



# SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

APRIL 3-4, 2025 | MATTHEWS TRAINING CENTER - PIERRE

## MEETING INFO

*This agenda is subject to change without prior notice.*

**Date and Time:** April 3, 2025, from 1-5 pm CST | April 4, 2025, from 8 am-12 pm CST

**Meeting Location:** Matthews Training Center, 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501

**Webinar Info:** We will be using Zoom Webinar® for this meeting. As a participant, you will not have audio or video capabilities by default. During the open forum and public hearing, if you'd like to testify, please 'Raise Your Hand' using the button at the bottom of the screen, or by pressing \*9 on your phone. To lower your hand via phone, press \*9 again. When it's your turn to speak, the meeting host will unmute you, allowing you to have audio but no video. If your phone is muted when called upon, press \*6 to unmute.

- \*9 to 'Raise Your Hand' or 'Lower Your Hand.'
- \*6 to Unmute or Mute

Please inform Gail Buus at [gail.buus@state.sd.us](mailto:gail.buus@state.sd.us) by 1 pm CST if you plan to speak during the meeting. This helps us to accurately identify and call on speakers during the session. Thank you for your cooperation!

**Zoom Webinar:** [Click here to join the meeting](#)

**Meeting ID:** 912 6417 6710

**Passcode:** 970458

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**Video Conference ID:** [91264176710@zoomcrc.com](https://zoom.us/j/91264176710)

## AGENDA

### Call Meeting to Order (1 pm CST / 12 pm MT)

#### Division of Administration

##### Action Items

1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure
2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives>
3. Additional Commissioner Salary Days

##### Informational Items

4. Staff Introductions

### Public Hearing (2pm CST / 1pm MT)

*The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment finalizations.*

#### Open Forum – following the conclusion of the Public Hearing

*The portion of the meeting is designated for public comment on petitions, proposals, and other items of interest not on the agenda.*

#### Petitions

5. #236 Eliminate Closed Area on Lake Francis Case

#### Finalizations

6. Waterfowl Hunting Season
7. Prairie Mountain Lion Hunting
8. Boating Safety
9. Big Horn Sheep Hunting Season
10. Prairie Elk Hunting Season



# SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

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## Proposals

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11. E-Tagging
12. Mentored Hunter
13. Deer Proposal and Population Status Update
14. Black Hills and Custer State Park Elk Hunting Seasons
  - a. Elk Survey Results

## Division of Wildlife

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### Action Items

### Informational Items

15. Fish Production Development Plan Update
16. Hunting 101 Program Update
17. River Otter Action Plan
18. Prairie Dog Update
19. License Sales Update

## Division of Parks and Recreation

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### Action Items

### Informational Items

20. Go Outdoors Event Management System
21. Park Volunteer Recruitment Effort
22. Ft. Sisseton Festival Preview
23. Statewide and Missouri River Boat Ramp Update
24. March Park Camping Unit and Revenue Report

## Solicitation of Agenda Items

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*Now is the time to submit agenda items for the Commission to consider at a following commission meeting.*

## Adjourn

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The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on May 8-9, 2025, starting at 1 pm MST at the Custer State Park Event Barn, Custer, SD.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

March 6-7, 2025 | Ramkota Convention Center | Pierre, SD

### REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

#### Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the Ramkota Convention Center in Pierre, SD on March 6, 2025. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Jim White, Travis Bies, Jon Locken, Julie Bartling, and Travis Theel were present, with Bruce Cull joining virtually. With seven commission members present or online, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 90 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

#### 1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler requested the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, but none were brought forward.

#### 2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of the January 2025 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 2025 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 3. Additional Salary Days

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. Additional days were submitted for approval for Commissioner Bartling for two days, Commissioner White for two days, and Commissioner Rissler for one day.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONER SALARY DAYS. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 4. New Staff Introductions

[Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced two new employees: A) Paxton Steen - Park Maintenance Technician at Fort Sisseton State Park; and B) Todd Novotny – Park Maintenance Technician at Spring Creek Recreation Area.

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, introduced three new employees: A) Brant Helman – Resource Biologist at Cleghorn Springs Fish Hatchery; B) Shandi Chrysler – Senior Secretary at Ft. Pierre Licensing Office; and C) Jessica Speiser – Wildlife Diversity Biologist.

#### 5. Legislative Session Update

[Info Item]

Deputy Secretary Simpson gave a brief update on the legislative items being brought during the 2025 legislative session.

#### 6. Habitat Plate

[Info Item]

Nick Harrington, Communications Manager, provided an update regarding the new Habitat Conservation License plates. These became available Monday, March 3, and have sold 40 decal sets as of the Commission update. Harrington provided a step-by-step process on how to obtain both the license plates themselves and the accompanying decals as well as covered questions that have been received prior to the plates becoming available.



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### Public Hearing

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Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:01 CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as finalization. No testimony was provided by the public, so the Public Hearing was closed at 2:03 pm CST.

### Open Forum

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Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:03 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda not as a finalization.

2:04 pm: Mark Oslund of Black Hawk, SD testified in person in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season.

2:07 pm: Matt Tucker of Rosebud, SD representing the Rosebud Sioux Tribe testified in person in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:10 pm: Chalmer Combellick of Green Grass, SD representing the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe testified in person in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:14 pm: Ben Janis of Lower Brule, SD representing the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Wildlife, Fish and Recreation Department testified in person in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:17 pm: Isaac Johnson of Chamberlain, SD representing the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Wildlife, Fish, and Recreation Department testified in person in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:21 pm: Dalton Grassel of Reliance, SD representing the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Wildlife, Fish, and Recreation Department testified in person in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:24 pm: Tip Taylor of Presho, SD testified in person in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:26 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audobon Society testified virtually in opposition of prairie mountain lion hunting and the nest predator bounty program.

2:29 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition of prairie mountain lion hunting and big horn sheep hunting.

2:31 pm: Brad Tisdall of Rapid City, SD representing South Dakota Houndsmen testified in person in support of prairie mountain lion hunting.

2:33 pm: Ben Dorman of Kennebec, SD testified in person in support of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:34 pm: Brad Karlen of Kennebec, SD representing Karlen Ranch testified in person in support of the prairie elk hunting season.

2:35 pm: Tyler Frederick of Kennebec, SD testified in person in support of the prairie elk hunting season.

The open forum closed at 2:37 pm CST.

### 7. #234 – To Implement a Regulated Season on Jack Rabbits

[Action Item: Petition]

Tom Riddle of Mitchell, SD submitted petition #234 in which requested the Commission require the change of implementing a regulated season on Jack Rabbits.

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann introduced the petitioner and Mr. Riddle provided a summary of reasons why he desires the regulated season on Jack Rabbits. Kirschenmann then provided some background





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information and shared a few explanations why the department is providing a recommendation of denial. Those included using habitat conservation as a primary management measure to promote better populations and the conflict of state statute by approving this rule.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY THEEL TO DENY PETITION #234. Yea Votes (4) Rissler, Bartling, Locken, and Theel. Nay Votes (2) Bies and White. The motion did not pass. Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, offered to have an information item regarding Jack Rabbits presented at a future Commission Meeting to provide further detail on the species. Roll call was subsequently held. Yea Votes (7) Rissler, Bies, Bartling, Cull, Locken, Theel, and White. The motion to deny carried unanimously.

### RESOLUTION 25-06

WHEREAS, Tom Riddle of Mitchell, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated March 4, 2025, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission implement a regulated season for jackrabbits (hereinafter referred to as “the Petition”); and

WHEREAS, all members of the Commission have been furnished with and have reviewed a copy of the Petition; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that a copy of the Petition has been served on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council as required by SDCL § 1-26-13; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that SDCL § 1-26-13 requires that within thirty (30) days of submission of a Petition, the Commission shall either “deny the petition in writing (stating its reasons for the denials) or shall initiate rule-making proceedings in accordance with SDCL 1-26-4.”; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised and is of the opinion that a hearing on the Petition is neither statutorily required nor necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has reviewed and carefully considered the requirements and procedures set out in SDCL §1-26-13 and the contents of the Petition, including the reasons advanced by Petitioner to Tom Riddle; and

WHEREAS, habitat is the primary factor and ultimately responsible for regulating jackrabbit population growth. Other factors such as predation and variable weather can affect population growth, but are secondary and closely related to habitat quality, not independent drivers of jackrabbit populations; and

WHEREAS, loss of enrolled acres in the Conservation Reserve Program and grassland conversion to agriculture are the primary reasons for jackrabbit population declines; and

WHEREAS, hunter harvest in recent decades likely has negligible impacts to jackrabbit populations at broader geographic scales across all of South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the requested season change does conflict with current state law pertaining to night hunting which allows harvest year round. Administrative rule cannot supersede statute; and

WHEREAS, the department will bring forward a future information item to a scheduled Commission meeting to further discuss information around jackrabbit populations and potential season structure opportunities within statute and administrative rule.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission does hereby deny the Petition for the reasons hereinabove stated in this Resolution, which said Resolution as adopted by the Commission shall constitute the Commission’s written denial of the Petition and its reasons therefore.



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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Petition, a record of the Commission's discussions concerning same, and this Resolution be made a part of the Minutes of the Commission meeting at which this Resolution is adopted, and further, that the Department be and it is hereby authorized and directed in compliance with SDCL §1-26-13 to serve a copy of an extract of that portion of the Commission minutes which pertain to the Commission's discussion of the Petition and its adoption of this Resolution, including a copy of the Resolution, on all members of the Interim Rules Review Committee and Director of the Legislative Research Council with copies also to be provided to the Petitioner, Tom Riddle of Mitchell, South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 25-06. The motion carried unanimously.

### 8. Bear Butte Public Use Restriction

[Action Item: Finalization]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, asked the Commission to finalize the rule prohibiting the leaving of human remains at Bear Butte. In 2002, at the request of the tribal groups representing the Bear Butte forum, the Commission approved this same rule as proposed. In 2019 as part of a Dept. rule cleanup process this rule was inadvertently repealed. Bear Butte is viewed as a spiritual worship area by the various tribal groups and the spreading or leaving of human remains at Bear Butte is not an acceptable spiritual and cultural practices. The rule simply reinstates what was formerly in rule. No public comments were received. The rule (41:03:01:33) was finalized.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 9. Waterfowl Hunting Season

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented proposals for waterfowl hunting season. A summary was provided reviewing the current Waterfowl Season proposals that are scheduled to be finalized in April. Proposed changes include an increase from 1 to 3 for the pintail daily bag and a reduction in the early blue-winged teal season from 16 to 9 days. There were also proposals to remove the Special Canada Goose Season in Bennett County and combine Bennett County goose hunting regulations into the Unit 2 Canada Goose Season.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL. FINALIZATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN APRIL 2025.

### 10. Prairie Mountain Lion Hunting

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, presented the proposal for the mountain lion hunting season. Proposed changes include to allow the initiation of the pursuit of a mountain lion with dogs outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District to occur anywhere, where permitted by the landowner. The commission made an amendment to the proposal to exclude examples of closed areas Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Park, and Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 11. Boating Safety

[Action Item: Proposal]

Law enforcement section chief Sam Schelhaas presented a second reading of a proposal to adjust two boating rules. The first rule addressed was 41:04:05:02.01 which pertains to special use personal floatation devices. The second rule addressed was 41:04:05:03 which pertains to fire extinguishers on boats. Both proposed changes would harmonize the administrative rule with the Federal regulations.



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NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL. FINALIZATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN APRIL 2025.

### **12. Big Horn Sheep Hunting Season & Population Status Report** [Action Item: Proposal]

Chad Lehman, Senior Wildlife Biologist, gave a presentation with information on data collection for bighorn sheep and other background information. The presentation included history of the Deadwood bighorn sheep herd. John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, presented the proposal for the bighorn sheep hunting season. Proposed changes include to expand the unit boundary for BHS-BH4 to include those portions of Lawrence and Meade counties west of Interstate 90 and clean-up unit descriptions. Bighorn sheep license allocations were also presented. The commission is considering a total of seven licenses for the 2025 bighorn sheep season.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES TO THE PROPOSAL. FINALIZATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN APRIL 2025.

### **13. Prairie Elk Hunting Season** [Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented a proposal for prairie elk season. A summary was provided reviewing the current Prairie Elk Season proposal that is scheduled to be finalized in April. In addition to the current proposal to expand the PRE-WRA unit and increase the season length and allow landowner-own-land hunting in PRE-27A, an amendment was approved to increase the season length and allow landowner-own-land hunting in PRE-9A.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### **14. Mountain Goat Action Plan** [Action Item: Wildlife]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, reviewed the mountain goat action plan. The action plan was presented at the January commission meeting and then made available for public review and comment. Comments received were related to the mountain goat hunting season that is currently closed. Comments did not cause the department to make any changes to the draft plan.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT THE MOUNTAIN GOAT ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

### **15. Swan Lake (Walworth Co.) Land Exchange** [Action Item: Wildlife]

Habitat Program Manager, Ryan Wendinger presented information about the land exchange at Swan Lake. The land exchange details were shared for the second time regarding a 1/3 of an acre of GPA to be exchanged for 1/3 of an acre of private land to improve an access lane to main portion of Swan Lake. The GFP Commission adopted Resolution 25-03 approving and authorizing the department to move forward with the steps need to complete the exchange.

#### **RESOLUTION 25-03**

WHEREAS, the State of South Dakota (held by and for the use and benefit of the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) owns an interest in real estate described as:

The 33 foot wide access lane as part of Lot 1 in the SW1/4NW1/4 of section 23, Township 121 North, Range 75 West of the 5th P.M., Walworth County, South Dakota; containing .30 acres, more or less, hereinafter referred to as GFP PROPERTY; and

WHEREAS, Jason Klocker (KLOCKER), of 6013 W. WHISTLER CT., SIOUX FALLS SD 57101, owns an interest in real estate described as:



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A 31 foot wide access lane across the north end of Lot 1, Thuente Addition located in the SW1/4NW1/4 in Section 23, Township 121 North, Range 75 West of the 5th P.M., Walworth County, South Dakota, containing .30 acres, more or less, hereinafter referred to as KLOCKER PROPERTY; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota law (SDCL 41-2-29.2) provides that GFP has the power, authority, and duty to trade or exchange real property owned by the State and held by GFP if the GFP Commission shall first determine that real property more suitable to GFP purposes may be obtained by an exchange, provided the parcels of real property to be exchanged are of equal value; and

WHEREAS, GFP and KLOCKER desire to exchange interests in GFP PROPERTY and KLOCKER PROPERTY, and the GFP Commission having determined that KLOCKER PROPERTY is more suitable to GFP for GFP purposes than GFP PROPERTY, and that GFP PROPERTY and KLOCKER PROPERTY are of equal value as determined by a qualified appraiser; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota law requires that the conveyance of GFP PROPERTY be approved and executed in the manner provided by SDCL 5-2-11.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the GFP Commission hereby takes final action on and approves the above referenced exchanges of the above described parcels of real property and hereby directs GFP to take all steps necessary to effectuate the exchange of GFP PROPERTY for KLOCKER PROPERTY under procedures mandated by statute.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the GFP Commission does hereby ratify and confirm the Department's designation of the KLOCKER PROPERTY being acquired pursuant to the exchange authorized by this Resolution for utilization by the Division of Wildlife for the purpose of game production and, further, does hereby expressly designate and classify the KLOCKER PROPERTY being acquired pursuant to the exchange authorized by this Resolution for use as a game production area.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 25-03. The motion carried unanimously.

### 16. Faulk County Land Disposal

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Habitat Program Manager, Ryan Wendinger presented information about the Faulk County Land Disposal. The details to dispose of 19 groups of lots around Lake Faulkton were shared for the second time along with the appraised values of each lot. Information was shared that GFP would retain shoreline for fishing access. Information was also shared around a general timeline to dispose of the property. The GFP Commission adopted Resolution 25-04 approving and authorizing the department to proceed with disposing of this property per SDCL.

#### RESOLUTION 25 - 04

WHEREAS, the State of South Dakota (for the use and benefit of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks) (DEPARTMENT) owns the following described property in Faulk County South Dakota:

Lots 10, 11, 24, 25, 26, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 82, 83, 86, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 97, 98, 110, 111, 112, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, Outlot A, and Lot 1 of Outlot B located in the Southeast Quarter of Section 17, Township 118 North, Range 69 West of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Faulk County, South Dakota.

WHEREAS, SDCL § 41-2-29.1 provides the DEPARTMENT shall sell real property owned by the state and held by the DEPARTMENT if such real property is no longer needed for game, fish, or parks purposes, with such sale to be conducted pursuant to the procedure more fully set out in SDCL § 41-2-29.1; and



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WHEREAS, these portions of the Lake Faulkton GPA were acquired by the DEPARTMENT to provide wildlife habitat and public hunting opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the DEPARTMENT has determined these portions of Lake Faulkton GPA provide limited value as wildlife habitat and for public hunting opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission hereby determines these portions of the Lake Faulkton GPA no longer serve the purposes for which they were originally acquired and are no longer needed for game, fish, or park purposes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission hereby directs the DEPARTMENT to sell and transfer title to these portions of Lake Faulkton GPA according to the procedures provided for in SDCL § 41-2-29.1, and authorizes the DEPARTMENT to execute and consummate agreements relative to the sales deemed appropriate by the Department, with proceeds from the sales dedicated to future GPA acquisitions.

MOTIONED BY WHITE, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 25-04. The motion carried unanimously.

### 17. Spink County Land Disposal

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Habitat Program Manager, Ryan Wendinger presented information regarding Spink County Land Disposal. The details to dispose of two parcels that were a previous site for structures to divert water to Twin Lakes. The structures have been removed and thus the department no longer has a need for these parcels of land. Appraised values were shared on the parcels. The GFP Commission adopted Resolution 25-05 approving and authorizing the department to proceed with disposing of this property per SDCL.

#### RESOLUTION 25 - 05

WHEREAS, the State of South Dakota (for the use and benefit of the Department of Game, Fish and Parks) (DEPARTMENT) owns the following described land in Spink County:

A strip of land Nine (9) rods wide in Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twenty Four (24), Township One Hundred Fifteen (115), Range Sixty Five (65) West of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., the centerline of which is described as follows: Beginning at a point 1455.7' South and 274.5' East of the Northwest corner of the above mentioned Section Twenty Four (24), thence East for 670 feet, more or less, according to the survey thereof, containing 2.28 acres.

A strip of land Fourteen (14) rods wide in in Northwest Quarter (NW1/4) of Section Twenty Four (24), Township One Hundred Fifteen (115), Range Sixty Five (65) West of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., the centerline of which is described as follows: Beginning at a point 467.7' north of the center of Section Twenty Four (24), thence 200 feet, more or less, west containing 1.06 acres, more or less.

WHEREAS, SDCL § 41-2-29.1 provides the DEPARTMENT shall sell real property owned by the state and held by the DEPARTMENT if such real property is no longer needed for game, fish, or parks purposes, with such sale to be conducted pursuant to the procedure more fully set out in SDCL § 41-2-29.1; and

WHEREAS, these portions of the Twin Lakes Diversion Ditch GPA were acquired by the DEPARTMENT to provide wildlife habitat and public hunting opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the DEPARTMENT has determined these portions of Twin Lakes Diversion Ditch GPA provide limited value as wildlife habitat and for public hunting opportunity; and

WHEREAS, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission hereby determines these portions of the Twin Lakes Diversion Ditch GPA no longer serve the purposes for which they were originally acquired and are no longer needed for game, fish, or park purposes.





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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission hereby directs the DEPARTMENT to sell and transfer title to these portions of Twin Lakes Diversion Ditch GPA according to the procedures provided for in SDCL § 41-2-29.1, and authorizes the DEPARTMENT to execute and consummate agreements relative to the sales deemed appropriate by the Department, with proceeds from the sales dedicated to future GPA acquisitions.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 25-05. The motion carried unanimously.

### 18. Lake Francis Case Fishery Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Jason Sorensen, Fisheries Biologist, presented an update on the Lake Francis Case Fishery. The Lake Francis Case (LFC) walleye relative abundance has been below average for the past 2 years. However, the portion of the population that is of harvestable size (>15 inches) has remained consistent. In 2024 58% of the sample was of harvestable size. Fall age-0 walleye electrofishing samples continue to show consistent reproduction in LFC. In 2024 LFC walleye had an excellent relative weight of 90 indicating very good condition which translates into very good growth. Walleye in LFC are reaching 16 inches in length by age 3. Angler use the past several years has been consistently around 140,000 angler hours. Walleye catch rates by anglers was low in 2024 (0.476 fish/hour). This was likely in large part due to over-wintering of age 0 gizzard shad during the mild winter of 2023/24 coupled with a large age-0 gizzard shad year class produced in 2024. These fish had plenty of forage available. Increased water clarity due to zebra mussels has also translocated walleye and allowed deeper light penetration leading to vegetation growth. Anglers targeting traditional areas with traditional methods are not finding success while those that have altered their location and/or methods have found success. Anglers harvested an estimated 67,543 walleye from LFC in 2024.

### 19. Southeast SD Fisheries Management

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Dave Lucchesi, South East Area Fisheries Supervisor, presented information on southeast South Dakota fisheries management. Marginal waters are shallow, highly-productive waterbodies that are prone to both summer and winterkill. Nearly half of the 96 waterbodies managed in southeastern South Dakota are designated as marginal and half of those have experienced at least one kill in the past four years. Fish kills, especially severe winterkill, can be beneficial by nearly eliminating over-abundant, non-game species like black bullhead and common carp providing a “clean slate” for fish stockings, however, winterkill has also wiped out some fisheries. Fish stocking is used to rebuild fish populations post-kill. Marginal lakes are stocked with pre-spawn northern pike, yellow perch and crappies as well as hatchery-reared walleye fry and small fingerlings. Impoundments and community fish ponds are restocked with panfish, bass, channel catfish and sometimes hatchery-reared saugeye. The prevalence of fish kills in marginal waters highlights the relevance of harvesting fish when they reach a keepable size because those fish are often lost to fish kills in the future.

### 20. Nest Predator Bounty Program

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Jacquie Ermer, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, provided information about the nest predator bounty program. The program opened on March 1 for youth under the age of 18 and will open April 1 for all ages of residents to participate. The schedule for collection days along with FAQs and Terms and Conditions can be found on the Game, Fish and Parks website. Participating youth will be entered into a weekly drawing to win a raccoon trapping starter kit. Youth can also receive a free copy of the National Trappers Association Trapping Handbook when they submit tails. The program will run through July 1 unless the maximum payout of \$500,000 is reached prior to July 1.





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### 21. Outdoor Campus East Expansion

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Kip Rounds, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, provided an update on the status of the Outdoor Campus Sioux Falls expansion project. This expansion project will be completed in 2 main phases. The first phase, which will involve the construction of an outdoor archery range, is nearing completion and will be opening to the public in March, pending weather. Phase 2 will involve an indoor archery range, expanded classroom space, cooking classroom, and remodel of existing space. This second phase will start around mid-March 2025 and completion is anticipated October 2026.

### 22. E-Tagging

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, provided an e-tag update, which is a significant functionality available for use within Go Outdoors South Dakota. Since January 2024, an internal e-tagging workgroup has been meeting weekly and have held requirement meetings with Brandt Information Services. Internal testing of South Dakota's e-tag system is scheduled soon that will include a mock application, issuance of e-tags, e-notching for a successful harvest, reporting of harvest, and issuance of a confirmation number for transportation. Department staff will be presenting recommendations to our transportation rules to operate our current licensing system and an e-tag system concurrently as we phase in e-tagging into our limited draw seasons. Upon successful testing, implementation of an e-tag system would begin with the 2025 fall turkey hunting season.

### 23. License Sales Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Director Kirschenmann provided a short update on license sales for small game and fishing for the current license year, December 15 through February 28. Both categories are showing strong license sales with fishing licenses very strong due to good ice fishing conditions throughout the state. Currently, licenses sales revenue show about \$1 million ahead of last year. This can be attributed to strong sales and the license fee package passed last fall.

### 24. Custer State Park Private Cabin Transfer

[Action Item: Parks]

Matt Snyder, Parks Regional Supervisor, presented the Resolution for a Custer State Park Cabin Transfer. The Commission adopted Resolution NO. 25-02 which allows for the transfer of a private cabin within Custer State Park. The cabin is currently owned by the Richard K. Tobias Living Trust and is being transferred to his children who established the Archies Bunker LLC.

#### RESOLUTION NO. 25-02

WHEREAS, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks Commission has been advised that Richard K. Tobias Living Trust is the owner of a cabin located in Custer State Park (Custer County) on property described as:

No. 7 Pine Crest in the Northwest Quarter (NW ¼) of the Southwest Quarter (SW1/4) of Section (12), Township Four (4) South, Range Five (5) East, of the Black Hills Meridian, Custer County, South Dakota; and

WHEREAS, the property upon which the cabin is located is owned by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and has been leased to Richard K. Tobias Living Trust by permit by reason of a Stipulation of Settlement and Dismissal entered in Craft v. Wipf, Civil Action No. 85-5092, US District Court for the District of South Dakota, Western Division and subsequent agreements and PERMITS executed thereafter based on said Stipulation and Dismissal; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been advised that Richard K. Tobias Living Trust desires to and has transferred and assigned all of his interest in said cabin and cabin site permit to Archies Bunker LLC, owned by the children of Richard K. Tobias; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has been requested to approve said Transfer and Assignment.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

March 6-7, 2025 | Ramkota Convention Center | Pierre, SD

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in the event the Department receives an executed Agreement and Assignment of the cabin site permit and cabin and appurtenances located thereon and which further provides that said Assignee agrees to abide by all of the terms and conditions of the aforementioned Stipulation of Settlement and Dismissal and all subsequent agreements relative thereto, including but not limited to Cabin Site Permits, Addendums, and all agreements relative to establishing the lease or rental payments due the Department, then in that event the Department is authorized to execute a Consent to the requested Assignment.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 25-02. The motion carried unanimously.

### 25. Spring Creek Restaurant Lease

[Action Item: Parks]

Sean Blanchette, State Parks Business Administrator, updated the Commission on the prospectus which was approved at the January meeting for the restaurant operation at Spring Creek Recreation Area. Blanchette informed the Commission that 2 responses were received, but they were not acceptable proposals. He provided a history of past operations and previous lease terms. New terms proposed for future operations include a base term of 3 years with renewal options for up to 5 years total, as well as restaurant equipment maintenance listed as a Concessionaire responsibility, and the implementation of lease payment to the state in the form of either a Franchise Fee of 4% of Gross Receipts or a direct reimbursement to the Department of utility costs. Blanchette also indicated that the convenience store, which is currently self-operated by Park staff, will be offered as an optional opportunity. Blanchette stated that the Department does not intend to issue future prospectuses if this effort does not yield acceptable proposals. Blanchette requested approval of a new prospectus to be advertised for a minimum of 30 days in accordance with the lease terms presented, with the intent to report the results back to the Commission at their May 2025 GFP meeting.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE NEW PROSPECTUS TO BE ADVERTISED. The motion carried unanimously.

### 26. 2025 Marketing Plan and Theme Update

[Info Item: Parks]

April Larson, Marketing Coordinator, provided an update on the 2025 South Dakota State Parks Marketing Plan, which builds on the success of the See For Yourself 2024 campaign. The plan continues efforts to inspire more people to explore and enjoy state parks through strategic advertising and outreach. Advertising efforts will launch in March, utilizing targeted strategies to connect with the right audience at optimal times. By working with South Dakota-based marketing agency Lawrence & Schiller, the department will enhance outreach by strategically placing ads based on factors like weather conditions and campsite availability. The campaign aims to drive increased visitation across all areas, including camping, day use, lodging, and park programs. In addition to general marketing efforts, the Make a Splash annual theme will highlight water recreation in 2025, encouraging visitors to enjoy activities in, on, and around the water.

### 27. DOT Collector Road Projects Report

[Info Item: Parks]

Planning & Development Administrator, Adam Kulesa provided an update on the DOT Collector Road Program referencing the FY25 projects completed and the FY26 proposed projects. GFP staff will present an annual report and request for approval of the 2.8 million dollars for FY26 at the DOT Commission Meeting in late April.

### 28. Snake Creek Recreation Area Project Update

[Info Item: Parks]

Planning & Development Administrator, Adam Kulesa and Central Region Parks Supervisor, Pat Buscher shared a presentation on progress at Snake Creek Recreation Area. Mitigation efforts have been ongoing with the South Dakota Department of Transportation planning on replacing and relocating the Hwy 44



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

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bridge. A new park residence, shop complex, and dump/fish cleaning station are all complete. There will be minor disruptions in service over the next several years as the bridge project gets bid let and under contract. The park and park amenities will be open throughout the construction of the bridge and the department will continue to update the public on any temporary disruptions in service. The tentative completion date for the new bridge according to the SDDOT STIP plan is December 2028 with construction starting as early as the summer of 2025.

### 29. February Camping Units and Revenue Reports

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the February monthly and year-to-date report numbers for the Division of Parks & Recreation related to camping units and revenue. With the cool weather in February camping units were down but YTD exceed the 2024 numbers. The Parks Division revenue is up 1% YTD. Various graphs and charts were shared with the Commission to depict how park revenue comes in on a monthly basis throughout the year as well as the impact of the new non-resident park entrance license fees as compared to other entrance fees.

### 30. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on April 3-4, 2025, at the Matthews Training Center, in Pierre, starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 9:50 AM CST ON March 7, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary



**From:** info@gfp.sd.us

**Sent on:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 12:11:47 AM

**To:** ericstorms15@yahoo.com

**CC:** Gail.Buus@state.sd.us; Nick.Harrington@state.sd.us

**Subject:** Petition for Rule Change Form

## **South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks**

### **Petition for Rule Change**

A new form was just submitted from the <http://gfp.sd.gov/> website with the following information:

**ID:** 236

**Petitioner  
Name:** Eric Storms

**Address:** 208 Cherry Ln  
Chamberlain, SD 57325

**Email:** ericstorms15@yahoo.com

**Phone:** 605-840-7624

**Rule  
Identification:** The closed area on Lake Francis case Includes the waters between the railroad bridge and the I 90 bridge Causeway in Brule and Lyman County Waters closed from December 1 to April 30

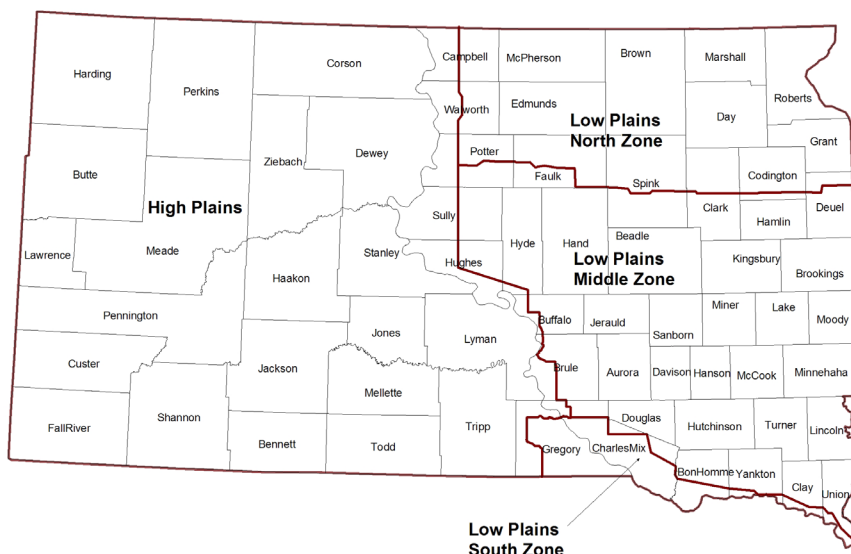
**Describe  
Change:** eliminate the closed area.

**Reason for  
Change:** 1. My family and friends would like to use it during the closed area time 2. What is it actually protecting? Zero studies on if it helps the fishery, many other areas on lake Francis case that is just as deep and deeper 3. Hard for game fish to patrol correctly and only reason its closed is because of local public don't like people fishing?





<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>January 9-10, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 3, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 3-4, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>



**Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:16:03 to increase the daily limit of pintail from one to three and reduce the bonus blue-winged teal season from sixteen to nine days.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

South Dakota GFP works cooperatively with US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to establish waterfowl hunting season structures. The FWS develops an annual Federal Register that imposes regulatory oversight. Within the Federal Register structure, GFP can impose more conservative hunting seasons, but cannot make hunting seasons more liberal. Some regulations are duck and goose unit boundaries, days that species can be hunted, and bag limits. These rules are established by input from cooperative groups called Flyways. South Dakota is included in the Central Flyway with GFP representation.

In the most recent Federal Register, the daily bag limit for pintail was increased from one to three and the bonus blue-winged teal season, occurring at the beginning of the duck season which allows the harvest of two additional teal, was decreased from sixteen to nine days. The pintail bag limit increase is experimental and is designed to evaluate how much pintail harvest affects their populations, which will be closely monitored over the next few years. The teal season was reduced in length because population estimates fell below 5 million which triggers the more conservative season.

Comparison of the 2018 - 2023 duck season statistics

Year	Resident Hunters					Nonresident Hunters				
	Number Hunters	Harvest	Ave Day Hunted	Ave Bag	Satisfaction	Number Hunters	Harvest	Ave Day Hunted	Ave Bag	Satisfaction
2018	10,271	134,307	6.88	13.08	4.99	4,051	41,515	4.31	10.25	5.11
2019	11,295	176,885	7.30	15.66	5.17	4,423	52,225	4.47	11.81	5.38
2020	12,285	190,515	7.75	15.51	5.15	4,274	51,169	4.36	11.97	5.38
2021	10,634	151,207	7.37	14.22	5.10	4,442	47,802	4.28	10.76	5.18
2022	10,417	158,173	7.40	15.18	5.10	4,267	52,082	4.34	12.21	5.40
2023	11,726	189,983	7.40	16.20	5.07	4,594	59,912	4.40	13.04	5.51

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

41:06:16:03. Daily bag limit. For purposes of this section, the term "ducks" includes "mergansers." The daily bag limit is six ducks, unless the person chooses the second-tier option at which the daily bag limit is an aggregate of three ducks or mergansers of any species or gender. The total daily limit of six ducks may include no more than two redheads, one scaup, three wood ducks, ~~one~~ three pintail, two canvasback, and five mallards, of which no more than two may be hen mallards.

During the first ~~16~~ nine days of the season an additional two blue-winged teal may be harvested in addition to the daily bag limit.

The daily bag limit for coots is ~~15~~ fifteen.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Early Fall Canada Goose Chapters 41:06:50

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 9-10, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 3, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 hunting season

**Season Dates:** September 1 - 30, 2025      **Open Area:** Unit 1 (see map below)

**Daily Limit:** 15 Canada Geese      **Possession Limit:** 45 Canada Geese

#### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

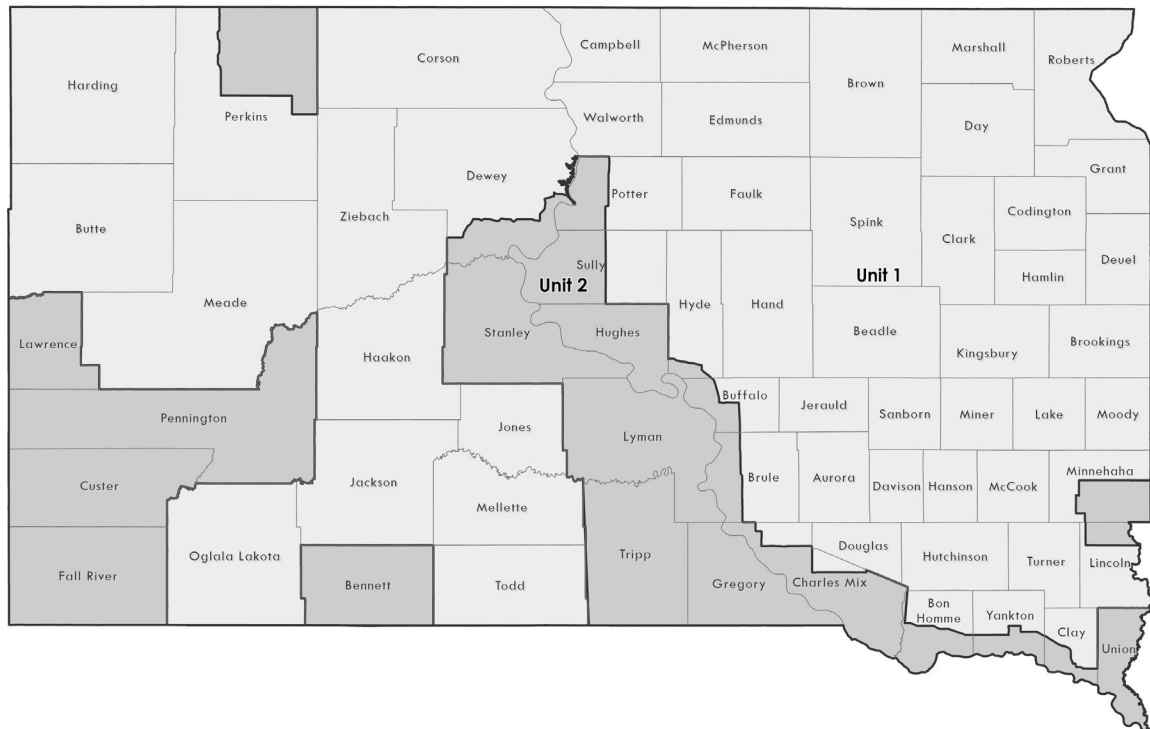
#### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:50:02 to no longer reference Unit 3.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Provided the recommended change to align Canada geese season dates in Unit 3 with Unit 2 is proposed, Unit 3 (Bennett County) would no longer need to be described in rule. The Early Fall Canada Goose season does not occur in Unit 3. However, Unit 3 is referenced in administrative rule for this season. Relevant information regarding Bennett County goose hunting seasons are included below.

Currently goose seasons in Bennett County are open for 65 days from mid-October to late December (Special Canada Goose), 2 days during the early youth waterfowl season, and again for 9 days in January during the regular goose hunting season for a total of 76 days. These season dates are a holdover from when Canada geese were not abundant or widely distributed across South Dakota. The recommendation to incorporate Unit 3 for the regular goose season and Special Canada goose into the current goose Unit 2 will reduce regulatory complexity, remove tagging requirements, and increase opportunity by 31 days. In addition, goose migrations are occurring later and adding Bennett County into Unit 2 begins the goose season at the latest dates authorized under the Federal goose hunting Frameworks.



Comparison of the 2014 - 2023 Early Fall Canada goose harvest statistics

<i><b>Year</b></i>	<i><b>Number Hunters</b></i>	<i><b>Harvest</b></i>	<i><b>Average Season Bag</b></i>
2014	5,106	28,814	5.64
2015	3,883	20,735	5.34
2016	3,366	27,660	8.22
2017	3,226	25,808	8.00
2018	2,716	17,904	6.59
2019	3,000	21,054	7.02
2020	3,857	33,769	8.76
2021	3,671	33,179	9.04
2022	3,034	28,547	9.41
2023	3,008	25,764	8.57

#### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:50:02. Open unit and season dates. Early fall Canada goose hunting season is open September 1 through September 30. This season is open statewide except in Units 2 and 3 as described in § 41:06:16:07.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

#### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Goose Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:16:07

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 9-10, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 3, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025/2026 waterfowl hunting seasons

#### Season Dates:

Canada Geese (and Brant)

Unit 1: October 1 – December 16, 2025

Unit 2: November 3, 2025 – February 15, 2026

Light Geese

Statewide: September 27, 2025 – January 9, 2026

White-fronted Geese

Statewide: September 27 - December 9, 2025

#### Daily Limits:

Canada geese

Unit 1: 8

Unit 2: 4

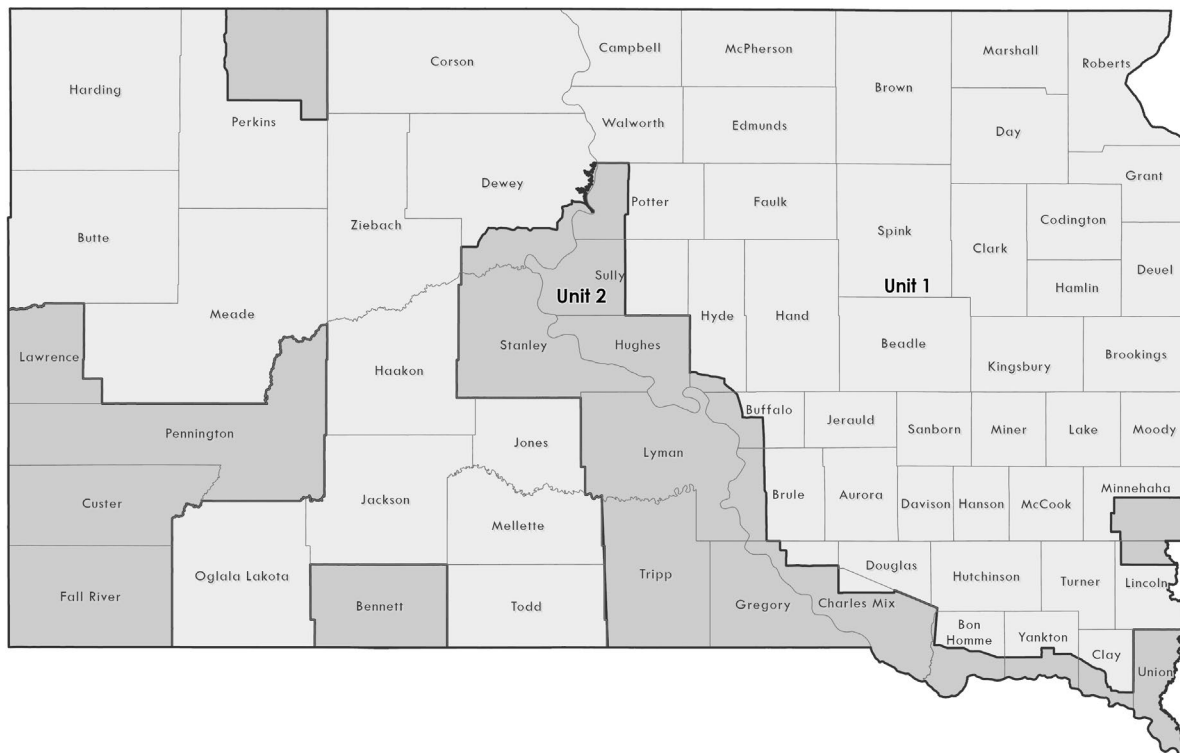
#### Possession Limits:

Light geese: Unlimited

All other geese: Three times the daily limit

Light geese: 50

White-fronted goose: 3



### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:16:07 season dates in Unit 3 to match the season dates in Unit 2 for Canada geese.

### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

The proposed change would modify season dates for Canada geese in Unit 3 to align with Unit 2. This would add 31 days of Canada goose hunting opportunity in Bennett County compared to the currently available 76 days which includes the statewide youth 2-day season, Special Canada Goose Unit 3 65-day season, and January Unit 3 9-day season. While hunters would have more season days to hunt, with nonresidents still restricted to two 5-day periods within the season, the adjustment would no longer permit individuals to hunt from the third Saturday of October through early-November, because the Unit 2 season only initiates in early-November. Per § 41:06:16:07, Unit 2 season dates are for 105 consecutive days preceding and including the Sunday closest to February fifteenth, in addition to the early 2-day youth waterfowl season.

Provided the recommended changes to repeal the Special Canada Goose season in Bennett County Unit 3 and modifications to nonresident waterfowl 10-day unit boundaries are accepted, waterfowl hunters would no longer be required to draw a permit with 3-tags to hunt Canada geese in Bennett County. Rather, nonresidents successful in drawing an NRW-00B license would be able to hunt in Bennett County for the two 5-day periods they choose, provided they fall within the season dates for Unit 2. Likewise, an unlimited number of residents would be able to hunt in Bennett County during the Unit 2 season dates. Canada goose hunters in Bennett County would be restricted to daily and possession limits rather than a 3-goose limit per permit. Previously, hunters in Bennett County were restricted to 800 resident 65-day season-long and 25 nonresident two 5-day period permits. The last time these resident licenses were all sold was in 2021. Since that time, there have been unsold licenses at the end of the season, which explains that the demand for these licenses is limited.

**2025 Season Dates in Unit 3:** January 11 – 19

Comparison of the 2014 - 2023 Canada goose harvest statistics

<i>Year</i>	<i>Resident Hunters</i>					<i>Nonresident Hunters</i>				
	<i>Number Hunters</i>	<i>Harvest</i>	<i>Ave Days Hunted</i>	<i>Ave Bag</i>	<i>Satisfaction</i>	<i>Number Hunters</i>	<i>Harvest</i>	<i>Ave Days Hunted</i>	<i>Ave Bag</i>	<i>Satisfaction</i>
2014	12,130	97,956	6.92	8.08	4.96	1,969	5,193	4.31	2.76	5.22
2015	10,228	73,471	7.00	7.18	4.78	2,104	5,482	4.30	2.70	4.98
2016	9,964	85,809	6.98	8.61	4.87	2,046	5,485	4.51	2.77	4.86
2017	9,762	76,827	6.95	7.87	5.06	2,428	6,601	4.19	2.74	5.18
2018	8,633	63,848	6.67	7.40	4.93	2,289	5,638	4.17	2.52	5.11
2019	9,264	78,143	6.85	8.44	5.09	2,209	5,995	4.05	2.82	5.41
2020	10,356	93,682	6.96	9.05	5.07	2,199	6,924	3.96	3.15	5.38
2021	9,997	104,693	7.20	10.47	5.14	2,357	6,736	4.14	2.89	5.27
2022	8,973	90,680	6.96	10.11	5.07	2,327	8,209	4.11	3.55	5.51
2023	9,361	78,633	6.70	8.40	4.97	2,295	5,925	4.02	2.59	5.48



Comparison of the 2014 - 2023 regular season light goose harvests

Year	Residents					Nonresidents				
	Number Hunters	Harvest	Ave Day Hunted	Ave Bag	Satisfaction	Number Hunters	Harvest	Ave Day Hunted	Ave Bag	Satisfaction
2014	3,572	49,460	5.34	13.85	4.92	514	4,355	4.58	8.47	5.02
2015	3,096	37,266	5.66	12.04	4.78	519	3,492	4.71	6.72	4.83
2016	3,206	39,841	5.41	12.43	4.85	515	5,263	5.40	10.22	4.77
2017	4,159	70,772	6.05	17.02	5.09	1,013	13,972	4.27	13.80	5.22
2018	3,099	39,624	5.40	12.79	4.93	883	6,644	4.39	7.53	4.85
2019	3,060	41,524	4.85	13.57	5.18	774	5,714	4.61	7.38	5.55
2020	3,415	43,499	5.61	12.74	5.17	761	5,473	3.92	7.20	5.27
2021	2,799	50,282	5.51	17.97	5.26	788	8,980	4.15	11.40	5.38
2022	3,182	72,756	5.83	22.87	5.06	852	10,267	4.01	12.05	5.64
2023	3,781	74,048	5.64	19.58	5.13	1,224	18,692	3.97	15.27	5.58

Comparison of the 2014 - 2023 white-fronted goose harvests

Year	Residents				Nonresidents			
	Number Hunters	Harvest	Ave Days Hunted	Ave Bag, Season	Number Hunters	Harvest	Ave Days Hunted	Ave Bag, Season
2014	951	1,378	6.13	1.45	244	151	4.80	0.62
2015	1,097	1,618	5.93	1.47	275	201	5.20	0.73
2016	992	1,707	6.43	1.72	295	176	5.52	0.60
2017	1,185	2,286	6.30	1.93	354	292	5.00	0.83
2018	1,262	2,428	5.67	1.92	426	293	4.83	0.69
2019	1,015	2,176	4.60	2.14	358	601	4.78	1.68
2020	1,256	2,804	7.05	2.23	283	359	4.26	1.27
2021	1,358	3,748	5.61	2.76	466	1,071	4.33	2.30
2022	1,494	3,939	6.64	2.64	470	935	3.88	1.99
2023	2,117	6,392	5.92	3.02	642	1,484	4.14	2.31

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:16:07. Goose hunting season, Conservation Order, and August Management Take established -- Shooting hours -- Exceptions -- Open units -- Closed areas. The light goose hunting season is open statewide for one hundred and five consecutive days beginning on the last Saturday of September. A Conservation Order is open statewide from the day after Unit 2 dark goose season ends to May fifteenth. Only light geese, as defined in § 41:06:16:06.01, may be taken during a Conservation Order.

As used in this article, a Conservation Order is a Congressional Order which amends the Fish and Wildlife Service regulations based on a 1999 Congressional action (Pub. L. No. 106-108,) effectively reinstating regulations intended to reduce the population of mid-continent light geese.

Additionally, an August Management Take for the taking of Canada geese is open to South Dakota residents beginning on the third Saturday of August through August thirty-first in Meade County south of South Dakota Highway 34, Pennington County west of the Cheyenne River, and the counties of Brown, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Edmunds, Faulk, Hamlin, Grant, Marshall, McPherson, Roberts, and Spink.

The white-fronted goose season is open statewide for seventy-four consecutive days beginning on the last Saturday of September.

The dark goose season is open statewide as specifically provided for in this section ~~and the special Canada goose hunting units in § 41:06:16:08:~~

(1) Unit 1: the counties of Aurora, Beadle, Brookings, Brown, Butte, Campbell, Clark, Codington, Corson, Davison, Day, Deuel, Douglas, Edmunds, Faulk, Grant, Haakon, Hamlin, Hand, Hanson, Harding, Hutchinson, Jackson, Jerauld, Jones, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, McPherson, Marshall, Meade, Mellette, Moody, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, Todd, Turner, Walworth, and Ziebach; that portion of Dewey County north of Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 8, Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 9, and the section of U.S. Highway 212 east of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 8 junction; that portion of Potter County east of U.S. Highway 83; that portion of Sully County east of U.S. Highway 83; portions of Hyde, Buffalo, Brule, Charles Mix, and Bon Homme counties north and east of a line beginning at the Hughes-Hyde county line on State Highway 34, east to Lees Boulevard, southeast to the State Highway 34, east seven miles to 350<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south to Interstate 90 on 350<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south and east on State Highway 50 to Geddes, east on 285<sup>th</sup> Street to U.S. Highway 281, north on U.S. Highway 281 to the Charles Mix-Douglas county boundary; the portion of Bon Homme County north of State Highway 50, the portions of Yankton and Clay counties north of County Highway 585 (306<sup>th</sup> Street) to U.S. Highway 81, then north on U.S. Highway 81 to 303<sup>rd</sup> Street, then east on 303<sup>rd</sup> Street to 444<sup>th</sup> Avenue, then south on 444<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 305<sup>th</sup> Street, then east on Bluff Road (305<sup>th</sup> Street) to County Highway 19, south to State Highway 50 and east to the Clay/Union County line; the portion of Perkins County west of State Highway 75 and south of State Highway 20; that portion of Lincoln County west of State Highway 17 and south of County Highway 116 (Klondike Road); and the portion of Minnehaha County north of a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Minnesota state line and County Highway 122 (254<sup>th</sup> Street) west to its junction with County Highway 149 (464<sup>th</sup> Avenue), the portion west of County Highway 149 (464<sup>th</sup> Avenue) to Hartford, the portion west of County Highway 151 (463<sup>rd</sup> Avenue) to State Highway 42, the portion south of State Highway 42 to State Highway 17, and the portion west of State Highway 17 to the Minnehaha-Lincoln county boundary. The season is open for one hundred and seven consecutive days, less the number of days set aside for the Early Fall Canada Goose season established in chapter 41:06:50 ~~that begins on October first;~~

(2) Unit 2: those portions of the state not described in Unit 1 ~~and Unit 3~~. The season is open for one hundred and five consecutive days preceding and including the Sunday closest to February fifteenth; and

~~—(3) Unit 3: Bennett County. The season is open for nine consecutive days beginning on the second Saturday of January.~~

Except for the light goose Conservation Order, shooting hours for geese are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset daily. The shooting hours for the light goose Conservation Order are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset daily.

#### **RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

1. The Issue – Regulation complexity and requirements to obtain Canada goose permits to harvest geese in Bennett County, Unit 3.
2. Historical Considerations – This was originally established to limit Canada goose harvest and hunters. However, there is no longer a concern of overharvest in this area and permits for this unit do not sell out.
3. Biological Considerations – There is no concern this will result in a biological impact to the Canada goose population in the area.
4. Social Considerations – This will increase hunting opportunity and simplify regulation complexity for waterfowl hunters.
5. Financial considerations – NA.

### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No, it increases their ability to participate.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Provides more hunting opportunity without compromising the resource or hunting experience.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Special Canada Goose Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:16, 41:06:03

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 9-10, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 3, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** Beginning in 2025 hunting season

#### **Proposed changes from last year:**

- (1) Repeal § 41:06:16:08 to allow hunting in this area with an appropriate waterfowl license without the requirement to obtain a permit specific to Bennett County.
- (2) Modify § 41:06:16:09 to remove language describing bag limits, permit requirements, and application process for CGW-11A Special Canada Goose. Bennett County would default to Canada Goose season dates and bag limits for Unit 2.
- (3) Modify § 41:06:03:01 to remove the reference to a locking seal requirement for Canada geese based on repealing this season, which had required goose tags.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Waterfowl hunters would no longer be required to draw a goose permit with 3-tags per permit to hunt Canada geese in Bennett County. Rather, nonresidents successful in drawing an NRW-00B license would be able to hunt in Bennett County for the two 5-day periods they choose, provided they fall within the season dates for Unit 2 and they adhere to the daily and possession bag limits. Likewise, an unlimited number of residents would be able to hunt in Bennett County during the Unit 2 season dates and allowed to harvest Canada geese according to the daily and possession bag limits. Previously, hunters in Bennett County were restricted to 800 resident 65-day season-long and 25 nonresident two 5-day period permits.

Provided the recommended change to align Canada geese season dates in Unit 3 with Unit 2 is accepted, this would also add 31 days of hunting opportunity in Bennett County compared to the currently available 76 days which include the statewide youth 2-day season, Special Canada Goose Unit 3 65-day season, and January Unit 3 9-day season. While hunters would have more season days to hunt, with nonresidents still restricted to two 5-day periods within the season, the adjustment would no longer permit individuals to hunt from the third Saturday of October through early November, when the Unit 2 season initiates. Per § 41:06:16:07, Unit 2 season dates are for 105 consecutive days preceding and including the Sunday closest to February fifteenth, in addition to the early 2-day youth waterfowl season.

#### **2024 Season Information:**

**Season Dates:** October 19 – December 22, 2024

**Open Area:** Bennett County (Unit 3)

**Licenses:** 800 permits with 3-tags per permit

Table 1. License and harvest data from resident Special Canada Goose season.

Year	Licenses Available	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice Applicants	Licenses Sold	Geese Harvested
2005	800	754	797	884
2006	800	799	800	1,136
2007	800	828	800	1,016
2008	800	740	800	720
2009	800	665	800	589
2010	800	524	800	810
2011	800	429	800	952
2012	800	406	800	1,139
2013	800	468	799	671
2014	800	412	800	585
2015	800	390	801	635
2016	800	370	799	410
2017	800	289	800	933
2018	800	241	799	598
2019	800	241	789	676
2020	800	188	754	731
2021	800	169	799	779
2022	800	170	666	480
2023	800	160	647	408
2024	800	178	560	NA

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:16:08. Special Canada goose hunting unit established -- Limited permits -- Application. Repealed. Unit CGW-11A: Bennett County, including tribal trust lands, is open for the special Canada goose hunting season for 65 consecutive days beginning on the third Saturday of October; 800 permits with three tags per permit.

-

~~— A person may not hunt Canada goose unless the person has been issued a special permit and tags. Each tag is valid for taking one Canada goose consistent with the provisions of § 41:06:16:09. Each goose must be tagged immediately upon retrieval.~~

-

~~— Half of the permits are available to persons with land-occupant preference. If licenses remain unsold following an initial first-come, first-served period, a person already holding a license may apply for up to two additional licenses.~~

41:06:16:09. Bag and possession limits on geese. ~~The daily bag limit in the special Canada goose hunting unit established in § 41:06:16:08 may include no more than 50 light geese, three geese that may be a combination of Canada geese and black Brant, and three white-fronted geese.~~

The daily bag limit in Unit 1 during the goose hunting season may include no more than 50 light geese, eight geese that may be a combination of Canada geese and black Brant, and three white-fronted geese. The daily bag limit in Unit 2 during the goose hunting season may include no more than 50 light geese, four geese that may be a combination of Canada geese and black Brant, and three white-fronted geese. ~~The daily bag limit in Unit 3 during the goose hunting season may include no more than 50 light geese, and four geese that may be a combination of Canada geese and black Brant.~~ The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit, except there is no possession limit for light geese.

There is no daily bag or possession limit for light geese taken during a Conservation Order.

During the August Management Take, the daily bag limit is 15 Canada geese. There is no possession limit for Canada geese during the August Management Take.

41:06:03:01. Tagging required. The locking seal issued with each big game license, or swan license, ~~or special Canada goose license~~ is an adhesive tag. The licensee shall sign the tag and date it by cutting out completely the month and day of the date of kill only. The licensee shall attach the tag securely around one leg of a mountain lion, turkey, or swan, ~~or goose~~. The licensee shall attach the tag securely to all hoofed big game animals:

- (1) Around one hind leg between the hoof and ankle joint;
- (2) Around the hock tendon directly above the ankle joint on one hind leg; or
- (3) Around the base of the antler or horn.

#### **RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

1. The Issue – Regulation complexity and requirements to obtain a 3-tag Canada goose permit to harvest geese in Bennett County, Unit 3.
2. Historical Considerations – This was originally established to limit Canada goose harvest and hunters. However, there is no longer a concern of overharvest in this area and permits for this unit do not sell out.
3. Biological Considerations – There is no concern this will result in a biological impact to the Canada goose population in the area.
4. Social Considerations – This will increase hunting opportunity and simplify regulation complexity for waterfowl hunters.
5. Financial considerations – Permits will not be sold for Bennett County.

#### **RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No, it increases their ability to participate.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Provides more hunting opportunity without compromising the resource or hunting experience.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Permits will not be sold for Bennett County Unit 3 Special Canada Goose Hunting season.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Seasons Chapter 41:06:16:11

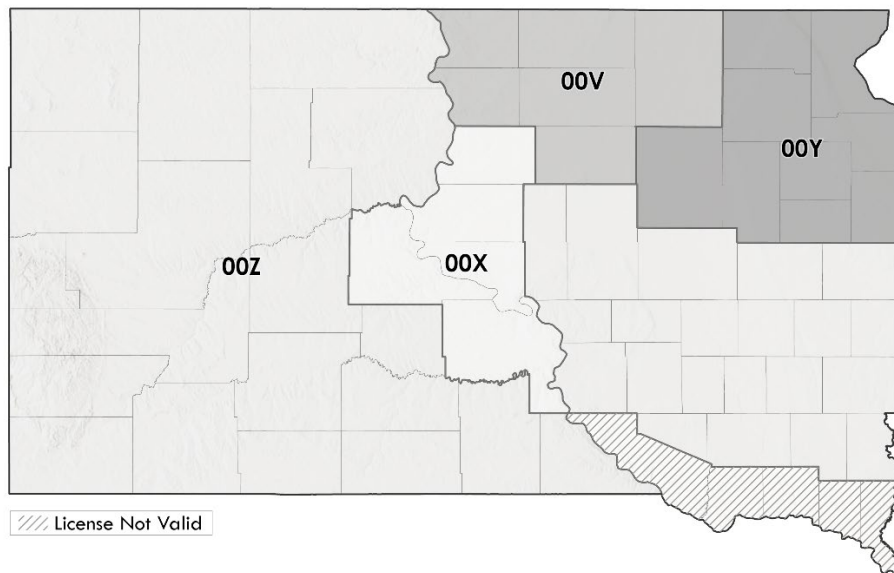
Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 9-10, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 3, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

### PROPOSED CHANGES

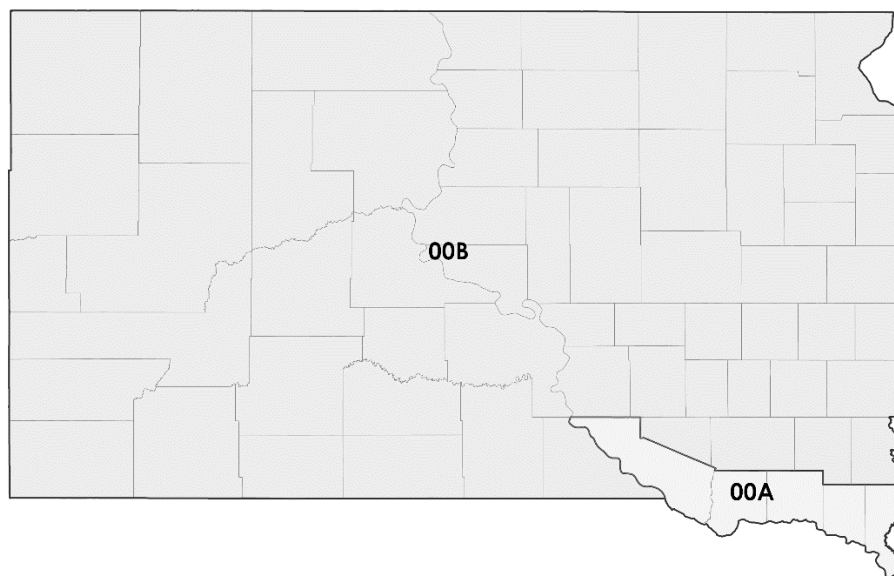
**Duration:** 2025/2026 waterfowl hunting seasons

**Licenses:** Nonresidents: Limited in all units and seasons. 6,300 licenses.

Current 3-day Nonresident Waterfowl Units



Current 10-day Nonresident Waterfowl Units



**Proposed changes from last year:**

Move 25 nonresident licenses from NRW-11A to NRW-00B to accommodate repealing Special Canada Goose Hunting Season (Unit 3; 11A).

**Nonresident Waterfowl System**

Season/Unit	Private/Public	Length	Description	2024 Licenses	Recommended 2025 Licenses
NRW-00A	Public and Private	Season long	Bon Homme, Charles Mix, Clay, Union, and Yankton counties	250	250
NRW-00B	Public and Private	Two 5-day periods	Statewide except 00A and 11A	3,925	3,950
<del>NRW-11A</del>	<del>Public and Private</del>	<del>Two 5-day periods</del>	<del>Bennett County</del>	<del>25</del>	<del>0</del>
NRW-00V	Private	3 day	Brown, Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson and Walworth counties	550	550
NRW-00X	Private	3 day	Hughes, Lyman, Potter, Stanley and Sully counties	750	750
NRW-00Y	Public and Private	3 day	Clark, Codington, Day, Duel, Grant, Hamlin, Marshall, Roberts and Spink counties	500	500
NRW-00Z	Private	3 day	Statewide except Unit 00A, 00X, 00V, and 00Y. and 11A	300	300
<b>Total</b>				<b>6,300</b>	<b>6,300</b>

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

Provided the recommended changes to align Canada geese season dates in Unit 3 with Unit 2 and repeal the Special Canada Goose Hunting Season are accepted, 25 nonresident licenses are recommended to be moved from NRW-11A to nonresident hunting unit NRW-00B. This recommended change will not result in a change to the total number of nonresident waterfowl hunters/licenses.

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:16:11. Maximum number of nonresident waterfowl licenses -- Open units -- Dates -- License restrictions. The maximum number of nonresident waterfowl licenses to be issued by lottery is four thousand two hundred special nonresident waterfowl licenses, two thousand early fall Canada goose temporary nonresident licenses, two thousand one hundred fall three-day temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses, one hundred nonresident youth waterfowl licenses, and ten thousand spring snow goose temporary nonresident licenses divided for administrative purposes as follows:

(1) Unit NRW-00A: the counties of Union, Clay, Yankton, Bon Homme, and Charles Mix. No more than two hundred and fifty special nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued;

(2) Unit NRW-00B: all open counties not in Units NRW-00A or NRW-11A. No more than three thousand, nine hundred and ~~twenty-five~~ fifty special nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued;

(3) Unit NRW-00C: those units as described in § 41:06:50:02. No more than two thousand early fall Canada goose temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued;

~~—(4) Unit NRW-11A: Bennett County. No more than twenty-five special nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued. The season in this unit is open for sixty-five consecutive days beginning on the third Saturday of October and during any period that Bennett County is open in January as described in subdivision 41:06:16:07(3);~~

~~(5)~~ (4) Unit NRW-00X: the counties of Potter, Stanley, Sully, Hughes, and Lyman. No more than seven hundred and fifty fall three-day, temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued. The licenses issued pursuant to this subdivision are valid only on private property;

~~(6)~~ (5) Unit NRW-00V: the counties of Brown, Campbell, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, and Walworth. No more than five hundred and fifty fall three-day, temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued. The licenses issued pursuant to this subdivision are valid only on private property;

~~(7)~~ (6) Unit NRW-00Y: the counties of Spink, Marshall, Roberts, Day, Grant, Clark, Codington, Deuel, and Hamlin. No more than five hundred three-day, temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued;

~~(8)~~ (7) Unit NRW-00Z: statewide except the counties in Units NRW-00A, ~~NRW-11A~~, NRW-00V, NRW-00X and NRW-00Y. No more than three hundred fall three-day, temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses may be issued. The licenses issued pursuant to this subdivision are valid only on private property;

~~(9)~~ (8) Unit NRW-ST1: statewide. No more than ten thousand spring snow goose temporary nonresident licenses may be issued. The licenses issued pursuant to this subdivision are valid only during a Conservation Order issued pursuant to 50 CFR § 21.180;

~~(10)~~ (9) Unit NYW-YW1: statewide. No more than one hundred nonresident youth waterfowl licenses may be issued for the youth waterfowl season established in § 41:06:49:01. A nonresident youth may also hunt during the youth waterfowl season, with a valid waterfowl hunting license, as provided for in this section.

Licenses issued under this section are valid only in the unit for which they are issued. ~~Licenses for Unit NRW-11A include two tags for Canada geese. Each tag is valid for taking one Canada goose, consistent with the provisions of § 41:06:16:09. Each goose must be tagged immediately upon retrieval.~~

## RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue – Regulation complexity and requirements to obtain Canada goose permits to harvest geese in Bennett County, Unit 3.
2. Historical Considerations – This was originally established to limit Canada goose harvest and hunters. However, there is no longer a concern of overharvest in this area and permits for this unit do not sell out.
3. Biological Considerations – There is no concern this will result in a biological impact to the Canada goose population in the area.
4. Social Considerations – This will increase hunting opportunity and simplify regulation complexity for waterfowl hunters.
5. Financial considerations – NA.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Mountain Lion Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:61

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>January 9-10, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 3, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 3-4, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

#### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** Beginning in 2025

**Season Dates:** Black Hills Fire Protection District:  
December 26, 2024 – April 30, 2025  
December 26, 2025 – April 30, 2026

Outside Black Hills Fire Protection District:  
December 26, 2024 - December 25, 2025  
December 26, 2025 – December 25, 2026

**Open unit:** Statewide

**Licenses:** Unlimited (1 license per individual), residents only

**Harvest Limit:** Black Hills Fire Protection District: 60 mountain lions or 40 female mountain lions (includes Custer State Park)

#### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. No person may harvest more than one (1) mountain lion in a season.
2. No person may hunt mountain lions with the aid of traps or bait.
3. Shooting hours are ½ hour before sunrise to ½ hour after sunset.
4. No mountain lion with a spotted coat (kitten) and no mountain lion accompanying another mountain lion may be harvested.
5. A person may use an electronic call to hunt mountain lions.
6. All firearms, muzzleloaders, and archery equipment must meet the same minimum requirements as established in administrative rule for deer hunting.
7. The Game, Fish and Parks Commission, by resolution, may authorize the mountain lion season to extend beyond April 30.
8. The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is only allowed during those specified hunting intervals in Custer State Park that permit the use of dogs, and year-round outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District.
9. In Custer State Park, a person using dogs shall attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion they have a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except under the condition where the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation.
10. Licensed hunters must accompany the dog handler when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt thereafter until the hunt is completed.
11. Custer State Park is closed to mountain lion hunting except for 75 mountain lion licensees who possess a valid mountain lion license and a temporary access permit structured to include:
  - (a) Four hunting intervals each having 15 access permits in which hunting with dogs is not allowed.
  - (b) Five hunting intervals each having three access permits in which hunting with dogs is allowed.

- (c) Hunting in Custer State Park shall begin with an interval that allows the use of dogs and rotate every 14 days with an interval that does not allow the use of dogs until the lion season closes in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. The temporary access permits are issued free-of-cost and may be issued by a random drawing.
- 12. All mountain lions harvested within the Black Hills must be presented to a department representative at the Rapid City Regional Office or Custer State Park Headquarters within 24 hours of harvest for inspection. Any person who harvests a mountain lion outside of the Black Hills region must present the mountain lion to a department representative within 24 hours of harvest.

#### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:61:06 to allow the initiation of the pursuit of a mountain lion with dogs outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District to occur anywhere, where permitted by the landowner. Because this season is open year-round, this change would become effective twenty days after the modified rule is filed with the Secretary of State's Office.
2. Modify § 41:06:61:06 to exclude examples of closed areas Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Park, and Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

#### **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

The rule change would allow more mountain lion hunting opportunity on the prairie because the restriction of where the pursuit may initiate outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District will be removed. This may result in increased harvest of mountain lions on the prairie of South Dakota.

#### **DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

41:06:61:06. Application requirements -- License and season restrictions -- Special conditions -- Carcass check-in procedures. The following requirements, restrictions, special conditions, and procedures apply to all applications for license and to all licenses issued under this chapter:

- (1) Only residents of the state may apply for a license;
- (2) No person may harvest more than one mountain lion in a season;
- (3) No person may harvest or attempt to harvest a mountain lion with a spotted coat or any mountain lion accompanying another mountain lion;
- (4) No person may hunt mountain lions with the aid of traps or bait;
- (5) The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is allowed only during those specified hunting intervals in Custer State Park that allow the use of dogs; and year-round outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District ~~when on private land, with permission of the landowner or lessee. However, a pursuit of a mountain lion by dogs that originates on private land may cross over or culminate on private land, with permission from the landowner or lessee, or on public land, unless expressly prohibited by the managing entity;~~
- (6) No person may release dogs on tracks indicating multiple mountain lions traveling together;
- (7) In Custer State Park, a person using dogs shall attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion the person has a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except under the condition in which the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation;
- (8) Licensed hunters must accompany the dog handler when the dogs are released and must continuously participate in the hunt until the hunt is completed;
- (9) A person may use any firearm, muzzleloader, or bow and arrow established by statute or administrative rule as legal implements for the taking of deer; and
- ~~—(10) Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Park, and Mount Rushmore National Memorial are closed to mountain lion hunting; and~~

~~(11)~~ (10) All mountain lions harvested must be presented to a department representative within 24 hours of harvest for inspection.

#### **RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

1. The Issue – NA
2. Historical Considerations – Historically, mountain lion hunting outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District was established to mitigate mountain lion depredation on private land and there was concern with hounds originating on public land potentially causing conflict with other users.
3. Biological Considerations – More mountain lions may be harvested because pursuit of mountain lions can initiate anywhere on the prairie, with permission.
4. Social Considerations – NA
5. Financial considerations – NA

#### **RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? The change will remove restrictions where a chase for hunting lions may initiate.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_





## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Boating Regulations Chapter 41:04:05.02 and 41:04:05.03

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	Jan 9-10, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	March 6, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

#### COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Amend two boating rules to be in harmony with the current United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). This was a recommendation made to the Department by the US Coast Guard (USCG) upon completion of their audit of the Departments use of Federal funds.

#### DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED CHANGES FROM PROPOSAL

None.

#### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

First, there has been a change in the language at the Federal level to provide more clarity for users and law enforcement officers in regard to personal flotation devices that must be worn. Second, there was some clarifying language at the Federal level to ensure that required fire extinguishers be in serviceable condition and not expired. These changes will place South Dakota rules ARSD 41:04:05.02.01 and ARSD 41:04:05.03 in compliance with 33 CFR 175.15 (a) (2) and (3) and 33 CFR 175.310 (3) and (4). The U.S. Coast Guard will conduct another review in three years (2027) to ensure appropriate changes were made.

#### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

**41:04:05:02.01. Personal flotation device use required.** If a boat is operated at ~~greater than no-wake~~ greater-than-no-wake speed, personal flotation device use on the boat is required as follows:

(1) The operator of the boat shall ~~assure~~ ensure that each child on board under the age of seven-years-of-age is wearing a Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device, ~~unless such the child is within in~~ unless the child is within a cabin or below deck; and

(2) Any ~~person~~ individual who claims a ~~Type V Hybrid~~ hybrid or an inflatable personal flotation device as ~~his or her~~ the individual's life jacket personal flotation device of choice shall ~~wear the device unless the person is within a cabin or below deck~~ use that personal flotation device in accordance with any requirements on the approval label or in the owner's manual.

**Source:** 29 SDR 21, effective August 26, 2002.

**General Authority:** SDCL 32-3A-1(1).

**Law Implemented:** SDCL 32-3A-1(1).

**41:04:05:03. Fire extinguishers required -- Exception.** ~~A working fire extinguisher with the that bears an unexpired U.S. Coast Guard stamp of approval of the U.S. Coast Guard and is in serviceable condition~~ is required on ~~boats~~ a motorboat operated on public waters as follows:

(1) Each Class A or Class 1 motorboat must carry at least one fire extinguisher of B-I type or larger;

(2) Each Class 2 motorboat must carry at least two fire extinguishers of B-I type or larger; and

(3) Each Class 3 motorboat must carry at least one B-II type and one B-I type or three B-I type fire extinguishers; ~~or.~~

~~(4) A Class A or Class 1 motorboat less than 26 feet long and not carrying passengers for hire is exempt from the requirements of this section if the construction of the boat will not permit the entrapment of explosive or flammable gases or vapors.~~

**Source:** SL 1975, ch 16, § 1; 10 SDR 76, 10 SDR 102, effective July 1, 1984; 16 SDR 32, effective August 20, 1989; 23 SDR 197, effective May 27, 1997; 38 SDR 178, effective April 30, 2012; 46 SDR 74, effective December 2, 2019.

**General Authority:** SDCL 32-3A-1(1).

**Law Implemented:** SDCL 32-3A-1(1).

**Cross-Reference:** Classification of boats for equipment purposes, SDCL 32-3A-18.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

#### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:56

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	January 9-10, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 3, 2025	Pierre
	Finalization	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 hunting season

**Season Dates:** September 1 – December 31

**Open unit:** Units 2, 4, and Custer State Park. See unit map for boundaries.

**Licenses:** 2025 license numbers are recommended on following agenda item.

10 “ram bighorn sheep” licenses were available in 2024.

One of the licenses shall be an auction “ram bighorn sheep” license if a minimum of three total bighorn sheep licenses are allocated.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Except for the auction license, application for a license may be made by any resident hunter who has not been previously issued a bighorn sheep license in South Dakota.
2. Landowner - operator preference is not applicable to these licenses.
3. All licensees are required to attend an orientation meeting prior to the first day of hunting by the license holder at the regional office in Rapid City.
4. One bighorn sheep license may be allocated as an auction license if a minimum of three bighorn licenses are approved by the Commission. The Commission shall determine in which unit or units the auction license is valid.
5. All successful hunters must submit their bighorn sheep to a designated department representative for inspection and marking within 24 hours after the kill.

### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:56:02 to expand the unit boundary for BHS-BH4 to include those portions of Lawrence and Meade counties west of Interstate 90 (Figures 1 and 2) and clean-up unit descriptions.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The Hell Canyon unit (BHS-BH4) bighorn sheep herd is currently experiencing a *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* related die-off and only seven rams have been documented in this herd in November and December 2024 compared to 22 ewes and 7 lambs. For the 2024 hunting season, the BHS-BH4 unit was expanded to include bighorn sheep near Rapid City. Like Rapid City, bighorn sheep in Deadwood may not be available for harvest, depending on their location and land ownership. The Department's recommendation is to again expand BHS-BH4 to include additional areas to hunt in

2025. Specifically, the recommendation is to expand the unit into Lawrence and Meade counties west of I-90 to encompass the Deadwood bighorn sheep population.

Reports of sheep with symptoms indicative of *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* in Custer State Park have been documented, although the disease related die-off is not perceived to be as significant of that in Hell Canyon. However, only 9 of 60 bighorn sheep in Custer State Park were rams in 2024 compared to 47 ewes and 4 lambs. It is unknown whether these low ram counts are the result of disease, harvest, migration, inability to detect animals, or a combination of all four. Regardless, the recommendation will be conservative to ensure adequate adult ram survival in this herd.

Table 1. Minimum bighorn sheep counts by hunting unit.

Season	Unit	Herd	2023 Min. Count	2024 Min. Count
Custer State Park (CBS)	CU1	CSP	61	60
Bighorn Sheep (BHS)	BH2	Elk Mountain	58	70
	BH3	Badlands	66	65
	BH4	Hell Canyon and Rapid City	130	67
No Current Hunting Unit		Deadwood	26	23
Auction	All	All	NA	NA
<b>Total</b>			<b>341</b>	<b>285</b>

Figure 1. Custer State Park (CBS-CU1) and bighorn sheep units (BHS-BH2, BHS-BH3, BHS-BH4).

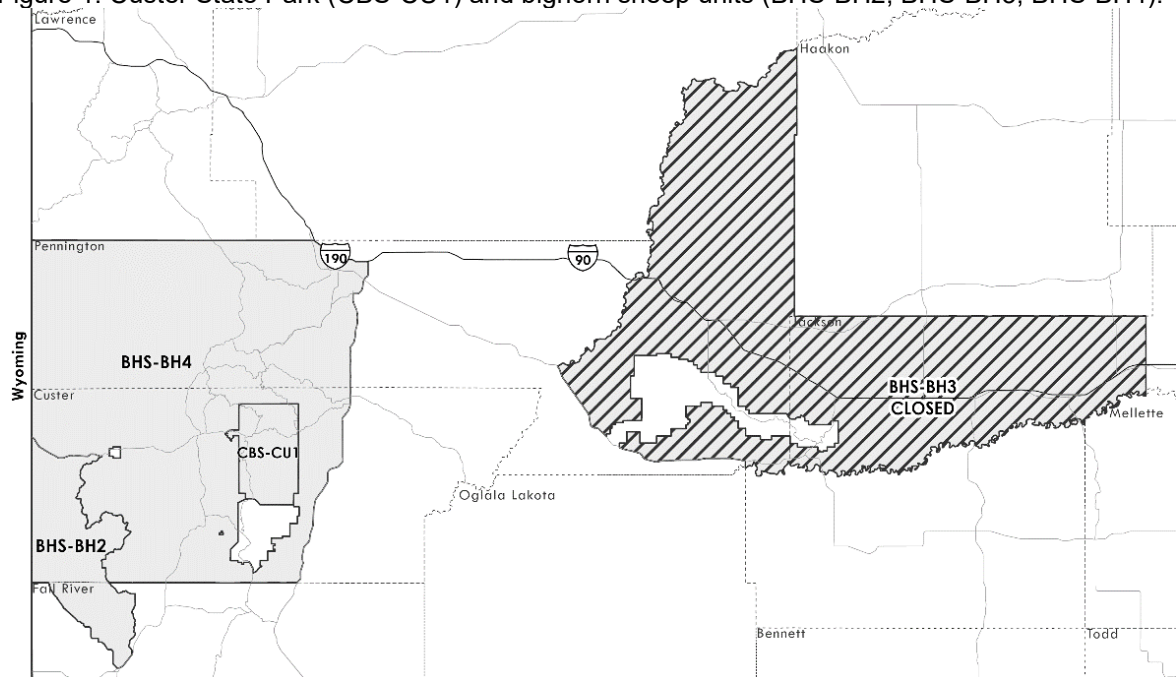
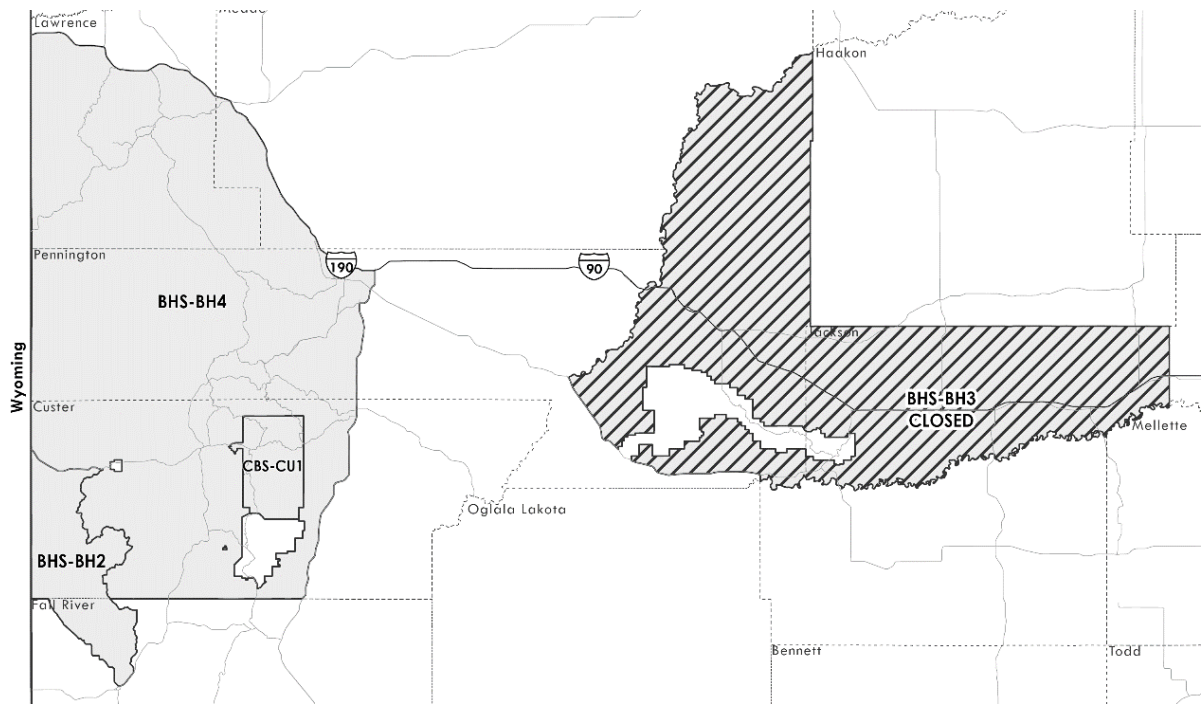


Figure 2. Proposed expansion to BHS-BH4 for 2025 hunting seasons.



## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:56:02. Open units. The open units for the bighorn sheep hunting season are as follows:

- (1) Unit BHS-BH2: that portion of Custer and Fall River Counties within a line beginning at the junction of U.S. Highway 16 and the Wyoming state line, east on U.S. Highway 16 to the intersection of U.S. Highway 16 and Mann Road (USFS Road 270) then south along Mann Road to Pass Creek Road (USFS Road 272) then south on Pass Creek Road to Richardson Cutoff (USFS Road 276) then east on Richardson Cutoff to Pleasant Valley Road (USFS Road 715) then south on Pleasant Valley Road to Pilger Mountain Road (USFS Road 317) then south on Pilger Mountain Road to County Road 15 then south on County Road 15 to U.S. Highway 18 then west on U.S. Highway 18 to County Road 16 then north on County Road 16 to Dewey Road (USFS Road 769) then north and west on Dewey Road to the Custer County line then west on the Custer County line to the Wyoming state line then north on the Wyoming state line to the point of origin;
- (2) Unit BHS-BH3: that portion of Pennington County east of the Cheyenne River and north of Highway 44 and that portion of Jackson County north of the White River, ~~excluding the Badlands National Park;~~
- (3) Unit BHS-BH4: that portion of Custer, Meade, Lawrence, and Pennington Counties beginning at the junction of the Wyoming/South Dakota state line and Interstate 90, ~~Lawrence County line, and Pennington County line then east on the Pennington County line to Interstate 90~~ then south on Interstate 90 to Elk Vale Road then south on Elk Vale Road to SD Highway 79 then south on SD Highway 79 to the Custer/Fall River County line then west on the Custer/Fall River County line to Pilger Mountain Road then north on Pilger Mountain Road to Pleasant Valley Road then north and east on Pleasant Valley Road to Richardson Cutoff then north on Richardson Cutoff to Pass Creek Road then west and north on Pass Creek Road to Mann Road then north on Mann Road to U.S. Highway 16 then west on U.S. Highway 16 to the Wyoming

state line, then north on the Wyoming state line to the point of origin, excluding ~~Jewel Cave National Monument, Wind Cave National Park, and Custer State Park~~; and

- (4) Unit BHS-CSP: the fenced portion of Custer State Park.

#### **RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

#### **RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, this will open new areas to bighorn sheep hunting.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? This will increase hunting opportunity.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes, by increasing opportunity.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

## Bighorn Sheep Hunting Licenses

### Chapter 41:06:56

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Public Hearing Finalization</b>	<b>April 3, 2024 April 3-4, 2024</b>	<b>Pierre Pierre</b>
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**COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

## 2025 Ram Bighorn Sheep Licenses

Season	Unit	Ram Bighorn Sheep
Custer State Park (CBS)	CU1	2
Bighorn Sheep (BHS)	BH2	3
	BH3	0
	BH4	1
Auction	All	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

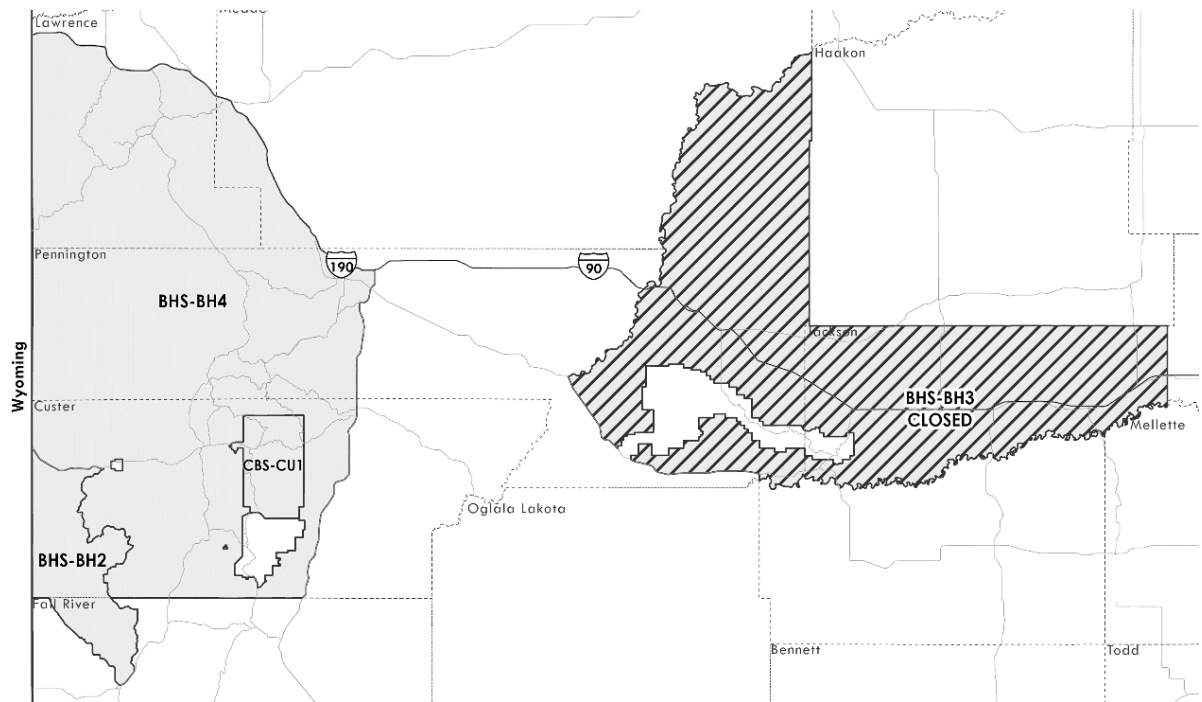
The Hell Canyon bighorn sheep herd is currently experiencing a *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* related die-off and only seven adult rams have been documented in this herd.

The Custer State Park bighorn sheep herd is currently experiencing a *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* related die-off and only nine rams have been documented in this herd.

Table 1. Minimum bighorn sheep counts, previous license allocation (2024) and proposed license allocation (2025) by bighorn sheep hunting unit.

Season	Unit	Herd	2023 Min. Count	2024 Min. Count	Licenses	
					2024	2025
Custer State Park (CBS)	CU1	CSP	61	60	4	2
Bighorn Sheep (BHS)	BH2	Elk Mountain	58	70	3	3
	BH3	Badlands	66	65	0	0
	BH4	Deadwood, Hell Canyon, and Rapid City	156	90	2	1
Auction	All	All	NA	NA	1	1
Total			341	285	10	7

Figure 1. Custer State Park (CBS-CU1), Black Hills bighorn sheep units (BHS-BH2, BHS-BH3, and , BHS-BH4).



APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Prairie Elk Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:01, 41:06:59

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>January 9-10, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 3, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 3-4, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 hunting season

### **2025 Season Dates:**

Units	License Types	Season Dates
PRE-09A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31*
PRE-11B	Any Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 15
PRE-11C	Any Elk	Oct 16 - Nov 30
PRE-11D	Antlerless Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 31
PRE-11E	Antlerless Elk	Nov 1 - Dec 31
PRE-15A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-27A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31*
PRE-35A	Both	Sep 15 - Dec 31
PRE-35B	Both	Sep 15 - Dec 31
PRE-49A	Both	Sep 15 - Oct 31 AND Dec 1 - 31
PRE-WRA	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31

\* Proposal is to change these season dates

**Licenses:** Last year, there were 126 resident “Any Elk” licenses and 210 “Antlerless Elk” licenses for the Prairie Elk seasons.

The Department’s recommendation for a specific number of licenses by tag types for the 2025 hunting season is on the following action sheet.

**Open Areas:** See Figure 1.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. No person may possess more than one (1) elk license of any type, in a year.
2. No more than two persons may submit applications together.
3. Except for landowner/operator preference applicants, no person who receives a license in the first drawing for this season shall be eligible to apply for a Prairie elk license in first drawings for the next nine years.
4. One-half of the licenses allocated in each unit are available for landowner/operator preference application. Only one member of each qualifying landowner/operator household may apply every year.
5. Any elk that is harvested must be inspected by a Department representative within 24 hours after kill.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:59:02 to expand PRE-WRA to include all counties west of the Missouri River not currently in a Prairie Elk or Black Hills Elk hunting unit.
2. Modify § 41:06:59:01 to expand PRE-27A season dates from Oct. 1 to Oct. 31 and Dec. 1 to Dec. 31 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31.
3. Modify § 41:06:01:07.03 and § 41:06:01:15 to include PRE-09A and PRE-27A in Prairie Elk Hunting Season units eligible for a landowner-own-land resident only antlerless elk license.
4. Modify § 41:06:59:01 to expand PRE-09A season dates from Sep. 15 to Oct. 31 and Dec. 1 to Dec. 31 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

Elk have expanded into new areas and there is hunting opportunity in new counties. On the prairie there are increasing depredation concerns and complaints from landowners, especially where there is agriculture such as corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. Expanding the PRE-WRA hunting unit will allow landowners in additional counties to harvest elk on their property with landowner-own-land antlerless resident-only elk licenses, in addition to more counties open to hunting using a limited draw PRE-WRA any elk or antlerless elk hunting license. The Department's recommendation is to increase license numbers to a level that allows management of elk at a very low density. Because most of the land in PRE-WRA is privately owned, landowners will ultimately determine if elk are harvested on their property because they control hunter access. As such, they will have the choice to not harvest elk on their property or use hunters with PRE-WRA licenses or their landowner-own-land antlerless licenses to reduce the local population.

The Departments' recommendation will be to increase license numbers in PRE-WRA. This is expected to decrease antlerless harvest success rates in PRE-WRA, and elk will be managed at a lower population to minimize depredation concerns, as opposed to other prairie units where elk populations are managed at densities that also consider increased recreational opportunity and harvest success.

Elk in PRE-09A and PRE-27A are managed towards social tolerance of landowners and optimizing harvest success. There is a desire from landowners to make landowner-own-land antlerless resident only elk licenses available and allow elk hunting during September and November in PRE-09A and PRE-27A.

Figure 1. Map of 2024 Prairie elk season hunting units.

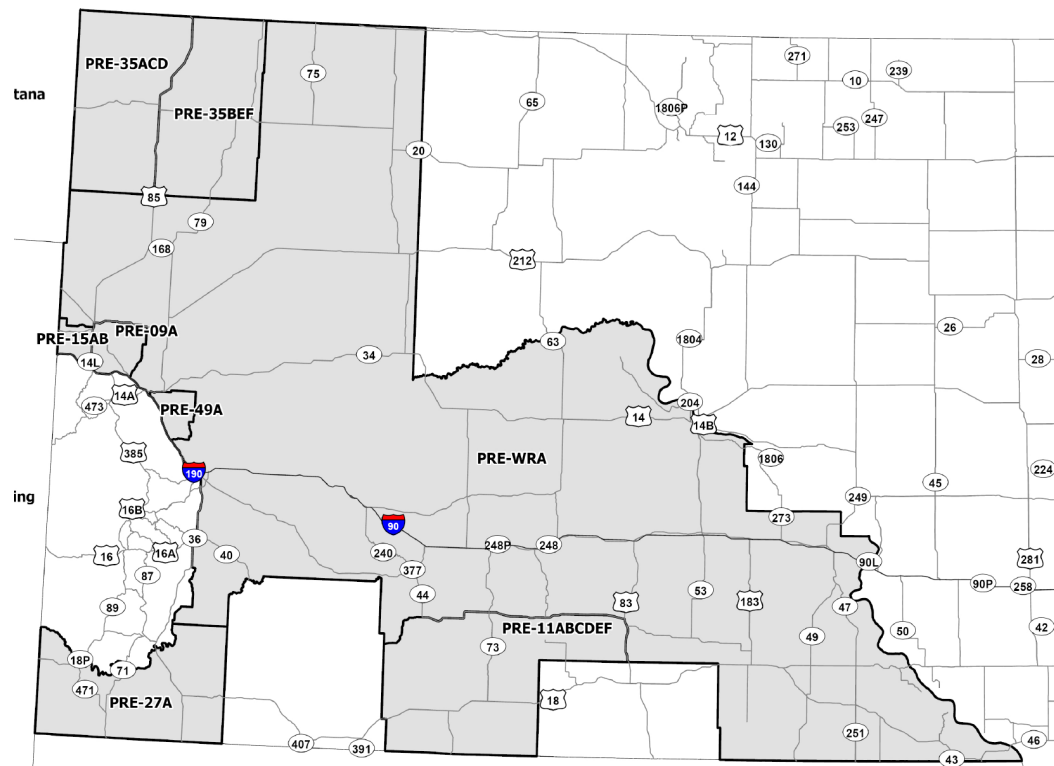


Figure 2. Map of proposed 2025 Prairie elk season hunting units.

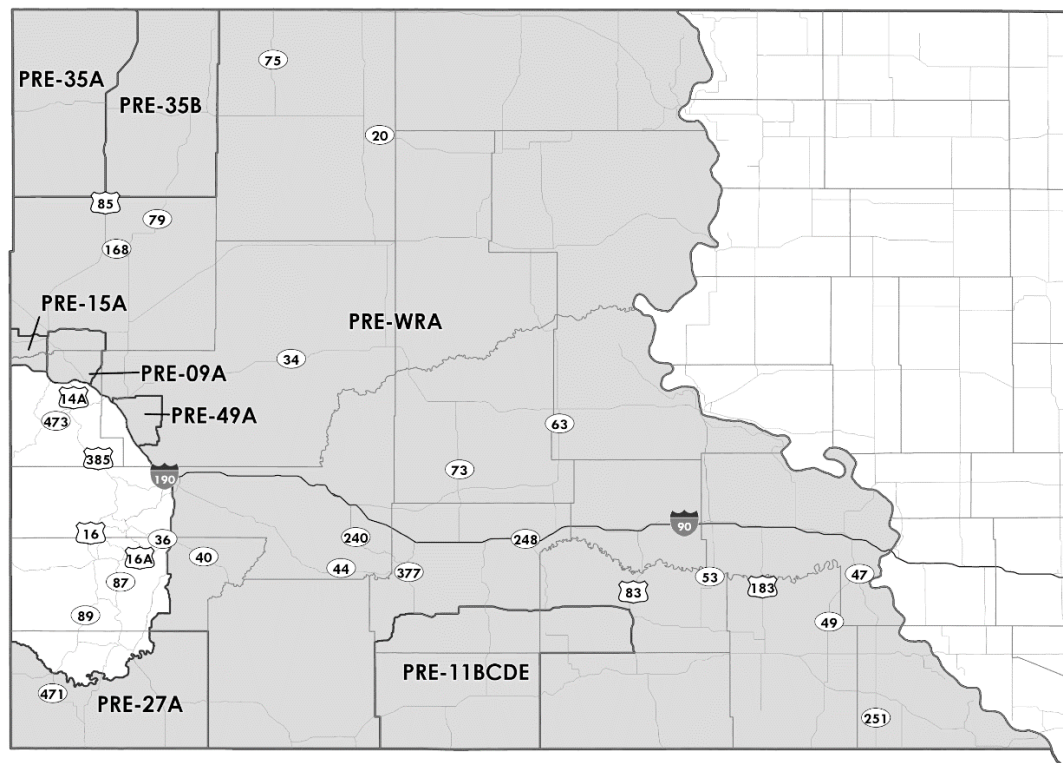


Table 1. Proposed changes to season dates.

Units	License Types	Season Dates
PRE-09A	Both	<del>Sep 15 – Oct 31 AND Dec 1 – 31</del> Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-11B	Any Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 15
PRE-11C	Any Elk	Oct 16 - Nov 30
PRE-11D	Antlerless Elk	Sep 1 - Oct 31
PRE-11E	Antlerless Elk	Nov 1 - Dec 31
PRE-15A	Both	Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-27A	Both	<del>Oct 1 – 31 AND Dec 1 – 31</del> Sep 1 - Dec 31
PRE-35A	Both	Sep 15 - Dec - 31
PRE-35B	Both	Sep 15 - Dec - 31
PRE-49A	Both	Sep 15 - Oct 31 AND Dec 1 - 31
PRE-WRA	Both	Sep 1 - Dec - 31

Table 2. Prairie elk hunters, applicants, harvest success, and harvest by year.

Year	Licensed Hunters	Applicants	Harvest Success Rate	Bulls Harvested	Cows Harvested
2014	92	1,725	64%	33	25
2015	98	2,119	55%	29	25
2016	148	2,272	40%	32	27
2017	149	2,249	50%	41	34
2018	139	3,080	79%	59	51
2019	140	3,831	65%	41	50
2020	251	4,532	57%	56	87
2021	257	4,912	50%	57	71
2022	270	5,037	48%	74	55
2023	258	5,438	51%	78	53
2024	334	6,212	49%	91	73

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:59:01. Prairie elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates. The prairie elk hunting season is open from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day of the season. No more than two hundred "any elk" licenses and no more than four hundred "antlerless elk" licenses may be issued for the prairie elk hunting season. The prairie elk hunting seasons are as follows:

- (1) Unit PRE-09A is open from September ~~fifteenth first~~ through ~~October thirty-first and from December first through~~ December thirty-first;
- (2) Unit PRE-11A is open from July fifteenth through August thirty-first;
- (3) Unit PRE-11B is open from September first through October fifteenth;
- (4) Unit PRE-11C is open from October sixteenth through November thirtieth;
- (5) Unit PRE-11D is open from September first through October thirty-first;
- (6) Unit PRE-11E is open from November first through December thirty-first;
- (7) Unit PRE-11F is open from January first through the last day of February;
- (8) Unit PRE-15A is open from September first through December thirty-first;
- (9) Unit PRE-15B is open from December first through January thirty-first;

- (10) Unit PRE-27A is open from ~~October~~ September first through ~~October thirty-first and from December first through~~ December thirty-first;
- (11) Unit PRE-35A is open from September fifteenth through December thirty-first;
- (12) Unit PRE-35B is open from September fifteenth through December thirty-first;
- (13) Unit PRE-35C is open from October first through November fifteenth;
- (14) Unit PRE-35D is open from November sixteenth through December thirty-first;
- (15) Unit PRE-35E is open from October first through November fifteenth;
- (16) Unit PRE-35F is open from November sixteenth through December thirty-first;
- (17) Unit PRE-49A is open from September fifteenth through October thirty-first and from December first through December thirty-first; and
- (18) Unit PRE-WRA is open from September first through December thirty-first.

41:06:59:02. Open units. The open units for the prairie elk hunting season are as follows:

- (1) Unit PRE-09A: those portions of Lawrence and Butte Counties within a line beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highways 85 and 212, then east on Highway 212 to Whitewood Valley Road, then south on Whitewood Valley Road to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to U.S. Highway 85, then north on U.S. Highway 85 to the point of beginning;
- (2) Unit PRE-11A: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (3) Unit PRE-11B: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (4) Unit PRE-11C: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (5) Unit PRE-11D: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (6) Unit PRE-11E: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (7) Unit PRE-11F: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;
- (8) Unit PRE-15A: the portion of Butte County beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border, east on Sourdough Road to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then north to the point of beginning;
- (9) Unit PRE-15B: the portion of Butte County beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border, east on Sourdough Road to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then north to the point of beginning;
- (10) Unit PRE-27A: the portion of Fall River County not included in BHE-H3 or BHE-H4;
- (11) Units PRE-35A, PRE-35C, and PRE-35D: the portion of Harding County west of U.S. Highway 85;
- (12) Units PRE-35B, PRE-35E, and PRE-35F: the portion of Harding County east of U.S. Highway 85;
- (13) Unit PRE-49A: the portion of Meade County within a line beginning at the junction of Interstate 90 and Elk Creek Road, then east on Elk Creek Road to Ricard Road, then north on Ricard Road to Tilford Road, then east on Tilford Road to Middle Alkalai Road, then north on Middle Alkalai Road to

Alkalai Road, then west on Alkalai Road to SD Highway 34, then west on SD Highway 34 to Interstate 90, then south on Interstate 90 to the point of beginning; and

(14) Unit PRE-WRA: the portion of the state west of the Missouri River not associated with another prairie elk unit, Custer State Park, or any Black Hills elk unit described in 41:06:26., ~~excluding the Lower Brule Indian Reservation and Corson, Dewey, Oglala Lakota, Todd, and Ziebach Counties.~~

41:06:01:07.03. Landowner own land license types. For the West River, East River, and Black Hills firearm deer hunting seasons, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one "any deer" license or one two-tag "any deer" and "any antlerless deer" license. For the antelope firearm hunting season, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one "buck antelope" license. For the prairie elk hunting season units ~~PRE-11D, PRE-11E, PRE-35A, PRE-35B, and PRE-WRA, as described in chapter 41:06:59 subdivision 41:06:01:15(4), a qualifying landowner or lessee, as described in subdivision 41:06:01:15(4),~~ may purchase one "antlerless elk" license.

41:06:01:15. Elk application requirements. The following requirements and restrictions apply to all license applications for elk seasons:

- (1) Only a resident of the state may apply for a license;
- (2) Except for a qualifying landowner-operator applicant described in subdivisions (3) and (4), and except as provided in § 41:06:01:09, a person who received an elk hunting license for this season in the first lottery drawing or the second drawing by using preference points in any of the nine preceding years may not apply for a license under this chapter for the next nine years; and
- (3) Fifty percent of the licenses are available to persons who operate or live as owner or tenant on agricultural, timber, or grazing lands pursuant to SDCL 41-6-21. To qualify as a landowner-operator applicant, the person must own or lease a minimum of two hundred forty acres of land within an elk unit that has had at least five hundred days of elk use since the last day of the previous application period. A day of elk use is any day an elk feeds or waters on private land. Any qualifying landowner or operator's grandparent, parent, spouse, child, child's spouse, or grandchild who lives on the ranch unit or in the closest community and has an active role in the ranch operation also qualifies. Only one qualifying applicant per ranch unit per year may apply for a landowner-operator preference elk license in the first draw. For purposes of this subdivision, a ranch unit means all private property owned or leased for agricultural, timber, or grazing purposes by written agreement by a qualifying landowner in the state. A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner-operator preference; and
- (4) A person is eligible for a landowner-on-own-land license, pursuant to SDCL 41-6-19.9, by owning or leasing a minimum of two hundred forty acres of land within ~~an~~ any of the following open prairie elk hunting season-unit units, as described in chapter 41:06:59: PRE-09A, PRE-11D, PRE-11E, PRE-27A, PRE-35A, PRE-35B, and PRE-WRA. Any qualifying landowner's grandparent, parent, spouse, child, child's spouse, or grandchild who lives on the ranch unit or in the closest community and has an active role in the ranch operation also qualifies. Only one qualifying applicant per ranch unit per year may purchase the license. A qualifying applicant for a ranch unit may not purchase the license if any qualifying member of the ranch unit holds an elk license obtained using landowner-operator preference, as provided in subdivision (3), in the prairie elk hunting season. For purposes of this subdivision, a ranch unit means all private property owned or leased for agricultural purposes by written agreement by an individual qualifying landowner in the state. A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner-on-own-land elk license. The elk may be harvested only on land that is owned or leased by the qualifying landowner within the designated open prairie elk hunting season unit.

#### **RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

#### **RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, this will result in additional hunting opportunity.

3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? Additional hunting opportunity.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes, by providing additional hunting opportunity.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE ____	MODIFY ____	REJECT ____	NO ACTION ____
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## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

## Prairie Elk Hunting Season Licenses

## Chapter 41:06:59

**Commission Meeting Dates:**      **Public Hearing**  
**Finalization**

**April 3, 2025**  
**April 3-4, 2025**

**Pierre  
Pierre**

**COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

**Licenses:** 136 resident “Any Elk” licenses and 280 “Antlerless Elk” licenses.

**2024**

Prairie Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
9A	8	10	
11A			
11B	16		
11C	16		
11D		30	
11E		10	
11F			
15A	8	5	
15B			
27A	30	30	
35A	10	30	
35B	8	40	
35C			
35D			
35E			
35F			
49A	10	15	
WRA	20	40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>336</b>

**2025**

Prairie Elk		
Unit	Resident Licenses	
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23
9A	8	30
11A		
11B	16	
11C	16	
11D		30
11E		10
11F		
15A	8	5
15B		
27A	30	40
35A	10	30
35B	8	40
35C		
35D		
35E		
35F		
49A	10	15
WRA	30	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>280</b>

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## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Anecdotal reports and observations suggest the elk population on the prairie continues to grow. It is likely much of the growth and expansion has occurred in WRA unit, where Any Elk and Antlerless Elk licenses are recommended to be increased. Similarly, the population in 09A (mostly in Lawrence County) and 27A (mostly Fall River County) appears to be increasing, resulting in recommended increases in license numbers.



# 2024 Prairie Firearm Elk Harvest Projections

Last Revised: 18 Feb 2025

Resident Licenses						Harvest Projections							Avg	Avg	Land Hunted Most					
Appl. 1st						Bull			Cow	Total Elk		Elk Shot Not	Satisfctn	Days	Other					
Unit/Type	Choice *	Avail.	Sold	Resp.	Success	Bulls	Cows	Calves	Calves	Harvested	CI (95%)	Recovered	Score	Hunted	Public	Own	Private			
09A-21	176	8	8	63%	100%	8	0	0	0	8	+/-0	0	7.0	2.4	0	5	3			
11A-23	6	10	9	56%	20%	0	2	0	0	2	+/-2	0	5.5	2.5	0	0	7			
11B-21	467	16	16	75%	75%	12	0	0	0	12	+/-2	1	6.0	7.2	3	7	7			
11C-21	208	16	16	69%	64%	10	0	0	0	10	+/-3	0	5.3	5.0	0	7	9			
11D-23	58	30	30	63%	58%	0	13	2	3	17	+/-4	0	5.4	4.2	2	0	24			
11E-23	26	10	10	70%	29%	0	3	0	0	3	+/-2	0	4.4	2.4	0	0	7			
15A-21	123	8	8	50%	75%	4	2	0	0	6	+/-2	0	5.7	16.7	0	0	6			
15A-23	2	5	5	60%	33%	0	2	0	0	2	+/-2	0	4.0	4.0	0	0	2			
27A-21	834	30	30	57%	65%	18	2	0	0	19	+/-5	2	4.2	8.9	7	9	14			
27A-23	41	30	30	60%	50%	0	12	0	3	15	+/-4	0	5.0	4.5	8	0	18			
35A-21	1,038	10	10	60%	50%	5	0	0	0	5	+/-3	0	4.7	19.5	8	2	0			
35A-23	61	30	30	63%	16%	0	5	0	0	5	+/-3	0	3.3	10.1	17	0	9			
35B-21	1,579	8	8	50%	100%	8	0	0	0	8	+/-0	0	6.0	7.5	6	0	2			
35B-23	107	40	39	63%	46%	0	15	0	3	18	+/-5	2	4.4	6.1	28	0	10			
49A-21	138	10	10	60%	100%	10	0	0	0	10	+/-0	2	5.2	23.8	0	0	10			
49A-23	12	15	15	60%	11%	0	2	0	0	2	+/-2	0	3.6	13.4	0	0	8			
WRA-21	1,245	20	20	55%	73%	15	0	0	0	15	+/-4	0	5.3	15.1	4	5	11			
WRA-23	91	40	40	75%	20%	0	8	0	0	8	+/-3	0	3.9	7.6	4	4	27			
Totals	6,212	336	334	63.1%	49.1%	89	63	2	10	164	+/- 44	6	4.68	8.34	84	40	175			
The response rate for all units combined is:					63.1%													28%	13%	59%
Satisfaction scale of 1=very dissatisfied to 7=very satisfied.																				
* Number of 1st drawing applicants with that unit as 1st choice.																				

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

### POSSESSION, PROCESSING AND TRANSPORTATION OF GAME

Chapter 41:06:00, 41:06:03, 41:06:16

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal Public Hearing Finalization</b>	<b>April 3-4, 2025 May 8, 2025 May 8-9, 2025</b>	<b>Pierre Custer State Park Custer State Park</b>
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### PROPOSED CHANGES

#### Requirements and Restrictions:

1. SDCL § 41-14-14 describes transportation requirements for big game and grants rule promulgation authority for tagging requirements to the GFP Commission. Big game must be legally tagged after harvest and before the animal is:
  - a. Brought out to a road or into a hunting camp, dwelling, farmyard, or other place of abode of any kind; or
  - b. Placed upon a vehicle of any kind.
  
2. ARSD § 41:06:03:01 describes tagging requirement and the locking seal issued with each big game, swan, and Canada goose\* license as an adhesive tag.
  - a. The licensee shall sign and date the locking seal by cutting out the month and day of the kill only.
  - b. The licensee shall attach the tag securely around the leg of a mountain lion, turkey, swan, or goose\*.
  - c. The licensee shall attach the tag securely to all hoofed big game animals:
    - i. Around the hind leg between the hoof and ankle joint;
    - ii. Around the hock tendon directly above the ankle joint on one hind leg; or
    - iii. Around the base of the antler or horn.
  - d. \* The requirement for Canada goose is currently proposed to be removed with a separate GFP Commission proposal.

#### Proposed changes from last year:

1. Modify § 41:06:00 to include a definition in ARSD for "Tagged/Tagging."
2. Add § 41:06:03:01.01 to describe tagging requirements for electronic license validation. This will not replace the current locking seal tagging rule § 41:06:03:01, but allow the option to switch to an electronic tagging option in the future.
3. Modify § 41:06:16 to provide the option for a physical locking seal tag or an electronic tag for Tundra Swans.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

A Department priority is to start the transition and implementation of an electronic tagging system (e-tag). During the 2021 South Dakota Legislative Session, HB1035 was a department-sponsored bill and signed into law that removed the paper lock and seal requirement in codified law and provided the GFP Commission the flexibility to promulgate rules for tagging options for legally harvested game animals. One of the components included in the implementation of an e-tag system is to review administrative rules and recommend amendments, additions or deletions. The objective is to ensure big game populations are conserved, our conservation officers have the continued ability to enforce the tagging requirements, and hunters can understand and adhere to these rules.

The goal is to transition into full implementation of an e-tag system with several seasons. The transition will occur first in several smaller seasons that the Department feels would have less impact on hunters and harvest information. Seasons such as fall turkey and mountain lion are two examples. This would allow the Department to continue to work through any challenges that arise prior to the use of e-tagging in larger seasons like East River Deer and West River Deer. During this transition, the administrative rules for transportation must apply to both valid forms of licenses, the traditional and current physical license and tag, and implementation of the e-tag system which uses e-tags, e-notching, and physical tagging of the harvested animal.

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

**41:06:00.01:02. Definitions.** As used in this article:

- (1) "Buck" means a male deer with a visible, polished antler;
- (2) "Bull" means a male elk with a visible, polished antler;
- (3) "Antlerless" means a whitetail or mule deer, or elk, of either sex without a visible antler;
- (4) "Any deer" means a whitetail or mule deer of either sex;
- (5) "Any whitetail" means a whitetail deer of either sex;
- (6) "Antlerless whitetail" means a whitetail deer without a visible antler;
- (7) "Any mule deer" means a mule deer of either sex;
- (8) "Mule buck" means a male mule deer with a visible polished antler;
- (9) "Any elk" means an elk of either sex;
- (10) "Any antelope" means an antelope of either sex;
- (11) "Doe/fawn antelope" means an antelope of either sex without horns or with horns less than three inches in total length;
- (12) "Wild turkey" means a dark turkey which bears the characteristics of a Merriam (*Meleagris gallopavo merriami*), Rio Grande (*Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*), or Eastern (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) turkey; any such turkey released to the wild which is not marked in accordance with § 41:09:02:04 and which is within a hunting unit established by chapter 41:06:13 or 41:06:14;
- (13) "Any turkey" means a wild turkey of either sex;
- (14) "Male turkey" means a wild turkey with a visible beard or spurs. The beard is a feathered appendage protruding from the breast;

(15) "Hen turkey" means a wild turkey without a visible beard or spurs;

(16) "License type" means a license for a species or a family of related species, sometimes specific to a particular species, sex, and geographic unit;

(17) "Preference point" means a unit of license drawing opportunity that is assigned to an individual;

(18) "Agricultural purposes" means the producing, raising, growing, or harvesting of food or fiber upon agricultural land, including dairy products, livestock, crops, timber, and grasslands. Land leased solely for hunting, fishing, or trapping is not considered agricultural purposes;

(19) "Operate" means to lease or hold fee title to farm or ranch real property and be directly involved in the management decisions made for agricultural purposes on the farm or ranch;

(20) "Owner-operator" means an individual holding fee title to farm or ranch real property who is directly involved in the management decisions made for agricultural purposes on the farm or ranch;

(21) "Tagged/Tagging" means the placement of a department issued locking seal adhesive tag or electronically generated confirmation number onto a harvested animal in accordance with § 41:06:03:01 or 41:06:03:01.01.

Source: 6 SDR 31, effective October 2, 1979; 9 SDR 171, effective July 13, 1983; 10 SDR 76, 10 SDR 102, effective July 1, 1984; 12 SDR 14, effective August 6, 1985; 12 SDR 151, effective March 16, 1986; 13 SDR 37, effective October 7, 1986; 22 SDR 28, effective September 4, 1995; 27 SDR 101, effective April 18, 2001; 28 SDR 24, effective August 28, 2001; 29 SDR 147, effective May 6, 2003; 34 SDR 67, effective September 10, 2007; 37 SDR 235, effective June 27, 2011; 46 SDR 116, effective April 29, 2020.

General Authority: SDCL 41-2-18(1)(2).

Law Implemented: SDCL 41-2-18(1)(2).

**41:06:03:01.01. Electronic license validation required.** Each electronic swan or big game license shall be validated at the time of harvest or prior to transport of harvested swan or big game as provided in § 41-14-14. Upon validation and prior to transport, the licensee shall affix the confirmation number provided to them to the harvested swan or big game animal. Confirmation numbers must be legible and affixed using durable material around one leg of a mountain lion, turkey, or swan, and to all hooved big game animals by one of the following:

(1) Around one hind leg between the hoof and ankle joint;

(2) Around the hock tendon directly above the ankle joint on one hind leg; or

(3) Around the base of the antler or horn.

**41:06:16:09.01. Tundra swan season established -- Open units -- Shooting hours.** The tundra swan hunting season is open from the Saturday closest to October 1 through the end of the light goose hunting season as established in § 41:06:16:07 in the counties of McPherson, Edmunds, Campbell, Walworth, Potter, Faulk, Spink, Beadle, Kingsbury, Brookings, Brown, Marshall, Day, Clark, Codington, Sully, Hughes, Hyde, Hand, Hamlin, Roberts, Grant, Buffalo, Jerauld, Sanborn, Miner, Lake, Moody, Brule, Aurora, Davison, Hanson, McCook, Minnehaha, and Deuel. No more than 1,300 permits may be issued with one tag per permit. No more than 200 of the available permits may be issued to nonresidents. Shooting hours for tundra swans are the same as for duck hunting.

A person may not hunt tundra swans unless the person has been issued a ~~special license permit with a tag~~. The license ~~tag~~ is valid for the taking of one tundra swan. Each swan must be tagged immediately upon retrieval in accordance with §41:06:03:01 and 41:06:03:01.01.

Land occupant preference is not applicable to this season. If permits remain unsold after the first lottery drawing, only those residents and nonresidents who do not have a permit may apply in the second lottery drawing for and receive one permit from any respective remaining resident and nonresident permits. If any resident and nonresident permits remain unsold after the second lottery drawing, all permits shall be combined, and any resident or nonresident may receive a permit. No person may receive more than two permits.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

#### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Mentored Hunter Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:01, 41:06:02, 41:06:16, 41:06:49

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** Beginning Fall 2025 Hunting Seasons

### **Season Dates and Open Units:**

Small Game: license requirements, bag limits, and season dates follow small game seasons.

Pheasants: includes additional 9-day youth and mentored hunter early season.

Waterfowl: includes additional 2-day youth and mentored hunter early season.

Mentored hunter residents can hunt the entire season while nonresident mentored hunters are limited to the early 2-day youth and mentor season.

Deer: license requirements, season dates, and unit descriptions follow youth deer hunting season.

2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday in September – January 1

An individual can only purchase one mentored deer hunting license valid for:

MHD-03: West River Units 02A, 15A, 15B, 31A, 35A, 35C, 35L, 49A, 49B, 53A, 53C, and 64A. Only a single tag "any antlerless deer" license is valid in this unit.

or

MHD-13: That portion of the state not included in Unit MHD-03. Only a single tag "antlerless whitetail deer" license is available in this unit.

Turkey: license requirements, season dates, and unit descriptions follow spring and fall turkey hunting season dates.

**Licenses:** Unlimited, except:

An individual with a mentored big game hunting license may not apply for or purchase another hunting license for that species or season.

Nonresident youth and mentored waterfowl licenses are limited to 100.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. The mentee is the youth 15 years of age or younger that will be hunting. The mentor is the mentee's parent, guardian, or other adult 18 years of age or older.
2. Mentee must purchase a hunting license to hunt species.
3. Mentee must be fifteen years old or younger and accompanied by the child's parent, guardian, or other adult 18 years of age or older who has the consent of the child's parent or guardian, hereafter the mentor.
4. Mentee must be under the immediate physical, direct supervision, and responsibility of a mentor, at the time the child discharges a firearm or operates a bow and arrow in the act of hunting.
5. Mentor must be unarmed; except they may possess a concealed pistol or other legally possessed handgun.
6. Mentor shall have successfully completed hunter safety or hunter education course (SDCL 41-7).
7. Mentor may accompany no more than one mentee at any one time.

### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Senate Bill 41 amended SDCL to modify the requirement of the mentored hunter license and resulted in the following changes:
  - a. Mentored hunting license purchased by mentored hunter.
    - i. Previously, the mentored individual hunted under a license held by the adult hunting mentor.
  - b. Remove list of specific seasons and/or species in SDCL.
    - i. Fees and species and season restrictions will be described in ARSD.
  - c. Changes to mentor requirements in SDCL.
    - i. Consent from parent or guardian can be written or verbal (previously required written consent).
    - ii. Remove hunting party size limits (previously six persons maximum).
    - iii. GFP Commission shall promulgate rules to establish criteria and conditions of mentored hunting seasons.
  - d. Other SDCL changes allowed an individual less than twelve years old to purchase a license, which is restricted to individuals participating in the mentored hunter license.

## **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

### **How do they streamline the process?**

- Mentee will purchase their hunting license and create an account in GFP licensing system, which will allow identification of individuals rather than the current system that identifies the mentor and not the mentee.
  - Inclusion in the licensing system will allow communication regarding:
    - Hunting opportunities and other recruitment approaches
    - Regulation and season information
    - License history
    - Harvest reporting
  - Increase compliance as some mentors are currently inadvertently purchasing multiple licenses for an individual mentee.
- Remove barriers to participation in the mentored hunting program.
  - Written or verbal consent from the parent or guardian would be acceptable for a mentor.
  - No hunting group size requirements.
  - GFP Commission can establish or remove mentor hunting seasons for any species.
- Season regulations can be structured to optimize hunter recruitment and retention because administrative rules would establish season criteria and conditions for mentor and youth hunting opportunities.
  - For example, youth hunting (<18 years old with hunter safety) and mentored hunting opportunities could be standardized to simplify regulations.



- Flexibility to administrative rule would allow current opportunities (small game, waterfowl, turkey, antlerless deer, doe/kid antelope) to be expanded or reduced, depending on game availability.
  - E.g., bag limits or dates could be changed for mentored pheasant season.
  - If game populations drastically increase, additional mentored hunting opportunities could be added, and conversely, if populations decrease substantially, limitations can be made to mentored hunting (because mentored seasons would no longer be directly tied to other seasons like small game bag limits for pheasants).

#### End results.

- Desire to increase hunter participation and recruitment by optimizing hunting opportunities for mentored individuals and simplifying regulations for all youth seasons.
  - Currently, children under 16 must navigate multiple hunting opportunities, such as youth, mentored, and traditional seasons.
- Mentee can directly obtain hunting license.
- GFP Commission can establish new mentored hunting seasons.

### **DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

#### Application for license

41:06:01:12. ~~Mentored youth big game license -- Restrictions. A resident parent or guardian youth under the age of sixteen may purchase no more than one mentored small game, nonresident waterfowl, "any antlerless deer" license or "antlerless whitetail deer" license, one fall "any turkey" license, and one spring "male turkey" license, for a designated mentored child, as provided in SDCL 41-6-81. The hunting of antelope by a mentored child is not currently permitted. No child participating in individual that possesses a mentored big game hunt license may apply for a regular season license for that corresponding species and season, nor can an individual that has an active application or possesses a big game license purchase a mentored big game license for that corresponding species and season.~~

41:06:01:12.01. Mentored youth hunting seasons -- Restrictions. An individual with a mentored hunter fall "any turkey" or spring "male turkey" license must adhere to season dates and weapon and unit restrictions specified for that corresponding season. An individual with a mentored hunter "any antlerless deer" license or "antlerless whitetail deer" license must adhere to season dates weapon and unit restrictions specified for the youth deer hunting season (§ 41:06:63). An individual with a mentored small game or mentored hunter nonresident waterfowl hunting license must adhere to the season dates, bag limits, and weapon and unit restrictions specified for that corresponding species and season (§ 41:06:49, SDCL 41-6-16, and 41-6-17).

#### License forms and fees

41:06:02:03. Hunting license fees. Hunting license fees are as follows:

(28) Nonresident small game license:

- (a) Eighteen years of age and older, one hundred thirty-six dollars; and
- (b) Under eighteen years of age, ten dollars;

(33) Nonresident youth and mentored waterfowl season hunting license under eighteen years of age, five dollars;

(63) Mentored youth small game, deer, antelope, or turkey license:

- (a) Resident, five dollars; and
- (b) Nonresident, ten dollars;

## Waterfowl hunting season

41:06:16:11. Maximum number of nonresident waterfowl licenses -- Open units -- Dates -- License restrictions. The maximum number of nonresident waterfowl licenses to be issued by lottery is four thousand two hundred special nonresident waterfowl licenses, two thousand early fall Canada goose temporary nonresident licenses, two thousand one hundred fall three-day temporary nonresident waterfowl licenses, one hundred nonresident youth waterfowl licenses, and ten thousand spring snow goose temporary nonresident licenses divided for administrative purposes as follows:

(10) Unit NYW-YW1: statewide. No more than one hundred nonresident youth and mentored hunter waterfowl licenses may be issued for the youth and mentored hunter waterfowl season established in § 41:06:49:01. A nonresident youth or mentored hunter may also hunt during the youth and mentored hunter waterfowl season, with a valid waterfowl hunting license, as provided for in this section.

## Youth waterfowl hunting season

41:06:49:01. Youth and mentored hunter waterfowl hunting season established. The youth and mentored waterfowl hunting season is open statewide for two consecutive days from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset daily beginning 14 days prior to the Saturday closest to September 24.

41:06:49:04. Eligibility requirements and restrictions. Persons who have not reached the age of 18 years by the first day of the season may hunt during the youth and mentored hunter waterfowl season.

## RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

## RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, this will enhance the process for a mentor hunter to engage in hunting and also remove some barriers to participation.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? This will enhance opportunities for the next generation.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

## FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Mentored and Youth Deer Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:01, 41:06:63

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** September 13, 2025 – January 1, 2026  
September 12, 2026 – January 1, 2027

**Open Units:** Unit MHD-03 and YOD-03: West River Units 02A, 15A, 15B, 31A, 35A, 35C, 35L, 49A, 49B, 53A, 53C and 64A (See map for open area)

Unit MHD-13 and YOD-13: That portion of the state not included in Unit MHD-03 and YOD-03 (See map for open area)

Custer State Park and National Wildlife Refuges, unless specified by the refuge, are closed to those with a Mentored or Youth Deer Hunting License.

**Licenses:** Unit MHD-03 and YOD-03: Single tag “any antlerless deer” license  
Unit MHD-13 and YOD-13: Single tag “antlerless whitetail deer” license

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Youth
  - a. Both residents and nonresidents who have reached the age of 12 years by September and have not reached the age of 18 years by June 30; and any person who has not received a Mentored Hunter Deer License may purchase a Youth Deer License. Successful applicants for the Youth Deer License are not eligible for the Mentored Hunter Deer License.
  - b. Each hunter under 16 years old must be accompanied by an adult while hunting.
  - c. Hunters may purchase one (1) Youth Deer Hunting License valid for either Unit YOD-03 or Unit YOD-13.
2. Mentored
  - a. Both residents and nonresidents with a Mentored Hunter license may not apply for or purchase another deer hunting license.
  - b. Mentee must purchase hunting license to hunt species and season\*.
 

\* Senate Bill 41, 2025 specifies this change for the 2025 hunting season.

- c. Mentee must be fifteen years old or younger and accompanied by the child's parent, guardian, or other adult 18 years of age or older who has the consent of the child's parent or guardian, hereafter hunting mentor.
  - d. Mentee must be under the immediate physical, direct supervision, and responsibility of a hunting mentor, at the time the child discharges a firearm or operates a bow and arrow in the act of hunting.
3. Hunting mentor must be unarmed; except they may possess a concealed pistol or other legally possessed handgun.
4. Hunting mentor shall have successfully completed hunter safety or hunter education course (SDCL 41-7).
5. Hunting mentor may accompany no more than one mentee at any one time.
  - a. Mentees may purchase one (1) Youth Deer Hunting License valid for either Unit YOD-03 or Unit YOD-13.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

None.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Figure 1. Map of Youth Deer hunting units YOD-03 and YOD-13. Mentored Deer hunting units MHD-03 and MHD-13 are the same as YOD-03 and YOD-13, respectively.

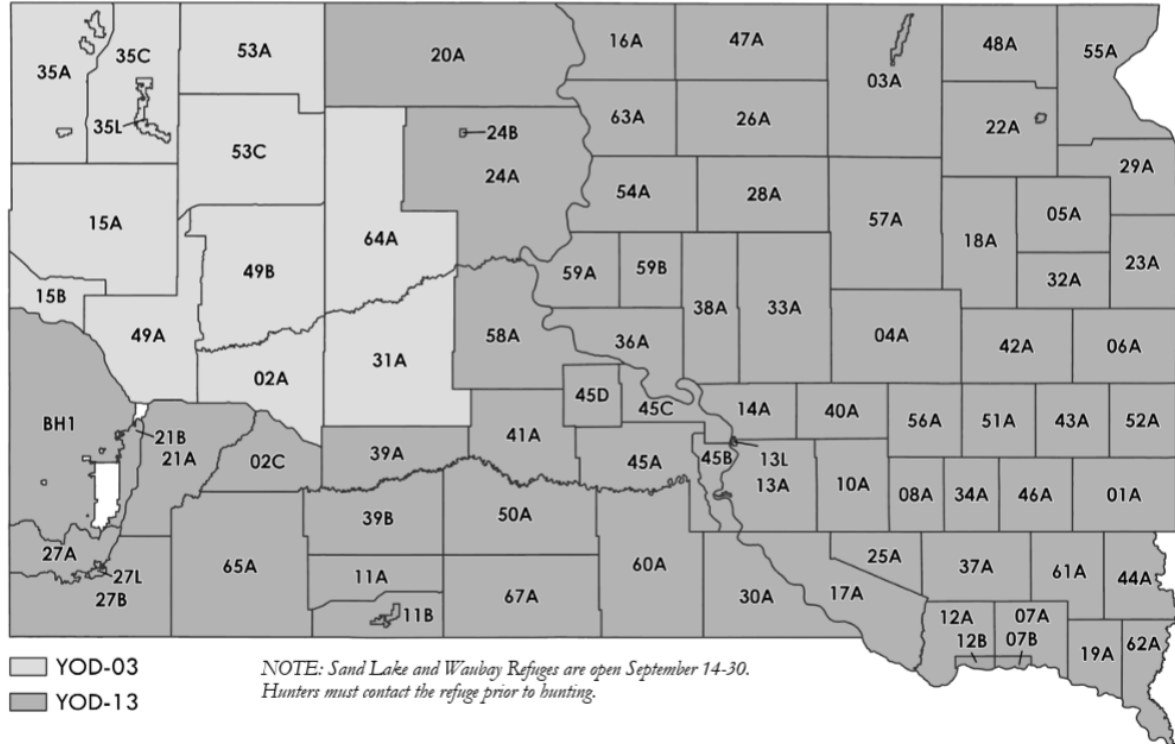


Table 1. Youth Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2013 to 2023.

YEAR	Licenses Sold	Harvest						Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
		Bucks		Does		Total	Success		
		WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2013	5,548	346	32	1,756	344	2,477	45%	4.64	5.23
2014	5,038	317	37	1,924	287	2,565	51%	4.61	5.47
2015	5,331	329	33	2,137	333	2,831	53%	4.54	5.59
2016	4,861	322	29	1,896	324	2,571	53%	4.15	5.65
2017	5,325	292	35	2,072	426	2,825	53%	4.17	5.65
2018-20	Modified into Apprentice Deer season								
2021	3,812	175	8	1,523	156	1,861	49%	3.89	5.57
2022	3,448	151	4	1,282	235	1,672	48%	4.08	5.38
2023	3,286	145	3	1,191	121	1,460	44%	4.82	5.05

\* The Youth season was modified into the Apprentice season in 2018 and then separated from the Apprentice season in 2021. See Apprentice season report for license sales and estimated harvest for that season.

Table 2. Mentored Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2013 to 2023.

YEAR	Licenses Sold	Harvest						Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
		Bucks		Does		Total	Success		
		WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2014	3,096	214	29	1,187	167	1,595	52%	3.98	5.70
2015	3,646	261	25	1,556	243	2,086	57%	3.96	5.89
2016	3,646	287	30	1,495	301	2,114	58%	3.56	5.85
2017	4,069	230	31	1,567	320	2,147	53%	3.78	5.83
2018	5,357	324	51	2,335	439	2,824	53%	3.61	5.89
2019	5,715	348	45	2,123	417	2,932	51%	3.52	5.79
2020	6,387	371	21	2,772	472	3,636	57%	3.77	5.77
2021	6,207	301	5	2,446	226	2,977	48%	3.92	5.69
2022	6,723	320	5	2,525	301	3,150	47%	3.88	5.59
2023	6,985	328	2	2,630	225	3,185	46%	4.08	5.24

#### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

None.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

#### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Apprentice Hunter Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:44

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** September 13, 2025 – January 1, 2026  
September 12, 2026 – January 1, 2027

**Open Units:** Unit APD-03: West River Units 02A, 15A, 15B, 31A, 35A, 35C, 35L, 49A, 49B, 53A, 53C and 64A (See map for open area)  
  
Unit APD-13: That portion of the state not included in Unit APD-03 (See map for open area)  
Custer State Park is closed to those with Apprentice Hunter Deer License and National Wildlife Refuges are closed unless specified by the refuge.

**Licenses:** Unit APD-03: Single tag “any antlerless deer” license  
Unit APD-13: Single tag “antlerless whitetail deer” license

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Any resident hunter who has not held a license to hunt deer during the previous 10 years may purchase an Apprentice Hunter Deer License. Receipt of an Apprentice Hunter Deer License does not affect eligibility for a license in any other season.
2. Hunters may purchase one (1) Apprentice Hunter Deer License valid for either Unit APD-03 or Unit APD-13.

### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:44:02 to change “YOD” to “APD”.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The unit description for APD-13 inadvertently referenced areas not included in YOD-03 when it should have referenced APD-03.

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

YEAR	Licenses Sold	Harvest						Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
		Bucks		Does		Total	Success		
		WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2018	4,845	264	35	1,823	377	2,499	52%	3.85	5.72
2019	4,424	263	37	1,722	297	2,319	52%	3.93	5.70
2020	4,302	249	26	1,846	372	2,493	58%	3.71	5.73
2021	641	21	0	323	18	362	57%	3.09	6.10
2022	527	29	4	210	22	263	50%	4.10	5.82
2023	653	36	3	292	29	361	55%	4.27	5.69

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

(1) Unit APD-03: West River Units 02A, 15A, 15B, 31A, 35A, 35C, 35L, 49A, 49B, 53A, 53C, and 64A. Only a single tag "any antlerless deer" license is valid in this unit.

(2) Unit APD-13: That portion of the state not included in Unit ~~YOD~~ APD-03. Only a single tag "antlerless whitetail deer" license is valid in this unit.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Archery Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:22

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** September 1 – January 1.

Nonresidents may not hunt on private lands leased for public access by the Department or public lands prior to October 1.

Archery deer licenses are restricted in the following areas:

- Waubay State Game Bird Refuge and Sand Lake, Lacreek, and Waubay National Wildlife Refuges are open September 1 – January 1, except during the refuge firearm deer seasons.
- Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge is closed.
- Except as expressly authorized, all national parks, national monuments, and national memorials are closed to archery deer hunting.
- An access permit is required to hunt within Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, Good Earth State Park, WRD-27L (Hill Ranch Game Production Area), and WRD-35L (Custer National Forest).

**Open Unit:**

ARD-ST1: Statewide, excluding Custer State Park.

ARD-ER1: All counties east of the Missouri River.

ARD-WR1: All counties west of the Missouri River, excluding Custer State Park.

\*ARD-LM1: May be available in hunting units that offer a deer license for exclusively antlerless deer in the lottery drawing for the Black Hills, West River, and East River deer seasons.

ARD-MP1: designated areas within the city limits of Custer.

ARD-MP2: designated areas within the city limits of Rapid City.

\*ARD-MP3: designated areas within and around the city limits of Sioux Falls.

\*ARD-MP4: designated areas within the city limits of Hot Springs.

*\* Proposal is to modify these unit definitions.*

**Licenses:** For the Archery Deer seasons last year there were:

Unlimited resident any deer licenses: ARD-ST1, ARD-ER1, ARD-WR1.

An individual with an ARD-ST1 license may not purchase an ARD-ER1 or ARD-WR1 license

Unlimited nonresident any deer licenses: ARD-ST1 valid on private land not leased by the Department for public hunting.

2,200 nonresident any deer licenses: ARD-ST1 valid on public and private lands.

Unlimited resident and nonresident antlerless whitetail licenses: ARD-LM1.

1,000 any antlerless deer licenses among ARD-MP1, ARD-MP2, and ARD-MP3.

No more than one license type per individual, except in municipal (ARD-MP) units.

The Department will recommend specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons at the April and May Commission meetings.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:22:01 and 41:06:22:01.01 to expand municipal antlerless hunting opportunities by increasing the Sioux Falls municipal area to include private lands around the city and to add the city of Hot Springs as a unit.
2. Modify § 41:06:22:01.01 to clarify that antlerless whitetail license may be available in units that offer firearm antlerless licenses to allow some limited firearm hunting opportunity without creating an unlimited archery opportunity.
3. Modify § 41:06:22:01 and § 41:06:22:01.01 to remove specifications to license types within rule and increase the maximum number of access permits that may be issued.
4. Modify § 41:06:22:03.01 to remove specifications to license types within rule and more directly specify the limits to the number of licenses an individual may purchase. For example, an individual is limited to one license in the ARD-LM1 unit, but they are not limited in the municipal deer hunting units. This will not alter the current archery license options available for a resident and nonresident to harvest an antlered deer.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

The human footprint in and around Sioux Falls has expanded and much of the suburban landscape beyond the city limits includes areas that have become inaccessible to firearm hunters and thus refugia for white-tailed deer. In the proposed municipal Sioux Falls zone, the objective is to decrease the deer population. By expanding the municipal zone to include the city of Sioux Falls and surrounding areas, antlerless deer archery hunting can be used to help accomplish population objectives in and around Sioux Falls, without compromising deer population objectives in surrounding East River Deer hunting units in Minnehaha and Lincoln counties. Similarly, the population of deer in and around Hot Springs is increasing and the recommendation to create a municipal unit may allow additional archery hunting in this area. No more than 1,000 antlerless permits may be issued among all municipal archery hunting units in South Dakota.

The recommendation to remove license types and LM1 unit specification from administrative rule will allow the Commission discretion to alter license types or the LM1 unit for the Archery Deer season via administrative action without the need to change administrative rule. License type recommendations would follow a similar process to how license types are specified via administrative action for West River Deer, East River Deer, Refuge Deer, and Custer State Park Deer hunting seasons.

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Table 1. Archery Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023.

YEAR	Licenses Sold		Harvest					Tag Success	Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
			Bucks		Does		Total			
	Res	Nonres	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2014	21,647	2,840	3,948	562	1,459	83	6,052	25%	10.80	4.97
2015	23,507	3,180	5,042	632	1,593	73	7,340	28%	11.24	5.14
2016	24,531	3,474	4,780	824	1,987	89	7,680	27%	10.80	5.06
2017	25,512	3,800	4,750	961	1,775	136	7,622	26%	10.94	5.24
2018	26,660	4,449	4,930	1,115	1,902	141	8,088	26%	10.59	5.23
2019	25,970	4,325	5,436	910	2,210	140	8,696	29%	10.57	5.25
2020	29,551	4,692	6,253	1,234	2,807	150	10,445	31%	11.14	5.25
2021	30,530	5,851	6,100	1,112	2,261	163	9,635	26%	11.87	5.23
2022	29,757	5,463	5,279	1,095	2,472	178	9,023	26%	12.19	4.94
2023	29,800	4,974	5,276	1,051	2,062	150	8,539	25%	10.64	4.57

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:22:01. Archery deer hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses -- Access permits. The archery deer hunting season is open statewide from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day beginning September first through January first, except as otherwise provided in § 41:06:22:02.

Unlimited resident ~~any~~ deer licenses may be issued for units ARD-ST1, ARD-ER1, and ARD-WR1 and unlimited resident and nonresident ~~antlerless whitetail~~ deer licenses may be issued for unit ARD-LM1.

Unlimited nonresident ~~any~~ deer licenses valid on private land not leased by the department for public hunting may be issued for unit ARD-ST1.

Two thousand and two hundred nonresident ~~any~~ deer licenses may be issued for unit ARD-ST1 valid on public and private lands.

One thousand ~~single tag any antlerless~~ deer licenses may be issued for use in ARD-MP1, ARD-MP2, and ARD-MP3 ~~and ARD-MP4~~.

No more than ~~ten any deer and fifty antlerless whitetail~~ one hundred deer access permits may be issued to residents for Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve.

No more than ~~ten any deer and twenty-five antlerless whitetail~~ one hundred deer access permits may be issued to residents for Good Earth State Park.

No more than five hundred ~~any~~ deer access permits may be issued to residents and no more than one hundred and twenty-five ~~any~~ deer access permits may be issued to nonresidents for unit WRD-35L described in § 41:06:20:02.

No more than twenty ~~any~~ deer access permits may be issued to residents and no more than five ~~any~~ deer access permits may be issued to nonresidents for Unit WRD-27L, described in § 41:06:20:02.

41:06:22:01.01. Open units. The following is a description of the open units for deer:

- (1) Unit ARD-ST1: statewide, excluding Custer State Park;
- (2) Unit ARD-ER1: all counties east of the Missouri River;
- (3) Unit ARD-WR1: all counties west of the Missouri River, excluding Custer State Park;
- (4) Unit ARD-LM1: ~~antlerless whitetail deer licenses are~~ may be available in hunting units that offer a deer license for antlerless deer in the lottery drawing for the Black Hills, West River, and East River deer seasons;

- (5) Unit ARD-MP1: for those designated areas within the city limits of Custer;  
(6) Unit ARD-MP2: for those designated areas within the city limits of Rapid City; and  
(7) Unit ARD-MP3: for those designated areas within the city limits of Sioux Falls and on private lands surrounding the city limits of Sioux Falls within the area defined as 258<sup>th</sup> street from 466<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the 484<sup>th</sup> Avenue, then south to 268<sup>th</sup> Street, west on 268<sup>th</sup> to 480<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south on 480<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 271<sup>st</sup> Street, west along 271<sup>st</sup> Street to 466<sup>th</sup> Ave, and north along 466<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 258<sup>th</sup> Street; and  
(8) Unit ARD-MP4: for those designated areas within the city limits of Hot Springs.

41:06:22:03.01. License purchase restrictions. ~~A resident~~ An individual may purchase one ~~statewide any deer~~ license valid in unit ARD-ST1 ~~on public and private land~~. In lieu of a ~~statewide any deer~~ license valid in unit ARD-ST1, a resident may purchase one ~~East River any deer~~ license valid in unit ARD-ER1 and one ~~West River any deer~~ license valid ~~on public and private land in unit ARD-WR1~~. A nonresident may purchase one ~~statewide any deer~~ license valid on private land only in ARD-ST1 or apply for one ~~any deer~~ license valid ~~statewide on public and private land in ARD-ST1~~ made available through a lottery draw. ~~A nonresident may not purchase more than one archery any deer license. No person may purchase more than one antlerless whitetail deer archery~~ An individual may purchase one license valid in unit ARD-LM1. All units in the above section are described in § 41:06:22:01.01.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

#### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## General Muzzleloading Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:45

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** December 1 – January 1.

**Open Unit:**

MZD-ST1: Statewide.

\*MZD-LM1: May be available in hunting units that offer a deer license for exclusively antlerless deer in the lottery drawing for the Black Hills, West River, and East River deer seasons.

Muzzleloading deer licenses are not valid in:

- Sand Lake, Lacreek, Lake Andes, and Waubay National Wildlife Refuges.
- Custer State Park, Waubay State Game Refuge, Farm Island State Recreation Area, and LaFramboise Island Nature Area.

*\* Proposal is to modify this unit definition.*

**Licenses:** For the Muzzleloading Deer seasons last year there were:

1,000 resident any deer licenses: MZD-ST1. Limit of one license per individual in this unit.

Unlimited resident and nonresident antlerless whitetail licenses: MZD-LM1. Limit of one license per individual in this unit.

The Department will recommend specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons at the April and May Commission meetings.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:45:01, § 41:06:45:02, and § 41:06:45:04 to remove specifications to license types within rule.
2. Modify § 41:06:45:02 to clarify that antlerless whitetail license may be available in units that offer firearm antlerless licenses to allow some limited firearm hunting opportunity without creating an unlimited muzzleloading deer hunting opportunity.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The recommendation to remove license types and LM1 unit specification from administrative rule will allow the Commission discretion to alter license types or the LM1 unit for the Muzzleloading Deer season via administrative action without the need to change administrative rule. License type recommendations would follow a similar process to how license types are specified via administrative action for West River Deer, East River Deer, Refuge Deer, and Custer State Park Deer hunting seasons.

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Table 1. Muzzleloading Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023.

YEAR	Licenses Sold		Harvest						Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
			Bucks		Does		Total	Success		
	Res	Nonres	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2014	3,073	140	235	85	498	11	829	26%	3.79	4.58
2015	3,303	143	313	77	539	16	935	27%	4.03	4.76
2016	2,914	134	334	89	699	6	1,127	37%	4.06	5.03
2017	3,304	128	263	117	865	4	1,251	36%	4.39	5.10
2018	3,263	120	275	110	808	14	1,208	36%	4.44	5.01
2019	3,200	140	295	112	795	17	1,219	36%	4.95	5.10
2020	3,550	157	272	170	882	17	1,341	36%	4.36	5.14
2021	3,358	133	235	110	711	8	1,065	31%	4.87	5.01
2022	3,083	104	275	83	760	8	1,125	35%	5.03	4.73
2023	3,529	130	213	119	600	12	945	26%	5.75	4.22

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:45:01. General muzzleloading deer hunting season established -- Open unit -- Number ~~and type of~~ licenses. The general muzzleloading deer hunting season is open statewide from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day beginning on December 1 through January 1. Unlimited single tag "antlerless whitetail deer" licenses may be issued for unit MZD-LM1 and no more than 1,500 "any deer" licenses may be issued for unit MZD-ST1.

41:06:45:02. Open units. The following is a description of the open units for the general muzzleloading deer hunting season:

- (1) Unit MZD-ST1: statewide, excluding Custer State Park; and
- (2) Unit MZD-LM1: ~~antlerless whitetail deer licenses are~~ may be available in hunting units that offer a deer license for antlerless deer in the lottery drawing for the Black Hills, West River, and East River deer seasons.

41:06:45:04. Application requirements and restrictions. The following requirements and restrictions apply to all applications for license under this chapter:

- (1) A person may possess ~~no more than two one general muzzleloader muzzleloading deer licenses, of which only one can be an "antlerless whitetail deer" license valid in MZD-LM1 described in § 41:06:45:02;~~ and
- (2) Only residents of the state may apply for a general muzzleloader muzzleloading "any deer" license valid in MZD-ST1 described in § 41:06:45:02 and they may only possess a single license valid in this unit.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Black Hills Deer Season Chapter 41:06:19

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** November 1 - 30

**Open Units:** Black Hills (see Figure 1)

**Licenses:** For the Black Hills Deer seasons last year there were 216 “Any Deer” licenses and 2,970 “Any Whitetail” licenses.

The Department will recommend specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons at the April and May Commission meetings.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. No more than 5,000 one-tag deer licenses.
2. One-half of the resident licenses allocated for each unit are available for landowner preference.

### **Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:19:02 to clean-up boundary description for BHD-BH1 to exclude Wind Cave National Park and Custer State Park and correct county road references.
2. Modify § 41:06:19:04 to specify licenses available to residents and nonresidents and clean-up boundary description for BHD-BD1 and BHD-BD2.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The changes will clean-up and standardize boundary descriptions for Black Hills Deer hunting unit descriptions and clarify user groups eligible for licenses.

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.



Figure 1. Map of Black Hills Deer units BHD-BD1 and BHD-BD2. Unit BHD-BH1 includes all the areas in BHD-BD1 and BHD-BD2.

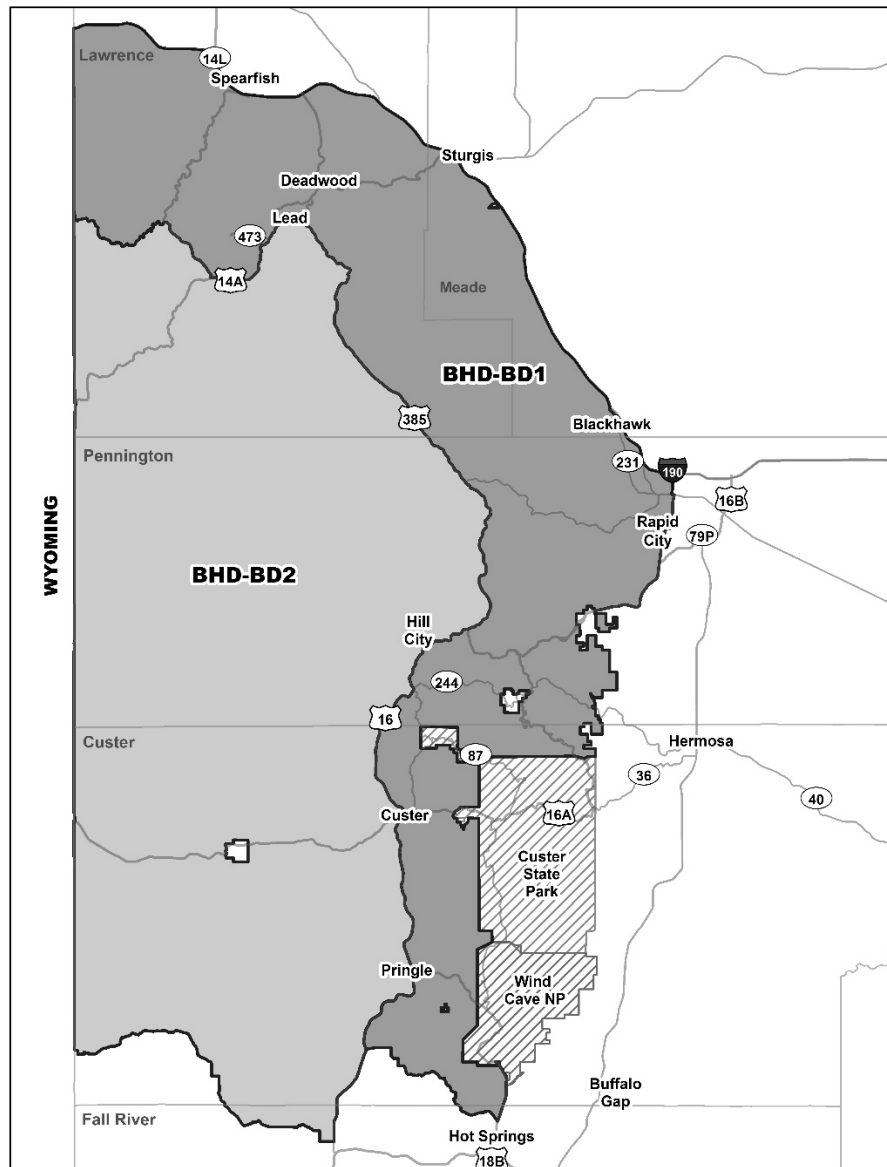


Table 1. Black Hills Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023, including landowner-own-land data.

YEAR	Licenses Sold		Bucks		Harvest Does		Total	Success	Avg Days Hunted	Avg Satis
	Resident	Nonres	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2014	3,242	252	2,076	59	275	0	2,410	69%	4.82	5.48
2015	3,741	294	2,533	74	307	2	2,917	72%	4.61	5.75
2016	4,120	325	2,604	86	505	2	3,198	72%	4.38	5.76
2017	4,319	343	2,616	79	630	0	3,325	71%	4.39	5.76
2018	4,366	344	2,260	86	643	12	3,001	64%	4.54	5.52
2019	4,838	375	2,258	57	847	0	3,161	60%	4.09	5.50
2020	4,889	343	2,311	81	909	7	3,307	63%	4.87	5.44
2021	3,547	269	1,916	76	422	8	2,420	63%	4.88	5.49
2022	3,565	291	1,789	75	437	10	2,310	60%	5.01	4.96
2023	3,016	234	1,645	73	242	6	1,967	60%	5.26	4.75

41:06:19:02. Open Unit. The unit open to deer hunting in the Black Hills is Unit BHD-BH1. Unit BHD-BH1 is: those portions of Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Custer, and Fall River Counties within a line beginning at the South Dakota-Wyoming border and Interstate 90, then easterly and southerly along Interstate 90 to its junction with the city limits of Rapid City, then westerly and southerly along the city limits of Rapid City to its junction with U.S. Highway 16, then southwesterly along U.S. Highway 16 to its junction with the eastern boundary of the Black Hills National Forest, then southerly along the eastern boundaries of the Black Hills National Forest, western boundaries of Custer State Park, and Wind Cave National Park to the southeast southwest corner of Wind Cave National Park, then westerly along the southern boundary of Wind Cave National Park to its junction with U.S. Highway 385, then southwesterly along U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with Fall River County Road 18 (Argyle Road), then northwesterly along Fall River County Road 18 and Custer County Road 333 to its junction with State Highway 89 at Argyle, then southerly along State Highway 89 to its junction with Fall River County Road ~~347~~ 12 (Minnekahta-Dewey Road), then westerly along Fall River County Road ~~347~~ 12 to its junction with Custer County Road ~~349~~ 317, then westerly along Custer County Road ~~349~~ 317 to its junction with Custer County Road 715, then westerly along Custer County Road 715 to its junction with Custer County Road 769, then westerly along Custer County Road 769 through Dewey to its junction with the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then northerly along the South Dakota-Wyoming border to its junction with Interstate 90, the point of beginning.

41:06:19:04. Special deer licenses. Special deer licenses valid November 1 through November 30 are available by lottery ~~to residents~~. The following is a description of the open units:

- (1) Unit BHD-BD1: those portions of Custer, Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington Counties within a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border and Interstate 90, then southeasterly along Interstate 90 to its junction with U.S. Highway 16 at Rapid City, then southerly along U.S. Highway 16 to its junction with the eastern boundary of the Black Hills National Forest near Rapid City, then southerly along the eastern boundaries of the Black Hills National Forest, western boundary of Custer State Park, western boundary of Wind Cave National Park, then easterly along the southern boundary of Wind Cave National Park to its junction with U.S. Highway 385, then southerly along U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with Fall River County Road 18 (Argyle Road), then northwesterly along Fall River County Road 18 (Argyle Road) and Custer County Road 333 to its junction with State Highway 89 at Argyle, then northerly along State Highway 89 to its junction with U.S. Highway 385 at Pringle, then northerly on U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with U.S. Highway 85 at Deadwood, then southwesterly along U.S. Highway 85 to its junction with U.S. Highway 14A near Cheyenne Crossing, then northwesterly along U.S. Highway 14A to its junction with Forest Service Road 222.3 (Roughlock Falls Road), at Savoy, then westerly along Forest Service Road 222.3 to its junction with Forest Service Road 134 (Tinton Road), then westerly along Forest Service Road 134 to its junction with Forest Service Road 222 (Schoolhouse Gulch Road), then westerly along Forest Service Road 222 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then northerly along the South Dakota-Wyoming border to its junction with Interstate 90, the point of beginning;
- (2) (2) Unit BHD-BD2: those portions of Custer, Lawrence, and Pennington Counties within a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border and Forest Service Road 222 (Schoolhouse Gulch), then easterly along Forest Service Road 222 (Schoolhouse Gulch) to its junction with Forest Service Road 134 (Tinton Road), then easterly along Forest Service Road 134 (Tinton Road) to its junction with Forest Service Road 222.3 (Roughlock Falls Road), then easterly along Forest Service Road 222.3 (Roughlock Falls Road) to its junction with U.S. Highway 14A at Savoy, then southeasterly along U.S. Highway 14A to its junction with U.S. Highway 85 near Cheyenne Crossing, then northeasterly along U.S. Highway 85 to its junction with U.S. Highway 385 at Deadwood, then southerly along U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with State Highway 89 at Pringle, then southerly on State Highway 89 to its junction with Fall River County Road ~~347~~ 12 (Pilger Mountain Road), then westerly along Fall River County Road ~~347~~ 12 to its junction with Custer County Road ~~3197~~ 317, then westerly along Custer County Road ~~3197~~ 317 to its junction with Custer County Road 715, then westerly along

Custer County Road 715 to its junction with Custer County Road 769, then westerly along Custer County Road 769 through Dewey to its junction with the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then northerly along the South Dakota-Wyoming border to its junction with Forest Service Road 222, the point of beginning.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

#### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Custer State Park Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:41

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** CUD-CU1-11: Any whitetail November 1-30  
CUD-CU1-13: Antlerless whitetail December 1-15 (currently closed)

**Open Units:** Custer State Park

**Licenses:** For the Custer State Park Deer seasons last year there were 20 “Any Whitetail” licenses.

The Department will recommend specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons at the April and May Commission meetings.

### Requirements and Restrictions:

1. No more than 100 one-tag deer licenses.
2. Applicants successful in drawing an “any” tag type are ineligible for the license again for 10 years.

### Proposed changes from last year:

None.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Table 1. Custer State Park Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023.

Year	Apps	Licenses	Whitetail		Mule		Total	Success	Avg Days Hunted
			Bucks	Does	Bucks	Does			
2014	1,755	30	8	13	0	0	21	68%	2.2
2015	1,866	29	8	15	0	0	23	79%	2.9
2016	2,088	40	10	19	0	0	29	72%	2.3
2017	2,391	64	30	11	1	0	42	66%	3.5
2018	2,503	64	26	9	0	0	36	56%	2.6
2019	1,199	87	26	24	3	0	53	61%	3.4
2020	1,080	88	28	25	3	0	56	63%	3.3
2021	1,091	73	20	23	0	0	43	59%	3.1
2022	1,029	75	14	28	0	0	42	56%	3.3
2023	1,063	20	18	0	0	0	18	89%	5.8

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

None.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## West River Deer Season Chapter 41:06:20

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** November 15 – 30, 2025\*

\*Gregory County – 30A: November 8 – 11 and 24 – 30, 2025

30B: November 15 – 30, 2025

Antlerless deer tags only: December 13-21, 2025

November 14 – 29, 2026\*

\*Gregory County – 30A: November 7 – 10 and 23 – 29, 2026

30B: November 14 – 29, 2026

Antlerless deer tags only: December 12-20, 2026

**Open Unit:** West River hunting units (see Figure 1)

**Licenses:** For the West River Deer seasons last year there were 11,617 single-tag licenses and 7,771 two-tag licenses.

The Department will recommend a specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons at the April and May Commission meetings.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. West River resident and nonresident "special any deer" license allocation is the greater of four percent of the total West River resident deer licenses which include an "any deer" tag allocated in the previous year, or 500 resident and 500 nonresident licenses.
2. West River resident and nonresident "special any whitetail deer" license allocation is the greater of four percent of the total West River resident deer licenses which include an "any whitetail deer" tag allocated in the previous year, or 500 resident and 500 nonresident licenses.
3. "Special any deer" licenses are available by lottery and are valid only on private property not leased by SDGFP for public hunting in any West River prairie deer unit.
4. No more than 20,000 one-tag deer licenses, 15,000 two-tag deer licenses and 10,000 three-tag licenses.
5. One-half of the licenses allocated in each unit are available for landowner/operator preference.
6. Landowners not possessing a license that allows the harvest of a buck may purchase an "any deer" or a two-tag "any deer and antlerless deer" license that is valid on their property only.
7. Resident and nonresident licenses are pooled after the fourth lottery drawing.
8. Only unfilled "any antlerless deer" and "antlerless whitetail deer" tags are valid for 9 days beginning on the third Saturday after Thanksgiving.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

None.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Figure 1. Map of West River Deer units.

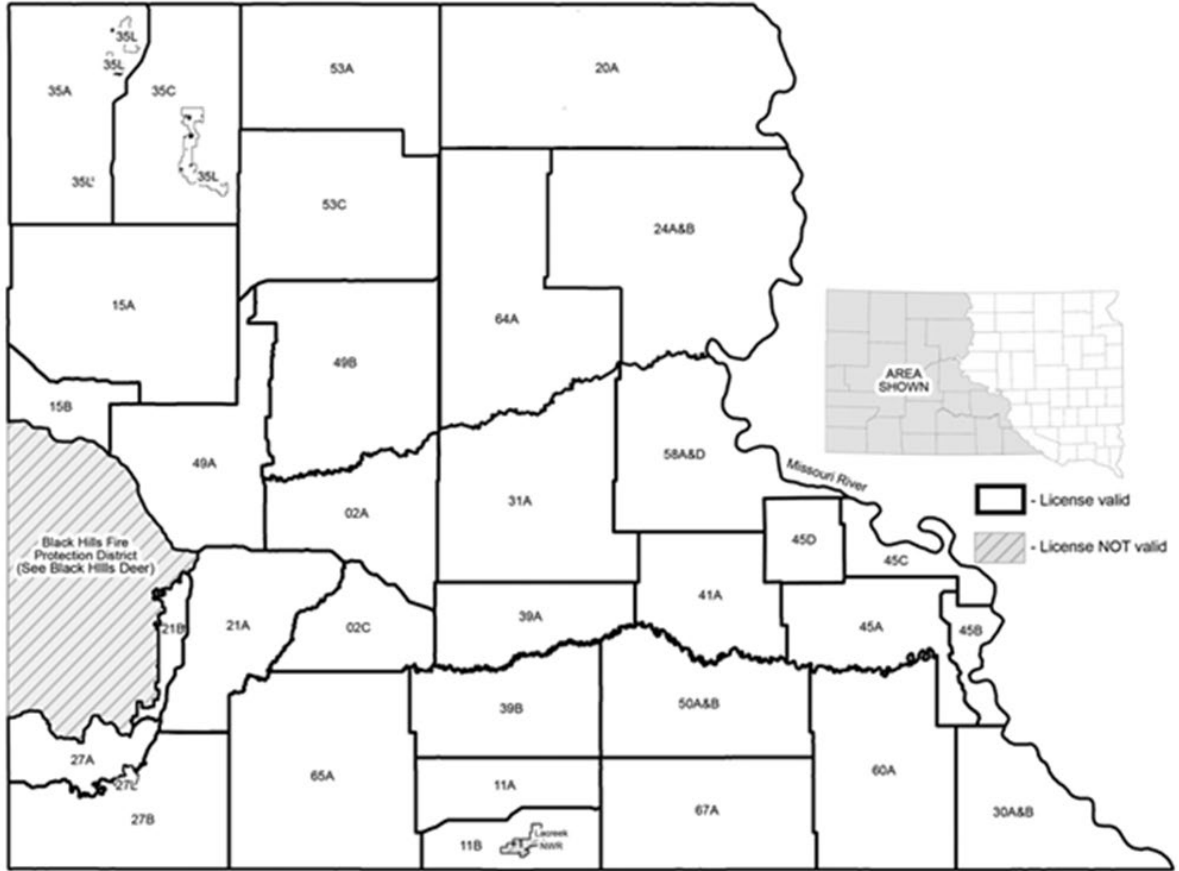


Table 1. West River Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023, including Special Deer and landowner-own-land licenses.

YEAR	Licenses Sold				Harvest					Tag Success	Avg Days	Avg Satis
	Resident		Nonres		Bucks		Does					
	Lics	Tags	Lics	Tags	WT	Mule	WT	Mule	Total			
2014	20,736	23,533	2,035	2,216	7,646	3,246	2,415	334	13,642	53%	3.25	4.88
2015	20,417	23,405	2,394	2,547	9,091	3,673	2,521	246	15,528	60%	3.12	5.27
2016	21,974	28,565	2,510	3,086	8,789	3,885	3,805	354	16,384	53%	3.33	5.13
2017	21,310	26,057	2,322	2,679	7,977	4,384	3,224	399	15,984	56%	3.28	5.05
2018	21,389	26,184	2,337	2,691	7,731	4,200	3,270	427	15,628	54%	3.38	5.10
2019	20,864	28,342	2,028	2,592	7,717	3,800	3,732	423	15,672	51%	3.09	5.18
2020	21,733	29,434	2,380	2,872	9,147	4,033	4,621	454	18,255	56%	3.46	5.30
2021	23,028	33,731	2,745	3,679	8,514	3,846	5,366	556	18,282	49%	3.50	5.12
2022	23,671	34,621	2,796	3,738	7,864	3,893	5,317	568	17,642	46%	3.51	4.69
2023	21,413	29,884	2,585	3,528	7,589	3,473	3,661	468	15,190	46%	3.60	4.55

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

None.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## National Wildlife Refuge Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:36

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**2025 Season Dates:** Sand Lake NWR November 8-12, November 13-17, November 18-23\*,  
November 24 – 30, and December 1-7  
Lacreek NWR October 15-21 and November 26 – December 2  
Waubay NWR November 15-23, November 24-28\*\*, and November 29 –  
December 7  
includes Waubay State Game Bird Refuge

**2026 Season Dates:** Sand Lake NWR November 14-18, November 19-23, November 24-29\*,  
November 30 – December 6, and December 7-13  
Lacreek NWR October 21-27 and November 25-December 1  
Waubay NWR November 14-22, November 23-27\*\*, and November 28 –  
December 6  
includes Waubay State Game Bird Refuge

*\* License recommendation of 0 licenses for 3<sup>rd</sup> interval in Sand Lake NWR.*

*\*\* 2<sup>nd</sup> interval in Waubay NWR currently closed.*

**Licenses:** Specific number of licenses by tag types and allocation will be recommended by the Department to the GFP Commission at the April Commission meeting.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. The first and fourth seasons on Sand Lake NWR, all seasons on Lacreek NWR and Waubay NWR are restricted to muzzleloaders.
2. Applicants may apply for only one refuge unit (season) in the first application period.
3. Licenses remaining after the first application period may be purchased by any resident or nonresident on a first-come, first serve basis.

### **Proposed changes from last year:**

None.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Table 1. National Wildlife Refuge Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023.

**Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LICENSES</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>DOES</b>	<b>% SUCCESS</b>	<b>AVG DAYS HUNTED</b>
2014	133	50	5	42%	2.34
2015	165	52	10	37%	2.89
2016	163	33	16	30%	2.60
2017	165	36	15	31%	2.72
2018	164	46	15	38%	2.66
2019	115	27	10	32%	2.54
2020	118	34	5	34%	2.81
2021	114	39	5	38%	3.08
2022	114	33	11	39%	2.63
2023	106	34	1	33%	3.11

**Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LICENSES</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>DOES</b>	<b>% SUCCESS</b>	<b>AVG DAYS HUNTED</b>
2014	34	8	0	24%	3.10
2015	34	12	0	35%	2.71
2016	23	7	1	34%	2.50
2017	29	11	1	41%	2.73
2018	29	7	0	23%	2.00
2019	21	9	0	41%	2.79
2020	19	9	0	49%	3.70
2021	17	9	0	53%	3.44
2022	22	11	0	50%	3.56
2023	22	6	0	25%	4.06

**Waubay National Wildlife Refuge**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>LICENSES</b>	<b>BUCKS</b>	<b>DOES</b>	<b>% SUCCESS</b>	<b>AVG DAYS HUNTED</b>
2014	33	8	2	32%	1.54
2015	33	8	0	24%	2.10
2016	33	8	1	29%	2.29
2017	21	10	3	61%	2.22
2018	22	10	3	56%	2.94
2019	22	6	3	40%	2.93
2020	22	5	0	23%	3.22
2021	21	8	1	44%	2.55
2022	22	9	6	66%	2.47
2023	22	5	0	24%	3.11

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

None.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## East River Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:21

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	April 3-4, 2025	Pierre
	Public Hearing	May 8, 2025	Custer State Park
	Finalization	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** November 22 – December 7, 2025  
Antlerless deer tags only: December 13-21, 2025

November 21 – December 6, 2026  
Antlerless deer tags only: December 12-20, 2026

**Open Unit:** East River hunting units (see Figure 1)

**Licenses:** For the East River Deer seasons last year there were 24,290 resident single-tag licenses and 450 resident two-tag licenses.

The Department will recommend a specific number of licenses by tag types for 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons at the April and May Commission meetings.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Resident "special any deer" license allocation is the greater of four percent of the total East River deer licenses which included an "any deer" tag allocated in the previous year, or 500 resident licenses. These licenses are available by lottery and are valid only on private property not leased by SDGFP for public hunting in any unit east of the Missouri River.
2. No more than 30,000 one-tag deer licenses, 15,000 two-tag deer licenses and 5,000 three-tag licenses.
3. One-half of the licenses allocated in each unit are available for landowner/operator preference.
4. Landowners not possessing a license that allows the harvest of a buck may purchase an "any deer" or a two-tag "any deer and antlerless deer" license that is valid on their property only.
5. Initially, all licenses are available only to residents. Nonresidents may apply for licenses remaining after the fourth lottery drawing.
6. A portion of southeastern Minnehaha County is closed to hunting with firearms other than muzzleloaders and shotguns using slugs.
7. Only unfilled "any antlerless deer" and "antlerless whitetail deer" tags are valid for 9 days beginning on the third Saturday after Thanksgiving.

### **Proposed changes from last year:**

None.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Preliminary harvest data for the 2024 deer hunting seasons just became available. Department staff will review all harvest and other biological data, population modeling outputs, determine population objectives for whitetail and mule deer, and then bring recommendations for unit-specific license numbers and types to the GFP Commission at the April and May Commission meeting.

Figure 1. Map of East River Deer units.

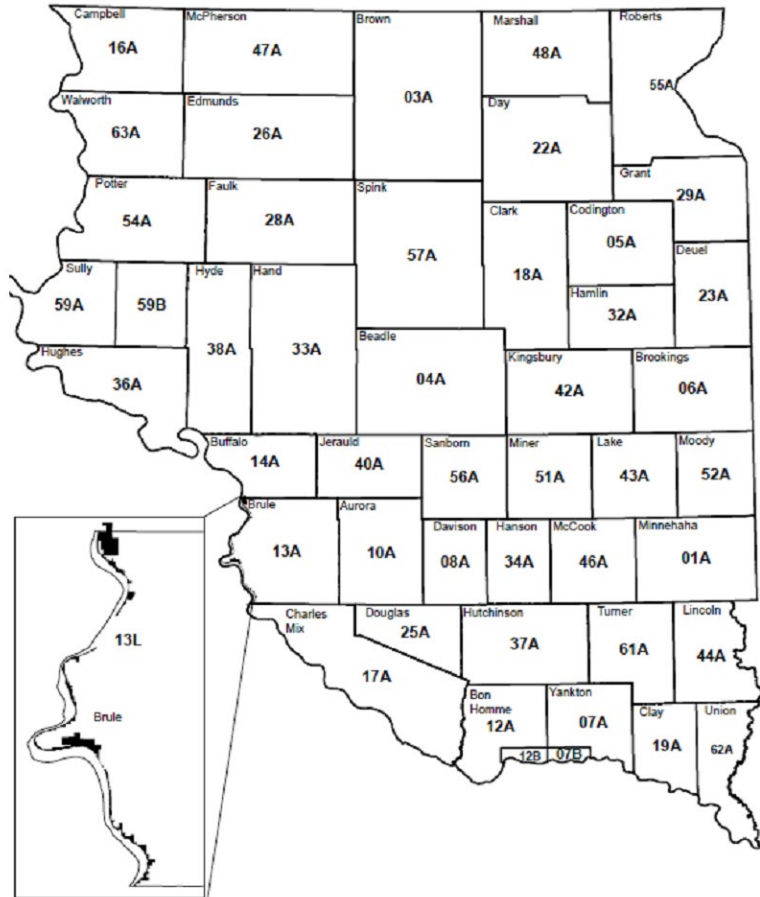


Table 1. East River Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2014 to 2023, including Special Deer and landowner-own-land licenses.

YEAR	Licenses Sold				Harvest				Total Harvest	Success	Avg Days	Avg Satis
	Resident		Nonres		Bucks		Does					
	Lics	Tags	Lics	Tags	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2014	31,037	37,835	912	1,326	12,213	376	6,673	86	19,347	49%	4.10	4.80
2015	32,287	40,420	836	1,276	13,060	369	7,331	104	20,866	50%	4.15	4.96
2016	31,048	44,311	759	1,595	10,659	359	7,972	117	19,107	42%	4.16	4.70
2017	31,501	39,556	830	1,313	11,636	312	6,446	96	18,489	45%	4.40	4.86
2018	31,791	39,926	718	1,143	11,329	348	6,616	95	18,388	45%	4.36	4.86
2019	33,353	39,891	526	538	10,015	280	6,142	66	16,503	41%	4.15	4.77
2020	33,816	40,884	437	451	11,801	339	7,066	59	19,265	47%	4.56	5.30
2021	33,836	39,740	257	257	11,759	243	6,150	30	18,182	45%	4.43	5.01
2022	33,722	38,962	342	385	12,819	278	6,204	61	19,362	49%	4.21	4.87
2023	33,479	37,747	262	336	11,249	286	5,098	53	16,685	44%	4.44	4.45

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

None.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

**RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA**

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_

# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

## Deer Hunting Season Licenses

Chapter 41:06:19, 41:06:20, 41:06:21, 41:06:22, 41:06:36, 41:06:41, 41:06:44, 41:06:45, 41:06:63

Commission Meeting Dates: Public Hearing May 3, 2025 Custer State Park  
Finalization May 8-9, 2025 Custer State Park

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The following recommendations would result in a 17% reduction in deer licenses from 2024 to 2025.

### COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

#### ARCHERY AND MUZZLELOADING DEER LICENSE TYPES

Unit	Area	License Type
ARD-ST1	Statewide	Any Deer
ARD-ER1	East River	Any Deer
ARD-WR1	West River	Any Deer
ARD-LM1	Designated Units	Antlerless Whitetail
ARD-MP1	Custer	Antlerless Deer
ARD-MP2	Rapid City	Antlerless Deer
ARD-MP3	Sioux Falls and surrounding area	Antlerless Deer
ARD-MP4	Closed	Closed
MZD-LM1	Designated Units	Antlerless Whitetail

#### 2025-2026 ARCHERY ACCESS PERMITS

Designated Area	Any Deer Access Permits
Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve	10
Good Earth State Park	5
WRD-27L (Residents)	20
WRD-27L (Nonresidents)	5
WRD-35L (Residents)	400
WRD-35L (Nonresidents)	100

#### 2024 vs. 2025 Comparison

Designated Area	Any Deer Access Permits
2024 Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve	10
2025 Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve	10
2024 Good Earth State Park	5
2025 Good Earth State Park	5
2024 WRD-27L (Residents)	20
2025 WRD-27L (Residents)	20
2024 WRD-27L (Nonresidents)	5
2025 WRD-27L (Nonresidents)	5
2024 WRD-35L (Residents)	400
2025 WRD-35L (Residents)	400
2024 WRD-35L (Nonresidents)	100
2025 WRD-35L (Nonresidents)	100

**LANDOWNER FREE, ARCHERY, AND  
MUZZLELOADING ANTLERLESS DEER UNITS**

<b>TYPE 13: LFD-ST1</b>	
<b>TYPE 13: ARD-LM1 and MZD-LM1</b>	
03A	Brown
05A	Codington
06A	Brookings
18A	Clark
22A	Day
23A	Deuel
26A	Edmunds
28A	Faulk
29A	Grant
32A	Hamlin
42A	Kingsbury
43A	Lake
47A	McPherson
48A	Marshall
51A	Miner
52A	Moody
55A	Roberts
57A	Spink
63A	Walworth
02A	Pennington
15A	Butte
15B	Butte
20A	Corson
21A	Custer
24A	Dewey
24B	Little Moreau
27A	Fall River
27B	Fall River
30A	Gregory
30B	Gregory
31A	Haakon
35A	Harding
35C	Harding
39A	Jackson
39B	Jackson
45C	Lyman
49A	Meade
53A	Perkins
53C	Perkins
58A	Stanley
58D	Stanley
64A	Ziebach

**2025-2026 MUZZLELOADER DEER**

	Resident	
	Any Deer Licenses	Any Deer Tags
Statewide	1,000	1,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>

**2023-2024 VS. 2025-2026 Comparison**

	Resident	
	Any Deer Licenses	Any Deer Tags
2023-2024 Statewide	1,000	1,000
2025-2026 Statewide	1,000	1,000

**2025-2026 BLACK HILLS DEER**

Unit	Resident Licenses				Nonresident Licenses				License Totals							
	AnyD 01	AnyB 02	AnyWT 11	BWT 12	AnyD 01	AnyB 02	AnyWT 11	BWT 12	RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES Lic	RES Tags	NR 1-tag	NR 2-tag	NR Lic	NR Tags
BD1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BD2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
BH1	0	200	0	2,750	0	16	0	220	2,950	0	2,950	2,950	236	0	236	236
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>236</b>
<b>RES and NR:</b>											<b>3,186</b>	<b>3,186</b>				

**2023-2024 vs. 2025-2026 Comparison**

Resident Licenses				
Unit	Year		Change	
	23-24	25-26	#	%
BD1	0	0	0	NA
BD2	0	0	0	NA
BH1	2,950	2,950	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>2,950</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

Note: An additional 8% of the number of licenses will be available to nonresidents.



**2025-2026 CUSTER STATE PARK DEER**

Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Deer Type 01	Any Whitetail Type 11	Antlerless Whitetail Type 13
CUD-1	0	25	0
CUD-2	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>

**2023-2024 vs. 2025-2026 Comparison**

Unit	2023-2024 Resident Licenses	2025-2026 Resident Licenses	# Change	% Change	2023-2024 Resident Tags	2025-2026 Resident Tags	# Change	% Change
CUD-1	20	25	5	25%	20	25	5	25%
CUD-2	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>25%</b>

**REFUGE DEER 2023-2024 vs. 2025-2026 Comparison**

Unit	Resident Licenses		Nonresident Licenses		License Totals					
	AnyD 01	AtlW 13	AnyD 01	AtlW 13	RES 1-tag	RES Lic	RES Tags	NR 1-tag	NR Lic	NR Tags
<b>Lacreek Refuge</b>										
RFD-LC1	10		1	0	10	10	10	1	1	1
RFD-LC2	10		1	0	10	10	10	1	1	1
<b>Sand Lake Refuge</b>										
RFD-SL1	20		2	0	20	20	20	2	2	2
RFD-SL2	20		2	0	20	20	20	2	2	2
RFD-SL3	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RFD-SL4	20		2	0	20	20	20	2	2	2
RFD-SL5	20		2	0	20	20	20	2	2	2
<b>Waubay Refuge</b>										
RFD-WA1	10		1	0	10	10	10	1	1	1
RFD-WA2	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
RFD-WA3	10		1	0	10	10	10	1	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>
			<b>RES and NR:</b>		<b>132</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>132</b>			

**2023-2024 vs. 2025-2026**

Unit	Resident Licenses							
	Any Deer				Antlerless Deer			
	Year		Change		Year		Change	
	2023-24	2025-26	#	%	2023-24	2025-26	#	%
<b>Lacreek Refuge</b>								
RFD-LC1	10	10	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
RFD-LC2	10	10	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
<b>Sand Lake Refuge</b>								
RFD-SL1	20	20	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
RFD-SL2	20	20	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
RFD-SL3	20	0	-20	-100%	0	0	0	NA
RFD-SL4	20	20	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
RFD-SL5	20	20	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
<b>Waubay Refuge</b>								
RFD-WA1	10	10	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
RFD-WA2	0	0	0	NA	0	0	0	NA
RFD-WA3	10	10	0	0%	0	0	0	NA
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>-20</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>NA</b>

Note: An additional 8% of the number of licenses will be available to nonresidents.

**2025-2026 WEST RIVER DEER**

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident Licenses													Nonresident Licenses												
		AnyD 01	AnyB 02	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P	AnyD 01	AnyD 02	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P
02A	Pennington	400								50		200			32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	16	0	0
02C	Pennington		100					25							0	8	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
11A	Bennett		125					50							0	10	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
11B	Bennett		25					50							0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
15A	Butte	200										600		500	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	40
15B	Butte	150										400		200	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	16
20A	Corson	200		50				350							16	0	4	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0
21A	Custer		100					200		50					0	8	0	0	0	0	16	0	4	0	0	0	0
21B	Custer	50						50							4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
24A	Dewey	100						250	100						8	0	0	0	0	0	20	8	0	0	0	0	0
24B	Little Moreau							10	10						0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
27A	Fall River		100					50		25					0	8	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
27B	Fall River		200					100	50	50					0	16	0	0	0	0	8	4	4	0	0	0	0
27L	Fall River		5					10							0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
30A	Gregory							450		100					0	0	0	0	0	0	36	0	8	0	0	0	0
30B	Gregory							450		100					0	0	0	0	0	0	36	0	8	0	0	0	0
31A	Haakon	600			100	75						100	150		48	0	0	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	0
35A	Harding	275						75				50		75	22	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	6
35C	Harding	200			50			75				50		75	16	0	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	6
35L	Harding	75						25							6	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
39A	Jackson	175						50		50					14	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
39B	Jackson	275						50	50						22	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
41A	Jones	200						200							16	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
45A	Lyman	100						350							8	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0
45B	Lyman	50						175							4	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
45C	Lyman	30							20						3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
45D	Lyman	30						50							3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
49A	Meade	500							150			250			40	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	20	0	0
49B	Meade	600						150							48	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0
50A	Mellette	150						400							12	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
53A	Perkins	400					100					250		100	32	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	20	0	8
53C	Perkins	500					100					250		100	40	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	20	0	8
58A	Stanley	150										150			12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0
58D	Stanley	5							3						1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
60A	Tripp	50						600							4	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	0
64A	Ziebach	250						75					50		20	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	4
65A	Oglala Lakota		75												0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
67A	Todd	75						75							6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL	5,790	730	50	150	75	200	4,395	383	425	0	2,300	150	1,100	465	59	4	12	6	16	352	32	34	0	184	12	88

**2025-2026 WEST RIVER DEER**

Unit #	Unit Name	License Totals									
		RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES 3-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags	NR 1-tag	NR 2-tag	NR 3-tag	NR Licenses	NR Tags
02A	Pennington	450	200	0	650	850	36	16	0	52	68
02C	Pennington	125	0	0	125	125	10	0	0	10	10
11A	Bennett	175	0	0	175	175	14	0	0	14	14
11B	Bennett	75	0	0	75	75	6	0	0	6	6
15A	Butte	200	1,100	0	1,300	2400	16	88	0	104	192
15B	Butte	150	600	0	750	1350	12	48	0	60	108
20A	Corson	600	0	0	600	600	48	0	0	48	48
21A	Custer	350	0	0	350	350	28	0	0	28	28
21B	Custer	100	0	0	100	100	8	0	0	8	8
24A	Dewey	450	0	0	450	450	36	0	0	36	36
24B	Little Moreau	20	0	0	20	20	2	0	0	2	2
27A	Fall River	175	0	0	175	175	14	0	0	14	14
27B	Fall River	400	0	0	400	400	32	0	0	32	32
27L	Fall River	15	0	0	15	15	2	0	0	2	2
30A	Gregory	550	0	0	550	550	44	0	0	44	44
30B	Gregory	550	0	0	550	550	44	0	0	44	44
31A	Haakon	700	325	0	1,025	1350	56	26	0	82	108
35A	Harding	350	125	0	475	600	28	10	0	38	48
35C	Harding	325	125	0	450	575	26	10	0	36	46
35L	Harding	100	0	0	100	100	8	0	0	8	8
39A	Jackson	275	0	0	275	275	22	0	0	22	22
39B	Jackson	375	0	0	375	375	30	0	0	30	30
41A	Jones	400	0	0	400	400	32	0	0	32	32
45A	Lyman	450	0	0	450	450	36	0	0	36	36
45B	Lyman	225	0	0	225	225	18	0	0	18	18
45C	Lyman	50	0	0	50	50	5	0	0	5	5
45D	Lyman	80	0	0	80	80	7	0	0	7	7
49A	Meade	650	250	0	900	1150	52	20	0	72	92
49B	Meade	750	0	0	750	750	60	0	0	60	60
50A	Mellette	550	0	0	550	550	44	0	0	44	44
53A	Perkins	400	450	0	850	1300	32	36	0	68	104
53C	Perkins	500	450	0	950	1400	40	36	0	76	112
58A	Stanley	150	150	0	300	450	12	12	0	24	36
58D	Stanley	8	0	0	8	8	2	0	0	2	2
60A	Tripp	650	0	0	650	650	52	0	0	52	52
64A	Ziebach	325	50	0	375	425	26	4	0	30	34
65A	Oglala Lakota	75	0	0	75	75	6	0	0	6	6
67A	Todd	150	0	0	150	150	12	0	0	12	12
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,923</b>	<b>3,825</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,748</b>	<b>19,573</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,264</b>	<b>1,570</b>
	<b>RES &amp; NR:</b>	<b>12,881</b>	<b>4,131</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17,012</b>	<b>21,143</b>					

**WEST RIVER DEER 2023-2024 vs. 2025-2026 Comparison**

Unit #	Unit Name	2023-2024 Resident Licenses	2025-2026 Resident Licenses	# Change	% Change	2023-2024 Resident Tags	2025-2026 Resident Tags	# Change	% Change
02A	Pennington	600	650	50	8%	800	850	50	6%
02C	Pennington	150	125	-25	-17%	150	125	-25	-17%
11A	Bennett	175	175	0	0%	175	175	0	0%
11B	Bennett	125	75	-50	-40%	125	75	-50	-40%
15A	Butte	1,200	1,300	100	8%	2,200	2,400	200	9%
15B	Butte	750	750	0	0%	1,350	1,350	0	0%
20A	Corson	700	600	-100	-14%	1,200	600	-600	-50%
21A	Custer	350	350	0	0%	350	350	0	0%
21B	Custer	100	100	0	0%	100	100	0	0%
24A	Dewey	450	450	0	0%	450	450	0	0%
24B	Little Moreau	20	20	0	0%	20	20	0	0%
27A	Fall River	200	175	-25	-13%	200	175	-25	-13%
27B	Fall River	425	400	-25	-6%	425	400	-25	-6%
27L	Fall River	15	15	0	0%	15	15	0	0%
30A	Gregory	925	550	-375	-41%	1,825	550	-1,275	-70%
30B	Gregory	925	550	-375	-41%	1,825	550	-1,275	-70%
31A	Haakon	850	1,025	175	21%	1,000	1,350	350	35%
35A	Harding	525	475	-50	-10%	650	600	-50	-8%
35C	Harding	475	450	-25	-5%	600	575	-25	-4%
35L	Harding	100	100	0	0%	100	100	0	0%
39A	Jackson	325	275	-50	-15%	325	275	-50	-15%
39B	Jackson	375	375	0	0%	375	375	0	0%
41A	Jones	500	400	-100	-20%	500	400	-100	-20%
45A	Lyman	800	450	-350	-44%	1,000	450	-550	-55%
45B	Lyman	300	225	-75	-25%	475	225	-250	-53%
45C	Lyman	50	50	0	0%	70	50	-20	-29%
45D	Lyman	80	80	0	0%	80	80	0	0%
49A	Meade	825	900	75	9%	1,075	1,150	75	7%
49B	Meade	700	750	50	7%	700	750	50	7%
50A	Mellette	700	550	-150	-21%	700	550	-150	-21%
53A	Perkins	825	850	25	3%	1,250	1,300	50	4%
53C	Perkins	925	950	25	3%	1,350	1,400	50	4%
58A	Stanley	350	300	-50	-14%	500	450	-50	-10%
58D	Stanley	8	8	0	0%	8	8	0	0%
60A	Tripp	1,350	650	-700	-52%	2,350	650	-1,700	-72%
64A	Ziebach	400	375	-25	-6%	450	425	-25	-6%
65A	Oglala Lakota	75	75	0	0%	75	75	0	0%
67A	Todd	300	150	-150	-50%	300	150	-150	-50%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,948</b>	<b>15,748</b>	<b>-2,200</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>25,143</b>	<b>19,573</b>	<b>-5,570</b>	<b>-22%</b>

Note: An additional 8% of the number of licenses will be available to nonresidents.

**2025-2026 EAST RIVER DEER**

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident Licenses													License Totals				
		AnyD 01	AnyB 02	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P	RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES 3-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags
01A	Minnehaha	400													400	0	0	400	400
03A	Brown	600							300						900	0	0	900	900
04A	Beadle							450							450	0	0	450	450
05A	Codington	400							200						600	0	0	600	600
06A	Brookings	400							100						500	0	0	500	500
07A	Yankton		100												100	0	0	100	100
07B	Yankton														0	0	0	0	0
08A	Davison		100												100	0	0	100	100
10A	Aurora							200							200	0	0	200	200
12A	Bon Homme		100												100	0	0	100	100
12B	Bon Homme														0	0	0	0	0
13A	Brule	50						500							550	0	0	550	550
13L	Brule	20													20	0	0	20	20
14A	Buffalo	50						150							200	0	0	200	200
16A	Campbell	30						350							380	0	0	380	380
17A	Charles Mix							200							200	0	0	200	200
18A	Clark	600							200						800	0	0	800	800
19A	Clay		100												100	0	0	100	100
22A	Day	600							300						900	0	0	900	900
23A	Deuel	500							100						600	0	0	600	600
25A	Douglas							150							150	0	0	150	150
26A	Edmunds	500							200						700	0	0	700	700
28A	Faulk	600							400						1,000	0	0	1,000	1000
29A	Grant	400							100						500	0	0	500	500
32A	Hamlin	600							100						700	0	0	700	700
33A	Hand	10						300							310	0	0	310	310
34A	Hanson		150												150	0	0	150	150
36A	Hughes	150						250							400	0	0	400	400
37A	Hutchinson		100												100	0	0	100	100
38A	Hyde	10						300							310	0	0	310	310
40A	Jerauld							200							200	0	0	200	200
42A	Kingsbury	500							200						700	0	0	700	700
43A	Lake	300							100						400	0	0	400	400
44A	Lincoln		100												100	0	0	100	100
46A	McCook	250													250	0	0	250	250
47A	McPherson	500							400						900	0	0	900	900
48A	Marshall	500							50						550	0	0	550	550
51A	Miner	400							350						750	0	0	750	750
52A	Moody	300							100						400	0	0	400	400
54A	Potter	50						400							450	0	0	450	450
55A	Roberts	500							50						550	0	0	550	550
56A	Sanborn							250							250	0	0	250	250
57A	Spink	700							200						900	0	0	900	900
59A	Sully	100						75							175	0	0	175	175
59B	Sully	20						75							95	0	0	95	95
61A	Turner		100												100	0	0	100	100
62A	Union		100												100	0	0	100	100
63A	Walworth	50						400	100						550	0	0	550	550
	TOTAL	10,090	950	0	0	0	0	4,250	3,550	0	0	0	0	0	18,840	0	0	18,840	18,840



**EAST RIVER DEER 2024 vs. 2025-2026 Comparison**

Unit #	Unit Name	2023-2024 Resident Licenses	2025-2026 Resident Licenses	# Change	% Change	2023-2024 Resident Tags	2025-2026 Resident Tags	# Change	% Change
01A	Minnehaha	600	400	-200	-33%	600	400	-200	-33%
03A	Brown	1,400	900	-500	-36%	1,400	900	-500	-36%
04A	Beadle	650	450	-200	-31%	650	450	-200	-31%
05A	Codington	600	600	0	0%	600	600	0	0%
06A	Brookings	600	500	-100	-17%	600	500	-100	-17%
07A	Yankton	250	100	-150	-60%	250	100	-150	-60%
07B	Yankton	50	0	-50	-100%	50	0	-50	-100%
08A	Davison	250	100	-150	-60%	250	100	-150	-60%
10A	Aurora	400	200	-200	-50%	400	200	-200	-50%
12A	Bon Homme	225	100	-125	-56%	225	100	-125	-56%
12B	Bon Homme	50	0	-50	-100%	50	0	-50	-100%
13A	Brule	1,050	550	-500	-48%	1,050	550	-500	-48%
13L	Brule	20	20	0	0%	20	20	0	0%
14A	Buffalo	400	200	-200	-50%	650	200	-450	-69%
16A	Campbell	430	380	-50	-12%	430	380	-50	-12%
17A	Charles Mix	275	200	-75	-27%	275	200	-75	-27%
18A	Clark	800	800	0	0%	1,000	800	-200	-20%
19A	Clay	100	100	0	0%	100	100	0	0%
22A	Day	900	900	0	0%	900	900	0	0%
23A	Deuel	700	600	-100	-14%	700	600	-100	-14%
25A	Douglas	350	150	-200	-57%	350	150	-200	-57%
26A	Edmunds	900	700	-200	-22%	900	700	-200	-22%
28A	Faulk	1,100	1,000	-100	-9%	1,100	1,000	-100	-9%
29A	Grant	500	500	0	0%	500	500	0	0%
32A	Hamlin	800	700	-100	-13%	800	700	-100	-13%
33A	Hand	360	310	-50	-14%	360	310	-50	-14%
34A	Hanson	300	150	-150	-50%	300	150	-150	-50%
36A	Hughes	400	400	0	0%	400	400	0	0%
37A	Hutchinson	200	100	-100	-50%	200	100	-100	-50%
38A	Hyde	310	310	0	0%	310	310	0	0%
40A	Jerauld	400	200	-200	-50%	400	200	-200	-50%
42A	Kingsbury	700	700	0	0%	700	700	0	0%
43A	Lake	450	400	-50	-11%	450	400	-50	-11%
44A	Lincoln	150	100	-50	-33%	150	100	-50	-33%
46A	McCook	650	250	-400	-62%	650	250	-400	-62%
47A	McPherson	1,000	900	-100	-10%	1,000	900	-100	-10%
48A	Marshall	650	550	-100	-15%	650	550	-100	-15%
51A	Miner	750	750	0	0%	750	750	0	0%
52A	Moody	550	400	-150	-27%	550	400	-150	-27%
54A	Potter	450	450	0	0%	450	450	0	0%
55A	Roberts	700	550	-150	-21%	700	550	-150	-21%
56A	Sanborn	650	250	-400	-62%	650	250	-400	-62%
57A	Spink	1,200	900	-300	-25%	1,200	900	-300	-25%
59A	Sully	300	175	-125	-42%	300	175	-125	-42%
59B	Sully	220	95	-125	-57%	220	95	-125	-57%
61A	Turner	150	100	-50	-33%	150	100	-50	-33%
62A	Union	250	100	-150	-60%	250	100	-150	-60%
63A	Walworth	550	550	0	0%	550	550	0	0%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,740</b>	<b>18,840</b>	<b>-5,900</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>25,190</b>	<b>18,840</b>	<b>-6,350</b>	<b>-25%</b>

APPROVE \_\_\_\_\_ MODIFY \_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_ NO ACTION \_\_\_\_\_





1. No person may possess more than one (1) elk license of any type in a year.
2. No more than two persons may submit applications together.
3. Except for landowner/operator preference applicants, no person who receives a license in the first drawing for this season shall be eligible to apply for a Black Hills (firearm) elk license in first drawings for next nine years.
4. One-half of the licenses allocated in each unit are available for landowner/operator preference application. Only one member of each qualifying landowner/operator household may apply every year.
5. Any elk that is harvested must be inspected by a Department representative within 24 hours after kill.

Figure 1. Map of Black Hills elk season hunting units for “any elk” license types (left panel) and units for “antlerless elk” license types (right panel).

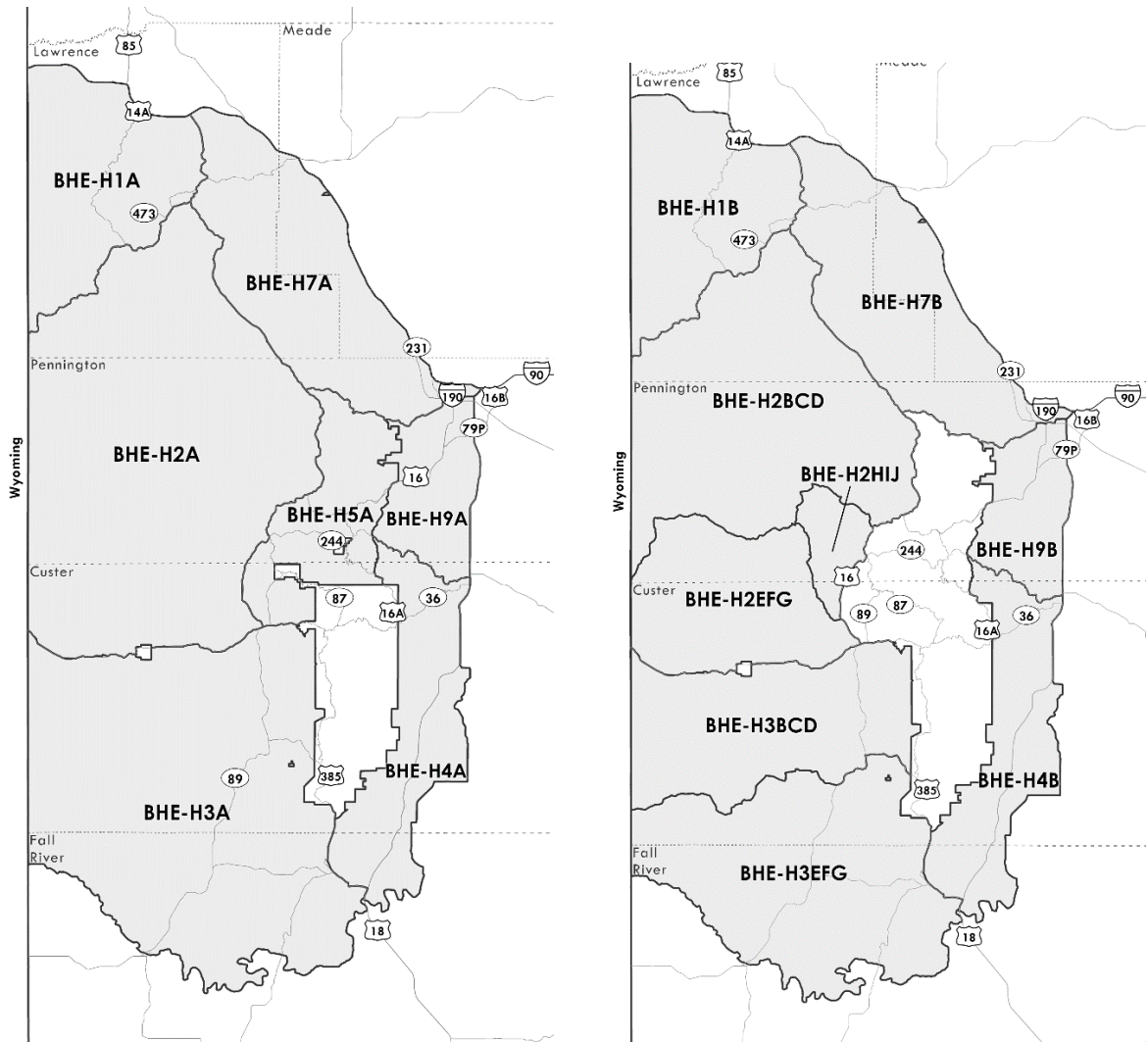
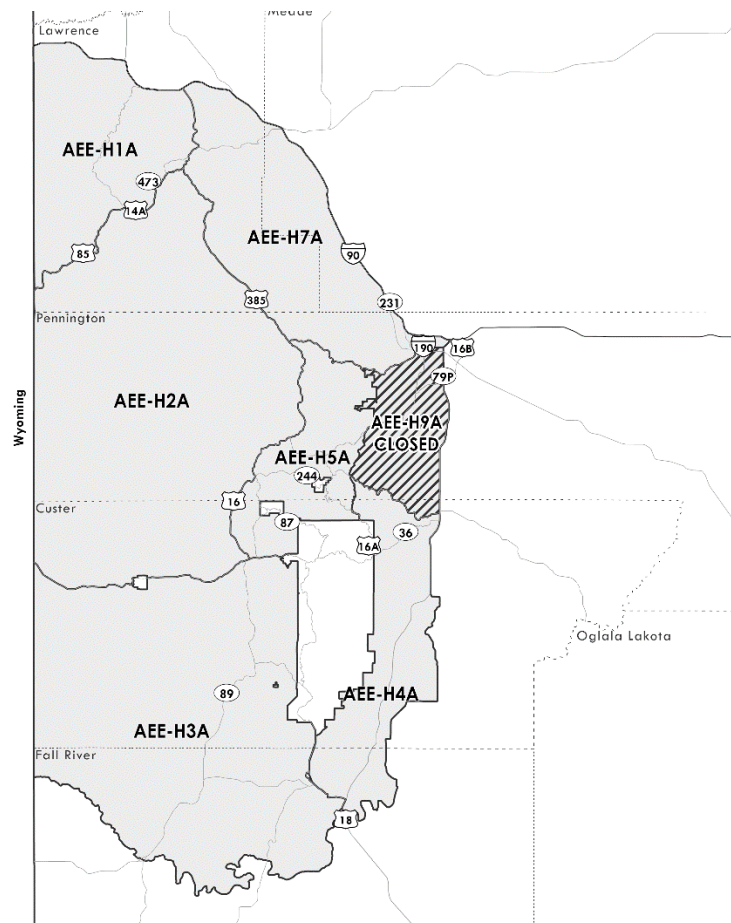


Figure 2. Map of Archery Elk Season hunting units in the Black Hills.



COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

2024

Black Hills (Firearm) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	60		
H1B		65	
H2A	300		
H2B		50	
H2C		50	
H2D			
H2E		40	
H2F		40	
H2G		40	
H2H		10	
H2I		10	
H2J		10	
H3A	120		
H3B		45	
H3C		45	
H3D		45	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	40		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	30		
H7B		20	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>1,300</b>

2025

Black Hills (Firearm) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	80		
H1B		100	
H2A	350		
H2B		100	
H2C		100	
H2D		50	
H2E		125	
H2F		125	
H2G		125	
H2H		10	
H2I		10	
H2J		10	
H3A	120		
H3B		45	
H3C		45	
H3D		45	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	40		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	35		
H7B		50	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1,845</b>

2024

Archery (Black Hills) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	30	10	
H2A	100	40	
H3A	40	30	
H4A	10	10	
H5A	2		
H7A	10		
H9A			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>282</b>

2025

Archery (Black Hills) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	30	15	
H2A	125	70	
H3A	40	30	
H4A	10	10	
H5A	2		
H7A	10	10	
H9A			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>352</b>

**2024**

CSP Early (Archery) Elk		
Season	Resident Licenses	
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23
CEE-CU1	5	

**2025**

CSP Early (Archery) Elk		
Season	Resident Licenses	
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23
CEE-CU1	10	

**2024**

CSP (Firearm) Elk		
Season	Resident Licenses	
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23
CUE-CU1	15	
RAFFLE	1	

**2025**

CSP (Firearm) Elk		
Season	Resident Licenses	
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23
CUE-CU1	25	
RAFFLE	1	

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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# North American River Otter Action Plan, 2025–2029



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND  
PARKS PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA  
**WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT TBD**  
DATE 2025





This action plan will be used by South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks staff on an annual basis and will be formally evaluated at least every five years. Plan updates and changes, however, may occur more frequently as needed.

A supportive document to this action plan, the “North American River Otter Management in South Dakota,” provides a historical background, research, surveys, population monitoring efforts and issues, challenges and opportunities which can be found at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/>.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Action Plan Coordinator – Alex Solem, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

Action Plan Team – Nathan Baker, Julie Lindstrom, Dan Sternhagen, Trenton Haffley, Jacob Wolfe, Rachel Gardner, Nick Markl, Nick Rossman, Brad Baumgartner, and Andrew Norton.

Cover photo by Wayne Melquist. All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision from corrections, updates, and data analysis.

Recommended citation:

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## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

A draft of the “North American River Otter Action Plan” was available for public comment from INSERT DATES HERE.



## INTRODUCTION

North American River Otter (*Lontra canadensis*, [hereafter; river otter]) were considered common in many riparian areas and permanent bodies of water in the Northern Great Plains. However, overexploitation, habitat degradation and water pollution extirpated the species from much of its range by the mid-twentieth century, including South Dakota (Anderson 1977, Jones et al. 1983, Jones et al. 1985, Kiesow 2003). Successful reintroduction efforts occurred by the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe in 1998 and 1999 to re-establish a river otter population in eastern South Dakota (GFP 2020). Historical reports of river otter sightings and sign occurred prior to re-establishment. However, only until recently have these reports become more common indicating their distribution has steadily expanded into other river systems in eastern South Dakota (GFP 2020). These reports could be a direct result of dispersals of individuals following restoration efforts in surrounding states or reestablished populations in South Dakota (Kiesow 2003).

Due to their limited distribution and population, river otter were listed as a state threatened species in South Dakota and given a protected status (South Dakota Administrative Rule 41:19:02:04; GFP 2012). In December of 2010, a group of South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) staff began developing a plan for the conservation and management of river otter and produced the South Dakota River Otter Management Plan (GFP 2012). That 5-year plan provided general, strategic guidance to GFP and potential partners for the recovery and sustained management of river otter in South Dakota. Using verified reports of sightings, sign, and incidental trapping events from staff and members of the public, GFP developed recovery criteria to remove river otter from the state threatened species list. In 2020, delisting criteria were met, river otter were removed from the state threatened species list, and a structured season was established. During this process, GFP outlined the need for a monitoring effort of the recently delisted species, an aspect critical for successful otter management (Melquist et al. 2003, Gallant et al. 2008), to ensure delisting criteria is continually being met and the population is sustainable.

This is an action plan for all constituents interested in the conservation of river otter in South Dakota. Wildlife managers are challenged to use the available tools for the benefit and well-being of river otter. With careful coordination among all stakeholders, South Dakota's trapping and outdoor heritage will be preserved for future generations. As such, GFP will manage river otter populations with data and techniques to encourage occupation of suitable available habitats and to provide sustainable use and enjoyment within the social tolerance level for this species.

## HARVEST STRUCTURE

Management options include total protection; adjusting opportunities to harvest animals by season length and harvest period; establishing harvest limits, management zones, and closed areas; limiting harvest by individual trappers; and restricting the size, type, and number of traps allowed (Melquist and Dronkert 1987). Melquist et al. (2003) described Canada's long-term use of registered traplines, which helps reduce competition among trappers, particularly during times of high fur prices.

River otter are vulnerable to overharvest because of their low fecundity rate, the long interval between generations, their ability to travel extensively, and, when restricted to riparian corridors, their limited travel routes (Toweill and Tabor 1982, Melquist et al. 2003). This has led some states to regulate river otter harvest by allowing only one animal/trapper/season (Toweill and Tabor 1982). In addition, Hill (1978), as cited in Melquist and Dronkert (1987), analyzed river

otter and beaver trapping in the southeastern U.S. and found that one river otter was taken for every 6-10 beavers, but most incidentally trapped otters are caught by a few trappers.

In May of 2020, GFP staff recommended an annual river otter trapping/hunting season. The GFP Commission approved this season beginning at sunrise on 1 November and running through 31 December or until a harvest limit of 15 river otters was reached, whichever came first. In 2021, the harvest limit was increased to 20 river otters. The river otter season was restricted to the eastern portion of South Dakota (Figure 1). Participation was limited to residents of South Dakota, and trappers/hunters were limited to a harvest of one river otter per individual per season. During the open season, trappers/hunters are required to report any river otter within 24 hours of harvest to GFP. The trapper/hunter is required to check-in the carcass and detached pelt at a designated GFP office for registration. Upon check-in, the hunter/trapper is issued a Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) tag for the pelt, and the carcass is obtained by GFP to collect biological samples.

## POPULATION MONITORING

The river otter is a difficult species to monitor, making the development of a meaningful and feasible monitoring program a continuing challenge. As with any species, clear objectives must be paired with suitable survey and monitoring tools. A monitoring program must help ensure the species status remains at least stable to demonstrate that delisting remains justified. A monitoring program can provide additional population status information, in addition to harvest or trapper effort data that are collected. Survey and monitoring tools must also be adapted to South Dakota's climate and landscape. A combination of methods best suited to South Dakota are needed, with consideration given to limited funding and staff availability, and dynamic weather and habitat conditions.

### Reports of Sign, Sightings, and Mortalities

Reports of river otter are categorized based on the primary method used to identify the animal as a river otter: sighting, sign, incidental trap, and vehicle kill. Sightings are based upon the actual observation of a river otter. Reports of sign are based on tracks, slides, runs, scat, latrines, and/or natal dens. Incidental trap reports are of river otter that were incidentally caught while targeting other species. Vehicle kills are reports of river otter found dead on the road or hit by a vehicle. A report can be of an individual animal or a group of animals.

Certain criteria are used to determine the reliability of each report:

- A **verified report** is one of a carcass or live-captured individual(s) or where evidence exists that proves the report was a river otter. Photos where the animal can clearly be identified as a river otter may also be considered verified. Tracks associated with sliding marks in the snow, if confirmed by knowledgeable reviewers can also be considered a verified sighting. Knowledgeable reviewers may include agency staff familiar with river otter or other river otter experts.
- A **probable report** is a sighting not accompanied by a photo but is observed by someone with river otter experience and knowledge. Tracks and scats not in snow are considered probable reports in part because of the difficulty of correctly identifying them. Photos are evaluated by knowledgeable reviewers.
- An **unverified report** is a report with no evidence to support or reject the report.

## Necropsy Information

Since 2003, GFP conducts necropsies on all available opportunistically obtained carcasses. Most carcasses are collected from two watersheds: Big Sioux and Minnesota. A vast majority of necropsied carcasses are obtained from Moody, Roberts, and Grant counties, with many of them obtained during the months of April and November. Incidental trapping is the primary cause of death for necropsied river otter.

When an incidentally killed river otter is reported to GFP, a river otter report form is filled out and includes date, time, county, location, GFP representative and reporting party. For those animals incidentally trapped, the trap type, species targeted, and whether the animal was found dead is recorded. Whole carcass weight, total length, and tail length is measured (Diggs 2013) prior to the initiation of the necropsy. Sex of the river otter is confirmed at necropsy. Samples are taken of the lower jaw or skull, reproductive organs (ovaries and/or uterus), and the tongue or a sample of hind quarter muscle tissue. Removal of lower canines from skulls/lower jaws is completed according to Matson's Wildlife Aging Lab protocols (Matson's Laboratory 2024). Reproduction status is determined by presence of corpora lutea (Diggs 2013). In addition, the uterine horn is examined for blastocysts and if swollen, the uterus is examined for embryos (Diggs 2013). The caudal lobe of liver and spleen may be collected to test for the presence of heavy metals such as selenium and mercury and the presence of pesticides. Presence of wrist worms and any obvious injuries are also recorded.

## Latrine Survey

River otter are secretive animals occurring at relatively low densities in hard-to-reach places, making the use of traditional monitoring efforts difficult (Blundell et al. 1999, Melquist et al. 2003, Helon 2006, Serfass et al. 1996, Gallant et al. 2008, Bieber et al. 2018). Non-invasive genetic sampling (NGS) can be an effective tool for management and conservation (Sollmann et al. 2013, Hansen et al. 2008, Bonesi et al. 2013), especially for elusive, secretive, and hard to trap species, such as river otter (Brzeski et al. 2013, Cox and Murphy 2019). NGS provides biologists an alternative sampling technique by relying on DNA from scat, hair, or urine (Waits and Paetkau 2005, Brzeski et al. 2013, Ferreira et al. 2018). River otter regularly deposit scat and anal jellies (intestinal mucus) at communal latrine sites. These genetic samples give biologists the ability to identify the unique individuals and their sex (Bonesi et al. 2013, Brzeski et al. 2013, Johnson et al. 2013, Klutsch and Thomas 2018, Cox and Murphy 2019).

GFP began a river otter monitoring program of surveying otter latrines in 2021. Twenty-three transects along the Big Sioux River ranging from 2.5 to 7 km are surveyed once by kayak in September and October annually. River otter latrines are a social hub and located in relatively predictable locations along a waterway. These locations include fallen trees, raised banks, sand bars, and near beaver lodges. Once a latrine is located, its location, the level of confidence it is a river otter latrine, number of scats sampled, and the scat's freshness are recorded. Fecal swabs are rubbed on the outside of the scat of anal jelly, and then stored in an individually marked vial containing a DNA/RNA shield. DNA is extracted from fecal swabs using DNeasy Blood and Tissue Kit (Qiagen, Inc.). Samples are genotyped to identify individual river otter (see North American River Otter Management in South Dakota for more detailed protocol).

The genetic information gathered provides a conservative count of river otter within a defined sampling unit and provides an index of abundance (river otter/sampling unit). This index helps establish a baseline distribution of river otter in South Dakota and provides

inferences to traditional abundance estimates (i.e., mark-recapture approaches) which can be monitored through time and establish population trends. An assessment will occur as needed to determine the feasibility of expanding monitoring efforts outside of the Big Sioux River to other river systems.

### Population Backdating

Population backdating utilizes the known age of individuals to calculate the number of individuals back to their projected birth year (Downing 1980). These individuals are combined into age specific cohorts and contribute to the cumulative number of known-aged individuals for the years they are alive. For example, an individual estimated at five years old at death would have been a member of the population for the previous five years. Each necropsied river otter contributes to the cumulative number of known-aged river otter for the years they are alive. GFP biologists use this analysis to determine historical trends in abundance and produce a population trajectory to a certain point in time.

## **MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

South Dakota will manage river otter populations with data and techniques to encourage occupation of suitable available habitats and to provide sustainable use and enjoyment within the social tolerance level for this species.

### **Objective 1: Determine the status of river otter populations.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 1.1** Annually collect and summarize river otter reports to improve knowledge of distribution and document expansion; refine reporting process as needed.
- 1.2** Annually collect information on age structure, sex ratio, and reproduction by conducting necropsies on all available carcasses.
  - 1.2.1** Use age structure data collected from cementum annuli to complete a population backdating analysis.
- 1.3** Annually implement latrine surveys within the Big Sioux River.
  - 1.3.1** Determine results of the latrine stream survey to evaluate occupancy and determine if the data can support a reliable population estimate.

### **Objective 2: Manage populations using harvest strategies that maximize sustainable recreational opportunity.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 2.1** Biannually review and analyze existing data to inform harvest season structure and harvest limit recommendations.
  - 2.1.1** By 2029, develop a harvest limit decision support tool to help guide harvest strategies for increasing, maintaining, or decreasing harvest limits and adjusting season structure.

- 2.2 Comply with necessary state and federal requirements for harvest implementation and reporting, while coordinating with these conservation partners.
- 2.3 Annually collect trapper/hunter information from harvested river otter to determine harvest metrics, such as, age and sex ratios, harvest locations, and harvest effort.

**Objective 3: Inform and educate the public on river otter ecology and management.**

**Strategies:**

- 3.1 Annually provide information on ways to reduce incidental river otter catches.
- 3.2 Respond to all requests for service and use those opportunities to educate on river otter ecology and management.

**Objective 4: Coordinate with private landowners and conservation partners to promote the restoration of wetlands, streams, and riparian habitat.**

**Strategies:**

- 4.1 Provide financial commitment to the project goal of 25,000 acres to be enrolled in the Big Sioux River Watershed CREP.
- 4.2 Provide financial commitment to the 82,000 acres enrolled in the James River Watershed CREP and use funding sources as they become available to enroll the project goal of 100,000 acres.
- 4.3 Support the implementation of the Riparian Buffer Initiative implemented by South Dakota's Department of Agricultural and Natural Resources.
- 4.4 Provide financial and technical support to interested landowners through department private lands cost-share programs, and partner programs to create or improve existing wetland and riparian habitat through restoration projects, range management projects and grazing stewardship practices.

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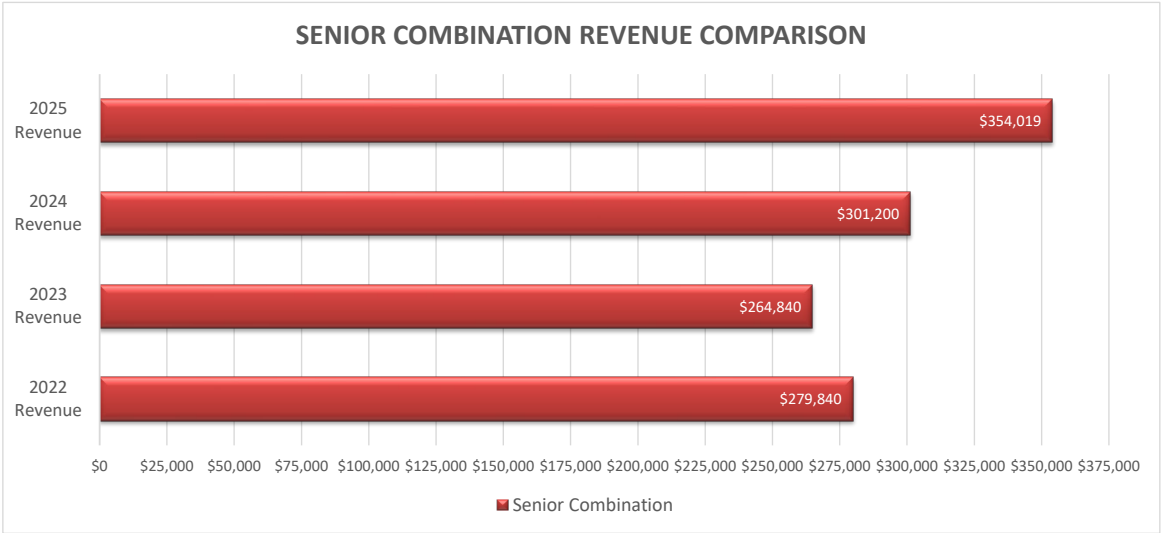
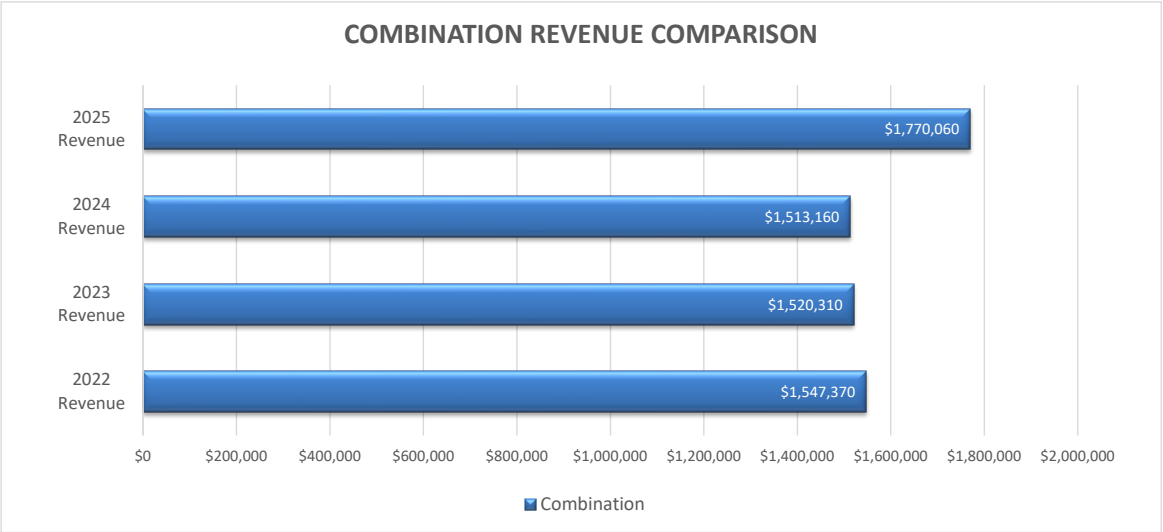
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COMBINATION LICENSES  
December 15 - March 31

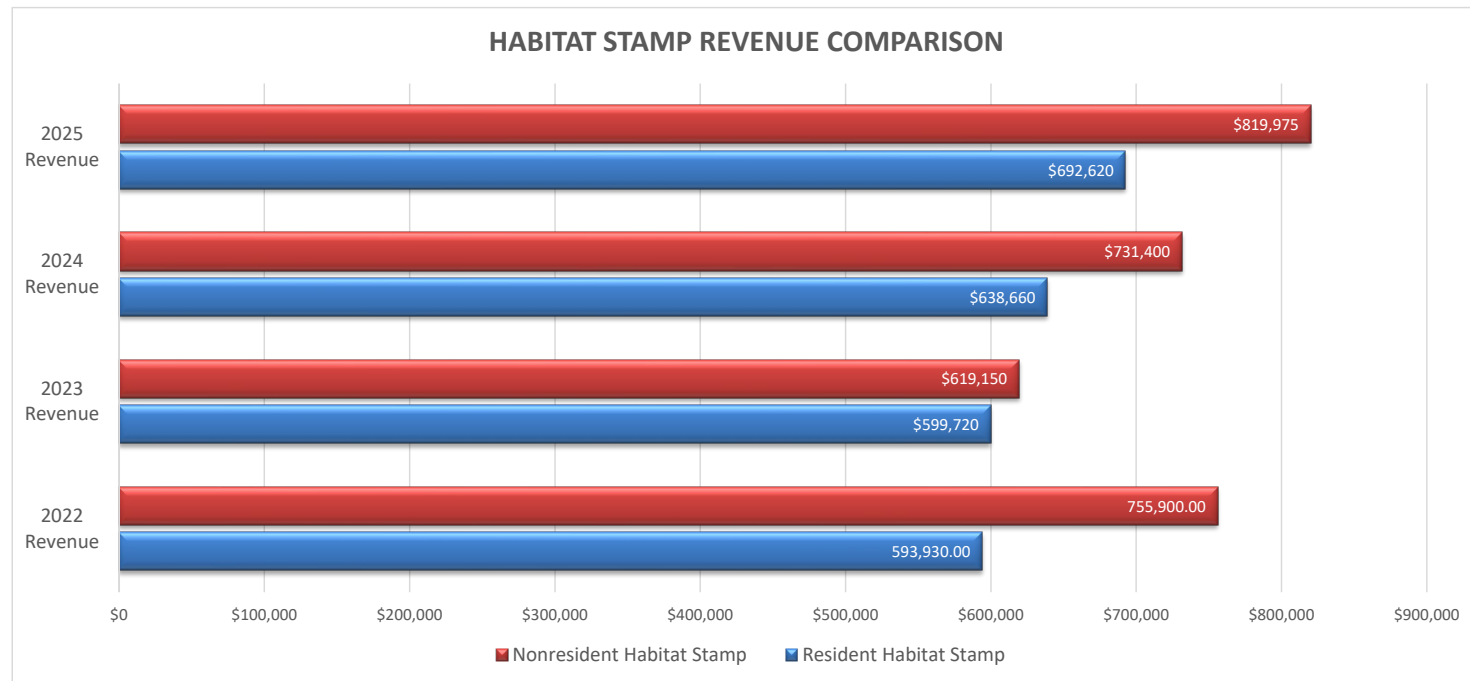
License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Combination	28,134	27,642	27,512	27,763	29,501	\$ 1,770,060	1,989	1,738	\$256,900	\$243,113	6%
Senior Combination	6,996	6,621	7,530	7,049	8,233	\$ 354,019	703	1,184	\$52,819	\$72,059	17%
Combination License Totals	35,130	34,263	35,042	34,812	37,734	\$ 2,124,079	2,692	2,922	\$309,719	\$315,172	23%



## HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - March 31

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Resident Habitat Stamp	59,393	59,972	63,866	61,077	69,262	\$ 692,620	5,396	8,185	\$296,780	450,175	13%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	30,236	24,766	29,256	28,086	32,799	\$ 819,975	3,543	4,713	\$141,720	188,520	17%
<b>Habitat Stamp Totals</b>	<b>89,629</b>	<b>84,738</b>	<b>93,122</b>	<b>89,163</b>	<b>102,061</b>	<b>\$ 1,512,595</b>	<b>8,939</b>	<b>12,898</b>	<b>\$438,500</b>	<b>638,695</b>	<b>14%</b>

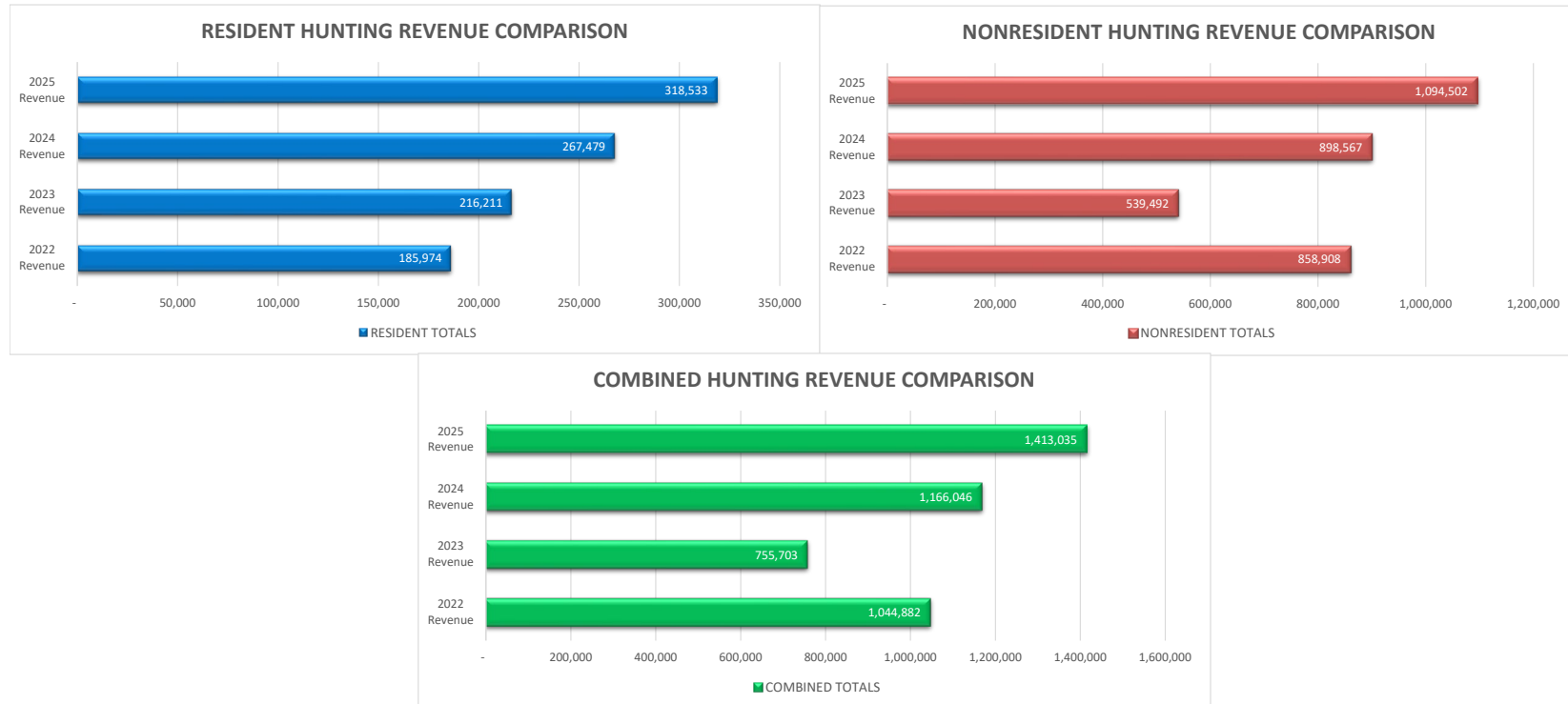


## SMALL GAME LICENSES

December 15 - March 31

License Type						+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change	
	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg
Small Game	2,124	3,730	4,975	3,610	5,747	\$ 206,892	772	2,137	\$42,717	\$87,773	59%
1-Day Small Game	151	88	192	144	197	\$ 2,955	5	53	\$651	\$1,231	37%
Youth Small Game	910	753	920	861	850	\$ 4,250	(70)	(11)	(\$350)	(\$132)	-1%
Furbearer	2,559	2,462	2,705	2,575	2,901	\$ 89,931	196	326	\$8,781	\$12,671	13%
Predator/Varmint	1,238	1,126	925	1,096	710	\$ 4,260	(215)	(386)	(\$365)	(\$1,222)	-35%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	150	165	132	149	90	\$ 450	(42)	(59)	(\$210)	(\$295)	-40%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	5,162	1,597	1,993	2,917	1,959	\$ 9,795	(34)	(958)	(\$170)	(\$4,792)	-33%
<b>RESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>12,294</b>	<b>9,921</b>	<b>11,842</b>	<b>11,352</b>	<b>12,454</b>	<b>318,533</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>1,161</b>	<b>\$ 51,054</b>	<b>\$ 95,235</b>	<b>10.22%</b>
Small Game	4,211	2,420	4,710	3,780	5,125	\$ 727,750	415	1,345	\$ 157,840	\$ 270,330	36%
Youth Small Game	289	154	314	252	323	\$ 3,230	9	71	\$ 90	\$ 707	28%
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	194	102	163	153	191	\$ 9,550	28	38	\$ 2,052	\$ 2,512	25%
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	1,176	793	982	984	1,195	\$ 114,720	213	211	\$ 40,088	\$ 39,961	21%
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	90	55	58	68	62	\$ 9,052	4	(6)	\$ 2,034	\$ 864	-8%
Furbearer	3	0	5	3	1	\$ 325	(4)	(2)	\$ (1,050)	\$ (408)	-63%
Predator/Varmint	696	776	878	783	1,015	\$ 46,690	137	232	\$ 11,570	\$ 15,357	30%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	3	22	28	18	107	\$ 535	79	89	\$ 395	\$ 447	506%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	197	2,181	4,014	2,131	3,596	\$ 17,980	(418)	1,465	\$ (2,090)	\$ 7,327	69%
Spring Light Goose	3,993	2,519	3,846	3,453	3,517	\$ 158,265	(329)	64	\$ (18,095)	\$ 2,895	2%
Youth Spring Light Goose	307	212	314	278	305	\$ 6,405	(9)	27	\$ (189)	\$ 574	10%
<b>NONRESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>11,159</b>	<b>9,234</b>	<b>15,312</b>	<b>11,902</b>	<b>15,437</b>	<b>1,094,502</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>3,535</b>	<b>\$192,645</b>	<b>\$340,565</b>	<b>29.70%</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTALS</b>	<b>23,453</b>	<b>19,155</b>	<b>27,154</b>	<b>23,254</b>	<b>27,891</b>	<b>1,413,035</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>4,637</b>	<b>\$243,699</b>	<b>\$435,799</b>	<b>19.94%</b>

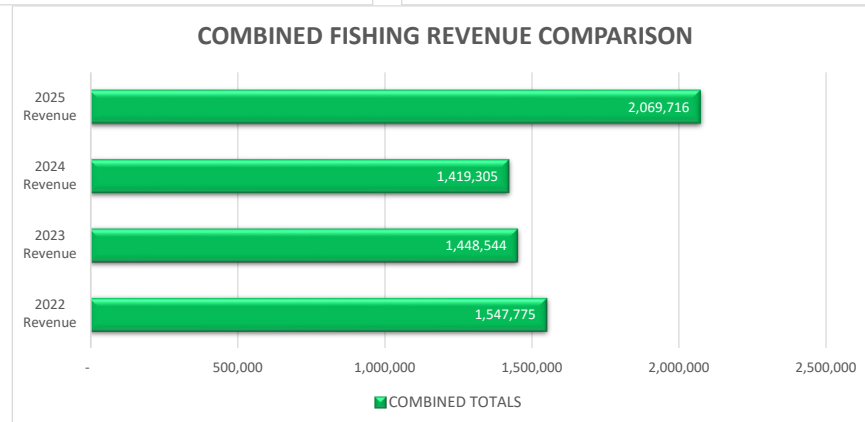
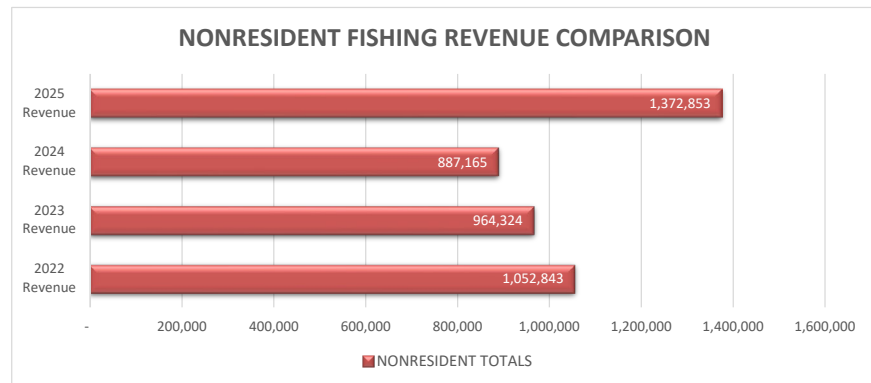
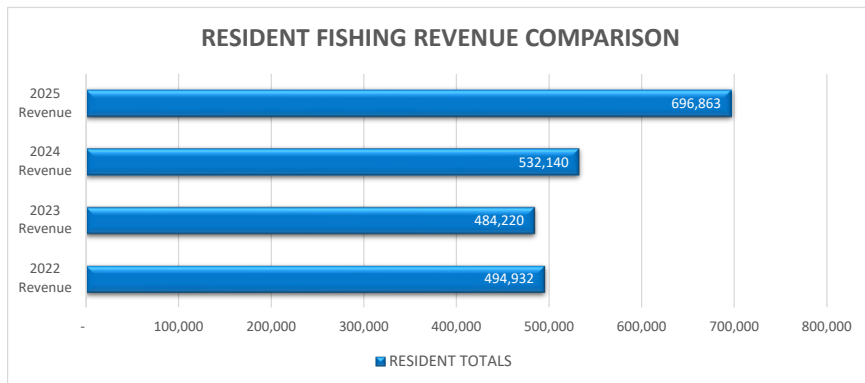
\*Spring Light Goose decreased by \$5 when the migratory bird certificate was no longer included.



## FISHING LICENSES

December 15 - March 31

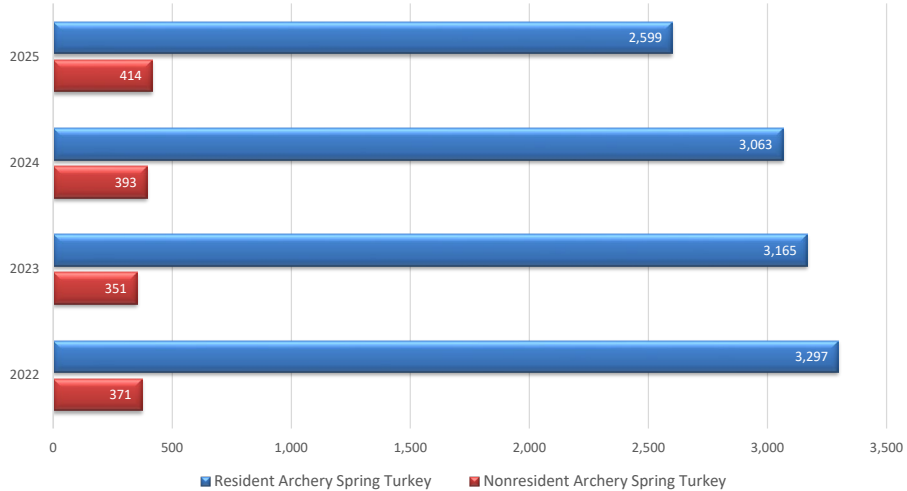
License Type							+/- Licenses	+/- Revenue	% Change		
	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg
1-Day Fishing	559	634	556	583	860	\$ 8,600	304	277	\$4,152	\$3,936	48%
Annual Fishing	15,725	15,519	16,729	15,991	19,204	\$ 595,324	2,475	3,213	\$126,912	\$147,576	20%
Senior Fishing	4,180	3,718	4,940	4,279	5,467	\$ 92,939	527	1,188	\$33,659	\$41,587	28%
<b>RESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>20,464</b>	<b>19,871</b>	<b>22,225</b>	<b>20,853</b>	<b>25,531</b>	<b>696,863</b>	<b>3,306</b>	<b>4,678</b>	<b>\$164,723</b>	<b>\$193,099</b>	<b>22.43%</b>
1-Day Fishing	4,854	3,961	3,232	4,016	3,143	\$ 81,718	(89)	(873)	\$30,006	\$17,467	-22%
3-Day Fishing	3,444	3,388	2,210	3,014	3,979	\$ 179,055	1,769	965	\$97,285	\$67,537	32%
Annual Fishing	12,653	11,576	11,249	11,826	13,901	\$ 1,112,080	2,652	2,075	\$358,397	\$319,738	18%
<b>NONRESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>20,951</b>	<b>18,925</b>	<b>16,691</b>	<b>18,856</b>	<b>21,023</b>	<b>1,372,853</b>	<b>4,332</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>\$485,688</b>	<b>\$404,742</b>	<b>11.49%</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTALS</b>	<b>41,415</b>	<b>38,796</b>	<b>38,916</b>	<b>39,709</b>	<b>46,554</b>	<b>2,069,716</b>	<b>7,638</b>	<b>6,845</b>	<b>\$650,411</b>	<b>\$597,841</b>	<b>17.24%</b>



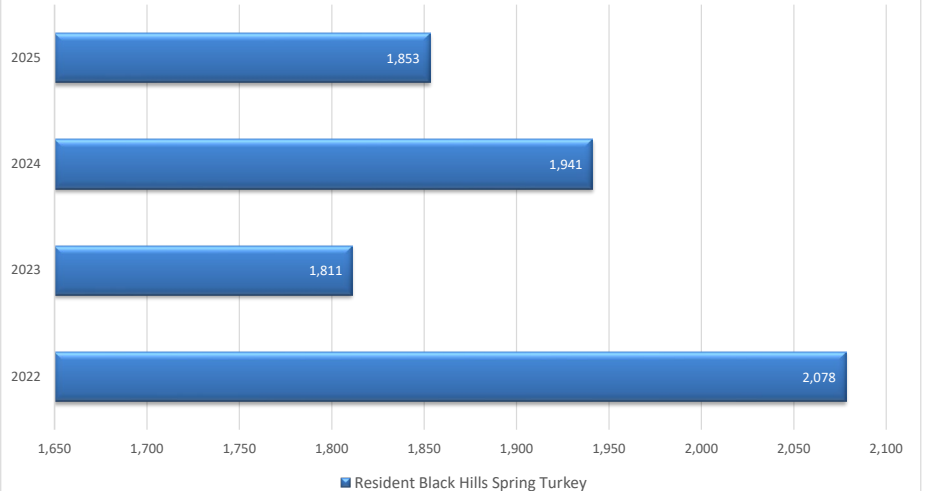
2025 BIG GAME LICENSES

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Mountain Lion	2,831	2,515	2,718	2,688	2,958	\$ 88,740	240	270	\$1,920	\$2,160	10%
Resident Mentored Spring Turkey	1,078	1,047	1,023	1,049	1,032	\$5,160	9	(17)	\$45	(\$87)	-2%
NR Mentored Spring Turkey	34	37	56	42	56	\$560	0	14	\$0	\$137	32%
Resident Archery Spring Turkey	3,297	3,165	3,063	3,175	2,599	\$ 72,772	(464)	(576)	(\$3,803)	(\$6,603)	-18%
Nonresident Archery Spring Turkey	371	351	393	372	414	\$ 50,094	21	42	\$10,794	\$12,927	11%
Resident Black Hills Spring Turkey	2,078	1,811	1,941	1,943	1,853	\$ 51,884	(88)	(90)	\$3,359	\$3,301	-5%

ARCHERY SPRING TURKEY LICENSES ISSUED



RESIDENT BLACK HILLS SPRING TURKEY LICENSES ISSUED







## March 2025 Camping

		3/1/2024 - 3/31/2024	3/1/2025 - 3/31/2025	
		Camping Units	Camping Units	
		1053	930	
District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	2	4	100%
	Pickereel Lake Recreation Area	5	8	60%
	Roy Lake State Park	11	18	64%
	Sica Hollow State Park	0	2	N/A
2	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	0	1	N/A
	Fisher Grove State Park	4	0	-100%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	0	4	N/A
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	7	18	157%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	6	9	50%
3	Hartford Beach State Park	6	5	-17%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	1	6	500%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	8	4	-50%
4	Oakwood Lakes State Park	15	11	-27%
5	Lake Herman State Park	8	25	213%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	23	16	-30%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	31	30	-3%
6	Burke Lake Recreation Area	3	0	-100%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	8	4	-50%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	1	0	-100%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	11	10	-9%
7	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	88	72	-18%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	34	29	-15%
	Palisades State Park	109	84	-23%
8	Newton Hills State Park	58	41	-29%
	Union Grove State Park	5	13	160%
9	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	16	16	0%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	94	74	-21%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	10	6	-40%
	Springfield Recreation Area	4	1	-75%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	1	0	-100%
10	North Point Recreation Area	32	12	-63%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	0	1	N/A
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	13	6	-54%
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	0	1	N/A
11	Farm Island Recreation Area	20	13	-35%
	West Bend Recreation Area	4	2	-50%
12	Cow Creek Recreation Area	3	5	67%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	72	50	-31%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	3	0	-100%
13	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	2	0	-100%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	3	20	567%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	0	1	N/A
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	9	11	22%
14	Bear Butte State Park	4	4	0%
15	Rocky Point Recreation Area	5	7	40%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	0	8	N/A
16	Custer State Park	243	239	-2%
17	Angostura Recreation Area	48	33	-31%
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	23	6	-74%
TOTAL		1053	930	-12%



# March 2025 YTD Camping

1/1/2024 - 3/31/2024	1/1/2025 - 3/31/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
1813	1688

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	4	8	100%
	Pickerel Lake Recreation Area	12	25	108%
	Roy Lake State Park	121	112	-7%
	Sica Hollow State Park	0	2	N/A
2	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	0	1	N/A
	Fisher Grove State Park	4	0	-100%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	2	16	700%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	14	32	129%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	11	9	-18%
3	Hartford Beach State Park	25	19	-24%
	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	55	1	-98%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	10	17	70%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	8	5	-38%
4	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	20	11	-45%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	23	19	-17%
5	Lake Herman State Park	13	28	115%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	82	62	-24%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	36	83	131%
6	Burke Lake Recreation Area	3	0	-100%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	15	5	-67%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	1	0	-100%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	14	19	36%
7	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	126	90	-29%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	46	44	-4%
	Palisades State Park	160	145	-9%
8	Newton Hills State Park	104	84	-19%
	Union Grove State Park	10	17	70%
9	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	16	16	0%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	113	92	-19%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	10	6	-40%
	Springfield Recreation Area	4	1	-75%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	1	0	-100%
10	North Point Recreation Area	41	13	-68%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	1	1	0%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	14	6	-57%
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	0	3	N/A
11	Farm Island Recreation Area	26	22	-15%
	West Bend Recreation Area	7	9	29%
12	Cow Creek Recreation Area	5	5	0%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	150	136	-9%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	3	5	67%
13	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	2	0	-100%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	13	30	131%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	0	4	N/A
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	0	2	N/A
	West Pollock Recreation Area	2	3	50%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	9	11	22%
14	Bear Butte State Park	17	14	-18%
15	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	0	2	N/A
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	20	29	45%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	23	17	-26%
16	Custer State Park	310	350	13%
17	Angostura Recreation Area	83	47	-43%
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	24	10	-58%
TOTAL		1813	1688	-7%



**Division of Parks and Recreation  
March 2025 Revenue by Item**

	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	2,101	\$ 75,196	1,616	\$ 62,651	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	471	\$ 28,080	
Resident Double	2,727	\$ 147,022	2,214	\$ 131,980	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	293	\$ 26,100	
Transferable	156	\$ 12,480	198	\$ 17,640	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	196	\$ 2,940	203	\$ 4,060	
2nd Annual	186	\$ 3,042	-	\$ -	
<b>Annual Licenses</b>	<b>5,366</b>	<b>\$ 240,680</b>	<b>4,995</b>	<b>\$ 270,511</b>	<b>12%</b>
Resident Daily License	1,146	\$ 9,152	919	\$ 9,140	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	550	\$ 8,235	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	15	\$ 225	24	\$ 475	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	42	\$ 168	69	\$ 345	
Motorcoach Permit	-	\$ -	3	\$ 12	
CSP 7 Day Pass	2,297	\$ 45,940	2,535	\$ 63,255	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	-	\$ -	6	\$ 120	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	3	\$ 150	3	\$ 300	
<b>Daily Licenses</b>	<b>3,503</b>	<b>\$ 55,635</b>	<b>4,109</b>	<b>\$ 81,882</b>	<b>47%</b>
<b>Licenses</b>	<b>8,869</b>	<b>\$ 296,315</b>	<b>9,104</b>	<b>\$ 352,393</b>	<b>19%</b>
Camping Services		\$ 1,727,148		\$ 1,872,595	8%
Pet Fees	146	\$ 1,460	104	\$ 1,040	-29%
<b>LODGING</b>		<b>\$ 1,728,608</b>		<b>\$ 1,873,635</b>	<b>8%</b>
Picnic Shelters		\$ 880		\$ 2,060	134%
Boat Rentals		\$ 75		\$ 144	92%
Firewood	76	\$ 456	101	\$ 672	47%
Gift Card	13	\$ 1,687	19	\$ 1,520	-10%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 138,999		\$ 43,600	-69%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ -		\$ -	
Retail		\$ 679		\$ 1,424	110%
Call Center Fee	1,408	\$ 2,792	1,230	\$ 7,352	163%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 7,745		\$ 6,352	-18%
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>		<b>\$ 153,313</b>		<b>\$ 63,124</b>	<b>-59%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 2,178,235</b>		<b>\$ 2,289,151</b>	<b>5%</b>

**Division of Parks and Recreation**  
**March YTD 2025 Revenue by Item**

	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	5,282	\$ 189,342	3,461	\$ 134,811	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	1,088	\$ 63,455	
Resident Double	6,376	\$ 343,654	5,268	\$ 313,970	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	662	\$ 59,040	
Transferable	455	\$ 36,400	453	\$ 40,410	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	468	\$ 7,005	515	\$ 10,105	
2nd Annual	366	\$ 5,886	-	\$ -	
<b>Annual Licenses</b>	<b>12,947</b>	<b>\$ 582,287</b>	<b>11,447</b>	<b>\$ 621,791</b>	<b>7%</b>
Resident Daily License	2,728	\$ 21,808	1,600	\$ 15,942	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	1,100	\$ 16,470	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	83	\$ 1,245	59	\$ 1,145	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	141	\$ 564	329	\$ 1,508	
Motorcoach Permit	4	\$ 12	96	\$ 293	
CSP 7 Day Pass	3,367	\$ 67,340	3,758	\$ 93,360	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	1	\$ 200	4	\$ 700	
<b>Daily Licenses</b>	<b>6,324</b>	<b>\$ 91,169</b>	<b>6,946</b>	<b>\$ 129,418</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Licenses</b>	<b>19,271</b>	<b>\$ 673,456</b>	<b>18,393</b>	<b>\$ 751,209</b>	<b>12%</b>
Camping Services		\$ 2,999,992		\$ 3,057,963	2%
Pet Fees	275	\$ 2,750	244	\$ 2,438	-11%
<b>LODGING</b>		<b>\$ 3,002,742</b>		<b>\$ 3,060,402</b>	<b>2%</b>
Picnic Shelter		\$ 1,450		\$ 2,710	87%
Boat Rentals		\$ 75		\$ 360	380%
Firewood	112	\$ 672	136	\$ 907	35%
Gift Card	49	\$ 5,576	52	\$ 5,009	-10%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 138,999		\$ 43,600	-69%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 205		\$ 175	-15%
Retail		\$ 2,005		\$ 3,356	67%
Call Center Fee	2,594	\$ 5,106	2,059	\$ 12,292	141%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 142,445		\$ 213,899	50%
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>		<b>\$ 296,533</b>		<b>\$ 282,308</b>	<b>-5%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 3,972,731</b>		<b>\$ 4,093,919</b>	<b>3%</b>

# Public Comments

## Bighorn Sheep Season

---

**Jim Simbeck**

**Lead SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose both hunting for Big Horn Sheep and Mt. Goats. I is ridiculous to hunt for sport animals the state brought to the hills to bring natural fauna to our beautiful hills. Just to decide later to hunt for them for sport. Should have never Introduced them to our home. It is sad enough all of the East and West coast people are destroying our hills. What's next in town hunting for deer?

---

**Jim Simbeck**

**Lead SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose both hunting for Big Horn Sheep and Mt. Goats. I is ridiculous to hunt for sport animals the state brought to the hills to bring natural fauna to our beautiful hills. Just to decide later to hunt for them for sport. Should have never Introduced them to our home. It is sad enough all of the East and West coast people are destroying our hills. What's next in town hunting for deer?

---

**Diane Hallock**

**Sturgis SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Paula Von Weller**

**Deadwood SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The take of one bighorn sheep, which equates to nothing more than a trophy hunt, will most certainly spawn increased interest by hunters moving forward. The small population of sheep in Deadwood is not large enough to sustain a hunting season. Not to mention that the sheep are so habituated to being around cars and the public that killing one of them would literally be like walking up and plucking a candy bar off a shelf at the gas station. This is not hunting. These are in town animals. Shooting an animal in town seems like a safety issue as well. As a resident of Deadwood, I strongly oppose a bighorn hunt. Instead, let's educate visitors about these majestic animals as they are most certainly a spectacle for visitors and locals alike.

## Mountain Goat Action Plan/Season

---

**Diane Hallock**

**Sturgis SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

## Mountain Lion Hunting Season

---

**Kristie Leptien**

**Huron SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Annette Hof**

**Crooks SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Annette Hof**

**Crooks SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Katelin Harrison**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Mary Schumacher**

**Deadwood SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This is cruel. With this you are allowing the dogs to chase the mountain lion until it is exhausted, with few trees on the prairie, where can this animal go? Where is the sport in this type of "hunting"?

---

**Kerma Cox**

**Custer SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please do not vote to expand hunting mountain lions in any capacity

---

**Rita Greslin**

**Sturgis SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I have no objections to a Mountain Lion season if the population of lions supports it but object to hunting with dogs. That's not a fair hunt.

---

**Brad Tisdall**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Deb Ellis**

**Mitchell SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This is extremely cruel. OPPOSE THIS

---

**Rebecca Cooper**

**Summerset SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Melissa Jerred**

**Tea SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunting is an inhumane, cruel & unsporting, outdated practice. This is NOT hunting.

---

**Alexandra Szameit**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunting is cruel and inhumane. Hunting lactating females leaves babies starving. Hunting with rifles for pest control is one thing, but there is no decent reason to hunt any animal with hounds. PLEASE don't allow this.

---

**Terri Pepper**

**Harrisburg SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The practice is inhumane, especially on the prairie!

---

**Gara Stadlman**

**Mitchell SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Dogs cannot be used while hunting any other wildlife besides birds to scout and retrieve them. Why is it acceptable to use a dog for mountain lion hunting? If you want to hunt Mt lion, they should hunt like they are hunting deer. And what happens if the dog gets attacked and or killed? How fair is that to the dog.

I am all for hunting, but I don't like the idea of hunting Mountain Lion at all.

Most people do just for the trophy and not the meat. Hunting is to feed your family, not hang a dead carcass on your wall.

I oppose and feel it is very inhumane for both lion and dogs

Mountain lions (as well as other, natural predators) are essential to keep their normal prey population in check. If the are removed, the animals they prey on can over populate. This is happened time and time again.

---

**Alisa Fonder**

**Sisseton SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

We are taking over their habitat and we need to back off.

---

**Cindy Peterson**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the hunting of mountain lions and especially with the cruel addition of hunting with hounds. It is a disgusting sport and does not give the mountain lions any chance of surviving the hunt...it is a slaughter rather than fair hunting.

---

**Peggy Mann**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Stop the madness please.

---

**Susanne Carter**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

There is no thrill to the hunt if the animal is shot after being exhausted by being chased by dogs.

---

**Jeannette Thomas**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

There are so many other no lethal options to protect humans/live stock from mountain lions. Our encroachment on to their land has caused the problem. Killing them is not the answer!



---

**Julaine Hurst**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please stop this.

---

**Tiffany Carlson**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Real hunters do not use there animals as a weapon! Dangerous to the dogs and cruel and unfair to the cats.  
Not to mention whatever else they corner and kill in the process.

---

**Patricia Jenkins**

**Brandon SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**G Grider**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**G Grider**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**G Grider**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Courtney Novak**

**Whitewood SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I did agree with allowing people to kill the mountain lions in our area in the first place. Allowing pack dogs to hunt them and kill them in more areas is a no for me. They are a big part of our environmental circle of life and we need to stop encroaching on their homes and not allow more killing

---

**Louise McGannon**

**Mitchell SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I sincerely oppose this hunting season. The cruelty of hunting with hounds and why, why do we need mountain lion hunting. Nature know best, not humans.

Please leave the lions alone.

---

**Katie Cozine**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please to not expand opportunities for cruel hunting practices.

Thank you

---

**Karen Collins**

**Denver CO**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Public lands are for everyone to enjoy. Public lands should not become used only for trophy hunters. Hound hunting should NEVER be allowed all year round. Wildlife should not be under pressure year round. Not enough protection is included for lactating females. Open prairie hound hunting for mountain lions is inhumane and should NEVER be permitted. As a tax paying citizen, I oppose this proposed change on every aspect.

---

**Heather Schiller**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Do not allow an increase to hound hunting. This is a cruel and inhumane practice that caters to trophy hunters. They don't care about managing the population. All they care about is their trophy and bragging rights while allowing the dogs and lions to suffer for their enjoyment. Be better than this.

---

**Heidi Coatsworth**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Oppose hound hunting

---

**Willow Burke**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a resident who has yet to see one of these majestic animals, I beg of you to put this to a stop. It's cruel.

---

**Kelly Mehring**

**Columbus OH**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

EGREGIOUS RULE TO HOUND LIONS-INCLUDES LACTATING MAMAS HUNTED YEAR ROUND- This is abominable. I oppose all mountain lion hunting but this is shameful.

---

**Diane Hallock**

**Sturgis SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Wendy Walker**

**Hot Springs SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Cynthia Cole**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Packs of dogs should not be able to be used, and lactating females should not be killed. There needs to be more thought into when and how this mountain lion season should be allowed or it should be stopped...

Hunting is supposed to be a sport that helps the population of animals stay down but not cruel, by shooting lactating mother's and allowing kittens to starve a horrible death, or packs of dogs tearing up young etc.

Make the rules so it is a gentleman's sport again, not a ruthless torture game.

---

**Kim Howard Red Fox**

**Eagle Butte SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Terry Mitchell**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

It's not the animals fault us humans are what we are. This needs to be a relocate situation not a kill situation. We have plenty of Black Hills to share with the variety of wildlife we host. I realize the Richy Tich have mansions out there, but that should be well known knowledge of heart wildlife if build in Middle of hills, still not wildlife fault.

Please consider this... God will smile on you.

---

**Cristin Holm**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Rita Greslin**

**Sturgis SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I am not opposed to a Mt Lion hunting season if there are sufficient numbers of lions to support that. I AM opposed to Mt Lion hunting with dogs. That is an unfair hunt and there is no need for it. Mt Lions are attained just fine without using that method it's only for the enjoyment of the hunters.

---

**Stefanie Schober**

**Cedar Park TX**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This proposal serves no one but a few trophy hunters. Expanding these practices makes survival even harder for this already vulnerable wildlife. They are our wild neighbors and deserve our respect and protection! Especially in the prairie, there are no trees and these often violent encounters are unacceptably cruel as there is no place for the lion to escape the dogs and hunters have an unfair advantage. Furthermore, it is unacceptable to permit the killing of lactating females, compounding the suffering of one kill by allowing kittens to end up starving. Humans must do better.

---

**Andrea Trejo**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I do not believe dogs should be used or lactating females should be shot as they are nursing kittens and it is a death sentence for them.

---

**Lierin Cole**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Tina Poortmans**

**Ruisbroek (Puurs) AE**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Peggy Jakopak**

**Scotland SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a South Dakota resident, I urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands."

---

**Paulette Keller**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Jean Matthesen**

**Custer SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

kittens left without mothers &/or killed!  
trespassing on private land  
cruelty to dogs  
injured lions not found  
lions generally not a food item  
lions do not attack humans unless feeling  
threat to them or their kittens

---

some disrespectful & just plain dumb hunters!

---

**Teresa Hicks**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a South Dakota resident, I urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands.

---

**Debra Perkins**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**William Haeger**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The use of dogs should not be permitted, the only advantage of dogs is being able to ID the cat, if treed. however the lion population in the Black Hills would not be sustained if dogs are a tool for hunting. Also any reputable hunter would agree it takes away from the challenge of this hunt.

---

**Barb Wright**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please do not expand mountain lion season. Using dogs is unnecessary and not a sport. There are already too many mountain lions killed in South Dakota.

---

**Lisa Savonen**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the expansion of using even more tactics to hunt mountain lions.

These are important predators necessary to these ecosystems, not to mention that hunting them could possibly orphan a cougar mother's kittens or cut a male's life short before they can even reproduce. I don't know why all of these regulations are now being lifted or being made to hunt them easier. Please live and let live.

---

**Dawn Grey**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a South Dakota resident, I urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands.

---

**Linda Palzkill**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

It's obvious that if you have to use dogs to find the mountain lions then there must not be that many left in the hills. I miss my lions. I live in the hills and HAD a female which hung around the house. Every year she would bring her kittens by so that we could see them. Haven't seen them in years. So sad.

---

**Victoria Greenlee**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please do not allow hunting dogs to chase down mountain lions. This is unsustainable and inhumane!

---

**Shari Kosel**

**Lead SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a South Dakota resident, I urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands.



---

Please also consider the hounds that could be maimed, mauled or killed because of the stress put on these mountain lions. No animal deserves this.

---

**Susie Taylor**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Oppose hound hunting for mountain lions. Cruel!

---

**Kathleen Jones**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

South Dakota's mountain lion population is already over hunted. By increasing the number of hound hunts, we would also endanger many non-target species. It would also be unsustainable.

---

**Jeffrey Palzkill**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Our property borders the forest service and the "hunters" we've been seeing are merely driving around with their rifles sticking out the window so adding dogs to the supposed "hunters" is sort of silly. Get the true hunters out who know the terrain, take the time to track and learn their quarry's patterns, and then additional assistance is not needed to be successful.

---

**Susan Vogt**

**Loveland OH**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This is not a sport.

---

**Sheryl Nieman**

**Parker SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Do not let dogs loose on wildlife and cause havoc in the hills.

---

**Ronda Avila**

**Mint Hill SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This proposed change is unacceptable. Public lands belong to ALL of us, not just a small group of special interest trophy hunters. Expanding these practices makes survival even harder for South Dakota's already vulnerable wildlife. The vast majority of South Dakotans DO NOT support hound hunting – and we must speak up.

---

**Connie Ryan**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I do not believe allowing hunting dogs to be part of mountain lion hunting is necessary or advisable (for the sake of all the animals). If a hunter isn't capable of tracking a mountain lion without dogs treeing it or cornering it for an easy shot, then I don't feel they should be out there.

---

**Glennis Torpey**

**Black Hawk SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I strongly oppose increase of mountain lion hunting.

---

**Tirza Eden**

**Saint Charles IL**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

We should not try to justify this level of cruelty and unfairness in any sport. It's bad enough to allow hunting of these beautiful animals but its a whole different story when you start allowing a pack of dogs to do the hunting for you. Our country should focus on being a good role model for others, not one that encourages such violence for no good reason.

---

**Teri Vaughan**

**Jefferson SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Teri Vaughan**

**Jefferson SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Amy Cerwick**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Kami Kuhle**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Cynthia Foos**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Keren Giovengo**

**Brunswick GA**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the proposed seasonal modifications (use of dogs). Thank you for your consideration on this important matter.

---

**Mary Shabbott**

**Arkadelphia AR**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunting is nothing but sadistic torture inflicted on vulnerable wildlife for the trophy hunter's kicks. These trophy hunters do NOT own our public lands and our wildlife is not for their walls, floors or bragging at the local bar. To even consider allowing this already struggling population to be chased down on prairies where there are fewer trees is sickening and wrong.

My husband and I have booked RV sites in your state for August to see the natural landscape and wildlife. This tourist will not coming and spending tourist dollars if you pass this and cave in to these trophy hunters. Please vote NO to this.

---

**Jean Serrato**

**Los Gatos CA**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

They are important to our eco system

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**Rhonda Dern**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hunting lions with hounds goes against the American Model of Wildlife Conservation. It is not fair chase. It is not for food for families. It is for a sport a trophy. Lions care for their cubs for over a year. Most Lions killed are mothers whose cubs die in their dens or moms with yearlings who aren't prepared to hunt on their own.

Hounding is a blood sport is unethical and barbaric. I grew up in SD and graduated from the USD. My family were hunters and would be disgusted with this archaic killing to be allowed.

Rhonda Dern

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**Joan Dennis**

**Setauket NY**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This is incredibly cruel. Please stop it. B

---

**Debora Goebel**

**Omaha NE**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please do NOT expand hound hunting of mountain lions. What a barbaric way to slaughter lions. Please evolve, South Dakota, and consider the proven ways to COEXIST non-lethally with our wild world. Stop the endless massacre AND disgusting hound hunting.

---

**Julie Baxa**

**Cedar Rapids IA**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

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**Marcia Mueller**

**Spokanr WA**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunting is not a sport. It is animal cruelty no better than dog fighting or fox hunting. It should not be allowed anywhere.

Wildlife is supposed to belong to We the People and held in trust by the government. Therefore, we should all have a voice in the fate of the animals. But now a special interest group--hunters--are allowed to abuse and destroy the animals. They are the ones listened to by fish and game departments.

It's time to give the rest of us a voice, and we have a simple message--hound hunting should not be expanded. It should be banned.

---

**Linda Good Buffalo**

**Valentine NE**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The mountain lions have been here long before us! They deserve to be protected and then they contribute to our ecosystem! Leave them alone!!

---

**Roger Sherman**

**Whitefish SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This is not hunting dogs do all the work.

---

**Jeff Nelson**

**Taylorsville UT**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**John Chamberlain**

**Sturgis SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a South Dakota resident, I urge you to oppose expanding hound dog hunting on public lands. The proposal will lead to more Mountain Lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress All wildlife on our public lands.

---

**Kim Elkins**

**El Paso TX**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

AS LONG AS THIS IS LEGAL IN SOUTH DAKOTA, MY FAMILY, FRUENDS & I WILL NEVER SET FOOT IN SD GIR BUDUNESS IR TOURISM! Hounding Trophy Hunters are part of an extremely dangerous & inhumane, do-called sport. It's dangerous for the dogs who have no choice & cruel to the wildlife they pursue. This should NOT Be allowed in private or public lands. STOP, JUST STOP.

---

**George (Les) Heiserman**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose hound hunting. It's cruel and shouldn't be allowed.

---

**Malina Haak**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a South Dakota resident, I vehemently urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands. Wild animals need more help, and our protection, now more than ever.

---

**Patricia Logan**

**Palm City FL**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Public lands belong to all of us! Not just a special group of TROPHY HUNTERS. Hound hunting is especially cruel!!

---

**Patricia Logan**

**Palm City FL**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Public lands belong to all of us! Not just a special group of TROPHY HUNTERS. Hound hunting is especially cruel!!

---

**Ashley Waldorf**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands.

---

**Donna Handley**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Joann Mckendry**

**Sicklerville NJ**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

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**Debra Mucci**

**Middletown NY**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please stop the senseless mountain loin hunts! I SAY HUNT THE HUNTER INSTEAD.

---

**Julie Anderson**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunters should not get access to more hunting. This amendment would open more public land for unethical and cruel killing of mountain lions, even lactating ones. SD GFP's catering to this special interest group is also unethical and therefore this amendment should not be passed.

---

**Lorraine Finazzo**

**Six Mile SC**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunting of wildlife is a barbaric 'sport' and should not be permitted in a civilized society. When will we understand that killing for fun is cruel and unnecessary?



I oppose the modifications to the Mountain Lion Hunting season.

---

**Juanita Short**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No dogs should be allowed in hunting lions.

---

**Dean Parker**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

As a lifelong resident of South Dakota, I'm writing to strongly oppose the Mountain Lion Hunting Season proposal, which would allow for increased use of dogs for hunting mountain lions and the hunting of lactating female lions on the prairie.

Hound hunting is an inhumane and dangerous practice. It not only results in the injury and death of the wild animal, but often puts the dogs at serious risk. Mountain lions are run to the point of exhaustion — and if they're unable to escape by climbing a tree, any of the animals involved can be mauled or killed.

Hound hunting on the prairie is especially dangerous — with fewer trees and natural cover, mountain lions have nowhere to escape. This can lead to prolonged, violent encounters where the animal is cornered and attacked by dogs until the hunter arrives to shoot it.

Beyond the cruelty, this practice also raises serious public safety and private property concerns. Packs of dogs can chase animals for miles, often far beyond their handler's control. These dogs don't recognize property boundaries or "No Trespassing" signs, creating conflicts for landowners and threats to other animals.

Don't let the agenda of a small special interest group dictate the policy towards our wildlife. South Dakota wildlife and public lands belong to all South Dakotans to enjoy, not just a select few.

I urge you to reject this proposal and prioritize responsible, humane wildlife management practices.

Thank you.

---

**Gail Collins**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Pleeeasssse do not expand the mountain lion hunting season. Don't allow mountain lion hunting at all if you ask me. When populations get down so low that we have to stop and start extra hunting seasons or licenses it seems ridiculous to me. I know people will say their population will get to high if we don't hunt them down. To that I say that Mother Nature handled the problem of over population with illnbbbbhnhjbesses and deaths without our help. I hate hunting but people will never ever give it up I know. We'll keep having to count our animals to see where we stand in proportion to their so important stats. Leave them alone for a minute. See how they do without our interference for a change. Do not lengthen the hunt, please? Thank you.

Gail Collins

---

**Karen Moore**

**Chelmsford MA**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The reasons are clear. Wildlife is at a breaking point between habitat loss, changing climate and the devastation it brings and we continue to experience, hunting, poaching, accidental deaths, disease.... I strongly oppose this extension.

---

**Jennifer Haskell**

**Dell Rapids SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I am writing to Oppose the expansion of Mountain Lion hunting, particularly hound hunting. This practice causes immense stress and suffering—not just for the intended targets, but for many other species as well. Beyond direct harm to individual animals, hounding disrupts ecosystems because packs of hunting dogs create a “landscape of fear.” Wildlife are constantly on edge, disrupting natural behaviors and migrations. Uncontrolled packs of dogs chasing wildlife across large areas will affect their normal behaviors, causing countless species to abandon habitat which particularly harms ground-nesting birds. Gone are the days of well managed hounds having been replaced by radio collars and GPS, often the hunters are not even near their dogs and have no control over their actions.

Hounded animals experience extreme stress, which can affect reproduction rates and territorial behavior, leading to broader ecological consequences. Hound hunting has a huge impact on deer populations and deeply affects fawn survival. Hound hunting is not selective. Packs of dogs chase any animal they come across, including non-target and potentially protected species such as the Black Footed Ferret, this is a real possibility if Hound hunting is allowed outside of the Black Hills area onto the open prairie. Not to mention if hounds are improperly trained and indiscriminate, there is a real risk of transmission of rabies from other animals such as skunk or racoon. In addition, the level of unregulated, relentless pursuit brought on by hound hunting is not sustainable or humane nor is it ethical nor scientifically justified.

With a lack of ability to properly assess population, adding more accessibility to hunt lions only increases the stress on the environment and wildlife but also risks maintaining target numbers. Mountain Lions have low reproductive rates and this proposed and largely unregulated Hound hunting will impact these rates. In addition, human caused killing carnivores can increase conflict; by removing mature, established cougars it disrupts ecosystems and can lead to more human-wildlife conflicts. Also, potentially orphan kittens as hounding can lead mother cats away from their young, and with no protected breeding and raising young timeframes, these kittens and mothers become even more at-risk particularly if a hunter fails to identify a lactating female.

Hound hunting doesn't help deer populations. Science shows that factors like habitat loss and climate change have a far greater impact on deer numbers than carnivore populations.

Hound hunting provides little revenue. The financial contribution of cougar hunting is minimal compared to the damage it causes to South Dakota's wildlife and ecosystems. While hound hunting should be banned altogether it is is blatantly apparent from the science and supporting evidence that it should not be expanded. Thank you for your time and attention to opposing this expansion.

---

**Ann Naber**

**Vermillion SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please don't change the mountain lion policy. The lands belong to everyone, not just a few.

---

**Rene Hersey**

**Toluca Lake CA**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I vehemently oppose expanding hunting season/more hunting areas and allowing up to 40 females killed in a year anywhere! In my life I've not seen such aggressive pursuit of an umbrella species so critical to ecological balance in an area already hostile to Lions for lack of camouflage, trees, escape routes. All the science tells us how important female/male lions are as umbrella species and there's no way hunters can always see that females are or are not lactating nor can they always determine if kittens have spots and how close kittens who are hiding near by are to their mothers. Sunrise and Sunset are key times for movement of wildlife and your hunting and hounding is far to lenient allowing 1/2 hour before and after sunrise/subset. And adult males should not be killed as they keep territories in balance and when you remove adult males the younger less experienced yearling or dispersing lions may replace them and not have their skills to survive. Your landscape is naked of anything resembling fair chase & thus hounding cats is particularly a brutal sport. I travel to WY and MT annually, and the Dakotas are on my list to visit but I won't spend money in a state where destructive sports hunting is decimating the small population of Lions trying to survive in that difficult landscape. These are our public lands, they should not become playgrounds to kill essential species such as Mountain Lions. Most of Americans and Dakotans object to hound hunting of already struggling wildlife. Please use a preservation approach to what few Mountain Lions are living in your state.

Thank you for reading my concerns.

---

**Sara Parker**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I'm writing about the proposed changes to the Mountain Lion Hunting Season (Chapter 41:06:61). As a lifelong resident of South Dakota, I urge you to oppose the expansion of hound hunting in our state.

Hound hunting is unsporting and inhumane. It subjects mountain lions to prolonged chases until they are too exhausted to run. When dogs catch their prey before the hunter arrives, the situation becomes even more brutal - lions can be mauled, kittens killed, and dogs injured.

This practice is particularly cruel on the prairie, where the lack of trees and natural cover leaves mountain lions with no means of escape. These prolonged, violent encounters make survival even harder for South Dakota's already vulnerable wildlife.

To make matters worse, it appears that hunters are only prohibited from killing lactating females in Custer State Park.

---

Beyond the ethical concerns, expanded hound hunting raises serious public safety and private property issues. Packs of dogs can chase animals for miles, often far beyond a hunter's control. These dogs do not recognize property boundaries, leading to conflicts with landowners and risks to livestock, pets and other wildlife.

Public lands belong to all South Dakotans, not just a small group of trophy hunters. This proposal prioritizes special interests over responsible wildlife management, ethical hunting practices and public safety.

I urge you to reject this expansion and instead support science-based wildlife management policies that reflect the values of the vast majority of South Dakotans.

---

**Doris Respects Nothing**

**Manderson SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

SDGFP is in violation of Federal Consultation rules with the Oglala Sioux Tribe and cannot assume responsibility on Tribal Reservation Jurisdictions

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**Nancy Hilding**

**Black Hawk SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I have repeated tried to attach a formal comment letter in opposition to hound hunting on public land on the Prairie Unit. It was a 3 page PDF file and your system fails to upload it. I tried this several times before midnight and several times after midnight and I am giving up and will call you all tomorrow.. Your system was broken tonight.

Nancy Hilding for Prairie Hills Audubon Society

---

**Paula Von Weller**

**Deadwood SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I strongly oppose changes to or the expansion of hound hunting lions.

Hound hunting is not fair chase.

When lions are threatened they climb trees. They are not designed for long chases.

Hound hunting is far more effective than boot hunting which will lessen opportunities for boot hunters.

Hound hunting has the potential to stress females with kittens, as well as separate them from their kittens, endangering the health of both.

Mountain lions are an iconic species that provide essential ecosystem services to South Dakota.

## Other

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**Joseph Counselor**

**Burke SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I am trying to buy my State Park permit, but everything I click on takes me to Non-Resident permits. Why can't I buy Resident Park permits online?

---

**Bob Brandt**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I would like to propose a change to the late season cow elk seasons in H3, currently the unit is divided into 2 units, north or south of 18-mile road and early and late December, 2 weeks for each season. The cows group up and tend to congregate on one side of the dividing line. My proposal would be to split it into 4 one-week seasons, but would allow hunting in all of H3. I had a tag for the late season last year on the north side and the elk were grouped up on the south side. The only cows I saw were near the fire tower on Elk Mountain, and were on the SD side for only one day, Montana has one-week seasons in January and February for cow elk north of Yellowstone and it seems to work fine for them. I had permission to hunt on 6 different ranches, including Ned Westphals, Spring Valley Ranch, Ned has land on both sides of the border and he had about 50 cows on his south ranch, but only had 2 hunters there and he would have loved to reduce that herd. Thank you for considering my proposal.

---

**Heidi Coatsworth**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Oppose allowing hound hunting of mountain lions or other animals. Cruel and unsportsmanlike.

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**Leslie Hladysz**

**Keystone SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I would like to express my outrage to two white signs in Custer State Park found on the # 4 Trail. I would ask you to remove these white signs and replace them with a brown or tan sign. These signs say "leaving Custer State Park," and are misleading. One is placed within feet of an appropriate sign reading "Entering Black Elk Wilderness". The other is on the entry to Trail # 3 and makes no sense at all.

Both trails do not blend with the natural aspect of the park. As signage conditions to increase for some reason in the wilderness and park I ask you to consider the necessity, aesthetics, and goal of the sign..if it is to help lost hikers neither of these accomplish this.

---

**Debra Elofson**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I urge you to oppose expanding hound hunting on public lands. This proposal will lead to more mountain lions being killed and put further strain on an already vulnerable population. It is a cruel and irresponsible move that threatens the balance of our wildlife and will further stress all wildlife on our public lands.

---

**Julie Doerr**

**Wagner SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No reason for dogs to be used to hunt Mountain Lions so that a spineless, pussy hunter can walk up and shoot it. What sport is that? People like that are horrible and that's not a sportsman's sport..

---

**Nancy Hilding**

**Black Hawk, SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Nancy Hilding  
President  
Prairie Hills Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 788  
Black Hawk, SD 57718  
phas.wsd@rapidnet.com,

Dear SDGFP Commission,

On the SDGFP Commission Agenda you list River Otter Action Plan as an Action or Informational Item. We are not sure if this means you plan to finalize an action plan for northern river otters or propose creating or releasing a draft action plan.

If it is your plan to finalize a plan, we would object to this. There was no mention of a River Otter Action Plan in the March minutes. There is no draft River Otter Action Plan on your web page for management plans. The April 2025 Commission book is not yet published.

We very much wish that GFP will design and fund a project to reintroduce river otter to western SD and that objective would be in any action plan you write.

Thanks,  
Nancy Hilding

## Prairie Elk Hunting Season

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**Shaun Grassel**

**Reliance SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

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**Doris Respects Nothing**

**Manderson SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

According to the McGirth case, State of South Dakota is illegally making administrative rules with input from the Oglala Sioux Tribe within the proposed Bennett County and Jackson County areas.

---

**Nancy Hilding**

**Black Hawk SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Nancy Hilding  
President  
Prairie Hills Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 788  
Black Hawk, SD 57718  
phas.wsd@rapidnet.com  
March 30th, 2025

Dear Game, Fish and Parks Commission,

At your March meeting, we listened to the comments of 5 wildlife staff and one attorney of Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe & Oglala Sioux Tribe in opposition to expanding the area of the PRE-WRA Prairie Elk hunting unit to overlap their reservations. We found their arguments convincing. We support and endorse their positions and requests.

We are concerned over the United States past adverse history with tribes - wars & conquest, years of broken treaties, the Allotment Acts and loss of tribal lands, shrinking of Reservation areas and discrimination against tribal peoples.

We join with tribes in fear that, extending the WRA Prairie Elk hunting unit to overlap reservations will result in disproportionate harvest of the reservations' share of elk by non-tribal hunters. We also fear that it will result in trespass onto tribal lands by non-tribal members and also their hunting in "Indian Country" without tribal licenses. We believe elk have cultural significance to tribes, and GFP should respect that.

We are disturbed that at least one tribe claimed you did not give them advance notice and thus did not comply with your MOU with the tribe. Also pursuant to SDCL 1-54-5 "Consultation with tribal government regarding state programs" - you have a statutory duty to consult with tribes when your actions would effect tribal people on reservations (<https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/1-54-5>).

Standing Rock Sioux Tribe did not testify at the March 2025 meeting. We hope you have complied with SDCL



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1-54-5 and consulted with them.

Perhaps you can work with Tribes to come to some sort of negotiated settlement of this dispute, however until that happens, we oppose the expansion of the WRA Prairie Elk hunting unit to overlap the West River reservations.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Hilding  
President  
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

---

**Paula Von Weller**

**Deadwood SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Proposed season conflicts with tribal wishes.

Dear Commissioners and State Fisheries Managers,

I've listened to concerns from my fellow bass sportfisherman regarding smallmouth bass management on the Missouri River. I have also listened to the biologists that study the smallmouth populations. Anglers that are targeting bass identify larger bass more desirable than smaller more abundant sized bass. My fellow bass sportfisherman contend the larger desirable sized bass are harvested at a higher rate than we desire. Our fisheries biologist suggest smallmouth bass are abundant and are not harvested at a rate to have concern. They point to electrofishing information to argue bass are abundant. However, they are not able to effectively and accurately survey the larger bass with electrofishing. Smallmouth bass take over 7 years to approach the 17 inch mark. I am concerned the desirable large fish have little to no protection.

After reviewing the Lake Francis Case Fisheries Update, I am hoping we don't see a cascading scenario leading to an unfortunate decline in the exciting yet controversial bass fishery. I could potentially see a scenario where more smallmouth bass are harvested due to the current state of the walleye fishing. Are more smallmouth going to be harvested by anglers finding smallmouth in the areas where they normally find walleye? Is more difficult walleye fishing going to lead to more smallmouth harvest? Will that lead to high rates of harvest among bass in the desired year classes? In the recent Lake Sharpe tagging study update, the yearly harvest rate with 21% with a 59% capture rate. We know there is a

very high capture rate of smallmouth bass. Is the harvest rate of large bass enough to warrant considering protection? We would suggest it is.

Does more information need to be captured to address this concern? Should there be a tagging project on LFC? Does the recent tagging program just encourage more harvest than normal when bass are most vulnerable? Are jaw tags detrimental? Should anglers be incentivized to report smallmouth catch information?

Biologists state these Missouri River reservoirs are not forage limited and likely not habitat limited due to the effects of zebra mussels to sustain a robust population of large smallmouth bass. Is it proper management to solely point to the abundance of younger fish and habitat? Do sportfisherman's concerns even matter? Or should something be done address this concern?

:



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March 2, 2025

Stephanie Rissler, Commission Chair  
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks  
501 Bulow Street  
Vermillion, SD 57069

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife  
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks  
523 East Capitol Ave  
Pierre, SD 57501

**RE: Mountain Lion Hunting Season Proposal (Agenda Item #15)**

Dear Chair Rissler, Director Kirschenmann and Members of the Commission:

On behalf of Humane World for Animals (formerly The Humane Society of the United States) and our supporters in South Dakota, I thank you for this opportunity to submit comments on Agenda Item #15. We strongly oppose the proposal to remove the restriction on pursuit of mountain lions initiating anywhere outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

We oppose the use of hounding to pursue mountain lions, the arbitrary population objective, and the year-round season outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD). These practices harm the small mountain lion population in South Dakota and potentially increase conflicts with livestock. We urge you to reject the proposal to allow the pursuit of mountain lions to initiate anywhere outside the BHFPD ("the proposal") so that hunting opportunity is not privileged to the detriment of conflict reduction and the ecological and social value of mountain lions.

Humane World for Animals is categorically opposed to the trophy hunting of mountain lions in South Dakota. This practice is not only cruel and unnecessary, but researchers have found that excessive hunting of mountain lions leads to increased conflicts with humans, pets and livestock.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, trophy hunting and predator control of mountain lions indirectly harms ungulates because predators target sick animals, including those with chronic wasting disease.<sup>2</sup> Finally, a national survey conducted by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and Responsive Management show that only 29% of Americans approve of trophy hunting.<sup>3</sup>

For these reasons, and those outlined in Appendix A of these comments, we request that SDGFP reject the proposal, end the use of hounds to pursue or hunt mountain lions, and protect mountain lions from trophy hunting now and in perpetuity.

If GFP is to continue allowing the trophy hunting of mountain lions, we request the agency limit the practice (detailed below) to protect South Dakota's iconic mountain lion population from excessive killing and to limit conflicts caused by indiscriminate hunting of these native cats. Specifically, we request the following changes:

1.) Lift the arbitrary population objective of 200-300 total mountain lions. The annual hunting limit should not exceed 14% of South Dakota's adult and subadult mountain lion population. This amounts to no more than 38 mountain lions based on GFP's recent – and quite imprecise – population count, as is



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acknowledged by GFP itself in the 2023 Mountain Lion Status report.<sup>4</sup> GFP currently allows 40 females or 60 total mountain lions to be killed; 30 have been killed so far in 2025. GFP estimates that 275 adult and subadult lions live in South Dakota. GFP should count its lions using contemporary methods and not allow hunters to kill more than South Dakota's mountain lion population growth rate. Non-spatial population models overestimate mountain lion populations by an average of 63%, and many jurisdictions count dependent kittens in their estimates.<sup>5</sup>

Beausoliel et al. (2013) suggest that in the absence of population data, agencies should not set quotas that exceed 14% of the mountain lion population to avoid harm.<sup>6</sup> Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) recently adopted a cap of 14% on mountain lion hunting quotas as part of their new West Slope Mountain Lion Management Plan.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, CPW has adopted a cap of 16% on total human-caused mortality to account for other sources of lion deaths. Washington state has also recently adopted a conservative more conservative mountain lion quota in order to maintain stable mountain lion social structures to minimize conflicts.<sup>8</sup>

GFP's Mountain Lion Action Plan continues to authorize trophy hunting of mountain lions that exceed sustainable levels, threatening the stability of South Dakota's mountain lion population as well as their range expansion to their historic range where they had been extirpated. GFP's own Andy Lindbloom acknowledged of South Dakota's current hunting limit at the July 2023 Commission meeting, "If we met this every year, we would not be able to manage for our management objective of two- to three-hundred lions. We just don't have enough lions that could meet that every year."<sup>9</sup> If current hunter kill rates continue, South Dakota's mountain lion population is projected to come dangerously close to falling below GFP's population objective. Any additional mortality of female mountain lions would likely lead to a disastrous decline below GFP's objectives. To quote directly from materials provided by GFP itself to the Commission at its July 2023 meeting:

If the four-year average of 26 females is harvested next year, the population is expected to decrease to just over 200 by December of 2024.... Alternatively, if the harvest limit is achieved and 40 females are harvested next year, the population is expected to decrease to under 200 mountain lions, and below the population objective of 200 to 300.<sup>10</sup>

As of August 14, 2024, 30 female mountain lions have been killed in South Dakota during the 2024 season, as well as 17 males. We therefore call on the agency to count South Dakota's mountain lions using contemporary spatial-model methods, implement a 14% cap on hunting mortality and a 16% cap on total human-caused mortality based on adult/subadult population estimates while doing away with the agency's arbitrary population objective of 200-300 total mountain lions.

2.) Implement a 20% sublimit on female hunting mortality as a proportion of total hunting mortality. Multiple studies across the western U.S. demonstrate that limiting female mortality to approximately 20% of total hunting mortality is necessary to ensure a stable population.<sup>11</sup> Based on the current adult/subadult population and an estimated sustainable hunting limit of 38 total mountain lions, GFP must limit the female hunting limit to no more than eight individuals.



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As the biological bank account of the population, GFP must take steps to protect resident females and ensure hunting of females does not exceed sustainable levels. The current subquota of 40 female mountain lions out of a total hunting limit of 60 lions is far too high.

3.) Prohibit the hunting of mountain lions with hounds throughout South Dakota and reject any proposed rule that would expand hound hunting.

As detailed in Appendix A, using radio-collared hounds to chase mountain lions and bay them into trees or rock ledges so a trophy hunter can shoot at close range is unsporting, unethical and inhumane.<sup>12</sup> Hounds kill kittens, and mountain lions often injure or kill hounds.<sup>13</sup> The practice is exceedingly stressful and energetically taxing to mountain lions.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, hound hunting is not considered “fair chase” hunting by most.<sup>15</sup> Hounds also chase and stress non-target wildlife, from porcupines to deer,<sup>16</sup> trespass onto private lands,<sup>17</sup> and have adverse interactions with the public.<sup>18</sup> If GFP is to continue allowing the hunting of mountain lions, the agency must prohibit the use of hounds and reject hound hunting in the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

In conclusion, Humane World for Animals strongly urges GFP to reject the proposal to allow pursuit of mountain lions to initiate anywhere outside the BHFPD as it seeks only to maximize trophy hunting opportunities, not conserve mountain lions. South Dakota’s mountain lions are a vital component of our natural wild heritage and deserve reasoned management for long-term conservation.<sup>19</sup> If GFP is to continue allowing hunting of mountain lions, the agency must limit the practice to no more than 14% of the adult/subadult population so that it does not exceed sustainable levels and implement a female sublimit of 20% of total hunting mortality. Additionally, total human-caused mortality must be limited to no more than 16% of the mountain lion population. Lastly, hound hunting of mountain lions must be prohibited, not expanded, throughout South Dakota. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Story Warren  
Program Manager, Wildlife Protection  
Humane World for Animals  
[swarren@humaneworld.org](mailto:swarren@humaneworld.org)



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Humane Society International

## Appendix A

### 1. Mountain lion trophy hunting is unsustainable, cruel and harmful to family groups

Trophy hunting is the greatest source of mortality for mountain lions throughout their range in the United States.<sup>20</sup> The practice is harmful to more than just the wild cats who are killed. Conservation biologists have condemned this practice as unnecessary and wasteful. Batavia et al. (2018) write that compelling evidence shows that the animals hunted as trophies have sophisticated levels of “intelligence, emotion and sociality,” which is “profoundly disrupted” by trophy hunting.<sup>21</sup> For these reasons, GFP must not allow trophy hunting of mountain lions in South Dakota.

- A. *Trophy hunting is unsustainable and cruel:* Large-bodied carnivores are sparsely populated across vast areas, invest in few offspring, provide extended parental care to their young, have a tendency towards infanticide, females limit reproduction and social stability promotes their resiliency.<sup>22</sup> Human persecution affects their social structure,<sup>23</sup> and harms their persistence.<sup>24</sup>

Conservation biologists have shown that trophy hunting results in *additive mortality*, meaning that trophy hunting and even other human-caused mortality increases the total mortality to levels that far exceed what would occur in nature.<sup>25</sup> In fact, the effect of human persecution is “super additive,” meaning that hunter kill rates on large carnivores has a multiplier effect on the ultimate increase in total mortality over what would occur in nature due to breeder loss, social disruption and its indirect effects including increased infanticide and decreased recruitment of their young.<sup>26</sup> When trophy hunters remove the stable adult mountain lions from a population, it encourages subadult males to immigrate, leading to greater aggression between cats and mortalities to adult females and subsequent infanticide.<sup>27</sup>

Biologists Wolfe et al. (2015) recommend that states manage mountain lions at a metapopulation level rather than at the single population level—which is critical for South Dakota’s tiny mountain lion population that is reliant on dispersers from Wyoming. They further add, “We recommend a conservative management approach be adopted to preclude potential over-harvest in future years.”<sup>28</sup> Instead, South Dakota’s mountain lions experience *additive* levels of mortality.<sup>29</sup> Extensive research shows that this additive mortality caused by high levels of hunting results in population sinks.<sup>30</sup> High hunting mortality does not result in decreased numbers and densities of mountain lions because of compensatory emigration and immigration responses, typically by dispersing subadult males.<sup>31</sup>

- B. *Trophy hunting is particularly harmful to kittens and their mothers:* In heavily hunted populations, female mountain lions experience higher levels of intraspecific aggression (fights with other cats) resulting in predation on themselves and their kittens.<sup>32</sup> Over-hunting harms a population’s ability to recruit new members if too many adult females are removed.<sup>33</sup> A Utah study shows that trophy hunting



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adult females orphan their kittens, leaving them to die of dehydration, malnutrition, and/or exposure.<sup>34</sup> Kittens are reliant upon their mothers beyond 12 months of age.<sup>35</sup>

- C. *Trophy hunting harms entire mountain lion communities:* A recent study on mountain lions shows that mountain lions are quite social and live in “communities,” with females sharing kills with other females, their kittens and even with the territorial males. In return for these meals, the adult males protect the females and their kittens from incoming males.<sup>36</sup> Disrupting these communities leads to deadly intraspecific strife, including infanticide and social chaos within the family groups.<sup>37</sup> Trophy hunting destabilizes mountain lion populations, which may cause increased conflicts with humans, pets and livestock.<sup>38</sup>
- D. *Trophy hunting is unnecessary, as mountain lions are a self-regulating species:* Mountain lions occur at low densities relative to their primary prey, making them sensitive to bottom-up (prey declines) and top-down (human persecution) influences.<sup>39</sup> Their populations necessarily stay at a much smaller size relative to their prey’s biomass or risk starvation.<sup>40</sup> They do this by regulating their own numbers.<sup>41</sup> When prey populations decline, so do mountain lion populations.<sup>42</sup> Mountain lion populations also require expansive habitat, with individual cats maintaining large home ranges that overlap with one another.<sup>43</sup>
- E. *Killing large numbers of mountain lions halts their ability to create trophic cascades in their ecosystems, which benefits a wide range of flora, fauna and people:* Mountain lions serve important ecological roles, including providing a variety of ecosystem services.<sup>44</sup> As such, conserving these large cats on the landscape creates a socio-ecological benefit that far offsets any societal costs.<sup>45</sup> Their protection and conservation has ripple effects throughout their natural communities. Researchers have found that by modulating deer populations, mountain lions prevented overgrazing near fragile riparian systems, resulting in greater biodiversity.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, carrion left from mountain lion kills feeds scavengers, beetles, foxes, bears and other wildlife species, further enhancing biodiversity.<sup>47</sup>
- F. *Hound hunting is harmful to mountain lions, hounds and non-target wildlife:* Using radio-collared trailing hounds to chase mountain lions and bay them into trees or rock ledges so a trophy hunter can shoot them at close range is unsporting, unethical and inhumane.<sup>48</sup> Hounds kill kittens, and mountain lions often injure or kill hounds.<sup>49</sup> The practice is exceedingly stressful and energetically taxing to mountain lions.<sup>50</sup>

To escape from the hounds, mountain lions use evasive maneuvers such as running in figure eights, scrambling up trees or steep hillsides and using quick turns to evade the pursuing pack of barking hounds. As a result, mountain lions could exceed their aerobic budgets causing their muscles to go anaerobic—while hounds are capable of running a steady pace with little ill effect.<sup>51</sup> For every one minute the hounds chased a mountain lion, it cost the cat approximately five times what would have been expended if the cat had been hunting. A 3.5-minute chase, according to Bryce et al. (2017), likely





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equaled 18 minutes of energy the mountain lion would have expended on hunting activities necessary to find prey.<sup>52</sup>

Hounding is not considered “fair chase” hunting by most.<sup>53</sup> Fair chase hunting is predicated upon giving the animal an equal opportunity to escape from the hunter.<sup>54</sup> The use of hounds provides an unfair advantage to trophy hunters who rely on hounds to do the bulk of the work in finding and baying a mountain lion. GFP Wildlife Program Administrator Andrew Norton stated to the Commission in 2023, “As you can imagine, success is much higher with hounds. We see on average about twenty times as high success when hounds are used compared to boot hunting in South Dakota.”<sup>55</sup> In Custer State Park, hunters relying on hounds experience an astounding 63% success rate in killing mountain lions, compared to a success rate of 3.5% for boot hunters.<sup>56</sup> Hounds also chase and stress non-target wildlife, from porcupines to deer,<sup>57</sup> cause adverse interactions with bystanders, and trespass onto private lands.<sup>58</sup>

Grignolio et al. (2011) found that hounding was highly costly to non-target deer. Hounding changed deer behaviors, including deer inside a protected refuge.<sup>59</sup> While the hounds were chasing other species, they caused non-target deer, especially younger animals, to panic and huddle in an inferior habitat (in this case: a protected, high-elevation, snow-covered reserve during the wintertime hunting season when foraging was difficult). Hounds also significantly increased deer home range sizes—meaning deer had to expend extra energy to distance themselves from the hounds. Furthermore, Grignolio et al. (2011), citing several others, indicated that hounding highly disturbs deer, likely reducing individual fitness and reproductive success while harming deer populations on the whole. If GFP’s conservation goals include conserving deer populations, then unleashing packs of loose dogs in their habitat to spook, harass, and chase wildlife during a sensitive time of the year is quite counter to that goal.

## **2. Hunting mountain lions does not boost prey populations**

Research shows that ungulates are ultimately limited more by their food resources and other habitat factors (“bottom-up” limitations) than by their predators (“top down” regulators).<sup>60</sup> However, when herds lose their predators, they suffer poorer health and body condition, as well as more degraded habitats.<sup>61</sup> With a healthy assemblage of native carnivores, ecosystems enjoy the benefits from top-down regulation, which increases the health of ungulate herds with which they are integrally coevolved.<sup>62</sup>

The best available science demonstrates that killing native carnivores to increase ungulate populations is unlikely to produce positive results. Numerous recent studies demonstrate that predator removal actions “generally had no effect” in the long term on ungulate populations.<sup>63</sup> Because ecological systems are complex, heavily persecuting mountain lions will fail to address the underlying malnutrition problems that deer face. Research also shows that disruption by oil and gas drilling does, in fact, greatly harm mule deer populations.<sup>64</sup> If South Dakota wants to grow its ungulate populations, then GFP must foster survival of adult female mule deer and elk to stem declines; and it must improve nutritional conditions for ungulates as these factors are the



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most important for mule deer survival.<sup>65</sup> It must also eliminate hound hunting of mountain lions as it is an unnatural stressor on deer.<sup>66</sup>

Persecuting mountain lions will not help bighorn sheep recruitment, either. It is clear from the literature that bighorn sheep populations are in decline in the U.S. because of unregulated market hunting, trophy hunting, disease from domestic sheep,<sup>67</sup> resource competition by livestock, and loss of habitat.<sup>68</sup> Sawyer and Lindzey (2002) surveyed more than 60 peer-reviewed articles concerning predator-prey relationships involving bighorn sheep and mountain lions, concluding that while predator control is often politically expedient, it often does not address underlying environmental issues including habitat loss, loss of migration corridors, and inadequate nutrition.<sup>69</sup> The best available science suggests that persecuting mountain lion populations is not a solution for enhancing bighorn sheep numbers. That is because mountain lion predation upon bighorn sheep is a learned behavior conducted by a few individuals who may not repeat their behavior.<sup>70</sup> Similar behavior has been documented on endangered mountain caribou in the southern Selkirk Mountains, where trophy hunting disrupted sensitive mountain lion communities, female lions took to higher altitudes to avoid incoming, infanticidal young males, and preyed upon mountain caribou there.<sup>71</sup>

South Dakota can better plan for bighorn sheep management by selecting relocation sites for bighorn sheep that have little stalking cover.<sup>72</sup> Escape terrain that contains cliffs, rocks, and foliage makes excellent ambush cover for a mountain lion and should be avoided.<sup>73</sup> The amount of mountain lion predation is also generally greater on small-sized bighorn sheep populations (those with fewer than 100 individuals) than on other larger bighorn sheep populations.<sup>74</sup> A host of authors reviewed by McKinney et al. (2006) and Ruth and Murphy (2010) recommend only limited mountain lion removals to benefit bighorn sheep populations.<sup>75</sup>

### **3. Mountain lions provide significant ecosystem benefits to their prey and other wildlife, as well as economic benefits to South Dakotans**

Mountain lions help prevent deadly deer-vehicle strikes<sup>76</sup> that can result in numerous human mortalities and pose significant financial and ecological costs to society.<sup>77</sup> In fact, by reducing vehicle collisions with deer, mountain lions saved drivers \$1.1 million in collision costs annually in South Dakota.<sup>78</sup> Additionally, highways fragment wildlife habitats, which can lead to both genetic inbreeding problems and direct mortality from vehicle collisions.<sup>79</sup> The cost of vehicle-animal collisions can be mitigated with the construction of highway structures that are designed to draw specific species such as deer across them, not only preventing vehicle strikes but protecting species and people while saving millions of dollars annually.<sup>80</sup>

Moreover, mountain lions help maintain the health and viability of ungulate populations by preying on sick individuals, reducing the spread of disease such as chronic wasting disease (CWD) and brucellosis.<sup>81</sup> For example, during a study in Rocky Mountain National Park, researchers found mountain lions preyed on deer infected with CWD.<sup>82</sup> The study concluded that adult deer preyed upon by mountain lions were more likely to have CWD than deer shot by hunters. According to the study, "The subtle behaviour changes in prion-infected deer may be better signals of vulnerability than body condition, and these cues may occur well before body condition noticeably declines."<sup>83</sup> This demonstrates that mountain lions select for infected prey and may be



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more effective at culling animals with CWD, including during the early stages of the disease when they are less infectious, than hunters who rely on more obvious signs of emaciation that occur in later stages of the disease, when they are more infectious. Moreover, the mountain lions consumed more than 85% of carcasses, thereby removing a significant amount of the disease from the environment.<sup>84</sup>

This ecosystem benefit is increasingly important as CWD infection continues to grow in prevalence and distribution in South Dakota<sup>85</sup> and neighboring states. Hammering our state's mountain lion population through extremely high and irresponsible levels of trophy hunting relative to the estimated population, and the setting of an arbitrarily low population objective for mountain lions, undermine one of our best defenses against the spread of this deadly disease.

#### **4. Trophy hunting increases human-mountain lion conflict and livestock losses**

Trophy hunting and predator control of mountain lions results in increased conflicts because lions' social structure are destabilized.<sup>86</sup> A review of predator-removal studies found that the practice is "typically an ineffective and costly approach to conflicts between humans and predators" and, as a long-term strategy, will result in failure.<sup>87</sup> Instead, the authors concluded, non-lethal alternatives to predator removal, coupled with coexistence (husbandry techniques) may resolve conflicts.<sup>88</sup>

A Washington state study shows that as mountain lion complaints increased, wildlife officials lengthened seasons and increased quotas to respond to what they believed was a growing lion population. However, the public's perception of an increasing population and greater number of livestock depredations was actually the result of a declining female and increasing male population.<sup>89</sup> Heavy hunting of mountain lions skewed the ratio of young males in the population by causing compensatory immigration and emigration, even though it resulted in no net change in the population.<sup>90</sup>

Study authors found that the trophy hunting of mountain lions to reduce complaints and livestock losses had the opposite effect. Killing mountain lions disrupts their social structure and increases both complaints and livestock losses.<sup>91</sup> Peebles et al. (2013) write:

... each additional cougar [i.e. mountain lion] on the landscape increased the odds of a complaint of livestock depredation by about 5%. However, contrary to expectations, each additional cougar killed on the landscape increased the odds by about 50%, or an order of magnitude higher. By far, hunting of cougars had the greatest effects, but not as expected. Very heavy hunting (100% removal of resident adults in 1 year) increased the odds of complaints and depredations in year 2 by 150% to 340%.<sup>92</sup>

Similarly, a study published recently shows the very same result – lethal removal of mountain lions is associated with increased conflicts, especially on small hoofstock including sheep and goats.<sup>93</sup> Dellinger et al. (2021) state:



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Removals can thus create a negative-feedback loop that leads to increasing conflict and lethal removal, which could begin to negatively impact the mountain lion population via reduced gene flow and population viability (Hiller et al. 2015, Vickers et al. 2015, Benson et al. 2019). Thus, maintaining an older age structure by reducing lethal removal of resident adults could mitigate depredations (Logan 2019).<sup>94</sup>

Hunting disrupts mountain lions' sex-age structure and tilts a population to one that is composed of younger males, who are more likely to engage in livestock predation than animals in stable, older populations.<sup>95</sup> In 2019, the Humane Society of the United States published a report on livestock losses from mountain lions using the U.S. Department of Agriculture's data.<sup>96</sup> For South Dakota's cattle and sheep ranchers, 2015 data show that most livestock losses came from illnesses, birthing problems, weather and theft, with far fewer losses coming from native carnivores and domestic dogs combined.<sup>97</sup> In 2015, nearly 96% of unwanted cattle losses in South Dakota were from maladies with only 0.17% coming from mountain lions, according to the USDA.<sup>98</sup> And USDA data show that in 2014, zero sheep were lost to mountain lions in South Dakota.<sup>99</sup>

Rather than allowing mountain lion trophy hunting, GFP must make a concerted effort to utilize non-lethal methods (described below) when rare conflicts occur, prioritizing these tools above lethal removal of mountain lions. The current reliance on lethal removal of mountain lions that enter a human community is cruel, unsustainable, and not in line with best management practices for mountain lion conservation.<sup>100</sup> A recent Utah study found that mountain lions selected for native prey even within urban-wildland interface habitat, with only 2% of 540 prey animals consisting of domestic animals.<sup>101</sup> Techniques such as hazing and relocation are viable options that prevent unnecessary killing and are largely supported by the majority of South Dakotans, as detailed within the Plan.<sup>102</sup> According to surveys of South Dakota residents in 2018, public education, relocation and hazing are by far the most widely supported methods for addressing human, pet and livestock conflicts with mountain lions.<sup>103</sup>

Furthermore, GFP must work with livestock owners to ensure they are adequately and appropriately employing nonlethal predator deterrence techniques. Installing predator-proof enclosures, using livestock guardian animals, or utilizing frightening devices are all effective strategies to prevent conflicts with mountain lions and other carnivores. Other livestock husbandry practices are also essential at reducing conflicts with carnivores. Livestock operators should:

- Practice sanitary livestock carcass removal to avoid scavenging and habituation.
- Keep livestock, especially in maternity pastures, away from areas where wild cats have access to ambush cover.<sup>104</sup>
- Keep livestock, especially the most vulnerable—young animals, mothers during birthing seasons and hobby-farm animals—behind barriers such as electric fencing and/or in barns or pens, or kennels with a top.<sup>105</sup> The type of enclosure needs to be specific to the native carnivore to prevent climbing, digging or jumping.<sup>106</sup>



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- Move calves from pastures with chronic predation problems and replace them with older, less vulnerable animals.<sup>107</sup>
- Concentrate calving season (i.e., via artificial insemination) to synchronize births with wild ungulate birth periods.<sup>108</sup>
- In large landscapes, use human herders, range riders and/or guard animals.<sup>109</sup> Guard dogs work better when sheep and lambs are contained in a fenced enclosure rather than on open range lands where they can wander unrestrained.<sup>110</sup>
- Suspended human clothing, LED flashing lights (sold as “Foxlights”) and radio alarm boxes set off to make alarm sounds/noises near pastures are some of the low-cost sound and/or visual equipment that deters wild cats.<sup>111</sup>
- Studded leather collars can be very effective at protecting cattle from big cats.<sup>112</sup>

According to USDA data from 2015, only an estimated 11.2% of cattle and calf operations in South Dakota used any nonlethal predator control methods.<sup>113</sup> Expanding the use of suitable techniques that are landscape and animal specific is essential to reducing conflicts and preventing the death of livestock as well as wild carnivores. We urge GFP to focus resources on further educating the public on how to share the landscape with carnivores, rather than only attempting to maximize trophy hunting opportunity.

##### **5. Trophy hunting of mountain lions is not economically sound or supported by the majority of Americans who want to see wildlife protected**

Trophy hunting of mountain lions is not in the best interest of this iconic species, nor does it represent the interests of the public majority. The practice deprives citizens of their ability to see, view tracks of, or photograph wild mountain lions, and deprives them of the important ecosystem services mountain lions provide in our landscapes. Nonconsumptive users are a rapidly growing stakeholder group that provides immense economic contributions to the communities in which they visit.<sup>114</sup> The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2016 survey on wildlife recreation indicates that wildlife watchers nationwide have increased 20 percent from 2011, numbering 86 million and spending \$75.9 billion, while all hunters declined by 16 percent, with the biggest decline in big game hunter numbers, from 11.6 million in 2011 to 9.2 million in 2016.<sup>115</sup> Altogether, hunters spent \$25.6 billion in 2016, about one-third that spent by wildlife watchers (Fig. 2).<sup>116</sup>

<b>Figure 2: Wildlife recreation participation &amp; expenditures, 2011 vs. 2016 data</b>			
<b>Numbers</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Wildlife watchers</b>	71.8M	86.0M	+14.2M (+20%)
<b>All hunters</b>	13.7M	11.5M	-2.2M (-16%)
<b>Big game</b>	11.6M	9.2M	-2.4M (-20%)





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Small game	4.5M	3.5M	-1M (-22%)
Migratory birds	2.6M	2.4M	-0.2M (-8%)
Other animals	2.2M	1.3M	-0.9M (-41%)
<b>Expenditures</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Wildlife watchers</b>	\$59.1B	\$75.9B	+\$16.8B (+28%)
<b>All hunters</b>	\$36.3B	\$25.6B	-\$10.7B (-29%)

The public values mountain lions and views them as an indicator of healthy environments while posing little risk to people living near them.<sup>117</sup> A new study indicates that Americans highly value wildlife, including top carnivores such as mountain lions, and are concerned about their welfare and conservation.<sup>118</sup> The landmark America's Wildlife Values report found that the percentage of South Dakotans who fall into the traditionalist values system – those who view wildlife as a resource to be used for human benefit – decreased by four percent between 2004 and 2018, while the percent of mutualists – those who value living alongside wildlife – rose significantly, with an increase of 7.5% in the same time period.<sup>119</sup> South Dakotans increasingly value their wildlife alive and thriving. Surveys also show that the majority of Americans do not support trophy hunting.<sup>120</sup> An additional study showed that most believe mountain lions are the best representative of the Southern Rockies heritage and landscape.<sup>121</sup> A continued trophy hunting and hounding season is not in the best interest of South Dakotans who prefer that these large cats remain on the landscape, without threat of persecution.

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<sup>21</sup> Batavia et al. (2018) write: "...nonhuman animals are not only physically, socially, and emotionally disrupted [by trophy hunters], but also debased by the act of trophy hunting. Commoditized, killed, and dismembered, these individuals are relegated to the sphere of

mere things when they are turned into souvenirs, oddities, and collectibles. We argue this is morally indefensible. Nonhuman animals are not mere objects but living beings with interests of their own, to whom we owe at least some basic modicum of respect (Regan, 1983). To transform them into trophies of human conquest is a violation of duty and common decency; and to accept, affirm, and even institutionalize trophy hunting, as the international conservation community seems to have done, is to aid and abet an immoral practice.” Authors then argue that trophy hunting cannot be “presumed [to be] integral to conservation success.”

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 March 30th, 2025

SD Game, Fish and Parks Commission  
 523 Capitol Ave  
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Dear Commission,

First Section:  
ADDITIONAL RULE CHANGE SUGGESTED.

With this rule change you will be increasing the area in SD subject to hound hunting of cougars, thus you should be increasing the animal welfare provisions.

#### LACTATING FEMALES

Rule # 41:06:61:06. 7, shows some protection to a lactating females, that hounds have treed, but that protection exists only if it is the first lion treed & the lion is in Custer State Park. Quote of section 7:

“In Custer State Park, a person using dogs shall attempt to harvest the first legal mountain lion they have a reasonable opportunity to harvest, except under the condition where the lion pursued shows obvious signs of lactation.” (emphasis added)

This protection should be improved to apply to all areas of hound hunting. Please add an entirely new rule saying: hound hunters of lions must not harvest a lactating female lion that they have treed or otherwise cornered with hounds.

#### PRAIRIE UNIT NAME

Please make a rule change to give a name to the hunting unit that is the rest of SD “outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District.” We suggest the Prairie Unit, as you once used that name for that area.

#### DIVIDE UP THE PRAIRIE UNIT

Oglala Sioux Tribe (OST) and Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST) have proof of cougar breeding. OST has a lion hunting season (harvest limit 20 any sex/10 females). Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (CRSt) may have resident lion(s), without proof of breeding. Yankton Sioux Tribe (YST), circa 2015, thought they had a couple of breeding mountain lions, but later on did not think they had any anymore and I don't know what their recent/current population is.

We think that GFP should split off area(s) east of Black Hills, South of I 90 and west of Yankton Sioux Tribe & create hunting unit(s) that prioritizes cooperation with tribes in the management of lions in the unit(s), if the tribes agree with that idea.

=====

Second section

WE OBJECT TO HOUND HUNTING ON PUBLIC LAND IN THE PRAIRIE UNIT:

We object to the proposed rule change to allow hound hunting of mountain lions to occur both on public and private land.

You are changing this rule:

Rule # 41:06:61:06 (5) The use of dogs to hunt mountain lions is allowed only during those specified hunting intervals in Custer State Park that allow the use of dogs; and year-round outside of the Black Hills Fire Protection District ~~when on private land, with permission of the landowner or lessee. However, a pursuit of a mountain lion by dogs that originates on private land may cross over or culminate on private land, with permission from the landowner or lessee, or on public land, unless expressly prohibited by the managing entity;~~

REASONS:

1. Dogs are designed for long chases while mt. lions are designed for short bursts of speed and when threatened or tired, they climb trees/rocks. On the prairie unit, trees and rocks may be lacking for a lion pursued by dogs to climb up & this could result in fights between dogs/lions.
2. Small populations need connectivity corridors to resupply the population with fresh genetics. Aggressive hound hunting could endanger that connectivity.
3. Nebraska, which lies below the Reservation breeding populations, last year doubled its' cougar harvest limits for it's 3 cougar hunting areas. Thus, Reservation populations may be losing some supply of lions from the south. More aggressive hound hunting in SD may also effect their populations
4. SDGFP does not require hound hunters to have e-collars, thus control of dogs in SD does not use the best available technology.
5. There are not that many hound hunters relative to boot hunters. Hound hunters outperform boot hunters. The harvest from Custer State Park and the Prairie Unit is mostly taken by hound hunters. The ratio of lion kill by hound hunters is excessive relative to their numbers, when compared with number of boot hunters.
6. Custer-Gallatin National Forest could support breeding lions and back in mid 1990s FS employees saw mom w/cubs. Why can't people who don't hunt, enjoy viewing lion tracks, or seeing lions or just knowing that public lands have apex predators. Aggressive hound hunting will destroy small populations.
9. Various river corridors (Such as Niobrara River in NE) can support lions. We might have lion habitat along Missouri River. Aggressive hound hunting will destroy small populations
10. Mountain lion pursuit with hounds is cruelty to lions and dogs.
11. Mountain lion pursuit with hounds will result in more trespassing.
12. Mountain lion pursuit with hounds will create disturbance to people, livestock and wildlife (including mule deer). Disturbance of wildlife can stress them.
13. Mountain lion pursuit with hounds will stress lions, especially in heavy snow or extreme heat, which will be especially hard for mothers with young.
14. Mountain lion kittens stay with moms for 18 months and moms can give birth any time of the year. Hound hunters may separate moms from kitten leaving their kittens unprotected or unfed.
15. Mountain lion pursuit with hounds is not fair chase.
16. Mountain lion hunting with hounds is more efficient than "boot hunting" and will result in less lions available for "boot hunters" (hunters not using dogs).

17. Mountain lion hunting by hounds will result in more commercialization of hunting, as some hound hunters will be hired as guides/outfitters. People with money to hire dogs, will thus be more likely to get a lion than those who can't afford such.

Please don't change the rule to allow hound hunting on public land in the prairie.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Hilding", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nancy Hilding  
President  
Prairie Hills Audubon Society



Chairman Boyd Gourneau - Vice Chairman Neil Cody Russell - Secretary/Treasurer Marty Jandreau  
Council Members: Kamela Wilson – Joelle Battese – Marlo Langdeau

## **Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council Meeting – February 5, 2025**

### **RESOLUTION NO. 2025-138**

#### **OPPOSE SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION'S 2025 PROPOSAL**

**WHEREAS**, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe is a federally recognized Indian Tribe organized pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934; and

**WHEREAS**, as empowered by the Constitution and Bylaws, Article VI, Section 1, (e) the Tribal Council as authorized by law to safeguard and promote the peace, safety, morals, and general welfare of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and to regulate and conduct of trade and the use and disposition of property upon the reservation provided that any ordinance directly affecting nonmembers of the reservation shall be subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe (LBST) opposes the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission's 2025 Proposal for the PRE-WRA Prairie Elk Hunting Season; and

**WHEREAS**, the Proposal expands the PRE-WRA boundaries to include land within the exterior boundaries of the LBST Nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the LBST is against this expansion of the PRE-WRA Elk Hunting Unit that would allow South Dakota residents to hunt elk on non-trust land within our nation's boundaries; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council does hereby oppose the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission's 2025 Proposal for the PRE-WRA Prairie Elk Hunting Season.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Lower Brule Sioux Tribal Council assembled in Regular Session with a quorum present on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2025 by the affirmative vote of five members for, none against, none absent and none not-voting.



**Boyd Gourneau, Chairman  
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe**

**ATTEST**



**Marty Jandreau, Secretary/Treasurer  
Lower Brule Sioux Tribe**