

Alabama alligators may become hunted

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Alabama officials are reportedly considering establishing an alligator hunting season to combat a dramatically rising gator population.

Alligators were placed on the federal endangered species list in 1967 after hunters pursued them nearly to extinction, the Birmingham (Ala.) News reported. Gators -- laying as many as 60 eggs and living to be 50 years old -- made a dramatic comeback after hunting was banned.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the animals from the endangered list in 1987.

Officials do not know how many alligators live in Alabama, but the number is estimated to be as high as 70,000. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service says it believes more than 1 million alligators live in Florida, Texas, Louisiana and Georgia.

Among those states, only Florida, Louisiana and Georgia permit alligator hunting, and Texas plans to allow it beginning next year.

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