

- general;
- It would meet public demand.

Other Alternatives Considered and Analyzed

Alternative B—No Action Alternative

The refuge would not implement the Hunt Plan. Opportunities to create a new outdoor recreation experience by adding alligator hunting would be lost and hunters would pursue these species off refuge.

This alternative was not selected because:

- It would not fulfill the intent of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan;
- It would not meet the aspects of Secretarial Order 3356;
- It would not provide the public with opportunities to hunt species already open to hunting by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Summary of Effects of the Selected Action

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to provide decision-making framework that 1) explored a reasonable range of alternatives to meet project objectives, 2) evaluated potential issues and impacts to the refuge, resources and values, and 3) identified mitigation measures to lessen the degree or extent of these impacts. The EA evaluated the effects associated with the proposed action. It is incorporated as part of this finding.

Implementation of the agency's decision would be expected to result in the following environmental, social, and economic effects:

- We anticipate an increase in visitation and expenditure for the additional species proposed. This will result in a minor impact to the local economy.
- The proposed hunt impacts are assumed to be minimal due to the small amount of hunters anticipated to participate in the hunt on the refuge. Georgia DNR will manage the hunt and issues 85 permits for a ten county area with a one alligator limit per permittee. Historically, Zone 4 has reported the least amount of alligators taken with tags going unfulfilled. The estimated amount of hunters and alligators harvested on the refuge is 10-20 per year.
- There will be no impacts to cultural resources. No buildings or structures exist on-site listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Hunting is not expected to cause ground disturbance.