

**IS THE ALLIGATOR UNENDANGERED?
AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**

January 1982

The U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service has recently suggested that the alligator be removed from the list of endangered species. The hunting season on `gators has been expanded to include virtually every parish in Louisiana. Frequent newspaper stories of an abundance of the reptiles throughout the state support the USF&W's position. The *Delta Sierran*, however, has conducted an exclusive interview with I. Zod LaCoste, a leading alligator representative.. LaCoste is the chairman of the Alligators Federation of Louisiana/Crocodiles International Order (AFL/CIO). He was interviewed after attempting to read a statement at the Atchafalaya Basin hearings. (Colonel Sand(er)s, honcho of the New Orleans office of the Army Corps of Engineers, refused LaCoste permission to speak because LaCoste refuses to recognize the legitimacy of the Corps's existence.)

At the interview LaCoste was dressed in a neat knit shirt with a small emblem embroidered over the left chest: the image of a private-school student.

Delta Sierran: You look peeved, I. Zod. Did they give you a hard time at the hearing?

I.Z.L.: Yeah. Those turkeys don't know a wetland from okra gumbo. What a waste of time!

D.S.: Let's get to the point. The Fish and Wildlife Service says you `gators are no longer endangered, don't need as much protection anymore. What do you say?

I.Z.L.: What do you expect from a bunch of bureaucrats?! Y' think they talked to me first? No. sir! All they know about being endangered is numbers, nothing about the quality of life. Just because there are a few more of us than there were a few years ago, the wildlife bureaucrats are going to let loose every mad-dog Cajun from here to Opelousas. Butcher shops and seafood markets are selling `gator meat for sauce piquante, fried `gator, you name it. It

makes you sick with worry.

D.S.: You mentioned the quality of life. Any particular gripes?

I.Z.L.: Yeah. We're being exploited economically. It's enough to make you go communist. Every prep school kid, his father, his mother, probably even his grandmother are wearing expensive clothes with little alligators embroidered on them. Do you think we get any royalties? No way! Not a dime! And Dixie Beer sells – not gives away, mind you – tee shirts with a picture of an inebriated alligator with his arm around a long-necked bottle of Dixie beer; the captions says “Only in Louisiana.” You think Dixie might have donated at least a few bucks to the ERA campaign to make up for those insulting tee shirts. Nothing. Not a nickel.

D.S.: Wait a minute. What's the Equal Rights Amendment got to do with all this?

I.Z.L.: No, dummy. The ERA I'm talking about is Eventual Reimbursement of Alligators. It a fund to assuage the guilt you people ought to feel for kicking us `gators around for so long.

D.S.: Where can the guilt-ridden send their contributions?

I.Z.L.: Cash, check, or money order to 111 S. Hennessy St., New Orleans, La. 70119.

D.S.: See you later, alli – Oh, never mind. Good-bye.