



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
865 Canal Street, Suite 3080
New Orleans, Louisiana 70130-1142

A5635 (JELA)

March 5, 1997

MANAGEMENT DIRECTIVE NO. 18

Subject: Exotic Species Control: Nutria

BACKGROUND

Section 905 of Public Law 95-625 states that, "Within the Barataria Marsh Unit, the Secretary shall permit hunting, fishing (including commercial fishing), and trapping in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws..." This allows for the continuation of "traditional uses" including the trapping of furbearing animals within the Barataria Preserve Unit of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve.

Nutria (*Myocaster coypus*), a non-native mammal, is a serious and disruptive pest subject to control under the provisions of NPS 77, *Natural Resource Management Guideline*. A Trapping Management Plan for the Barataria Preserve was approved and implemented in October 1990 to regulate trapping activities and to provide guidance for the control of nutria. The plan outlined three methods for nutria population control: 1) permitted traditional trapping; 2) contract trapping; and 3) direct reduction by park staff. The recommended take of nutria is 3,000 to 5,000 animals per year, a number deemed necessary to reduce the likelihood of severe environmental stresses resulting from nutria overpopulation, including winter eat-outs. Therefore, when data indicate that the park has not met nutria reduction goals, the park will undertake a direct reduction program to control nutria populations.

PREPARATION

Notification

The opportunity for public comment was provided during preparation of the Trapping Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. No further public notice will be given unless temporary closures are enacted to facilitate direct reduction due to special circumstances. Such temporary closures will be done in accordance with the provisions of 36 CFR § 1.5.

Trappers holding Special Use Permits will be notified through a written condition attached to the permit that a Direct Reduction Program for the control of nutria may be put into effect. Nutria control will take place on actively-trapped areas covered by a Special Use Permit only when additional pressure on nutria populations is determined to be necessary, and only after notification of the permittee. Nutria carcasses killed in areas covered by a Special Use Permit will be turned over to the permittee for processing and sale.

The Superintendent will consult the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries when a Direct Reduction Program for the control of nutria is to be put into effect.

Training

Park personnel selected to carry out the direct reduction program must be qualified under applicable NPS guidelines (see Appendix A).

IMPLEMENTATION

Field Activities

The park will employ a shooting program for nutria control to be carried out by qualified staff. A .22 caliber rifle will be available to qualified staff under appropriate circumstances as they perform various duties in the Barataria Preserve. Staff will have the discretion to shoot nutria under the following conditions:

- The line-of-sight is safe.
- The target animal is positively identified as a nutria.

- The visitor experience is not impaired.
- The shooting will not disrupt visitor activities, permitted activities, or park operations.

Nutria carcasses will be left in place in non-visitor use areas. In visitor use areas, staff will remove the carcasses to more remote areas. In all cases, carcasses will be removed from waterways.

Documentation

A Nutria Direct Reduction Log (Appendix B) will be completed daily to report the number of nutria killed, the number of shots fired, and the success ratio. The Barataria Preserve Unit Manager will forward the completed log to the Resource Management Division each month.

Evaluation

Resource damage due to nutria eat-outs will be monitored by park staff. If damage appears to be severe or spreading, expert consultants will be called in to evaluate the success of the park's Nutria Direct Reduction Plan and make recommendations for management action.


Geraldine Smith
Superintendent

Enclosures

Appendix A**Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
Direct Reduction Firearms Qualification Course**

Stage	Distance	Position	Rounds	Shots	Time	Description
1	50 yards	Standing Shoulder	5	5	30 seconds	Shooter will fire five shots from the standing shoulder position in thirty seconds.
2	50 yards	Kneeling	5	5	30 seconds	Shooter will fire five rounds from the kneeling position in thirty seconds.
3	50 yards	Sitting	5	5	30 seconds	Shooter will fire five shots from the sitting position in thirty seconds.
4	50 yards	Prone	5	5	30 seconds	Shooter will fire five shots from the prone position in thirty seconds.

Total Rounds = 20

Possible Score = 100

Minimum Score = 70

This course must be fired on a Trans-tar II target. Scoring is in the five ring only. Any hits outside the five ring are scored as "zero."

Appendix B

Nutria Direct Reduction Log

(month, year)

Date	Time	Shooter	Location	# Shots	# Killed	Notes

$$\frac{\text{\# killed}}{\text{\# shots}} = \text{\% success rate}$$

Please forward completed log sheet to the Resource Management Division each month.