

The Human Threat

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 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 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.



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Loosely regulated commercial harvesting in Louisiana poses a significant threat to future populations.

Parenthetical Citations

The relationship between in text documentation and your Works Cited.

Follow the arrows to see what each of these parenthetical citations actually references in the bibliography. Use **Citation Machine** as a guide for creating these citations. It will give you the format if you have entered the information in the right box when you created the citation.



Works Cited

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- Conniff, Richard. "Swamp Thing." *National Geographic* March 1999: 118 - 129.
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- Reed, Robert N., Justin Congdon, and J. Whitfield Gibbons. *The Alligator Snapping Turtle: A review of ecology, life history, and conservation, with demographic analyses of the sustainability of take from wild populations*. Aiken : University of Georgia: Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, 2002. <<http://www.uga.edu/~srelherp/projects/PDFs/BobReedAlligatorSnapper-02.pdf>>.
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- Alligator Snapping Turtle Foundation. Feb 20, 2006 <http://www.astfoundation.org/photos.html>
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- Montgomery, William. "Alligator Snapping Turtle, Macrochelys Temmincki Muddy Waters" Valley House Gallery and Sculpture Garden. Feb 20, 2006 <<http://www.valleyhouse.com>>

The Citation Machine was used to create the following entries for two of the resources on the left. Can you match the results with the entry?

Conniff, Richard. "Swamp Thing." *National Geographic* March 1999: 118-129.

Parenthetical Within Text

(Conniff 118-129)

Of course all you need for your bibliography is the MLA citation, but since it gives you the format of the parenthetical citation too, this is also useful.

Notice that the use of the parenthetical citation within the text of the brochure only includes the page number that the notes actually came from.

Now take a look at this citation result

Reed, Robert N., Justin Congdon, and J. Whitfield Gibbons. *The Alligator Snapping Turtle: A review of ecology, life history, and conservation, with demographic analyses of the sustainability of take from wild populations*. Aiken: University of Georgia: Savannah River Ecology Laboratory, 2002. <<http://www.uga.edu/~srelherp/projects/PDFs/BobReedAlligatorSnapper-02.pdf>>.

Parenthetical Within Text

(Reed et al. 7)

Notice the format for articles with more than two authors. The "et al" is Latin for "and others."