

# The Problem

## Threats to the Species



**Examine the relationship between the note cards used in the construction of this section of the brochure.**

Highlight the portions of each note card that is actually used in the text of the brochure.

What do you notice about the use of parenthetical documentation in this section?

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Why is parenthetical documentation used in this section more than the previous section?

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What do you think is missing from the content in this section? Explain.

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Overexploitation and habitat loss are the primary threats to this species; however, commercial harvest for the food and pet industries have taken the most dramatic toll on existing populations of the turtle across its range.

**Humans have harvested the alligator snapping turtle as a food source for a long time, but the industry increased dramatically in the 60's and 70's when the Campbell's Soup Company began producing frozen turtle soup (Reed et al. 5). In fact, the turtle was such a popular ingredient in soup and picante sauce that some populations were completely wiped out (Conniff 120).**

The problem with the commercial harvest of this species is that **these animals do not reach sexual maturity until they are 11-13 years of age. Research indicates that harvest rates of 2 percent per year of adult females will result in significant population declines (US F & W Service 74701). In Georgia, three to four tons of alligator snapper were taken annually from the Flint River alone until it could no longer sustain the demand (Reed et al. 5), and TRAFFIC reported in 2000 that over 23,000 live, adult individuals were exported to Hong Kong and Japan for both food and for the pet trade (US F & W Service 74701).**

This level of commercial harvest cannot be sustained indefinitely, and although **most states within its range offer some protection, Louisiana requires only a fishing license for the unlimited harvest of individuals at least 15 inches in length (Reed et al. 7).**

At this rate of commercial exploitation, our grandchildren will not know this species unless they read about it.

Threat - Human Impact B

Humans have harvested the alligator snapping turtle as a food source for a long time, but the industry increased dramatically in the 60's and 70's when the Campbell's soup company began producing frozen turtle soup. Three to four tons of the turtle were taken annually from the Flint River in Georgia until it could no longer supply the demand.

(Reed et al. 5)  
p. 5

Paraphrase

Threat - Human Impact H

Alligator Snapping turtle was such a popular ingredient in soup and picante sauce that some populations were completely wiped out across much of its range, which went from Florida to Texas and all the way up to Illinois and Missouri.

(Conniff 120)  
p120

Paraphrase

Threat - Human Impact G

Over collection of adult turtles from the wild for both the international and domestic pet trade along with human consumption as specialty meat present significant threats. Because adult turtles do not reach sexual maturity until 11-13 years of age in the wild, populations of this species are extremely sensitive to the harvest of adult females. Harvests rates of 2 percent per year of adult females will result in significant population declines.

(US Fish & Wildlife Service 74701)

Para

Threat - Export G

According to TRAFFIC, the wildlife trade monitoring network, most live adult alligator snapping turtles are exported to Hong Kong and Japan. In 2000, over 23,000 adult individuals were exported, and the number of individuals harvested from the wild nearly equaled the number of farm-raised individuals.

(US Fish & Wildlife Service 74701)

Threat - Inconsistent Protections B

The alligator snapping is not federally protected, but does receive some protection on a state level in most of the states within its range. Louisiana is the only state that still permits commercial harvest of wild individuals and only requires a fishing license and that individuals have shells at least 15 inches in length. There is no limit to the number of individuals at this size that may be harvested.

(Reed et al. 7)  
p. 7

Paraphrase