

The American Alligator and Concern for Visitors at Brazos Bend State Park

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Abstract

Information needed for the planning and development of facilities for visitors' use at Brazos Bend State Park included the activities of the American alligators (*Alligator mississippiensis*) in the park. Estimates of the number of alligators in the park were based on day- and night-time counts. These estimates were significantly different from one another, and day counts were highly correlated with night counts. Alligator observability indices demonstrated how observable the alligators were in different lakes. The number of large alligators in the park is too big for a park intended for high-intensity human use. Culling of upper size-class alligators might result in negative ecological chains of reaction. Removal, from time to time, of alligators that demonstrate aggressive nature or signs of habituation is suggested as an alternative strategy.