The nutria is a non-native, furbearing species in the rodent family that was introduced to enhance the Louisiana fur industry. Since the decline of the fur industry, nutria populations have increased tremendously along the coast. Because nutria voraciously consume marsh plants that help anchor wetlands, this non-native nutria population is now having a significant negative impact on coastal marsh health.

**Restoration Strategy**

The goals of this demonstration project were to determine if nutria meat for human consumption could be promoted and determine if a meat processing system promotional program could be developed. Meeting these goals would have facilitated nutria harvest through an increased meat demand. The project called for Coastal Wetlands Planning, Protection and Restoration Act funding matching that of participating meat-processing plants in order to compensate trappers for the nutria they harvest. The project also included monitoring selected coastal marsh areas by the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) to assess both nutria damage and recovery resulting from this project.

Other components of the project included nutria meat recipe development and publication, along with an advertising and marketing strategy focused on increasing the public demand for nutria meat. The project was implemented by the LDWF with oversight by the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Progress to Date**

This demonstration project was approved by the Louisiana Coastal Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Task Force in April 1997. Through this project, LDWF has coordinated with consultants to develop and implement various nutria meat marketing activities.