

Respondent #73

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"Very pleased this is being tabled and looking forward to my tag!! Thanks for your time..."

Respondent #77

Youngsville, NC (Franklin Co.)

"Is this really hunting - shooting an Alligator?"

What's to be shot when nothing else is left?

When the water is so polluted that it no longer supports life of animals (including mankind), what are going to do then.

What are you going to leave your children and grandchildren when the wildest animal in the forest is a [expletive] Squirrel?"

Respondent #79

Fairview, NC (Buncombe Co.)

"Opposed to any open or permitted hunting seasons. Trap and transfer alligators to areas of low populations from higher populations."

Respondent #80

Creswell, NC (Washington Co.)

"I might just add that alligators have helped with the wild bore population in some areas of eastern north Carolina. Wild hogs destroy crops around Tyrell county, alligators don't mind eating pig."

Respondent #91

(Lenoir Co.)

"strongly support eradication"

Respondent #96

Hubert, NC (Onslow Co.)

"Let us hunt alligators and keep the government and animal rights advocates out of it!"

Respondent #99

(Onslow Co.)

"Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

My family has lived in stump sound for many generations and old tales of the alligator population's were a premium.

The. Uncontrolled hunting of alligators from other states and locals almost eradicated the gator population. Today's technology can manage populations and keep the balance of nature intact.”

Respondent #101

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

“AGAIN I TOOK THIS SURVEY TO SAY "leave the alligators alone, but hunt the coyotes because they are killing foxes , rabbits , and pets”

Respondent #103

Lake Waccamaw, NC (Columbus Co.)

“All the studies mention in the plan should have already been conducted and I suspect exist now. Pull them out and take them to the General Assembly and let's get on with actual and real population control.”

Respondent #108

New Bern, NC (Craven Co.)

“For get it. Cost vs. benefit just isn't there.”

Respondent #112

Oriental, NC (Pamlico Co.)

“I want my Creek back so that my grand children and myself can swim in Dawson Creek. I will be glad to take care of ridding Dawson Creek of them and giving the dead gators for whatever you want.”

Respondent #113

Leland, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“I moved down here 6 years so I am part of the problem. Many of us out-of-staters are here to stay and more coming. For this I apologize for the nature that is being destroyed so quickly in front of my eyes. I hike in the woods every day and see lots of nature including alligators in swamps and retention ponds. I hope you take this project seriously since you will determine the safety of the nature you have had to enjoy before you for all of your lives. Please don't let nature suffer too greatly.”

Respondent #116

Sneads Ferry, NC (Onslow Co.)

“There is way to many alligators”

Respondent #118

Oak Island, NC (Brunswick Co.)

“\$1 million is a lot to spend on studies. This is the typical government way. Make jobs available to people with titles and or connections and little to no experience. Listen not only to the biologist, but the hunters, your true conservationist.”

Respondent #122

Richlands, NC (Onslow Co.)

"The places I fish are overrun with alligators. in one half mile stretch of water It is common to see over 40 alligators, varying in size, but some very large.

I think there should be a hunt to keep the numbers low to avoid over population and help reduce human alligator interactions."

Respondent #124

Rocky Point, NC (Pender Co.)

"I would only add that taking alligators with use of firearms should also be considered as part of the normal method of hunting."

Respondent #126

Wilmington, NC (New Hanover Co.)

"It would be nice, for once, if we establish a way to live with wildlife peacefully without hunting the animals. Land development is the #1 problem and continuing to kill wildlife for our benefit is immoral and not in the best interest of the environment. This has been a huge issue with deer, coyotes and now alligators in New Hanover County, but at some point we need to take responsibility and stop taking their habitat. Permits to build on land that is not already developed needs to be curbed dramatically. If that does not happen, we will continue to have problems. Hunting is not a good choice in the long run. Of course we can continue to kill off our wildlife, and when they are all gone, I guess some will be thrilled, but I, for one, will not. Just look at what we have done to the red wolves in NC."

Respondent #128

Boiling Spring Lakes, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"where humans live, alligators should not be allowed to populate the public lakes, remove or destroy the alligators"

Respondent #129

Hobgood, NC (Beaufort Co.)

"DO NOT ALLOW A COMMERCIAL SEASON TO SELL MEAT OR SKINS. IN OTHER WORDS, KEEP REGULATION TO NCWRC AND NOT THE NC MARINE FISHERIES! TOO MANY PEOPLE FROM FLORIDA AND LOUISIANA HAVE NC COMMERCIAL LICENSES AND IT WILL HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON OUR RESOURCE."

Respondent #131

Havelock (really Adams Creek/Harlowe), NC (Craven Co.)

"Education is very important. Too many people fear them even from a distance and want to kill them. People should be educated in the role alligators play in the environment. Snakes too!"

Respondent #137

Jacksonville, NC (Onslow Co.)

"If the occasional alligator shows up on a roadway simply remove it and take it to a new location beyond that leave them alone they don't bother anybody the lady in Jacksonville a few years ago whose husky was eaten buy a big alligator should have been ticketed for breaking the Citywide leash law and held

responsible for the death of the alligator (\$10,000 fine) she allowed her dog to enter his world they are the nuisance not the alligator, the alligator simply did what alligators do, nothing out of the ordinary”

Respondent #140

Belhaven, NC (Beaufort Co.)

“I own and run a small ecotourism business centered in Belhaven, NC. Because there are some small, isolated metapopulations of alligators in my area of activity, I agree that there should be no recreational or commercial harvesting/hunting of alligators in AMU 2. I hope to be able to make alligator viewing in the wild a popular part of my business. Overall, this plan appears to be well thought out”

Respondent #141

Stella, NC (Carteret Co.)

“The alligator population in NC is out of control. The people who do not believe this need to put their listening ears on and hear what the locals are saying. Implement controls now to prevent overpopulation.”

Respondent #146

Falkland, NC (Pitt Co.)

“I am opposed to alligator shooting (it’s not hunting) in North Carolina.

There is no logical or reasonable basis for opening an alligator season. As a professional biologist and a recreationalist, I have spent many years in what might be considered prime alligator habitat and I can recall only a handful of occasions seeing an alligator or evidence of an alligator outside of parks or preserves. North Carolina is the northern edge is their range, and for a species with temperature-dependent gender, hunting pressure may well have unforeseen and negative consequences for the population.

A proposal to open an alligator season was unsuccessful in 2016. I can only assume that there is some vested group pushing for a season and probably spurred on by some staged "reality tv show". I have hunted responsibly for over four decades. I recent years, however, slob hunters are ruining the tradition. They are more interested in gun play and shooting anything that moves, above any hunting ethics.

I do not see that Management Plan item E (line 275), wildlife viewing and hunting (shooting) can be compatible.”

Respondent #147

Charlotte, NC (Mecklenburg Co.)

“We spend a good amount of time at my family's beach house at Sunset Beach and it is teeming with alligators. We have even seen them on the boardwalk on occasion or a sand dune. Our family just thinks that with the growing number and the research at the Commission has done, it is time to bring back legal, responsible hunting of alligators - this is North Carolina! Thank you for all of the hard work that you and your team have done on this for the benefit of our great State.”

VI. Emails

February 10, 2017

"I live in Swanquarter, NC. I would support a limited harvest of Alligators on a Zone by Zone basis. This is how its done in Florida. The Commission biologists establish zone boundaries and a certain quota can be taken in each zone. The drawing for tags is a lottery. I think preference should be given to residents of the county where the zone occurs. If the Commission has any nuisance Alligator problems in Hyde County, I could also trap and relocate the animals. I did this in Florida for FWC as an assistant to a local trapper. In Florida each county has a local trapper that FWC subs out nuisance cases to. Alligator farms have also done a great deal to conserve alligators and may be sustainable in eastern NC."

April 25, 2017

"You know its kind of funny but when my grand parents were growing up on the bay river in stonewall, nc and in new bern, their were thousands of alligators. Old black and white photos of car lights facing the water and nothing but eyes looking back. So thick that its unbelievable to us today. They used to drink and shoot them for fun. Then people using insecticides on fields and foilege damn near killed every wild animal in NC that laid an egg. Im fifty eight and when i was young in eastern nc and va. We didnt see wild turkeys, eagles, alligators or pelicans. Since the mid seventies when the poisons were banned all creatures have made a huge come back. I see huge flocks of wild turkeys in fields all over eastern NC. Pelicans every where on our coast. Bald Eagles and Ospre

I love watching our wildlife and seeing the increase of it."

April 26, 2017

"Cat fish lake Water fowl inpondment is full of gators. Main canal > one looked like 15 to 16 inches from nose to eyes, one 12 inches, and many more. Nest last year by pump station. Hunting dogs have been lost in that area over the last 30 plus years. Tracking collars in their belly active for weeks. Labs attacked duck hunting. Needs to be looked into . BHS property at Long lake and canals full of them also. Some have been removed from ditches along HWY 70 between Havelock and New Bern. Seen them at 1st creek bridge off 70 on cat fish lake rd. could go on and on. They are a problem."

May 19, 2017

"I was absolutely shocked when I found out that the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission was even considering a proposal to begin a first-ever hunt on federally threatened American alligators.

This senseless violence has no place in the great state of North Carolina, and I urge you to ditch all plans to allow alligator hunting. PLEASE !!!!"

May 30, 2017

"I filled out your survey and strongly support a management removal plan. Increasingly we are seeing alligators in the waterway behind our surf city home on topsail island in pender county. This week I have seen three different alligators. Two smaller ones around 4 ft, one about 8 feet. This baby one waits for birds to land on the ground under the feeder. I've had to stop feeding the painted buntings. He almost got a child last year who waded into the water. Please do something! Thanks.

I forgot to mention in the email that I just sent that I haven't seen the otters since the alligators started lingering here. I have seen an alligator catch and eat a marsh rat behind my deck, but I fear they may have killed the otters too.

Thanks for taking on this issue for us."

May 30, 2017

"you allow the netters to kill everything that net can catch including birds, turtles, and many many non targeted fish. shrimpers ruin our nursery. hog farmers just keep right on polluting. you are allowing less and less shoreline to be protected from erosion. you allow martin marietta to kill a beautiful creek. so why not start killing the alligators. and no, i'm a not a tree hugger. just someone who is tired of seeing the state of nc continue to rape our public resources. pls don't reply to this email it will just be bs and i don't want to listen to any more of it. somewhere in this someone is trying to make money."

May 31, 2017

"I would like to see more rather than less alligators in North Carolina. If we follow the example of Louisianan, alligators can become a valuable asset for North Carolina, especially in the southeastern corner of the state."

June 2, 2017

"Just catching up on some of my reading. Just a couple comments about alligators. I fish a few times a year along the ICW from Little River north to Cedar Island. I have seen quite a few alligators in that section. Some quite large. I would suggest that a small recreational season be established, perhaps with a permit random draw system. I do not think any type of commercial take could be sustained at this time. I am a lifetime license holder. It seems to me the fees associated with that have possibly been used to help all manner of nongame animals and plants already, alligators included.

Thanks for the opportunity to comment."

June 2, 2017

"Why would the Resources Commission even THINK about having a season for alligator hunting? These beautiful creatures are one of the last remnants of a prehistoric time. This proposal makes absolutely no sense whatsoever!"

June 9, 2017

Email 1:

"In case I miss the meeting next week, I wanted to pass a idea to you. I don't know if the idea of a hunting season is for hunters to catch, kill and sell the meat and hides, or if the hunt is for personal consumption. What I do know is that the interest in a hunt is from high energy ultimate outdoor guys so more than anything, it's got to be "the thrill of the hunt". In that regard, allow me to offer up a suggestion that might serve and satisfy all sides of the issue. Why not, in some manner, suggest to the hunters that the gators be caught alive, and donated to the Shallotte River Swamp Park Alligator Sanctuary, where the gators can live out their lives, dining on fresh fish from our Ocean Isle Fishing Center fishing fleet, and are available for educational purposes. This creates a win/win for all the various groups who are interested in this subject."

Email 2:

"Thank you for the information. The Shallotte River Swamp Park proudly serves as a home for nuisance gators not suitable for relocation to the wild, thus avoiding euthanizing these problem gators. As such, we would like to be listed as one of your Wildlife "partner" groups.

Additionally, I believe we can offer a option where hunters would have a facility home for the gators they capture in the hunt, and avoid killing them. They get the thrill of the hunt, and the public gets a gator that is on display for public benefit. I think thats called a WIN-WIN.”

June 11, 2017

“I am writing as I may not be able to attend one of the meetings and want my voice to be heard.

I appreciate the fact that even though it may be only slightly, that our alligator population is increasing in NC. I understand the concerns of those who do not comprehend alligators and a possible fear of them being too populated in our state. However, I have observed alligators for many years - nothing formal or a major pursuit, just casual observations. Living in FL for a while, I became fascinated with them and saw many of them over the years. I have never one time observed an alligator being aggressive towards humans where they were not provoked or placed in a position where they felt they were endangered. On the contrary. As an avid fisherman in Eastern NC, I see alligators on a regular basis - mainly in the New River areas. Again - I have only observed them retreating from fishermen unless provoked. Only twice in my life have I interacted with them where there was a conflict - and both times it was because the alligator felt it was being cornered - and of course once we have it it's space, everything was fine...

In my experience, they are naturally curious and always either sleeping in the sun or actively hunting food. The times I have seen them curious, once they realized it was a human or a boat, they quickly retreated. I do not believe we are anywhere near overpopulated with alligators and I am not in support of a hunting season being opened on them.

I AM an avid hunter. I would LOVE to hunt alligator and eat their meat - however I do not believe the population is sufficient at this time to support anything like that...”

June 19, 2017

“Alligators are a socially valued and biologically important native wildlife species inhabiting North Carolina. The alligator is a valuable wildlife resource of great interest to people and a popular species for wildlife viewing. After reading the draft management plan it appears to be well thought out, overall. I strongly agree with dividing the NC population into two major areas of management, AMU 1 and AMU 2, along with identifying separate metapopulations. More specifically, I strongly support the following population management strategies:

1. No management strategy would be implemented within either AMU with the objective of eliminating a metapopulation.
2. However, population management to remove alligators may occur in some circumstances or locations if the removals do not harm a metapopulation.
3. AMU 2 Alligator metapopulations would be allowed to maintain their natural distributions, densities, and associated trends with no lawful forms of regulated take. Exceptions for management or take of alligators would be made for situations involving alligator threats to public safety or damage to property.

I have started a small ecotourism business centered in Belhaven, NC, and I hope to be able to incorporate alligator viewing as a popular activity for my customers.”

June 28, 2017

"I am against an alligator hunting season. I urge NCWRC to reject a proposal to establish a 2017-2018 alligator hunting season. Every female alligator killed will result in well over 500 hatchlings never being born. By allowing hunting, you will cause a threatened species to fall back to an endangered species. We do not need history to repeat itself."

VII. Comments on the NC Alligators iNaturalist Project Page

June 5, 2017

"I provided you with several alligator photos from the Neuse River, alligators I have been following for eight years. There has been NO increase in the population on the Upper Neuse, Swift Creek or Brice Creek. In your report, you state that reproduction is slower the further north there is a viable population. My understanding is there have been NO unprovoked situations in this state, and most "backyard" sightings are just movement from one water to another. You seem to affirm all this.

Now about hell breaking loose. You allow ANY municipality to file a complaint and it means someone has an historical fear, seeks support and political presence and puts you folks in the position where politics depends on good research and good sense. Keep ALL judgement inside NC Wildlife. YOU have the capacity to deal with any bothersome alligator. Don't give it up!"

VIII. Mailed Letters

May 31, 2017

Rowland, NC (Robeson Co.)

"I have just read that you are considering whether to allow alligator hunting in North Carolina. In making your decision, please look at the alligator population at Lake Waccamaw in Columbus County. On Memorial Day, I counted 14 large gators in less than a mile in the canal along Canal Cove Road. In addition, there were two alligators watching their babies on the bank along this stretch of road. Many people, kids and adults, walk along this road.

Other gators are also being spotted in the lake and on its banks now-not good for recreational activities!

What do we need to do to get you to look at this area? The alligator population definitely needs to be reduced before a tragedy occurs."

June 6, 2017

Oak Island, NC (Brunswick Co.)

"Concerning permits to kill alligators. It is not like we are running over them with our cars or are eating our cats and dogs or chasing golfers.

Given the permit to kill one alligator will keep the honest person honest. But think of all the alligators killed dishonestly. Are the hunters going to process the meat to eat? Why not tranquilize them and relocate them deeper in the swamps? Just leave them alone if they are not harming anyone.

I hope you vote NO on killing the alligators."

Carteret County Wildlife Club
P.O.Box 1123
Morehead City, NC 28557

Allen Boynton, Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator
NC Wildlife Resources Commission
1722 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1700

June 21.2017

Dear Mr. Boynton,

Attached are comments the Carteret County Wildlife Club wishes to submit in response to the Draft Management Plan (Ver. 1.2) for managing the American Alligator in North Carolina. These comments have also been sent to you electronically by email (from feeshdr@embarqmail.com).

Thank you for taking our concerns into consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Gervase Motes, President
Carteret County Wildlife Club

cc: Christopher North, NC Wildlife Federation

Comments on Proposed North Carolina Alligator Management Plan

The greatest concern of members of the Carteret County Wildlife Club is the lack of specificity about population goals for American alligator populations in North Carolina. The plan calls for achievement or maintenance of "viable" population units without any definition of viable or description of the characteristics, such as age structure, of a viable population. We propose a more specific population goal: "The goal of management of American alligators in North Carolina is to achieve in all biologically suitable habitats population numbers equaling the biological carrying capacity of that habitat with such populations having the age distribution of unexploited populations. " The slow growth and extra-ordinarily slow attainment of maturity of alligators in North Carolina along with their inherently low fecundity make them an inarguably and delicately fragile resource. Any exploitation scheme for alligators is mathematically certain to be highly risky. The current ignorance about true numbers of alligators in the state and their population characteristics make the risk even higher, so high as to be unacceptable

The Carteret County Wildlife Club recognizes that there are situations, primarily in urban areas, wherein nuisance alligators must be dealt with in some way. The primary control scheme should involve relocation, but euthanasia may be necessary. Under the latter circumstance, but no others, hunters could be permitted to take specific, Commission-designated, alligators. Broad brush, non-specific hunting schemes to reduce the overall populations of alligators are almost certain, by hunter preference, to focus on the oldest, largest, rarest individuals, those few that have survived the decade plus to maturity, those most fecund and most likely to bring successful broods into the populations. In more southern, alligator-rich states where alligator growth and attainment of maturity are rapid, controlled hunting appears to be harmonious with prudent conservation. Such is not the case in North Carolina.

The presently defined Alligator Management Unit 1 should be divided into two units, one encompassing the central coastal counties, the other covering the Cape Fear region with the approximate dividing line at Onslow County. Climatic, faunal, vegetative, and geological differences between the two regions, and thus probable differences in the growth rate, age at maturity, and other life history parameters of alligators, all argue for potentially different management schemes for the two regions. Even if, initially, the same management scheme is applied in both regions, the division will enable ready differentiation should such be required.

Finally, it is the opinion of Carteret County Wildlife Club members that the Management Plan, as written, displays a decided imbalance with respect to issues dealing with negative aspects of alligator presence versus the positive aspects. Greater emphasis and print space should be placed on the value and enjoyment afforded outdoors people by the mere sightings of alligators, and on the ecological benefits of alligator presence. Such positive aspects are mentioned in the document but occupy little space compared to the many paragraphs of discussion of control and removal.



North Carolina Wildlife Federation

Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation

1346 St. Julien St .
Charlotte, NC 28205
(704) 332-5696

1024 Washington St.
Raleigh, NC 27605
(919) 833-1923

June 22, 2017

I am writing on behalf of the NC Wildlife Federation (NCWF) to express our support for the NC Wildlife Resource Commission's (NCWRC) Alligator Draft Management Plan. NCWF's mission is to protect, conserve, and restore North Carolina wildlife and habitat and one of our core values is science-based decision making. It is within this purview that we comment. Although our organization supports the current Alligator Draft Management Plan, we have comments and concerns that we would like considered when finalizing the plan.

NCWF staff and board commend NCWRC for their science-based approach to managing wildlife resources and for acknowledging that "sufficient, long-term information on the ecology and population status for alligators, needed for successful management, is lacking." As reported in the management plan, "The two recent studies applicable to North Carolina were by Gardner *et al.* (2016) and Dunham *et al.* (2014). Both studies explored models including a harvest element, and both appeared to show declines with any significant level of harvest." Our organization strongly supports NCWRC's duty to adequately demonstrate that any potential recreational harvest of this species in North Carolina would be sustainable and have little to no adverse effect on the current metapopulation structure, given the slow growth rates and late maturing traits of alligators in North Carolina. It has taken 30 years of protection for alligator populations to recover to today's levels; so, extra caution should be exercised to ensure that these recent gains are not lost and that alligators successfully resume their ecological role throughout their distribution.

In response to the minimal amount of data currently available on alligators in North Carolina, NCWF urges NCWRC to fully fund studies that will allow for the collection and analysis of the necessary biological data to further determine population dynamics and trends for this species within its most northern distribution. We believe that population estimates derived through sampling methods contain merit but should not be used as the sole predictor for the potential for recreational hunting of this species.

Implemented studies should cover a vast amount of area where alligators are present and should be conducted in potentially suitable habitat. Studies should also consider the difficulties associated with obtaining detection rates through "eye shine" or the other sampling methods mentioned in the plan. Collaboration among various agencies and research entities specializing in alligator ecology and population modeling will be necessary to obtain the needed data. These data obtained through science-based research studies are crucial to determining the viability of the population and any potential for future recreational harvest. Therefore, NCWF requests re-evaluation of the biological data and dissemination of these results to stakeholders for input in 4 years or before, if available.

NCWF also supports the need for long-term assessment and monitoring of this species and its habitat. As a conservation organization with long-term goals in mind, we would like for NCWRC to prioritize increasing the amount and quality of available alligator habitat if the end goal is population expansion with the hope of enacting recreational hunting. We urge NCWRC to address the difficulties in differentiating between sexually mature female alligators and juvenile male alligators prior to developing any potential regulations associated with recreational hunting. Regarding managing alligator-human interactions, please clarify what the criteria will be for determining "local population goals" (line 321-322).

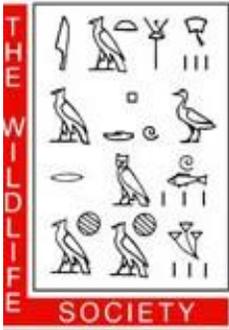
NCWF supports the regulated hunting of alligators if such take is scientifically determined to be sustainable and will not negatively impact the viability of the metapopulation structure. However, NCWF believes NCWRC should be cautious not to leave the impression that North Carolina is preparing to establish a recreational harvest of alligators until the data show the population is viable across its distribution and can withstand regulated hunter harvest. We strongly agree with the educational goals of the draft plan and believe it would be in NCWRC's best interest to prioritize and invest heavily in public education and enforcement now rather than later. Along with an educational campaign and proper permitting, site assessments by biologists, data collection, and enforcement, the NCWRC will be able to ensure the metapopulation structure is maintained throughout the entire distribution of this species.

As a supporter of the draft management plan, NCWF looks forward to reviewing upcoming research results, which will determine the future course of action on alligators in North Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jim Gustin".

North Carolina Wildlife Federation, CEO



The Wildlife Society

North Carolina Chapter

PO BOX 37742
RALEIGH, NC 27627
<http://www.nctws.org>

June 26, 2017

Allen Boynton
Wildlife Diversity Program Coordinator
1722 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-1700

Dear Mr. Boynton and NCWRC Alligator Task Force,

The NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society (NCTWS) respectfully submits the enclosed comments on the draft Alligator Management Plan. NCTWS is the professional society for wildlife biologists and managers in North Carolina, with 250+ members representing dozens of federal, state, & local agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations. As part of our mission, NCTWS “strives to be an acknowledged source of current scientific information and expertise, and acts as a collective voice on matters relating to wildlife biology, management, education, and policy”.

The comments were generated by Dr. Phil Doerr on behalf of the NCTWS Conservation Affairs Committee, and were reviewed by several members and approved by the executive board. Dr. Doerr is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and Professor Emeritus for Fisheries, Wildlife Biology & Conservation Biology, Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, at North Carolina State University. Dr. Doerr led many wildlife research projects during his 40 year career, including research on American alligator in NC. He was editor for numerous graduate theses, journal articles and symposium proceedings, and has been retired for 10 years.

We commend the work that that has gone into this draft plan, and we hope our comments will be constructive and helpful, and are submitted with the goal of strengthening the final product. Please do not hesitate to contact me for any follow-up questions or discussion.

Sincerely,

Jeff Marcus
President, NC Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Certified Wildlife Biologist

Draft Management Plan Ver. 1.2 for American Alligator in North Carolina: A review by the
North Carolina Chapter of The Wildlife Society, Conservation Affairs Committee

Phillip D. Doerr PhD, CWB, Professor Emeritus, Fisheries, Wildlife Biology & Conservation
Biology, Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, North Carolina State University

Summary of comments:

By and large the NC Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) used sound methods and your conclusions and recommendations are mostly supported by past research. The WRC and Alligator Task Force (ATF) are to be commended for that effort. However, the proposed implementation plan seems to be severely lacking. Important research needs are identified to make appropriate management decisions, such as measuring critical demographic variables and identifying population viability levels, but there is not a realistic timeline identified to collect the needed data. For a long-lived and slow-maturing species like American alligator, gathering sufficient demographic data will take many years. The plan does not include an adequate timeline, identification of where funding will come from, and other important elements that will be required to sufficiently implement the plan. We also have some concerns about the use of lethal controls to reduce alligator populations in urban areas. Lethal controls should be a last resort for dealing with nuisance situations, and there should be an understanding of how alligator populations in urban and other problem areas are connected to other populations. NCTWS supports the harvest of American alligator where populations can demographically support harvest, though we have concerns that the currently available data do not justify harvest.

=====

General Comments:

This Plan is very readable and well put together, especially for a document conceived and written by a committee! Kudos to the folks who made that happen. It seems clear that the Alligator Task Force was populated by a group of very smart and capable people who have worked hard to put together a strong management plan. However, the plan has a number of very serious flaws that give us concern about a successful outcome.

=====

In the following sections, the text from the plan with line numbers will be copied in standard font, followed by commentary/questions in bold face.

L 247 Five broad goals will guide the state's management of alligators. Proposed strategies (Section III) and objectives (Section IV) will guide activities to achieve these goals

These goals do indeed seem to effectively outline a strategy to manage alligators; Our concern is that we see no effective implementation plan for the research that is supposed to provide the data on which to base management decisions. The 22 objectives on L 758-59 appear to be a wish list but will be difficult to implement.

Line 200-251; The definition of “viable population” here or in the glossary needs to be strengthened I think, to include the notion of “long term sustainability”

L 308 In both AMU 1 and AMU 2, the primary management objective would be to continue managing for viable alligator populations.

Lacking specified criteria and data required to establish viability these statements seem meaningless, and I don’t really see such data being available in a timely manner to meet the schedules outlined later.

L 314 However, population management to remove alligators may occur in some circumstances or locations if the removals do not harm a metapopulation;

Again, nowhere in this document do I see a timely method to acquire the data needed to make a “no harm” decision. This needs to be made clear. It is also not clear how WRC will determine whether alligators are connected to a metapopulation and what the acceptable threshold for harm to that metapopulation will be.

L 319 The population objective would be to reduce alligator densities in L 320 urbanized areas where reports of alligator-human conflicts frequently occur, and to reduce alligator L 321 densities or otherwise allow limited take of alligators.

The Plan should make more explicit that public education, outreach, and non-lethal management options should be the first lines of defense in nuisance situations, and lethal removal should be a last option to resolve conflicts.

L 330 Population management.

Comment: We support that the Plan include removal and/or hunting of alligators, where populations might demographically support such activity. However, current evidence seems compelling that almost any harvest rate will be detrimental to most local alligator populations in North Carolina. The burden should be to demonstrate that proposed harvest levels will not cause undesirable population declines before any harvest is implemented.

The draft plan notes:

L 351 NCWRC would work with the jurisdiction involved to establish population goals and define hunt 352 area boundaries. The Director also would instruct staff to determine the approximate number of alligators 353 within the jurisdiction that should be dispatched to meet the established population goal.

How will the staff develop such removal numbers? I can't see any timely methods in this plan that such data could be available. The staff will need resources and lead time to collect data. We recognize that there may be demands from the public for more immediate action, but management decisions should be based on sound science.

L 443 Historically, NCWRC has had very few Nuisance Alligator Agents. Increasing calls about alligators received 444 by NCWRC and associated response activities are approaching the limit of agency capability.

Comment: These are vague statements. It would be useful to have data/records here of numbers of calls received each month and numbers of responses. Otherwise, it is hard to assess the validity of the statement. The data will benefit the argument.

L 477 With increasing contacts and demands from the public related to alligator issues, and uncertainties related 478 to some aspects of alligator biology and population dynamics, clearly NCWRC should develop a formal 479 alligator education and outreach program.

Comment: Outstanding goals. Again it would be helpful to present data concerning "increasing contacts and demands", unless this is speculative regarding future demand.

L 480 Six studies proposed.....all outstanding.

535 Research

536 The conservation of the American alligator in North Carolina depends on understanding fully the 537 demography of each metapopulation. This will include all the vital rates, such as fecundity, nest and egg 538 survival, recruitment rates, growth rates and size at maturity of adults. An understanding of alligator 539 movements would also clarify population dynamics. These data are sorely lacking for North Carolina, 540 although some may be available from other states.

How will size at maturity be measured? What does "maturity" mean in this case? Capable

of Reproduction? Need to specify.

Comment: A well stated expression of information/data required to scientifically manage NC alligators; but nowhere can I find any clearly stated proposals to collect these data. Collection of the data requires considerable field work and resources, and most especially time! Some vital rates can be estimated in a couple field seasons, while others (eg, growth rates, maturity, movements) may require several years to accomplish. Consequently, I am very skeptical of the windows for accomplishments in the implementation schedule.

L 544 Two recent studies explored exploitation models 545 including a harvest element, and both appeared to show declines with any significant level of harvest. In 546 fact, the Dunham et al. (2014) model found that the overall population of northern alligators (which would 547 include North Carolina) is in decline currently. The Gardner et al. (2016) model reported a similar negative 548 population trajectory, but anecdotal reports from trappers and biologists and comparison of raw counts 549 between the 1980s and 2010s indicated a slowly increasing population.

Comment: This last statement suggests the plan authors believe anecdotal observations are superior to the research and data based results. Not sure I'd put all my eggs in that basket! Strains credibility.

The plan states I think appropriately, if the vital rate data support the action:

621 It would be advantageous to establish an alligator hunting season and manner of take rules. These rules 622 would provide the legal framework to conduct population reduction hunts in cities. These rules could also 623 provide the legal framework for hunting in those areas of AMU 1 where research has demonstrated that 624 an alligator metapopulation produces sufficient recruitment to offset mortality from hunting.

Comment: Recreational hunting should be treated separately from “population reduction hunts”. As stated earlier, lethal controls should be a last resort for dealing with nuisance (and potential nuisance) situations. Also, population reduction hunts should not be implemented just as the request of a local government. NCWRC should retain authority and establish decision criteria for when such requests will be granted.

Comment: How will “sufficient recruitment” be determined? And how is recruitment defined in this document? I don't think I saw this definition anywhere.

L 758-759 **Table 3.** Implementation schedule for draft Alligator Management Plan objectives....

Comment: A very ambitious schedule for implementation and while I am convinced some objectives can be completed with this schedule, I really don't see how the objectives that require field studies of alligators can be completed on this schedule. In fact, I suspect it will be challenging to get some field studies underway in this time frame. Such difficulty I think means that many of the data needed to make the management decisions described will not be available when they are needed to make decisions about population reduction, hunting seasons, or estimating recruitment.

789 Completion of the six studies outlined in Section D could cost about \$855,000. The research is required to 790 provide the scientific basis for management of alligator metapopulations.

Comment: What is to be the source(s) of these resources to allow the needed research to be conducted??

Comment: It will be difficult for this comprehensive plan and all its component parts to be coordinated without a lead person who is ultimately responsible (a gator czar?). An organization without leadership will flounder. It's reasonable to suggest the Alligator Task Force may continue to function on some way, but operationally some one person needs to steer the ship. I recommend a significant portion of a senior staff position in WRC be assigned to this task.

It will be helpful to describe the accountability for implementation of the plan. Where does the buck stop? Is that the Director's office? What will be the public transparency of this entire endeavor?

Will the ATF be evaluating and awarding the competitive grants?

Formatting and other minor comments

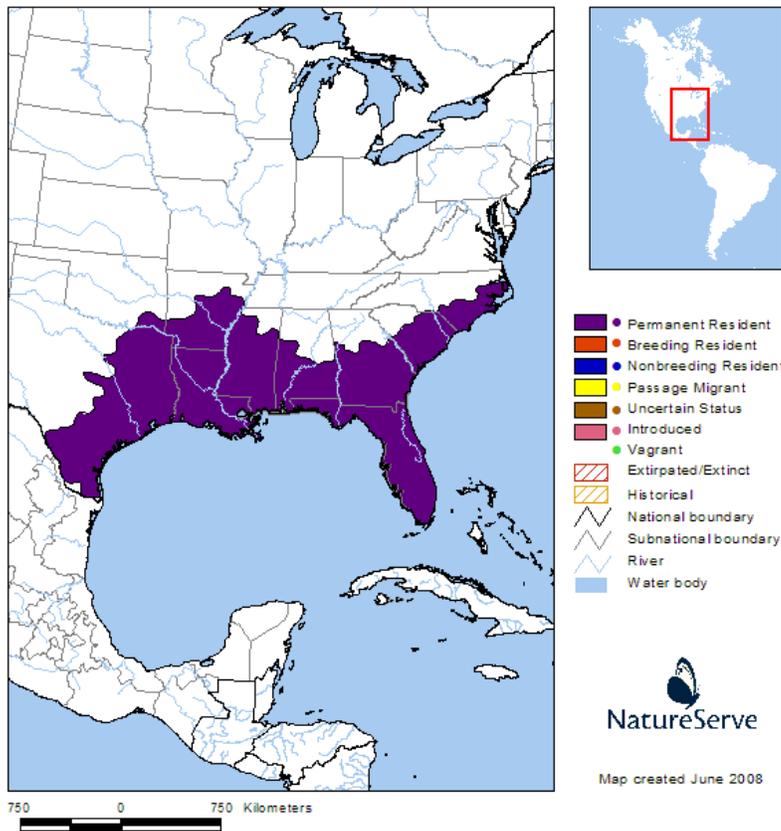
Line 86 etc "This draft plan proposes five management goals and 22 objectives to strengthen American alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) management in the state."

I had a hard time identifying/locating the 22 objectives noted here. I found the 22 objectives on page 23, which is a long way from L 86 on page 3. I suggest referring to Table 3 to let the reader know where to find these. It would be helpful to associate appropriate objectives

numerically with the research or survey activities as those are described.

Line 193 The range of the alligator in the United States includes areas from the southern tip of Texas through the northern coastal areas of North Carolina (Fig. 1).

Comment: This Figure includes a colorful legend depicting a variety of distributional characteristics of alligators, none of which are represented in the figure...needs editing. Either delete the legend or add the colors to the map.



Line 200 Figure 2 seems to have 2 slightly different captions; choose one. The caption should include a date to which the range estimate applies.

Comments on Literature Cited

L 381-383 makes reference to South Carolina harvest rates associated with hunt

permitting. A citation is needed here so readers can judge the credibility of the statement.

L 1016 reference/citation needed for Tom Murphy's alligator trap...

The first task of an editor or reviewer of such a document is to evaluate the quality of the literature research that must be the starting point for such an endeavor. While I believe that current available knowledge in the literature was well represented, I was disturbed by the seemingly careless attention to the details of standard literature citation protocols. I list below the numerous errors and oversights I found. There may be more that I missed. The reason I find this listing disturbing is that these are errors that anyone can easily locate, and there were many, leaving the reader to worry about the errors not so easily located. I trust that is not the case here and that this situation may indeed have the one flaw caused by group input to literature used and cited. These citations should all be carefully edited by the authors to ensure accuracy.

Authors/papers cited in text, NOT found in Lit cited:

Hagan 1982

Kushlan and Simon 1981

Kushlan 1973

McCoy et al. 2015

O'Brien and Doerr 1986

Zanno 2015

Schwimmer 2002

Sues 2003

Lit cited but NOT in text that either I or search command could locate.

Brochu, Christopher A. 1999. Phylogenetics, Taxonomy, and Historical Biogeography of Alligatoroidea. *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology* 19: 9-100.

Dalrymple, George H. 1996. Growth of alligators in the Shark Valley region of Everglades National Park. *Copeia* 1: 212-216.

Ouchley, Kelby. 2013. *American Alligator: Ancient Predator in the Modern World*. Gainesville:

University Press of Florida.