



Chairman Olson
South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501

August 5th, 2022

Chairman Olson and Members of the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks Commission,

The National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) mission is the conservation of the wild turkey and the preservation of our hunting heritage and we are dedicated to working with our partners, such as South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks (SDGFP) on issues that directly impact our mission. Further, we strongly support wildlife management decisions based on the best available science. We have reviewed the current proposal from SDGFP staff to change the season structure for the 2023 Spring wild turkey season, specifically recommendations to delay the opening date by one week from its current structure. Additionally, we have reviewed the data presented to the Commission at the July meeting by SDGFP staff Chad Lehman. We support the SDGFP proposal to move the spring turkey season opener to the third Saturday in April to better correlate with peak nest incubation dates. Doing so should have positive impacts on the overall health of South Dakota's wild turkey population and potentially lead to an increase in hunter satisfaction.

Additionally, and again based on the data provided by SDGFP staff on current wild turkey populations, we would ask the Commission to consider delaying the Spring turkey season opener another week to the fourth Saturday in April. We recognize this is a more conservative approach than the current staff proposal but believe it warrants your consideration for the potential long-term impacts to South Dakota's wild turkey population. We believe delaying the season dates to better correlate with the data currently available on wild turkey population trends will have the greatest benefit to the resource while maximizing hunter opportunity and satisfaction.

We greatly value our partnership with SDGFP and the hard work of your staff to manage the wild turkeys in the state. We appreciate SDGFP staff's commitment to let the science lead management decisions and adjust hunter opportunity to maximize the resource. Finally, we appreciate the Commission and your hard work and the opportunity to provide comment on the SDGFP proposal for the 2023 Spring wild turkey season. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out at any time.

Thank you,
Francis Strohfus 
South Dakota NWTF State Chapter President