

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission
April 2-3, 2020

Chairman Gary Jensen called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. CT via conference call. Commissioners Gary Jensen, Travis Bies, Mary Anne Boyd, Jon Locken, Russell Olson, Doug Sharp, Charles Spring, Robert Whitmyre. Public and staff were able to listen via SDPB livestream and approximately 25 participated via conference call.

DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Chair Jensen called for conflicts of interest to be disclosed. None were presented.

Approval of Minutes

Jensen called for any additions or corrections to the March 5-6, 2020 meeting minutes or a motion for approval.

Motion by Olson with second by Boyd TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 5-6, 2020 MEETING WITH MINOR REVISIONS. Motion carried unanimously.

Additional Commissioner Salary Days

No additional commissioner salary days were requested.

PETITIONS

Tom Kirschenmann, wildlife division director, provided information on the petition process and options available for commission action.

Lake Sharp Smallmouth Bass

Kirschenmann presented the petition submitted by Steve Baumberger, Sioux Falls, SD to only allow a daily bag limit of one smallmouth bass 15 inches or longer. Baumberger's petition give the reason for the change as Lake Sharpe is a relatively small reservoir with very high fishing pressure, with continuous pressure on smallmouth hangouts day after day during the open water season. Large smallmouths have declined greatly since the removal of the trophy fishery status in 2014, as a result of harvest during pre-spawn and spawning bass in shall waters. As anglers struggle to find legal size walleyes for harvest, more anglers, including guide services, are targeting larger smallmouth for harvest, and as the word spreads that they make good table fare, this trend will increase. Most anglers today do not like to go home without limits of fish. The implementation of this rule will improve the size distribution of smallmouths, improve the overall health of the fishery, and make for a better fishing experience for all, especially for those like myself who want a sustainable sport fishery.

Motion by Boyd with second by Sharp TO DENY THE PETITION. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Boyd with second by Locken TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-08 (appendix A) DENYING THE PETITION TO ALLOW FOR ONE SMALLMOUTH 15

INCHES OR LONGER ON LAKE SHARP. Motion by Boyd with second by Sharp TO DENY THE PETITION. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Elk Hunting Unit Boundary

Kirschenmann presented the petition submitted by Mike Jarding, Hot Springs, SD to amend the existing elk hunting unit boundary to increase or maintain the population in this area. This area is 50% public property and the vast majority of private property owners in this area want the elk population to increase or maintain the same as it is now, not significantly decrease the population as GFP proposes. The Unit H3 Cow Boundary Change would move the boundary H3 ,B, C, D to Co Road 18 Mile and Hwy 89 to go south on Hwy 89 to Minnekahta Jct. and then east on Hwy 18 to Hot Springs and then north on Hwy 385 to Wind Cave National Park boundary.

Motion by Boyd with second by Olson TO DENY THE PETITION. Motion carried unanimously. Motion by Boyd with second by Sharp TO DENY THE PETITION. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motion by Spring, second by Sharp TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-09 (appendix B) DENYING THE PETITION TO CHANGE BOUNDARY FOR THE H3 ELK UNIT. Motion by Boyd with second by Sharp TO DENY THE PETITION. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing began at 2:00 p.m. and concluded at 2:05 p.m. The minutes follow these Commission meeting minutes.

OPEN FORUM

Jensen opened the floor for discussion from those in attendance on matters of importance to them that may not be on the agenda.

Youth Pheasant Season

Gale Skoog, Milbank, SD doesn't feel it is necessary. They have 5 days and it would be okay to extent it to 7 days, but a second weekend is unnecessary as it is already open for residents and this would offer it to nonresident youth as well.

Other

Foster Bareholow, Rapid City spoke in regards to covid 19 concerns during turkey hunting season. NE took a proactive effort to stop the spread and feels this is something South Dakota should look at doing to keep our residents, farms and ranchers safe from the spread and unnecessary travel of nonresidents. People from other states are looking at places to go since their seasons were cancelled and because our rates are lower we are likely to see an influx. This could also cause a ripple effect on the population of turkeys. Reminded the commission there has already been a 3rd draw for resident licenses and the Black Hills has an unlimited amount of turkey licenses so would like to close the licenses for the area.

Bill Lengkeek, Lyman County Commissioner, Presho, SD spoke regarding out of state people hunting and fishing and we need to limit these licenses until covid 19 passes.

James Neilsen, Aurora County Emergency Manager, Plankinton, SD I would like to address a major concern of not just myself as County Emergency Manager, but also my commissioners as well as several community officials and many of the general public. We have a lot of people who pass through our county from locations out of state to fish the Missouri River and our concern is that there is no way to check or confirm they are free of the COVID-19 virus and could be spreading it to unsuspecting residents. It is not just our county but other counties as well who could be affected. A very good solution would be to cancel all fishing and hunting activities to out of state persons during the duration of the epidemic to ensure the safety of our residents. I understand the economic impact this would have on our state and the inconvenience it would be to not only the fishermen but the sport industry as well but feel that the saving of even one life would be worth it. FEMA and SBA have programs in place to help businesses cope with the financial losses that would occur. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Spoke regarding a study showing average 100-150 out of state licenses pulling a boat passing through his area.

James Nesladek, Brule County Commission Chair, Pukwana, SD spoke regarding concerns of out of state fisherman possible spread of covid-19. Feels we need to be proactive and close down out of state fishing across the state

Lester Thompson, Crow Creek Sioux Tribe Chairman, Fort Thompson, SD same concerns as county commissioners regarding the spread of covid 19. Seeing a massive influx of out of state fisherman from Minnesota and Iowa. Traced license plates and shows these people are coming from highly infected areas. Explained the potential spread is scary for example the women's prison escapees traveled to Crow Creek and had contact with a number of people in short amount of time

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society, Black Hawk, SD spoke regarding rule 41-08-02-13 trapping devises. Feels we do not need the two extra months for trapping. Asking the Commission to do a rule change to make it end July 1st. spoke about the nest predator bounty program and the two studies done and the differences which are attached to her public comments. She feels the study compiled by the humane society found better results because the other study asked people who didn't know anything about the program and was teaching them to get responses.

Jack Kolbeck, Sioux Falls, SD spoke regarding out of state fishing and agrees with the commissioners from the counties that provided comment. We do not need travelers coming into our state to increase the spread of covid 19. would like the commission to reconsider the use of rifles for turkey for those that are 65+ or disabled and possibly only on private land.

John Kludt, Mitchell, SD spoke regarding the petition on Lake Sharpe Smallmouth Bass. Would like to see some conversation to the sport fishery from what it was to how it is currently regulated. Concerned fishing ramps my close before there is community spread and none have been linked to out-of-stater's.

PROPOSALS

Fall Turkey

Chad Switzer, wildlife program administrator, presented the recommended changes to the Fall Turkey Hunting Season

1. Offer 125 less resident single tag licenses and 35 more resident double tag licenses for Prairie Units compared to 2019.
2. Close prairie units 12A (Gregory County), 50A (Mellette County), and 60A (Tripp County).
3. Establish and open prairie unit 12A (Bon Homme County).

Motion by Olson, second by Sharp TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE FALL TURKEY HUNTING SEASON. Motion by Boyd with second by Sharp TO DENY THE PETITION. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Switzer presented the administrative action for turkey cense allocation by unit. (see appendix C)

Motioned by Boyd, second by Spring TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE TURKEY HUNTING LICENSE ALLOCATIONS BY UNIT. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Lost License Replacement

Tom Kirschenmann presented the recommended change to remove the \$20 administrative fee for lost or destroyed licenses, permits or game tags. The license agent's fee established by SDCL 41-6-66.1 would still be charged by license agents and the Department. He explained that after considering public comment and a review of this administrative fee for all license types, the Department recommends removing this administrative fee. Authorized license agents and the department as per SDCL 41-6-66.1 will charge a license agent's fee of \$4 for resident and \$8 for nonresident licenses.

Motioned by Spring, second by Olson TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ELK HUNTING SEASONS AND LICENSE ALLOCATIONS BY UNIT. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Nonresident Waterfowl Season

Kirschenmann requested the Commission table this agenda item.

Administrative Rules Review ARSD 41:08, 41:09, 41:10 and 41:13

Jon Kotilnek, senior staff attorney, explained that during the 2019 Legislative Session HB 1162 was introduced by Representative Gosch. The intent of the bill was to have the Department conduct a systematic review of our administrative rules. During the review the Department was to identify rules that are irrelevant, inconsistent, illogically arranged, or unclear in their intent and direction. After discussions with Representative Gosch, the Department agreed to conduct the systematic review without legislation and to report its findings and corrective changes back to the Executive Board of the Legislative Research Council. These formally proposed suggested changes are

to correct inconsistencies, remove unnecessary barriers and arrange rules logically thus promoting an administrative code that benefits current, former and new users.

The Department recommends the following rule changes for the following administrative rules in an effort to reduce redundancy, increase transparency and improve consistency:

Chapter 41:08

Motion by Boyd, second by Bies TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES AS RECOMMENDED TO RULES IN CHAPTER 41:08. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Chapter 41:09

Motion by Sharp, second by Boyd TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES AS RECOMMENDED TO RULES IN CHAPTER 41:09. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Chapter 41:10

Motion by Bies second by Boyd TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES AS RECOMMENDED TO RULES IN CHAPTER 41:10. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

River Otter Delisting (proposed in March- no action necessary)

Flathead Catfish – Border Waters (proposed in March – no action necessary)

Archery Deer Season (proposed in March)

Chad Switzer, wildlife program administrator, presented the recommended changes to archery deer season from the March proposal as follows:

1. Remove the proposed hunting unit for the City of Sturgis.
2. Resident “any antlerless deer” licenses will be allocated as follows:

Municipality	# Licenses
Custer	45
Rapid City	60
Sioux Falls	60

Motioned by Locken, second by Whitmyre TO AMEND THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ARCHERY DEER SEASON PROPOSAL. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Boyd, second by Whitmyre TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE ARCHERY DEER SEASON PROPOSAL AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Landowner Elk License Applications (proposed in March - tabled)

Youth Waterfowl Season (proposed in March – no action necessary)

Youth Pheasant Season (proposed in March)

Switzer presented the recommended changes to amend the youth pheasant season proposal to modify the season dates from “five consecutive days beginning on the first Saturday of October” to “9 consecutive days beginning 21 days prior to the third Saturday of October”. See season dates in table below.

Year	Youth Pheasant Season Dates
2020	Sept. 26 - Oct. 4
2021	Sept. 25 - Oct. 3
2022	Sept. 24 - Oct. 2
2023	Sept. 30 - Oct. 8
2024	Sept. 28 - Oct. 6
2025	Sept. 27 - Oct. 5
2026	Sept. 26 - Oct. 4
2027	Sept. 25 - Oct. 3
2028	Sept. 30 - Oct. 8
2029	Sept. 29 - Oct. 7

Motioned by Sharp, second by Bies TO AMEND THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE YOUTH PEASANT HUNTING SEASON PROPOSAL. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Boyd, second by Bies TO THE CHANGES TO THE YOUTH PHEASANT HUNTING SEASON PROPOSAL AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

FINALIZATIONS

Elk – BH, Archery, CSP and Prairie

Switzer explained the intent of the changes being recommended are to allow an opportunity for adjustments to be made at finalization during the Commission meeting in April and in administrative rule to maximize hunter opportunity based on the results of the upcoming aerial survey and to meet population objectives identified in the elk management plan.

Switzer presented the recommended changes to amend the Black Hills Elk Hunting Season to adjust the total number of available licenses from 425 "any elk" and 700 "antlerless elk" licenses (total of 1,125 licenses) to 450 "any elk" and 490 "antlerless elk" licenses (total of 940 licenses). And Modify the season dates for antlerless elk units BHE-H2B and BHE-H2E from October 15-31 to October 15-31 and December 1-16.

Motioned by Bies, second by Spring TO APPROVE THE AMENDED CHANGES TO THE BLACK HILLS ELK HUNTING SEASON. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Bies, second by Whitmyre TO APPROVE THE CHANGES TO THE BLACK HILLS ELK HUNTING SEASON AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Switzer presented the amended changes to the Archery Elk Hunting Season to adjust the number of licenses available from 142 “any elk” and 80 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 222 licenses) to 147 “any elk” and 70 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 217 licenses).

Motioned by Olson, second by Boyd TO AMEND THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE NUMBER OF LICENSES ALLOCATED FOR ARCHERY ELK. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Locken TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO TO THE NUMBER OF ARCHERY ELK LICENSES AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Switzer presented the amended change to the Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season to retain current allocation of 9 “any elk” licenses. This is to address an error on the Department’s original recommendation as one of these licenses is available for the elk raffle license.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Bies TO AMEND THE “ANY ELK” LICENSES IN CUSTER STATE PARK PROPOSAL. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Spring TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES “ANY ELK” LICENSES IN CUSTER STATE PARK PROPOSAL AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Switzer presented the recommended change to the Custer State Park Archery Elk Hunting Season to retain current allocation of 3 “any elk” licenses.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Spring TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES “ANY ELK” ARCHERY LICENSES IN CUSTER STATE PARK. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Switzer presented the recommended changes to the Prairie Elk Hunting Season to

1. Adjust the number of licenses available from 68 “any elk” and 73 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 141 licenses) to 78 “any elk” and 178 “antlerless elk” licenses (total of 256 licenses).
2. Modify the proposed Unit PRE-WRA to also exclude the boundary of the Lower Brule Indian Reservation.

3. Establish two additional antlerless elk seasons for Unit 11 as follows: a. Unit 11E with season dates of November 1 – December 31
b. Unit 11F with season dates of January 1 – February 28
4. In conjunction with the proposed unit boundary change to Unit 15A, establish Unit 15B for antlerless elk harvest and season dates of December 1 – January 31.
5. Modify Unit 35A that currently includes all of Harding County to the following: a. Unit 35A: that portion of Harding County west of US Hwy. 85
b. Unit 35B: that portion of Harding County east of US Hwy. 85

Motioned by Bies, second by Whitmyre TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE PRAIRIE ELK HUNTING SEASON. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Switzer presented the administrative action for elk license allocation by unit. (see appendix D)

Motioned by Boyd, second by Olson TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE ELK HUNTING SEASONS AND LICENSE ALLOCATIONS BY UNIT. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Spring Creek Concessions

Scott Simpson, Parks and Recreation Division Director, provided the Commission with information on the status of the concessions at Spring Creek for the restaurant and convenience store.

Motion by Olson, second by Bies TO EXTEND THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL TO May 6, 2020. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 8 yes and 0 no votes.

Discussion on out-of-state hunters and anglers:

Jensen noted the authority of the Commission in conjunction with the Governor and staff.

Kelly Hepler, cabinet secretary, provided information addressing concerns from the public regarding out of state hunters and anglers possibly spreading COVID 19. Hepler explained the benefits of all people being able to enjoy the outdoors while following social distancing and other guidelines provided by Governor Noem and the CDC.

Jensen recommended putting a small group of the Commissioners together to be part of the reporting and analysis of the situation and be involved when necessary. Asked why it would be different for us to address things differently than other states like Nebraska with Turkey licenses.

Hepler explained each state is different and must make their decisions based on what their situations are.

Whitmyre stated local officials and community residents in his area are very concerned by the number of nonresidents they see. The concern is bars and restaurants are closed so these people are causing an influx in use of facilities at the businesses that are open and the staff there are working hard to keep things sanitized.

Olson asked if CSP and Game Lodge open for business

Simpson responded yes these are operated by Regency and are open on a limited basis where you can get a hotel room.

Sharp we have all seen the emails and appreciate where Whitmyre is coming from but while these comments are well intended, we need to make decisions on fact and data. The dept can set up game cameras at boat launches to get info. The reality is we have people traveling into our state every day to every city such as truck drivers to grocery stores. Anyone who is not traveling and doesn't have sanitizing products they are not paying attention and all the regulations in the world will not help that. Who do we think is a risk do we decide by counties that have cases? Until we have solid data, we need to treat all these people the same.

Olson said the CORP and some of the tribes' plan to close some ramps to stop the spread. Is it all of them or do we know which ones they are talking about? And will we be informing the public as our ramps will be more utilized.

Hepler no it is a limited number of boat ramps in six locations.

Mark Ohm, wildlife regional supervisor, explained that the six locations are CORP ramps and the list has not been finalized. All these ramps are on or in the Fort Thompson/Big Bend Dam area. The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe is closing everything on the west side of the river within the reservation.

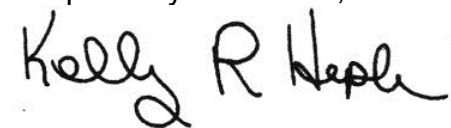
Jensen it would be good to let the public know and for these ramps to have proper signage by the people who are closing them.

Jensen asked Whitmyre and Sharp to join him on a subcommittee to address these concerns.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish and Parks Commission
April 2, 2020

The Commission Chair Gary Jensen began the public hearing at 2:00 p.m. CT via conference call. Commissioners Gary Jensen, Travis Bies, Mary Anne Boyd, Jon Locken, Russell Olson, Doug Sharp, Charles Spring, and Robert Whitmyre were present. Olson indicated written comments were provided to the Commissioners prior to this time and will be reflected in the Public Hearing Minutes. Olson then invited the public to come forward with oral testimony.

Elk Hunting Seasons No verbal comments were made

See attached written public comments submitted prior to the public hearing

The public Hearing concluded at 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary

Appendix A
RESOLUTION 20-08

WHEREAS, Steve Baumberger of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated March 3, 2020, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:07:03:03 (Fish Limits-Daily, possession, and length limit restrictions on special management waters) – to allow, at most, 1 smallmouth bass 15 inches or longer in length as part of the daily limit on Lake Sharpe for the reasons more fully set out in the petition (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 in support of establishing length restrictions for smallmouth bass on Lake Sharpe; and

WHEREAS, current smallmouth bass harvest levels are not detrimental to the smallmouth bass population in Lake Sharpe; and

WHEREAS, research has shown increasing smallmouth bass abundance and lake-wide distribution in Lake Sharpe throughout the last three decades; and

WHEREAS, previous length restrictions on smallmouth bass in Lake Sharpe did not have a positive impact on the smallmouth bass fishery; and

WHEREAS, the suggested length restriction will substantially reduce the ability of anglers to harvest smallmouth bass without improving population quality.

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.

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, Steve Baumberger of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Appendix B
RESOLUTION 20-09

WHEREAS, Mike Jarding of Hot Springs, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated March 27, 2020, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:06:26:02 (Black Hills elk hunting season units) – to modify the H3 unit boundary for antlerless elk tags for the for the reasons more fully set out in the petition (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 in support of modifying the H3 elk hunting unit; and

WHEREAS, the boundary of every elk hunting unit takes into account multiple factors and could be changed or adjusted based on both biological and social considerations; and

WHEREAS, the Department and Commission will be revising the state elk management plan in 2020 and hunting unit boundaries and other associated adjustments related to elk management and hunting units would be best suited to occur during that process.

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.

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, Mike Jarding of Hot Springs, South Dakota.

Appendix C
2020-2021 Fall Turkey License Allocation

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident		Nonresident		License Totals							
		AnyT 31	2 AnyT 37	AnyT 31	2 AnyT 37	RES 1-Tag	RES 2-Tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags	NR 1-Tag	NR 2-Tag	NR License	NR Tags
07A	Yankton	150				150		150	150				
12A	Bon Homme	150		12		150		150	150	12		12	12
39A	Jackson		35		3		35	35	70		3	3	6
48A	Marshall/Roberts	100				100		100	100				
BH1	Black Hills	200		16		200		200	200	16		16	16
TOTAL		600	35	28	3	600	35	635	670	28	3	31	34
RES & NR:						628	38	666	704				

Appendix D 2020-2021 Elk Hunting Seasons

2020-2021 Elk Hunting Seasons

2019			
Black Hills Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	60		
H1B		20	
H2A	250		
H2B		75	
H2C		75	
H2D		25	
H2E		75	
H2F		75	
H2G		75	
H2H		15	
H2I		15	
H2J		15	
H3A	80		
H3B		15	
H3C		15	
H3D		15	
H3E		50	
H3F		50	
H3G		50	
H4A	10		
H4B		10	
H5A	5		
H7A	10		
H7B		10	
H9A	10		
H9B		20	
TOTAL	425	700	1,125
Contingency	NA	140	140

2020-2021			
Black Hills Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	50		
H1B		15	
H2A	240		
H2B		25	
H2C			
H2D			
H2E		50	
H2F			
H2G			
H2H		5	
H2I		15	
H2J		15	
H3A	100		
H3B		30	
H3C		30	
H3D		30	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	20		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	20		
H7B		15	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
TOTAL	450	490	940
Contingency	NA	98	98

Archery Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	20	10	
H2A	90	50	
H3A	25	20	
H4A			
H5A	2		
H7A	5		
H9A			
30A			
TOTAL	142	80	222

Archery Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	20	10	
H2A	80	40	
H3A	35	20	
H4A			
H5A	2		
H7A	10		
H9A			
30A			
TOTAL	147	70	217

Prairie Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk	Atl Elk	
	21	23	
9A	10	10	
11A		18	
11B	16		
11C	16		
11D		30	
11E	Not Applicable		
11F	Not Applicable		
15A	8	5	
15B	Not Applicable		
27A	10	10	
30A			
35A	8		
35B	Not Applicable		
WRA	Not Applicable		
TOTAL	68	73	141

Prairie Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk	Atl Elk	
	21	23	
9A	10	15	
11A		18	
11B	16		
11C	16		
11D		30	
11E		30	
11F		30	
15A	8		
15B		5	
27A	10	10	
30A			
35A	4	8	
35B	4	12	
WRA	10	20	
TOTAL	78	178	256

Custer State Park			
Season	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk	Atl Elk	
	21	23	
CEE-CU1	3		
CUE-CU1	9		
TOTAL	12		12

Custer State Park			
Season	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk	Atl Elk	
	21	23	
CEE-CU1	3		
CUE-CU1	9		
TOTAL	12		12

Public Comments

Elk Hunting Seasons

Sean Fulton

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please carefully consider and read my attached letter.

Steve Cherkas

Edgemont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to see an elk landowner program like you do with deer where I can get a license to hunt elk ONLY on my land at a reduce price with 160 acres. I have lots of elk every year and have no interest in hunting them anywhere but my land, but only have 233 acres so do no qualify for existing program.

Landowner Elk License Applications

Gerald Ohman

Glenham SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

- In all the elk season/change proposal they only show the 2018 elk harvest data. Why didn't they show the 2019 harvest data? So is GFP setting the 2020 & 2021 elk tag quotas off of the 2018, two years old, harvest data???
 - Did GFP have any public involvement or seek input on this new SD GFP Proposed "landowner own-land" elk tag.
 - Why was the 500 elk use days proposed to be removed? That requirement helped to keep the landowners honest. Remember, any unused tags go back to public. They say CO doesn't have time to check elk use days. Think they'll have time to see if the elk are habitually using their property. The new landowners that will now apply with no elk use Days will increase with less leftover landowner tags that the public use to get.
 - Why should a landowner get to harvest an elk on August 1st and Joe Public can'tt? What about in late winter over alfalfa or hay bales? Doesn't seem equitable or fare.
 - What landowner involvement did SD GFP do for their new "landowner own-land" elk tag proposal? Who's behind this and what about the tens of thousands of hunters that may only get 1 or 2 elk permits their entire lives while many landowners will receive dozens and can still hunt public lands.
 - What's next transferable landowner elk tags for pure profit to NRs?
 - Black Hills unit H3 is increasing from 80 any elk rifle tags to 100 any elk rifle tags. H3 cow tags going from 195 rifle cow tags to 270 rifle cow tags. Archery stayed the same. This info was posted today. The day before the finalization meeting. How can they do that and not allow any public comment.
 - The aerial elk survey results will be presented at the finalization meeting. No public comment. I'm told GFP did this the same thing 4 years ago when the last aerial survey happened.
 - If we have landowners with depredation claims and are compensated through hunters dollars (1/2 of PP fees) then why do they get a bull tag every year instead of a cow tag? Should LOs get both a bull tag and depredation payments? Why not one or the other and how about asking them to enter property into WIA to help with their "damage" or require that the depredation monies are used for fencing to reduce future depredation?
- I think this is a very important issue and I'm not convinced that SD sportsmen and our public trust resources are being considered here at all.

Kurt Rahlf

Mobridge SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

should be either a license or the money for the depredation not both

Stephen Turner

Rapid SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to see the same for landowner deer tags as well, if they're getting a landowner tag, it should be for hunting there land that the game is causing the problem! Most of the landowners with more than 50 head of cows don't winter the herd in the hills any way.

Dana Rogers

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Regarding landowner elk season proposed changes. It's my understanding that this originated with approximately 87 Spearfish area landowners that enlisted a legislator. A meeting was held with this legislator, GFP representation and approximately 35 landowners with complaints in attendance.

They asked for transferable tags to sell, a guaranteed tag on their own land for a 8-month season (Aug-Mar), which will eliminate the cap of 50% of the available permits. Also to totally remove the 500 elk use days with proof to obtain these landowner permits.

Commissioners, PLEASE NOTE that basing a LO permit on habitual elk use without actual proof opens this door extremely wide for abuse. Allowing a LO to choose a LO on own land with an 8 month season independent of the regular season will likely impact large bull harvest and thus total harvest/tag recommendations long term for everyone.

When will the requests for accommodation with our public trust resources end? We already have the Elk Hunting Access Program: Allowing up to \$4,500 per landowner, with additional incentives. This program has paid out \$1,002,270 since 2015.

There is also a fence damage program: Last year \$48,260.92 was spent on this. Though it's NOT a requirement for claimants to actually use the top cable to decrease damage???

GFP has also implemented a stackyard/panel program. Last year \$37,531.64 was spent. Again, no requirement to fence in valuable cattle feed stores is mandated.

We have food plot/hay land contracts: Last year \$150,982.23 was spent on this program.

Please don't take the above as an indictment of all landowners. I know several Black Hills area landowners that qualify for a LO elk permit and they don't ask for a dime. They are simply happy with getting the landowner tag as their compensation. I'd estimate that 50% ask for help. In fact, I'm even aware of a few qualifying landowners that DO NOT even ask for a tag. The aforementioned landowners that don't ask for anything or are happy with 'just a tag' should be championed and revered in my opinion. They are doing us all a great service!

The fact remains that all SD wildlife belongs to the public. All SD residents. We have over 30,000 elk permit applicants a year in SD. Yet this proposal is born from approximately 87 respondents to a legislators survey and 36 that attended a local Spearfish meeting.

Now, I can certainly empathize if there is damage to their livelihood. We sportsmen are paying that bill through 1/2 of the preference point fees that we agreed to. If I have a risk to my property, I personally take countermeasures. Like locking my car door or home door or installing a security system. We see from GFP data that several of the claimant landowners continue to claim damages without using the cable system or installing permanent stack yard fencing. This is curious to me.

Again, about 1/2 of qualifying landowners are happy with a tag and only a tag. Yet we have 37-87 people asking for more while 30,000 sportsmen that pay the bills aren't asked about their opinions on a public resource?

This is certainly a hotly contested and divisive issue at its core, no doubt. Instead of removing license caps, increasing payments without countermeasure stipulations or entertaining selling landowner transferable tags, I'd suggest we offer an option. Do you want a tag, or would you like the depredation, fencing and hunter access payments? What about requiring that landowner tags are only valid on deeded/owned property? After all, these landowners often get dozens of permits in a lifetime while other residents may only draw once or twice in their entire lives.

Additionally, these hunter access payments are NOT tied to Walk In Access. Landowners can say no and can tell a hunter what they can and can't shoot. That's their right under the current Elk Hunting Access Program.

I am not opposed at all to the current and past programs. However, I am most certainly opposed to the continued creep toward commercialization of public trust wildlife resources.

I appreciate your time and involvement as a commission and I ask that you vote NO on the latest request for MORE by a segment of our state residents.

Tim Pravecek

Winner SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As I see this proposal It will destroy Land owner/Public Hunters trust and relationship. If the Landowner only hunts on his/or her land during typical season dates I have no problem with that. Especially when there are plenty of programs to compensate the landowners for damage. Also I fear making the tags transferable is a bad precedent.

Other

Kathy Petersen

Madison SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Let them alone. Let them live and die on their own, pretty soon they will be extinct and then that can be on your hands.

Steve Cherkas

Edgemont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to change the requirement to present the entire bobcat carcass for tagging. I had coyotes run off with carcass this year. I would like to see it change to present only the head or bottom jaw (we can cut off ourselves) which will make it easier to store inside where predators cannot take it.

Steve Cherkas

Edgemont SD

Position: support

Comment:

I would like to see the bobcat tagging within 5 days to be from end of season rather than each catch. There is alot of wasted time (both trapper and warden) trying to track down a warden to tag bobcats.

Helen Gurney Beveridge

Dallas OR

Position: oppose

Comment:

OMG..The Nest Predator Bounty program ..newborns are orphaned.this is animal abuse!! cruelty with no boundaries..nice going SD..I was born and raised in a SD with dignity..not this.

Gene Cox

Mobridge SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

In regards to the use of rifles in the Spring Turkey Season. I am opposed this amendment. From a sportsman viewpoint a shotgun and call is the challenge of the sport. From the safety side of things my set up has been stalked by other hunters. Now that I am incorporating the use of decoys I wonder if safety wont be a factor for some. I would recommend shotgun only. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Justin Broughton

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am writing in support of the additional youth pheasant hunting opportunities as listed in the petition.

Laural Bidwell

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I know the discussion on nest predator was yesterday and the decision will come today. I know that you are appointed by the governor -- but the governor should listen to the wishes of the public as should the commission. Do not approve the nest predator program. As you know it doesn't do anything for habitat, it isn't a recreational activity and the public is not for it. Please consider this when you make your decision.

Natalie Smith

Barrington IL

Position: oppose

Comment:

Nest Predator Bounty Program

Mike Bunkers

Dell Rapids SD

Position: support

Comment:

After witnessing all the damage along the Sioux River and some of its tributaries done by beaver would it only make sense to add beaver to our bounty program? With depressed fur prices I really don't see an interest in beaver trapping. I'm guessing our State Trapper would agree.

Teresa Engebretson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The nest predator bounty program is based on false or non existing information. Opossums eat thousands of ticks. Ticks cause Lyme Disease. Please acknowledge the damage this program is causing when you vote on it again in 2021.

Youth Pheasant Hunting Season

Robert Friedrichsen

Redfield SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Youth have plenty of options to hunt for pheasants in SD. They have all season long to hunt; youth are not excluded for the remainder of the season. I grew up without a special youth season; I participated in athletics, debate, and h.s. radio & newspaper; I worked as custodian at the post office (before school began for the day); & I graduated with a 3.9 gpa. I made life choices; something that youth will continue to learn that they will have to make. Even though I had a full academic, athletic, & work schedule; I still was able to enjoy hunting & fishing with parents, grandparents, and uncles & aunts. There is no need to extend the youth season; if a season extension is required to reduce the overpopulation of pheasants; then it should be extended to all residents.

Robert Carl

Farmington NM

Position: other

Comment:

I fully support getting young hunters in the field. As a senior (70+) though we should also get some special consideration as our hunting seasons are limited. Consider having senior only days and a special senior hunting license at a reduced fee. Thank you

I feel the new landowner proposal is worse than the one already instated. At least with the 500 elk use days the landowner has to prove they are getting the elk use necessary to harvest an elk. Furthermore the landowners don't need four months for an, any elk tag. If they want four months they can have an antlerless tag free of charge with approval of GFP. I feel they should have a free antlerless tag, if they want to thin the herd, to use one their own property, August-December. If the landowners use the free tag option they shouldn't be able to apply in the normal landowner tag, for any elk, in the whole unit, which should be for the normal season. Technically this would be to help with depredation of the herd anyway. Even if the game and fish did this the landowners are going to find something else to complain about.

Another thing is the added pressure from all the ATVs and dirt bike trails being built in the hills in core summer elk habitat is pushing the elk into different areas. Hence the elk entering onto the private lands with no or little access, probably eating up the grass in those private fields sooner than they used to.

Another problem is, the added strain of ATV use only trails are in prime summer elk habitat, which is driving the elk into new areas and pushing them all summer long. I've helped friends harvest elk most years any many of the elk that we were getting in the last few years down in the Jasper burn area don't have an ounce of fat on them in October. Leading me to believe that they are constantly being pushed. Yet they still have to make it through the next for five months of the year and they haven't had a chance to build up fat reserves, it's depressing.

If landowners have depredation claims and are compensated through hunter dollars then why do they get a bull tag every year instead of giving them a free cow tag? I don't feel landowners should be allowed both a bull tag and compensation and if they want four months to hunt elk on their own property it should only be a cow tag. Or if the landowners want a bull tag and compensated require them to put 80 percent of their land into the Walk In Area program for three years . This could be limited to one year any elk and the rest as antlerless only. Entering their land into the WIA program should help reduce some damage to their properties, due to increased hunting pressure?"

I feel this is an extremely important issue and feel that SD sportsmen aren't being considered at all here.

Sincerely, Sean Fulton
11675 W, Hwy 44
Rapid City, SD 57702

I'm writing to voice my opposition to the Nest Predator Bounty Program. The Resolution is full of misrepresentations. I spent a career in wildlife management, at Custer State Park. I have a PhD in wildlife ecology with my research focusing on predator prey relationships.

Paragraph 1 indicates that the removal of nest predators can enhance nest success, but fails to mention only under very specific conditions. None of these conditions are achieved under this program. Additionally while there was participation in 2019 trapping seminars, the number of trapping licenses sold does not indicate that there were many new people who took up trapping.

Paragraph 2 highlights a "professional scientific survey" of general public support for the Nest Predator Bounty Program. I understand a particular population segment not a general cross section of the general public was surveyed, giving a biased result.

Paragraph 3 indicates removal efforts on "properties with habitat" was used to increase nest success; however, there are no indications or studies to demonstrate the success of such programs. And if so, was it a cost effective effort.

Paragraph 4 acknowledges "intensive predator removal efforts can enhance nest success of pheasants and ducks at localized levels *when* (emphasis added) at high intensities during the nesting season". This type of control is not even approximated under this program. Predator removal must be targeted and intense to even be marginally effective. And even then only of limited duration. This program falls far short.

Paragraph 5. The pilot program in 2019 was a huge expense. Dollars would have been much better used to improve habitat. Habitat improvement is the scientifically established best way to improve pheasant populations.

If this program was about the resource and youth and bringing them into the fold of ethical trappers, it should be during the time of year furs are valuable, not the nesting period when the only value is the tail they can turn in. How does this develop ethical use of the natural resource?

Removal of 50,000 nest predators is not a scientific number and distribution of removal over a broad area will not have an effect on pheasant and duck populations. License sales have not increased over the past 10 years, and there was no spike in numbers in 2019 with the initiation of this program which included free traps and a higher bounty than proposed. I question how this will improve the ETHICS SD when the taking of these furbearers is during a non-prime period (waste of resource) for a program that will not positively impact the target populations. This is not a good way to teach the youth (20% of the targeted participants) the proper ethics of trapping.

This program is not backed up by Wildlife Science. A vast body of scientific evidence indicates that good habitat is the key to successful upland game bird populations. Winter habitat leads to good survival and a strong breeding population, nesting habitat ameliorates impacts of nest predation and leads to high reproduction, good brood rearing habitat leads to good survival and recruitment with a strong population for the hunt season and ample numbers going into winter.

This is an expensive program that removes money from the game fund to support a program that has no demonstrable impact on upland game populations, at the expense of other programs that provide habitat improvements (higher pop'ns) and access programs (increased hunter participation). This is a poor business model! Something the pheasant hunting capitol of the United States should not pursue.

Gary Brundige, PhD

Rapid City

Public Comments

Elk Hunting Seasons

Dennis Unkenholz

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Doug Hansen

Webster SD

Position: other

Comment:

No comment text provided.

James Riis

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like to comment on elk units H2H, H2I, & H2J. When these new units were created a few years ago, each season had 25 antlerless elk tags. Please consider going back to 25 tags as it was before. Any elk, any elk tag & any elk hunt is a special thing even if you don't bag one. I think increasing the number of tags could provide more opportunity without harming the elk population. thank you, Jim Riis

Other

Matt Staab

Brandon SD

Position: other

Comment:

The corona virus is going to cause revenues to the GFP to drop like a rock. PLEASE stop the predator bounty program before it re-starts. You are going to need that money for more important things!!!

Billy Boejingles

Gayville SD

Position: support

Comment:

Very Good Stuff

Todd Deneui

Sioux Falls SD

Position: other

Comment:

Allowing air rifles and air shotguns for muzzleloader season and ducks and pheasants

Michael Costanzo

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The new requirement to only allow shotgun hunting for Turkeys is an issue. Hunting turkeys in the hilly West River area often means shooting at distances. I shoot on private land where there are no other hunters causing a potential safety precaution. Also, as a disabled hunter the use of a long rifle, on private West River land allows me to continue to enjoy the outdoors in a less restrictive manner, as I have done for years. Please consider returning this privilege to hunters at least those with the conditions mentioned above.

Mark Peterson

Aberdeen SD

Position: other

Comment:

I oppose any size limits to smallmouth bass on the Missouri River system. They are a voracious predator and since their decline the quality of walleye available has greatly increased. Please do not mess up a multimillion dollar fishery for the benefit of a tiny few bass fisherman.

Dan Loge

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the shotgun only Prairie Turkey hunting. I am senior with a disability and find it very difficult to get Turkeys within range of a shotgun.

Tom Yseth

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Nesting predator traps had an 83% approval?? I haven't met anyone that did not think it was anything but a waste of money. Plus a loss of PR matching money. I received three traps (excellent traps by the way) and I own 240 acres of wildlife and rotational grazing land. I would need 40 traps and check them daily to make an minimal impact on nesting predators. A side note that with my additional traps from you and the 4 I had I caught 80 % fewer possum, 70% fewer skunks and 60% raccoons. The winter of 2018-2019 was really hard on them as well as the pheasants. Tom Yseth former Commissioner

River Otter Delisting

Susan Braunstein

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like to know why this is even being considered. We don't have a large population of river otters in this state. Why would we want to delist them so they can be trapped and killed? Please don't do this.

Ray Maize

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the Delisting of the River Otter in South Dakota.

Comments regarding finalization of Black Hills Elk regulations for 2020

Dennis Unkenholz
2860 Essex Road
Pierre, South Dakota 57501
605-280-4581

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2020 and 2021 proposed Black Hills elk seasons. I am a firm believer in the Commission process for rule making and consider South Dakota's model to be one of the best around. Thank you for your service as Commissioners. I respect the SDGFP staff's role in making recommendations based on sound science and public input. With that in mind I have the following comments and suggestions for increasing the number of cow tags in units H2H-23, H2I-23 and H2J-23 by 10 for each unit.

1. Decreasing the number of cow tags issued in H2H because of low hunter success seems counter intuitive. Even with measured 15% success rate, hunter satisfaction was near 5. Elk hunts in the Black Hills are quality hunts that can be satisfying even with low hunter success rates. What were the reasons for lower success in H2H during 2019 compared to previous years? In a unit where the stated management goal is to maintain status quo why decrease the number of licenses?
2. I have observed good elk abundance and what appears to be good age distribution of cows and calves while hunting turkeys in this unit for 40 years. My elk hunt in this area last December substantiates these observations. We hunted a small portion of unit H2I and saw two herds of approximately 75 head and a smaller herd of 20.
3. Given the demand for elk licenses and especially for guys like me who are over 70, an increase in the number of cow tags will provide a quality hunt for many. I may have had my last South Dakota elk tag as I now have to wait another 10 years to apply and can only compete for leftover tags. My cow hunt last December was most memorable. Increased number of cow tags will facilitate more hunter days of recreation in the woods.
4. Hunting pressure seemed low and additional hunters would not have detracted from the quality of my hunt last fall.
5. There has been well documented depredation and mitigation in the units H2H, I and J-23. An increase in cow tags will help in some way decrease depredation.
6. If you apply 2019 hunter success rates to the suggested increase, additional cow elk harvest would total 14-15 head. This seems like a small increase in total harvest when the entire units H2H, I, and J are considered.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED 2020 & 2021 BLACK HILLS ELK SEASONS

Regarding the Black Hills Antlerless Elk Season and specifically Units H2 H, I, and J (the small unit near Hill City):

I believe the number of licenses to be made available in each of those sub-units could be adjusted upward without significantly, or even noticeably, affecting the population objective for that unit.

I recently experienced an early December hunt in Unit H2 I. I was amazed at the number of elk we observed every day within that unit. I was also made more aware of the impact the large number of elk are having on the grass and hay resources of at least one local rancher.

By increasing the license numbers available in those 3 sub-units from 5, 15, and 15, respectively, to 20 or 25 in each, I believe the Commission could accomplish two other important objectives. It could enhance landowner/Department relations, and it could increase hunter opportunity.

With the number of elk apparently residing in this unit, it appears likely a modest increase in licenses would have minimal to no impact on overall population objectives.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Doug Hansen
43950 147th St.
Webster, SD 57274