

Minutes of the Game, Fish, and Parks Commission September 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, Jon Locken, Russell Olson (day 2), Doug Sharp, Charles Spring, Robert Whitmyre. Public and staff were able to listen via SDPB livestream and participate via conference call with approximately 94 total participants via zoom.

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 July 16-17, 2020 regular meeting minutes and July 29, 2020 special meeting or a motion for approval.

Motion by Sharp with second by Whitmyre TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE June 4, 2020 MEETING WITH MINOR REVISIONS. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes.

Additional Commissioner Salary Days

No additional commissioner salary days were requested.

Commission 2021 Meeting Schedule

Chris Petersen, administration division director, presented the 2021 Commission meeting calendar noting the criteria used to determine locations by considering factors such as adequate facility space and accommodation services, wireless connections, and relationship of location to agenda items.

Motion by Bies with second by Sharp TO APPROVE THE 2021 COMMISSION MEETING SCHEDULE. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes.

Volunteer Recognition

Commissioner Jensen spoke regarding the successful volunteer programs specifically recognizing and thanking Jim Scull for his contributions in the youth hunting program. This program got 100 kids out hunting that would not have had the opportunity and recent fundraiser raised \$150,000 for conservation and youth hunting. He asked if public has anyone who they think deserves recognition let us know so we can be sure to thank them.

Shikar Award Presentation (Will be awarded at the October Commission meeting.)

Pheasant Hunting Marketing Update

Emily Kiel, Mike Gussias and Kirk Hulstein provided an update on pheasant hunting marketing.

Governance Meeting & In Person Meetings

Commissioner Jensen noted the upcoming Commission meeting and Governance meetings will be held in person on October 1-2, 2020. While the regular meeting will begin at 1p central time on the 1st, the Governance meeting will begin at 9am at the AmericInn in Fort Pierre. He requested Commissioners and staff submit agenda items by September 11th. It was also noted that we will continue to provide zoom for public to participate remotely.

Commissioner Bies noted the need to begin holding meetings in person again.

PETITIONS

Sage Grouse Endangered Species Listing

Nancy Hilding and Erik Molvar presented their petition to add the greater sage grouse to South Dakota's list of threatened bird species because they feel it has been declining in numbers for many years and is in imminent danger of extirpation across its entire range in South Dakota

Motioned by Locken, second by Spring TO DENY THE PETITION TO LIST THE SAGE GROUSE AS ENDANGERED SPECIES. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes

Motioned by Spring, second by Locken TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-14 (Appendix A) DENYING THE PETITION TO LIST THE SAGE GROUSE AS ENDANGERED SPECIES. Roll Call vote: Spring – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes

Beaver Trapping

Nancy Hilding presented her petition to amend the beaver trapping and hunting season to be open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on March 31st to catch, trap or hunt beaver in all of South Dakota, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31. She said the current rule creates an unbalanced subdivision and that otters are frequently taken incidentally in otter traps.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Bies TO DENY THE PETITION TO MODIFY THE BEAVER TRAPPING SEASON. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Olson TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-15 (Appendix B) DENYING THE PETITION TO MODIFY THE BEAVER TRAPPING SEASON. Roll Call vote: Spring – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes

Lake Chub Endangered Species Listing

Nancy Hilding presented her petition to add the Lake Chub to South Dakota's list of threatened bird species because it is considered critically imperiled in SD

Motioned by Bies, second by Sharp TO DENY THE PETITION TO LIST THE LAKE CHUB AS ENDANGERED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes

Motioned by Olson, second by Bies TO APPROVE RESOLUTION 20-16 (Appendix C) DENYING THE PETITION TO LIST THE LAKE CHUB AS ENDANGERED. Roll Call vote: Spring – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes

PROPOSALS

State Park Modern Cabin Fees and Cancellation Policy

Scott Simpson, parks and recreation director, presented the recommended changes to the parks cabin fees and cancellation policy. He explained Parks currently has only two categories for assessing fees on overnight rental facilities; \$55 for a camping cabin and \$150 for a modern cabin. With the acquisition of facilities at Spring Creek and Roy Lake, there are now many different variations of cabins and suites that do not fit into either of these categories. Many of the units have full kitchens and include one bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom options. Several comments have been received indicating the current rental fee of \$150 may be too low for some facilities and too high for others, requiring a review of the current pricing structure to reflect what each facility offers.

Rather than identifying each of the 16 variations of facilities and an associated fee in rule, the Department is suggesting a range of pricing from \$85-\$205 to cover all types of facilities. A fee schedule would be provided to the commission each year identifying the fee for each type of facility. In addition, the Department is asking for the ability to reduce the price of modern cabins and suites by up to 25% to align rental facilities fees with the local market, occupancy rates and create marketing packages that will promote increased use.

He also noted that in that in 2019 a definition for modern cabin lodging was created for lodging in parks such as Oahe Downstream, Mina Lake and a new proposed modern cabin at Newton Hills. The acquisition of facilities at Spring Creek and Roy Lake has further diversified the options to include one bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom and four-bedroom units contained in one structure similar to a motel/hotel type of experience. By adding the suite definition our customers will have much clearer understanding of this new facility type.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Bies TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE STATE PARK CAMPING FEES AND CANCELLATION POLICY AS PRESENTED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing began at 2:00 p.m. and closed at 3:00 p.m. on September 2nd then reconvened on September 3rd at 9:00 a.m. and concluded at 9:20 a.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.

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD spoke in regards to the river otter management plan saying it doesn't include a plan to introduce the otter west river. She said staff doesn't want to reintroduce, but wants it to happen naturally, but the otter can't make it up the stream and the problems need to be addressed. She feels GFP is not monitoring and didn't provide clear information.

Christine Sandvik – Rapid City, SD appreciates the opportunity to allow remote opportunity to comment. Spoke in opposition to the otter management plan. Not all resources need to be hunted or killed.

Julie Anderson said imagine you are a SD resident that loves wildlife and go to meetings, speak up, do research, and consult experts for years and years and in doing so you are systematically denied concession, acknowledgement of facts or implementation of ideas. This exclusion results in the killing of thousands of animals in recreation. She said it's disheartening to know there is nothing she can do to help the wildlife that she loves. The agency should represent more than just hunters, trappers and hound hunters. Sickened by the abuse of power by the administration and the corruption of certain board members with their own agenda. There is unfair use of R3 with an agency motto of because we can. Asked to be proved wrong by asking for seasons to not be extended, more animals added to the threatened and endangered species list, ending of the nest predator bounty program and including all residents in the decision-making process

Erik Molvar, Western Watersheds Project – Hailey, Id, spoke in support of the beaver proposal. Said it important to note beavers play a critical role in the hydrology of stream systems. This increases the productivity of the bottomland for vegetation, cattle and wildlife. Because there are not beavers slowing the flow of water it all rushes out and is gone. The rule making went through at highspeed. Now people are doing artificial beaver dams instead of reintroducing the beaver.

FINALIZATIONS

3-Splash Waterfowl Hunting Package

Chad Switzer, wildlife program administrator, presented the recommended changes to the duck hunting season to

1. Implementation of an experimental 2-tiered duck regulation in South Dakota with a 3-splash option.
2. Modify the special nonresident waterfowl hunting license by reducing the cost from \$115 to \$110 and by removing the inclusion of the migratory bird certification permit.

Motioned by Bies, second by Locken TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE DUCK HUNTING SEASON 41:06:16; 41:06:02 AS PRESENTED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Boyd – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Spring Turkey Hunting Season and Update

Switzer presented the recommended changes to the spring wild turkey hunting season as follows:

1. Offer residents 140 more one-tag "male turkey" licenses for the Prairie Units than 2020.
2. Add Clark County to Hamlin County unit.
3. Remove Douglas County from Charles Mix County unit.
4. Create Unit 10A that includes both Aurora and Douglas counties.
5. Add Buffalo County to Brule County unit.
6. Add Beadle and Hand counties to Jerauld County unit.
7. Increase the number of archer turkey access permits for Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve from 20 to 30.
8. Establish 20 mentored turkey access permits for Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve that would be limited to a bow or crossbow.
9. For Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, allow for uncased bows and crossbows for a resident hunter who possesses a valid mentored spring turkey license and an access permit.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Bies TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE SPRING TURKEY HUNTING SEASON 41:06:13; 41:03:01.

Switzer informed the Commission there are no recommended changes to the Custer state park spring wild turkey hunting season.

Switzer presented the administrative action for spring turkey tag allocation by unit. (see appendix D)

Motioned by Spring, second by Whitmyre TO APPROVE THE SPRING TURKEY LICENSE ALLOCATION. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Other Upland Bird Hunting Seasons

Kirschenmann presented the recommended change to the grouse, partridge and quail hunting seasons to Modify the season end date from the first Sunday in January to one of the following options beginning with the 2020 hunting season: a. Season end date of January 15, or b. Season end date of January 31.

Motioned by Bies, second by Locken TO REJECT THE RECOMMENDED CHANGE TO THE GROUSE, PATRIDGE, AND QUAIL HUNTING SEASON 41:06:09; 41:06:11; 41:06:12 AS PRESENTED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Pheasant Hunting Season

Kirschenmann presented the recommended changes to the pheasant hunting season as follows:

1. Modify the shooting hours for the first week of the regular from Noon to 10:00 a.m. Central Time beginning with the 2020 hunting season.
2. Modify the season end date from the first Sunday in January to January 31 beginning with the 2020 hunting season.
3. Increase the daily bag limit from 3 to 4 and modify the possession limit accordingly for rooster pheasants beginning December 1st beginning with the 2021 hunting season.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Sharp TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO MODIFY THE PHEASANT HUNTING SEASON 41:06:08 START TIME TO 10:00 AM CT. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Olson, second by Locken TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO MODIFY THE PHEASANT HUNTING SEASON 41:06:08 END DATE TO BE JANUARY 31 AS PRESENTED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Locken TO DENY THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO MODIFY THE PHEASANT HUNTING SEASON 41:06:08 TO INCREASE THE BAG LIMIT TO 4 AS PRESENTED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – no. Motion carried 6 yes and 1 no votes.

Kirschenmann presented the recommended changes to the resident pheasant hunting season 41:06:58 to modify the shooting hours from Noon to 10:00 a.m. Central Time beginning with the 2020 hunting season.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Locken TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO MODIFY THE RESIDENT PHEASANT HUNTING SEASON 41:06:58 START TIME TO 10:00 AM CT. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Private Shooting Preserve Bag Limits

Robling explained the Department has been in contact with private shooting preserve operators and other stakeholders to determine whether there is support for the opportunity for hunters to shoot an unrestricted bag limit on private shooting preserves. There was support among the groups so long as the additional cost was on the hunter and not the preserve operators. He then presented the recommended changes as follows:

1. Create two new small game permit types and establish fee of \$150.00:
 - a. Resident small game unrestricted permit (Unrestricted – Valid on private shooting preserves only).
 - b. Nonresident shooting preserve unrestricted permit (Unrestricted).
2. Amend bag limits on for individuals hunting private shooting preserves to reflect no bag limit when hunting with an unrestricted small game license or an unrestricted shooting preserve license.
3. Licenses would only be valid if used in conjunction with an already existing license that authorizes a hunter to hunt on PSP properties. For example: a nonresident would have to purchase either a nonresident small game license or 1 day, 5 day or annual PSP license first, and then could purchase an unrestricted nonresident shooting preserve license on top of their existing license and hunt unrestricted on PSPs that offer the option.
4. Amend language that would only allow an individual to exercise the unrestricted portion of their license in party hunting if all parties to the hunt have the same license.
5. Depending on method of sale, may have to amend reporting requirements by PSP operators to include tracking of unrestricted license sales.

Robling noted the Department has received a recommended change to the proposal submitted on behalf of the South Dakota Upland Outfitters Association. The Department supports their recommended changes.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Olson TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGE TO THE SHOOTING PRESERVE RULES 41:06:02:03 and 41:09:01 ALLOWING UNLIMITED TAKE. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Olson TO AMEND THE SHOOTING PRESERVE FEES 41:06:02:03 and 41:09:01. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – no; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – NO. Motion carried 5 yes and 2 no votes.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Locken TO FINALIZE THE SHOOTING PRESERVE RULES FEE 41:06:02:03 and 41:09:01 AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – no. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Olson TO FINALIZE THE RECOMMENDED CHANGE TO THE SHOOTING PRESERVE RULES 41:06:02:03 and 41:09:01 ALLOW UNRESTRICTED LICENSES WHEN THE PARTY ALL HAVE THE SAME LICENSE. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Elk Raffle Drawing Date

Switzer presented the recommended changes to the Custer state park elk hunting season to Modify the drawing time period for the elk license raffle from at least 120 days before the Custer State Park rifle elk season begins to no later than July 15. He explained the intent of the change being recommended is to allow an opportunity for unsuccessful applicants from the regular elk hunting season drawings to purchase raffle tickets for this elk license.

Motioned by Bies, second by Whitmyre TO FINALIZE THE CHANGE TO THE ELK RAFFLE DRAWING AS PRESENTED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Season

Keith Fisk, program administrator, explained bobcats occur in several areas of eastern South Dakota where the current bobcat season is not open. Minimal harvest in those areas would not be detrimental to bobcat populations and are protected by the limit of one bobcat per hunter or trapper. This expansion would create additional opportunity and aligning the two seasons' dates (eastern South Dakota and western South Dakota) brings consistency and simplifies regulations. He presented the recommended changes to the bobcat hunting and trapping season as follows:

1. Modify the season dates in eastern South Dakota to align with western South Dakota. Proposed season dates would be December 15 to February 15, statewide.
2. Modify the open area in eastern South Dakota to include all counties. The proposed open area

would be statewide.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Bies TO FINALIZE THE CHANGES TO THE BOBCAT HUNTING AND TRAPPING SEASON 41:08:01. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Fishing Regulations

Geno Adams, fisheries program administrator, presented the recommended changes to the spearing rules as follows:

1. Currently there is no gamefish spearfishing season on the Missouri River from the Nebraska - South Dakota border up to Ft. Randall dam. To standardize spearfishing regulations in this area with other Missouri River dam tailrace areas, a May 1 – March 31 is recommended.
2. This was requested by a spearer. According to surveyed spearers, as with rod and reel angling, the last hour of light is one of the best times to spearfish. Currently gamefish can be taken with legal spear, legal speargun, legal crossbow and bow and arrow, one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Extending the hours to one-half hour after sunset will allow for additional opportunity for those spearers who choose to utilize it. Rough fish spearing is currently allowed 24 hours a day.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Bies TO FINALIZE THE CHANGES TO THE SPEARING RULES. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Aeration and System Use Overview

John Lott, fisheries chief, presented the recommended changes to the aeration rules to require safety signage in association with operation of aeration systems during periods of ice cover on waters with open public access. He explained Aeration is used to prevent fish kills during the summer and winter and to prevent ice from forming that may damage permanent docks or other structures anchored in the lakebed. Operation of aeration systems during the winter can cause significant public safety issues, as systems create open water and weakened ice conditions. Often, the public is unaware of system operation until it is accidentally discovered, while on the ice. Establishing a requirement that an aeration system in operation during periods of ice cover, on waters to which the public has open access, be signed and marked, would reduce safety issues associated with winter operation of aeration systems. Signage requirements would include:

- Signs of highly visible size and design indicating "Danger Open Water", clearly showing the location of the open water created by the aeration system, posted at all boat ramps and public access points any time the aeration system is in operation.
- Conspicuous markers, sufficient to notify the public of the location of the aeration system, shall be placed around the open water area during periods of ice cover.
- Access area signs and on-lake markers must be removed by March 30 each year, or earlier, if weather conditions warrant.

Motioned by Olson, second by Locken TO FINALIZE THE AERATION RULES TO REQUIRE SAFETY SIGNAGE AS RECOMMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

AIS

Lott explained the codified law 41-13A-2 contains prohibitions on possessing, importing, shipping, and transporting AIS, so prohibitions no longer need to be listed in administrative rule. And that the addition of an exemption to allow for possession of AIS while transferring a conveyance for decontamination will facilitate decontaminations. He then presented the recommended changes to AIS rules as follows:

1. Remove the prohibition on possessing, transporting, selling, purchasing, or propagating AIS from administrative rule.
2. Create an additional exemption for possession of AIS to allow an owner or agent of the owner of a conveyance to transport the conveyance for decontamination using a department approved process.
3. Remove prohibitions in administrative rule on launching a boat or boat trailer into the waters of the state with AIS attached.
4. Repeal the rule allowing for the creation of local boat registries.
5. Remove the exemption to the decontamination requirement for boats in a local boat registry in association with repealing the rule allowing the creation of registries.
6. Create a new rule to define the department-approved decontamination protocol.
7. Update the list of containment waters to include Lakes Pickerel, Waubay, North Rush, South Rush, and Minnewasta.

And the recommended change from proposal to:

Modify the Containment Waters rule by:

- a. Changing the title of the "Containment Waters" rule to "Infested Waters".
- b. Define infested waters as waterbodies that have an established zebra or quagga mussel population, waterbodies downstream of infested waters with a likelihood of becoming infested, and waters outside the state that are designated by a legal jurisdiction as infested for zebra or quagga mussels, for aquatic invasive species management purposes.
- c. Replace the term "Containment Waters" with "Infested Waters" in other administrative rules that reference containment waters.

Motioned by Sharp, second by Whitmyre TO AMEND THE RECOMMEND CHANGES TO THE AIS RULES. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Olson TO FINALIZE THE CHANGES TO THE AIS RULES 41:10:04 AS AMENDED. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

Public Waters

Geno Adams presented the recommended changes to public water zoning and fishing limits as follows:

1. Establish an electric-motors-only zone on Canyon Lake in Pennington County and Bismarck Lake in Custer County.
2. Change Nebraska – South Dakota border trout limit from 7 daily to 5 daily to match South Dakota inland waters.

Adams explained Canyon Lake and Bismarck Lake are utilized by canoers and kayakers. The City of Rapid City would like an electric motor only regulation on Canyon Lake. The United States Forest Service would like an electric motor only regulation on

Bismarck Lake. And currently the trout daily limit of 7 on Nebraska – South Dakota border waters does not match the South Dakota inland waters daily limit (5) or the Nebraska border water daily limit (5) for trout. Changing the daily limit for trout on Nebraska – South Dakota border waters to 5 would align the daily limit with those for South Dakota inland waters and Nebraska border waters.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Olson TO FINALIZE THE CHANGES TO THE PUBLIC WATER ZONING 41:04:02 AND FISH LIMITS RULES 41:07:03. Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Olson – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 7 yes and 0 no votes.

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Roy Lake and Spring Creek Updates

Willy Collignon and Pat Thompson, parks and recreation regional supervisors, provided updates on the Roy Lake and Spring Creek including concessionaires, day use areas, revenue and occupancy, and marina slips.

Visitation and Sales Report

Al Nedved, parks and recreation deputy director gave a report on revenue, camping and visitation through August.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

Elk Contingency License

Andy Lindbloom and Trenton Haffley, senior wildlife biologists, explained why there is a need for elk contingency licenses, the evaluation process, the decision support table and forage production by unit. Based upon this information the Department does not recommend contingency licenses be issued.

River Otter Management Plan

Chad Switzer, wildlife program administrator, explained that during the public comment period for the river otter management plan, we received input both in support of and opposition to the river otter trapping season. Changes to the plan document in response to public comments include our intent to provide information on ways to reduce incidental captures of river otter and emphasis was placed on our intent to develop a monitoring plan for this species.

Motioned by Whitmyre, second by Sharp TO APPROVE THE ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION TO ADOPT THE RIVER OTTER MANAGEMENT PLAN (Appendix E). Roll Call vote: Bies – yes; Locken – yes; Sharp – yes; Spring – yes; Whitmyre – yes; Jensen – yes. Motion carried 6 yes and 0 no votes.

Public Access Opportunities

Mark Norton, hunting access and farm bill coordinator, explained for the 2020 hunting season there are over 1.4 million acres of private land leased for public hunting through a GFP hunting access program. Since 2016 over 55,000 acres have been added to these hunting access programs. The programs are delivered and reviewed by numerous staff all across the state to ensure the hunting opportunity provided is justifiable. Walk-In Area (WIA) lease payment range from \$.53 to \$10/acre depending size, hunting opportunity, proximity to population centers, and habitat conditions. The

WIA program incentivizes CRP with upfront signing bonus payments for multi-year WIA contracts. CBHAPs provided additional incentives in certain parts of the state. CREP lands are being reenrolled and GFP is working with USDA to allow new CREP enrollments of up to 100,000 acres. GFP has unlocked over 31,000 acres of landlocked public land since 2017. GFP plans to continue to expand public hunting opportunities to quality habitat and landlocked public land in the future.

DOT/GFP Mitigation Plan and MOA

Hilary Morey, senior wildlife biologist and staff from South Dakota Department of Transportation provided information on the mitigation plan and MOA.

AIS discussion and Law Enforcement Efforts

Law Enforcement Section Chief Sam Schelhaas provided a brief update on law enforcement efforts in regards to Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) management. Schelhaas shared statistics garnered from the law enforcement management system and shared that there have been 257 citations and 122 warnings issued for AIS violations. Some of the most common violations observed are traveling with a boat drain plug still in, failing to pull the live well plug and bypassing a Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination station. Aquatics Section Chief John Lott provided an update on current AIS management efforts, focusing on helping facilitate decontamination of watercraft with adult zebra mussels on them and outreach efforts to lakeshore property owners to help detect zebra mussels on boat docks and lifts. A summary report of 2020 of inspection station operations and options for 2021 is being prepared. It is expected that the approach to using inspection stations will change for 2021, as zebra mussel distribution in the state is expanding.

State Threatened and Endangered Species Status Review

Eileen Dowd-Stukel, senior wildlife biologist, explained how Wildlife Diversity staff reviewed and updated the Threatened and Endangered Species Reviews to reflect new information gained from monitoring and research conducted since 2018. Species that benefited from this work included American dipper, osprey, peregrine falcon, sicklefin chub, sturgeon chub, false map turtle, swift fox, lined snake and black-footed ferret. The effort to identify delisting and downlisting goals led to the delisting of the river otter earlier this year. Staff recommended no new listings and no additional delistings in 2020 so efforts can continue to focus on recovering those species that, in some case, have been listed since the first list was put into rule in 1978.

Habitat Stamp Spending Approach

Heather Villa, administration chief, Paul Coughlin, wildlife program administrator, and Geno Adams, fisheries program administrator provide an update on the habitat stamp spending approach explaining GFP staff members utilized LEAN methodology to determine the best process to implement 2020 Senate Bill 75, which created a Habitat Stamp License Certification. The legislation states that GFP must perform an annual report out to the Government Operations Audit Committee (GOAC) to outline expenditures to ensure that we are in compliance with the spending parameters within the law.

GFP manages 720 GPAs encompassing over 285,000 acres statewide, with an emphasis on pheasants, deer, waterfowl, and other upland game species. Through the

2018 GPA Habitat and Access Assessment, GFP has identified a list of high-impact priority habitat and access projects to focus 2020-21 Terrestrial Habitat Stamp funded efforts on. Included are native grass and nesting cover plantings, high diversity pollinator habitat plantings, woody cover plantings, and improved public access trails - including waterfowl access points. Additionally, GFP is working through the process of finalizing reopening enrollments in the James River Watershed CREP to the fully authorized 100,000 acres.

Aquatics habitat projects will consist of three types: 1) Shovel ready projects, 2) Large restoration projects, 3) Dam repair/maintenance projects. Shovel ready projects are currently underway. Large-scale restoration projects are currently in evaluation. In upcoming years, staff will take varying roles in these types of projects with the aid of habitat stamp dollars. Dam repair and maintenance is currently being looked at on 15 different lakes with additional dams being scoped by private engineering firms. Annual maintenance will occur on dams around the state.

Mule Deer Harvest Information

Tom Kirschenmann, wildlife director, shared with the commission that the department will provide harvest information around mule deer for all seasons at the October Commission meeting. The discussion will then include ideas or recommendations from the commission which the department will build into deer season recommendations which will be presented this winter. Kirschenmann stated that after the October meeting staff will reach out to Commissioners Bies and Springs to be part of discussions on developing season and license approach to further curtail the harvest of mule deer does.

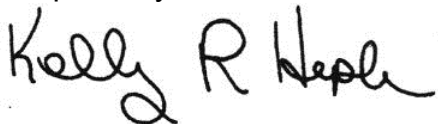
License Sales Update

Heather Villa stated license sales through the month of August are up 39% over 2020 which equates to a revenue increase of \$2,031,685. The newly implemented Habitat Stamp equates for \$750,350 of additional revenue. License sales have been steadily increasing throughout the year due to favorable weather conditions, as well as Governor Noem's messaging that "The Outdoors are Open."

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly R Hepler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary

Appendix A

Resolution 20-14

WHEREAS, Erik Molvar (Western Watersheds Project) of Hailey, Idaho and Nancy Hilding (Prairie Hills Audubon Society) of Black Hawk, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated August 27, 2020, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD §41:10:02:01 (List of endangered birds) – to add the greater sage grouse to South Dakota’s list of endangered bird species 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 adding the greater sage-grouse to South Dakota’s list of endangered bird species; and

WHEREAS, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (Department) is currently working on revising the South Dakota sage-grouse management plan, which will include science-based guidelines for sage-grouse hunting and other management activities, and it would be premature to make a state threatened listing prior to that revision process being completed; and

WHEREAS, South Dakota’s state endangered species law does not mandate habitat protection or management to benefit species listed under this law; and

WHEREAS, all projects submitted to the Department for environmental review are analyzed for impacts to sage-grouse and its habitats, even though sage-grouse is not listed as a state threatened species; and

WHEREAS, the best available science suggests use of land by working ranches is compatible with providing sage-grouse habitat; and

WHEREAS, designating the sage-grouse as a state endangered species will not in itself provide improved habitat conditions and is likely to discourage current and future voluntary habitat partnerships to benefit this species and others dependent on sage-steppe habitats; and

WHEREAS, it is unnecessary to list sage-grouse as a state threatened species to prevent hunting, because it is protected as a regulated game species; and

WHEREAS, the petition to list the greater sage-grouse as a state threatened species is not supported by data and such listing may negatively impact working relationships that currently benefit this species; and

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, Erik Molvar of Hailey, Idaho and Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, South Dakota.

Appendix B Resolution 20-15

WHEREAS, Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated August 28, 2020, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:08:01:07 (Beaver trapping and hunting season established.)—Modify the season dates to be November 1 through March 31, except U.S. Forest Service lands which would be January 1 through March 31 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 current season dates for the beaver trapping and hunting seasons; and

WHEREAS, under the current beaver trapping and hunting season structure, the river otter successfully satisfied all delisting criteria and is now managed as a furbearer with a restrictive season structure; and

WHEREAS, retaining trapping year round in western South Dakota prairies is important to address depredation and infrastructure issues; and

WHEREAS, the Department does not plan to re-introduce river otters into western South Dakota and the current beaver trapping and hunting season dates do not pose any threats to the current management strategy regarding river otters (identified within the South Dakota River Otter Management Plan, 2020-2029), in South Dakota.

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, Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, South Dakota.

Appendix C

Resolution 20-16

WHEREAS, Nancy Hilding and the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, Black Hawk, South Dakota, submitted a Petition to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission (Commission) dated August 28, 2020, requesting that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission amend ARSD § 41:10:02:05 (Endangered Fish) – to add Lake Chub (*Couesius plumbeus*) as a state endangered fish, statewide 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 listing Lake Chub as state endangered; and

WHEREAS, the necessary information and best science to inform a Lake Chub endangered species listing, is not currently available; and

WHEREAS, the Department has been and will continue communicating with the Black Hills National Forest on ways to better survey, manage, and recover native fish species, including the Lake Chub, a Forest Service Regional Sensitive Species; and

WHEREAS, the Department will expand sampling efforts, enhance existing partnerships, and explore reintroduction efforts to address native species’ needs, including Lake Chub in the Black Hills; and

WHEREAS, at this time an endangered species listing of Lake Chub is not warranted until additional surveys are conducted to better assess the status and distribution of this species; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Commission does hereby deny the petition to list the Lake Chub as state endangered 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, Nancy Hilding and the Prairie Hills Audubon Society, Black Hawk South Dakota.

Appendix D

2021 -2022 Spring Turkey

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident		Nonresident		License Totals							
		TomT 32	2 TomT 35	TomT 32	2 TomT 35	RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags	NR 1-tag	NR 2-tag	NR Licenses	NR Tags
01A	Minnehaha	80	0	0	0	80	0	80	80	0	0	0	0
02A	Pennington	200	0	18	0	200	0	200	200	18	0	18	18
06A	Brookings	20	0	0	0	20	0	20	20	0	0	0	0
07A	Yankton	280	0	0	0	280	0	280	280	0	0	0	0
08A	Davison/Hanson	80	0	0	0	80	0	80	80	0	0	0	0
08B	Davison/Hanson	80	0	0	0	80	0	80	80	0	0	0	0
10A	Aurora/Douglas	30	0	0	0	30	0	30	30	0	0	0	0
11A	Bennett	30	0	3	0	30	0	30	30	3	0	3	3
12A	Bon Homme	250	0	0	0	250	0	250	250	0	0	0	0
13A	Brule/Buffalo	150	0	0	0	150	0	150	150	0	0	0	0
15A	Butte/Lawrence	350	0	28	0	350	0	350	350	28	0	28	28
16A	Campbell/Walworth	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	10	0	0	0	0
17A	Charles Mix	350	0	0	0	350	0	350	350	0	0	0	0
19A	Clay	120	0	0	0	120	0	120	120	0	0	0	0
19B	Clay	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20A	Corson	50	0	4	0	50	0	50	50	4	0	4	4
21A	Custer	150	0	12	0	150	0	150	150	12	0	12	12
22A	Day/Codington	90	0	0	0	90	0	90	90	0	0	0	0
23A	Deuel	110	0	0	0	110	0	110	110	0	0	0	0
24A	Dewey/Ziebach	150	0	12	0	150	0	150	150	12	0	12	12
27A	Fall River	75	0	6	0	75	0	75	75	6	0	6	6
29A	Grant	280	0	0	0	280	0	280	280	0	0	0	0
30A	Gregory	700	0	58	0	700	0	700	700	58	0	58	58
31A	Haakon	0	200	0	16	0	200	200	400	0	16	16	32
32A	Hamlin/Clark	20	0	0	0	20	0	20	20	0	0	0	0
35A	Harding	100	0	8	0	100	0	100	100	8	0	8	8
36A	Hughes	30	0	0	0	30	0	30	30	0	0	0	0
37A	Hutchinson	60	0	0	0	60	0	60	60	0	0	0	0
39A	Jackson	150	0	12	0	150	0	150	150	12	0	12	12
40A	Jerauld/Beadle/Hand	20	0	0	0	20	0	20	20	0	0	0	0
41A	Jones	75	0	6	0	75	0	75	75	6	0	6	6
44A	Lincoln	50	0	0	0	50	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
44B	Lincoln	50	0	0	0	50	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
45A	Lyman	100	0	8	0	100	0	100	100	8	0	8	8
48A	Marshall/Roberts	440	0	0	0	440	0	440	440	0	0	0	0
49A	Meade	0	300	0	24	0	300	300	600	0	24	24	48
50A	Mellette	350	0	28	0	350	0	350	350	28	0	28	28
52A	Moody	60	0	0	0	60	0	60	60	0	0	0	0
53A	Perkins	0	100	0	8	0	100	100	200	0	8	8	16
56A	Sanborn	10	0	0	0	10	0	10	10	0	0	0	0
58A	Stanley	40	0	4	0	40	0	40	40	4	0	4	4
58B	Stanley	2	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	1	0	1	1
60A	Tripp	400	0	32	0	400	0	400	400	32	0	32	32
61A	Turner	20	0	0	0	20	0	20	20	0	0	0	0
62A	Union	120	0	0	0	120	0	120	120	0	0	0	0
62B	Union	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
65A	Oglala Lakota	40	0	4	0	40	0	40	40	4	0	4	4
67A	Todd	75	0	6	0	75	0	75	75	6	0	6	6
	TOTAL	5,807	600	246	48	5,807	600	6,407	7,007	246	48	294	342
	Unit	TomT 32	2 TomT 35	TomT 32	2 TomT 35	RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags	NR 1-tag	NR 2-tag	NR Lic	NR Tags
		RES & NR:				6,053	648	6,701	7,349				

Appendix E

River Otter Management Plan

Commission Meeting Dates: Draft Shared June 4-5, 2020 Virtual Meeting
Public Hearing September 2, 2020 Virtual Meeting
Adoption September 2-3, 2020 Virtual Meeting

Executive Summary

Over the last 41 years the number of incidental river otter reports continues to increase and their geographic distribution continues to expand. Age structure indicates a young and growing population. Delisting criteria developed as part of a status review have been met and the species has been delisted. South Dakota will manage river otter populations with scientifically sound 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. Although the river otter is secretive and difficult to survey, the need to develop a long-term monitoring program is a priority. Feasible and flexible survey methods will be used to meet monitoring program objectives, be suited to the state's climate and landscape, and implemented with available resources. Information, education and outreach will continue to enhance river otter management in South Dakota.

Introduction

In December of 2010, a group of South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (SDGFP) staff began developing a plan for the conservation and management of river otters. This team produced the South Dakota River Otter Management Plan. That 5-year plan provided general, strategic guidance to SDGFP and potential partners for the recovery and sustained management of river otter in South Dakota. It also included background information on the biology, ecology and management of river otter. The current plan identifies what we strive to accomplish related to the management of river otter in South Dakota over the next 10 years; including development of a feasible long-term monitoring program and continued outreach about this species. It also includes updates to the relevant supporting information included in the first river otter management plan. These two documents should be used in concert with one another. The current plan update will be used by SDGFP staff and Commission on an annual basis and will be formally evaluated at least every 10 years. Supporting information will be formally updated at least every 5 years. All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision for corrections, updates, and data analyses.

Management Goal

South Dakota will manage river otter populations with scientifically sound 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.

Public Involvement

An initial public comment period on the revised plan was announced following the May Commission with a deadline of June 19, 2020. Another public comment period was made available following the July 2020 Commission meeting with a deadline of August 16, 2020. A draft of the revised river otter management plan was made available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/> under "Plans Up for Revision." Written comments were sent to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501 or emailed to OtterPlan@state.sd.us.

Public Hearing Minutes of the Game, Fish and Parks Commission September 1-2, 2020

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

3-Splash Waterfowl Hunting Package

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD said the 3 R's should include the bird watching. Thinks this deviate from the public notice, but she does not object to the rule. Should consider public comments for rule change.

Spring Turkey Hunting Season

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD requested a reduction in take because there are fewer turkeys in the hills because people are saying they are not seeing them.

Pheasant Hunting Season

Bill Ferguson - Hermosa, SD said he is from family farm near winner with pheasants in decline he spoke in opposition of the proposal. He feels the population is just now starting to recover. Unfortunately, the brood survey was discontinued as it would have shown and increase in his area and saved some marketing time and money as well as taken some pressure off other areas. These are driven by wanting to increase revenue and eliminating the survey is poor optics like science has been thrown out the window. If the survey hurts revenue don't publish it. Understands the survey is far from accurate, but it is a good tool. More hunting pressure will lower the hen population.

Nathan Sanderson, South Dakota Retailers Association – Pierre, SD formerly involved in Pheasant Habitat workgroup. Spoke in favor of the proposal. Changing shooting hours which will not have a negative effect. Extending the season which makes sense it's bitter cold in January and will not be a lot of hunters, but it will allow for the small retailers to receive some additional revenue and not negatively impact the pheasant population. Increasing the take for a short period of time will not negatively impact the population.

Casey Griffith - Presho, SD runs Snake Den Lodge. Spoke in opposition of the 4 bird bag limit and extension of the season. Poor timing because of low population and expected loss of habitat in the new few years with lack of CRP. Depending on what it gets replaced with the loss of habitat and current numbers show it's not a good time to increase the take or season. Biologically it may not hurt the population that much but other factors such as time in the field and with the pheasants being stress. Unless there is private land available there will likely be a dissatisfaction in hunters. Population numbers need to be available as well as any other data.

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD this is a nonnative species that competes with a native species the greater prairie chicken which is not going well nationally. Disagrees with GFP staff that the concern is not habitat but it is pheasants. Wants more subsets to help pheasant hunting season and more aggressively hunt pheasants in greater prairie chicken habitat areas.

Brad Swofford – Branson, MO spoke in support as a hunter who goes to South Dakota to hunt for several years. Supports change in time and would allow more opportunity to hunt on travel days. South Dakota is the best bird hunting in the world and great hosts.

George Vandel – Pierre, SD supports the recommendations. It is a myth that people can drive birds out of winter cover and they cannot successfully hunt a large number of birds in the winter.

Christine Sandvik – Rapid City, SD pheasant hunts and does wildlife photography. Likes to see the pheasants in the field and current regulations are adequate.

Kevin Schumaker, Howard, SD if the season is extended to the end of January would like to see road hunting end in early January because the cattle are being brought home at that time and the ditches are full of snow and it will bring hunters closer to farmsteads.

David Sigdestad, Pierpont, SD spoke regarding the welfare of the pheasants explaining that we should not put more stress on the pheasants when the weather is already so bad and food can be hard to come by. If it is extended add it to the beginning of the season not the end.

Casey Weismantel, Aberdeen Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and HuntFishSD.com – Aberdeen, SD the proposed changes are not necessary. The bag limits and extended season are not overly necessary. The 10a start time would be okay either way. The late season hunting through January and the increase to 4 birds would increase the pressure on the hens which are the viable resource for next spring. If the weather is scaring away hunters what is it doing to the birds. Most of the late season hunters will be going to large preserve operations.

Other Upland Bird Hunting Seasons

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD spoke in opposition. Changing the date of the end season will increase the take and without rough grouse population monitoring.

Private Shooting Preserve Bag Limits

Matt McCaulley – Sioux Falls, SD spoke on behalf of Upland Outfitter Association in spoke in support of the proposal to allow additional birds to be harvested. He referred to letter from Curt Korzan that provides language on a rule change. The change would allow residents the option to exceed the current limit during the season if they hold a combination license and have a habitat stamp. It will also allow nonresidents to exceed the current limit as long as they have the nonresident license

and habitat stamp. And their groups can also exceed the limit if they all have the same license. This would measure the group on their weakest license. This recognizes the fact that lodges across the state are different with their own business model and marketing plans, but they are all ambassadors for the state, and most are family run. This provides an option for hunters if they meet the limits with no new fees and no new licenses.

Nathan Sanderson – South Dakota Retailers Association – Pierre, SD supports the proposal of the preserve owners presented by McCaulley. Over 4,000 members with many of them being preserve owners. Unfortunately, many of them were not able to be part of this call. There are different types of preserves with many of them being small family operations. These changes help all operations and the small towns.

Justin L. Bell, May, Adam, Gerdes & Thompson, LLP – Pierre, SD South Dakota landowner and outfitter association spoke in support of the proposal.

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD said this rule does not say pheasants it says small game, so it allows unlimited hunting of many bird species. Concerned about the greater prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse and rough grouse. If you want to make it about pheasants that's okay because they are an exotic species of Asia. Need to consider the other species and taken R3 into consideration for the adverse effect to photographers. Also need to amend the rule to only apply to pheasants or amend to remove greater prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse, rough grouse and rabbits.

Christine Sandvik – Rapid City, SD agrees with Nancy that the rule should be amended to only be pheasants or remove the other animals.

Casey Weismantel, Aberdeen Area Convention and Visitors Bureau and HuntFishSD.com – Aberdeen, SD spoke in support of the rule changes for preserves. Due to restrictions and unforeseen effects of covid 19 seeing lodges concerned hunters may not come which is a huge economic loss for lodges and communities. Less visitors is less economic dollars. Less visitors are less local jobs for services that are provided to nonresident hunters.

Curtis Korzan, President, South Dakota Upland Outfitters Association and Owner, of Grand slam Pheasant Hunts – Kimball, SD. All preserves are operated in different manner on how they control harvest of birds. Removing the restriction will allow them to create more income and accommodate their clients who want to harvest more birds. There is now a different style of upland hunter who lives in a fast-paced world and travels thousands of miles and they want to get as much time in the field as possible. This won't be the case for every preserve as some even do English style hunting.

Sal Roseland, R&R Pheasant Hunting LLC – Seneca, SD farms and ranches near Seneca, SD and started pheasant hunting preserve in 2002 to supplement income. Farm and ranch support's multiple families and many employees in Faulk County. Spoke in support to the rule changes. Explained family farming operations are diverse and hunting supplements many of these operations. These changes will provide the

opportunity to receive additional income on tough years. This year due to Covid there are several cancellations because of travel restrictions. These changes will allow full-time staff to stay on payroll.

Elk Raffle Drawing Date

No verbal comments

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Season

Brad Gates – Mitchell, SD avid outdoorsman and member of SD Trappers Association and Pheasants Forever. Spoke in support of opening the trapping season. He traps with his children and hopes they continue to tradition. Accidentally caught two bobcats. Found it is not uncommon to see bobcat and incidentally trap them. Thanked GFP, Commission and State to allow him to do the things he loves.

Tom Riddle – Mitchell, SD agrees with the comments provided by Gates and spoke to the cooperation of trappers, landowners and GFP. He said this enhances South Dakota's privileges and other provides other benefits.

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD spoke in opposition to trapping east river and extension of time. She says there is not a lot of habitat for bobcat's east river. Feels the population studies are not very good and wants the rule amended.

Christine Sandvik – Rapid City, SD said she is against bobcat season because it doesn't feel it well thought out. She is not opposed to hunting and is a member of the Izzak Walton League but thinks this is inhumane.

Larry Bowden, Western SD Fur Harvesters Association - Hot Springs, SD spoke in support of the proposal.

Fishing Regulations

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD complained on how the proposal as written.

Aeration Markings

No verbal comments

AIS

No verbal comments

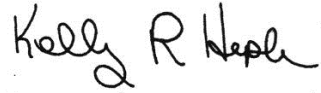
Public Waters

Nancy Hilding, Prairie Hills Audubon Society – Black Hawk, SD spoke in support of the public water's finalization.

See attached written public comments submitted prior to the public hearing

The public Hearing concluded at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kelly R Hepler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "H".

Kelly R. Hepler, Department Secretary

Public Comments

3-Splash Waterfowl Hunting Package

Andrew Ferris

Wall SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Leave the duck limit as is already at 6 and start season earlier in the high plains unit

Todd Scheuble

Webster MN

Position: oppose

Comment:

This is the icing on the cake of insane management practices.

You are losing hunters in SD because your refs and license restrictions for NR are so over the top that it's clear you don't want us there. 250 NR licenses? Really? And only 405 even cared to apply.... enough said.

My daughter (13) was drawn but I and two others we planned to hunt with were not, now they are not coming and I will be blowing my NR hunting budget on a trip only one of us can hunt.

Duck ID IS NOT a burden, it's part of learning the culture of the sport. Three splash (stupid name) will encourage shoot at anything at any distance because who cares as long as it only 3. That is not the type of hunters I want to be around with my daughter.

Try making licenses available& affordable, invest in habitat, work with landowners to allow walk-in access and quit encouraging/coddling big bucks estates and corporate retreats that monopolize opportunity.

Accept responsibility for missing the boat on what waterfowling is really about

Dennis Pugh

Akaska SD

Position: support

Comment:

last year there were huge number of pintails could only shoot 1 i see more again this year

Dana Randall

Akaska SD

Position: other

Comment:

This is not going to increase hunters! Give out more out of state licenses, use the extra funds to better our habitat. We have land that is covered in brome grass-doesn't raise any wildlife

Greg Knebel

Webster SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not think it is the kind of duck that is shot that is keeping hunters from hunting. It is more the cost of the hunt and the place to hunt. If they watch any of the outdoor shows you should have dozens of decoys a special gun ,cloths,amm0, ect. I think the mentor programs are doing a good job but might need to do more promoting of these programs and how to do them or some type of a reward program for taking them out and introducing them to waterfowl hunting!!

Aeration and System Use

Rena Smith

Mccook Lake SD

Position: support

Comment:

I agree to the proposal for requiring warning signs if there's an aerator in use on the lake. I would also like to suggest a permit requirement for people who want aerators to carry liability insurance. I would also like a clause that would protect neighboring homeowners so that the aerator does not block access to the ice in front of their home . Other states I have seen would require skirting placed around the aerator so it doesn't impact the neighboring properties. In my own experience there was a neighbor six houses down from my property that had an aerator that actually cleared the ice in front of and past my house so I could not access the ice in front of my home. Even when they put their aerator on a timer so that it removed less ice I still didn't feel comfortable going out on the ice because of the natural spring near my property. I felt that could have caused the ice to be thinner with the aerator moving the water. Having skirting around the aerator may help that. Thank you.

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Season

Cheri Nino

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

There's no need to let Bobcats be killed by the hundreds indiscriminately. It's a trophy hunt. And repulsive. Is South Dakota that desperate?

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Season

Mark Johnson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I think it would be a good idea to allow trapping for bobcats in all of east river. The population is expanding. The governor's office wants more people excited about trapping and doing more trapping. This would be another adventurous option of trying to trap a bobcat.

Also the link in the bobcat section of your email on July 24th doesn't work. It goes to an error page. I think you have the space hyperlinked after the word position.

Cody Pohlen

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I think this would be a great addition to the South Dakota hunting and trapping enthusiasts.

Alexander Young

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the east river bobcat season and would like to see it open to the entirety of the East River, every county. This would be a great addition to the hunting and trapping community.

Brad Gates

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I think that it's a great idea and I fully support the opening of all East river for a bobcat season. I believe that the population is expanding and as a trapper it would be great to be able to utilize this great resource! Thanks

Matthew Hayes

Letcher SD

Position: support

Comment:

Open all East river bobcat trapping and hunting please.

Trent Hagen

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steve Gates

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

With the population growing in eastern south Dakota, I support a season for trapping Bob cats.

Darrell Gates

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support opening all of eastern SD bobcat season. It will be great for hunting and trapping!

Cody Miles

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am for this season.

Jim Miles

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Jocelyn Nickerson

Omaha NE

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please find our letter and supplemental materials attached in opposition to the proposed bobcat hunting and trapping season. We ask that these be added to the official record.

Jocelyn Nickerson
The Humane Society of the United States

Kandy Hastings

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

If I'm not mistaken, the SD Dept. of Game Fish and Parks is supposed to be preserving our game, fish, wildlife, and lands for our future generations. All I can observe is that you are in the business of 'trophy hunting' instead. Please stop this travesty now!
With disappointment,
Kandy Hastings
Rapid City, SD

Sue Skovran

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I STRONGLY oppose the bobcat hunting expansion. I cannot fathom how anyone could so cruelly slaughter these beautiful animals. Please rethink this and show respect for Bobcats and those of us who love wildlife and pets.

Mary Hertz

Menno SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the expansion of the bobcat trapping and hunting. This is unnecessary cruelty.

Carol Christianson

Belle Fourche SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Bobcats are essential in helping to control the number of feral cats that are lethal to ground nesting birds in South Dakota. The bounty system for small predators does nothing to eliminate the hunting pressure of feral cats on game birds. Feral cats are a much greater problem. Please address that situation before you eliminate one of the few natural measures available to control the feral cat population.

Kimberly Duke

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not extend the season. They have the right to be here too. There has to be a better way to live together.

Peggy Mann

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please STOP this inhumane practice. We need to be better stewards of Earth.

Jana Haecherl

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Bobcat trapping is cruel and outdated form of management.

Nicole Eller

Edgemony SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please just leave the cats alone. We are in their territory, and there aren't enough of them in the first place. If we keep destroying our major predator populations, we are going to be very sorry.

Debra Brandt

Rapid Coty SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

They are such beautiful & shy creatures. They are not commonly seen in the woods. Please do not allow the hunting and trapping of these animals.

Sheena Thomas

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Julie Anderson

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Killing an animal for fun and vanity is unacceptable. This commission is pandering to a select few, ignoring the will of the majority and deliberately inflicting pain on the wildlife of this state. This agency is out of control and abusing its power to enact state policy.

Jeanette Williams

Vermillion SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please quit killing these beautiful animals. There is room for all of us.

Coree Mccabe

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't feel it is necessary to expand trophy hunting for bobcats.

Kerma Cox

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

It seems people in power want to kill any animal they feel is not somehow beneficial to them. I urge you to prohibit the hunting of the bobcat. Mother Nature's design is perfect in as far as balancing the wildlife. We should appreciate all of nature and animals that grace our land. This is exactly why a lot of us choose to live here.

Suzann Stonerwyngaarden

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No reason for the bobcats to be hunted as they do not provide food source only a trophy hunt.

Valerie Wente

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am a lifelong avid outdoors woman who has spent years hunting and fishing. My husband has a bachelor's degree in Natural Resources with an emphasis in Law Enforcement. I strongly oppose this approach to wild life management and feel that the "over-harvesting" of predators for trophy hunting is a disgrace. Not only does it cause more of a problem and further create an imbalance in our ecosystem, the methods of hunting Bobcats and Mountain Lions are not sportsman like and do not provide a swift, dignified end of life.

Heidi Madsen

Carpenter SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Valarie O'day

Black Hawk SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not kill the bobcats. They harm no one and have as much a right to be here as people do. They are not a nuisance animal and are important to the ecosystem.

Gail Saxonis

Hot Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am unequivocally opposed to the trapping and killing of bobcats as a source of trophy hunting.

Vicki Koebernick

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Margaret Culhane

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please leave the current season as it is. Thank you

Donna Watson

Lead SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please let's not drive another species to extinction in this state.

Kris Stapelberg

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I've lived and hiked in the state my whole life, and I have never seen a bobcat in the wild. To see such a thing would be an honor and thrill. But here goes backwards South Dakota, wanting to kill everything for the fun of it, so I guess I'll never see one.

Jamielynn Vanhoorn

Milbank SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Megan Daniels

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Debra Johnston

Hot Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

ABSOLUTELY NOT!!!!

Chloe Anderson-Meier

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Kim Nordsiden

Winner SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Nearly doubling the area where bobcats can be hunted would result in trophy hunters killing an unknown number of bobcats; this could potentially be devastating to a species that already faces a multitude of threats due to habitat loss and climate change.

Melissa Martin-Schwarz

Hermosa SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

More tourists come to see SD beautiful diverse wildlife in their natural habitat than seeing them mounted on walls after being cruelly killed by trapping and dog/hound hunting. Remember, tourists mean money to SD.

Dawn Pesicka

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Diane Buche

Box Elder SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the expansion of bobcat hunting throughout the state. We are in the midst of the 6th mass extinction on earth with approximately 30 to 50 percent of plants and animals disappearing by 2050. Let's not contribute to this horror for sport.

Mitchell Fee

Burbank SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Since these animals are at an all time low and feral cats and coy dogs are still running strong. Original native wildlife is struggling to survive. Through hunting and trapping and mostly from the loss of habitat due to top farmers taking more and more groves and wildlife habitat out and converting it into more cropland. Even less than the last ten acres is taken out routinely for more crops, causing wildlife to struggle and cross paths with man, vehicles, other wildlife and hunters. This causes our eco system to become unbalanced and some wildlife extinct. Let's give farmers incentives to stop being greedy and leave more habitat for our true wildlife.
Thank you kindly

Priscilla Young

Canton SD

Position: other

Comment:

Please provide your scientific research that supports your proposal.

Ramona Vanderzee

Harrisburg SD

Position: other

Comment:

Please do not endanger Bobcats. Use wisdom and science to support any decisions made before opening up more hunting of these precious creatures.

Leland Degolier

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Theda J Gallegos

Sioux Falls SD

Position: other

Comment:

You all need to stop killing our animal life for personal means! Enough is enough!

Mary Hall

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Fall Turkey

Wolfgang & Kathleen Schmidt

Nemo SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

In the many years we have lived in the Black Hills, we have usually seen some turkeys in our area. This year, we have seen NONE. There are NO HENS, NO BABIES, absolutely NOTHING. We are AGAINST ANY FALL TURKEY SEASON. The numbers indicate that there is a less than 35% "success" rate. Why are you allowing a turkey hunting season when there are so few out there anymore? Does the research not tell you this should be put on hold until they increase in numbers?

Fishing Regulations

David Madsen

Arlington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Raising grandchildren to become fishermen, it is seriously complicated to comply with every size, species, lake, etc. regulation that they need to know and understand.

Joe Venosdel

Tea SD

Position: support

Comment:

The fort Randall tail race should be just like the other tail races regarding spear fishing of gamefish. I support the change.

Paul Cox

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

Expanding hours for spearing is a good idea.

Chris Allen

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would prefer to fish behind the dam w/o the added competition for fish and space created by spearfishing for gamefish.

I have had dive-boats pull up to where I was fishing in Mobridge and tell me to move along my flag is now out... This was BS then and has made me rethink my support of this activity overall. I know people who enjoy the activity and have a lot of fun doing it and they seem to have plenty of fish on hand...

My opposition to opening the area behind the dam to gamefish spearing due to the limited space. I'd like to be able fish w/o having to worry about some spear-fisherman or group of spear fisherman and their flag staking out chunks of public water.

I'd also ask the commission to check with the DNR Fishery Biologists on the proposed change to the reg. See if this will have a negative impact to game fish populations.

Lance Wheeler

Pipestone MN

Position: support

Comment:

As an active bowfishermen in the state of South Dakota I am in support of the changes to the spear fishing season on the Missouri River from May 1st to March 31st. I am also in support of extending the hours of spear fishing game fish from one half hour before sunrise until one half hour after sunset.

Marc Schmitz

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Allowing walleye spearing close to the dams where the large females congregate is a colossal mistake. The Pierre area will see the effects of this in the next few years. In an attempt to increase license sales short-term, the agency is damaging the resource long-term. Please listen to the biologists.

Other

Tyra Honomichl

Wagner SD

Position: support

Comment:

It was brought to my attention that native americans should have free access to the river. I was talking to a tribal member and they have valid opinions and feelings. As you know most of the native population dont have a lot of financial resources, so to be able to help them in this way would be good for everyone. It will help build a bridge between cultural difference and build new connections with each other. With everything that is happening today with BLM movement, you would be able to support the movement. Which will also help you bring new visitors to this beautiful area which in turn gives you more business and revenue. I admit I dont know a lot about business but I know if more people visit the more money you yet. This is a win-win situation. Thank you for your time and hope to hear from you soon.

Matthew Provost

Seattle WA

Position: support

Comment:

"As long as the water flows and the grass grows".. We know where our Motherland is.

Would you pay money to visit your birthplace?

Jessi Jo

Lake Andes SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Stefanie Morales

Wichita KS

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tasheena Zephier

Marty SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Brenda Zephier

Marty SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Harlee Myers

Tripp SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Stefanie Morales

Wichita KS

Position: oppose

Comment:

We should not have to pay for what is already ours!!!! Yankton Sioux proud!!!!

Alex Davis

Windfall IN

Position: other

Comment:

As a non resident hunter, I figured I would at least present my view of how the commission could attract or draw people to South Dakota to pheasant hunt. I have been out there the past 8 or so years and the group I go with has been there since the early 2000s during the height of CRP and bird numbers. Money in my opinion would be best spent in reestablishing habitat to levels seen in those days. There are mainly pockets of habitat in the areas we hunt, and we only find birds in those areas. Many hunters that travel out there with minimal birds and minimal habitat to hunt vow not to go back. This is an issues that will not be solved by a marketing campaign. So it makes most sense to me to build the habitat and you will attract out of state hunters when the bird number increase. Thank you

Michael Jocks

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

I support all of the Commissions proposed changes to the upcoming Pheasant hunting season with the exception of the proposed extension of the season for our native birds: Prairie Chickens, Grouse & Quail. Pheasants are able to be farmed and there fore can be repopulated reasonably easily while any over-harvesting of the native species cannot.

Thanks, Michael (Bert) Jocks

Eugene Opbroek

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I read with dismay your approval of free park entrance fees for Native Americans in some of our SD Parks. I have a few concerns. 1. Will Native Americans be allowed to reserve 90 days in advance and will they be able to hold the reserved spot for 14 days?? If so, then, since it is FREE to them they could, and will if given the opportunity, actually live in the park for the whole camping season. It looks to me like this was passed with very little thought about the repercussions of the decision. It also looks like it has created a great agenda for continued racism in SD, not much thought there either!! Which tribe will be next?? YOU HAVE SET A VERY, VERY DANGEROUS PRECEDENT HERE!! Again not much thought. And my final question, what about Veterans???? You jump through hoops to accomodate Native Americans who currently get free housing, education, food, etc, etc. yet the Veterans who gave a part of their life to protect the freedoms and liberties of ALL South Dakotans and Americans, white, black, or brown get crapped on again!! Good Job Commission, hope you are proud of yourselves. This South Dakota Veteran and many of my fellow South Dakotans are NOT!!

Dean Young

Custer SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

GFP Commission Proposes Electric Motors Only on Two Black Hills Waters; Trout Limit Change on Border Waters.

"United States Forest Service requested the same restriction on Bismarck Lake. These waters are utilized by kayakers and canoers and the regulation change would be for safety reasons".

This statement is totally nonsense and is playing on the old safety tactic, which in this case doesn't fly. Reason's are

1. Bismarck Lake has a sign at the gravel boat put-in spot that already says electric motors only (not true, again the public being mislead). The only reason this is coming up is that I questioned the sign and found out that it was not true and invalid.

2. The so called boat landing, is not lend itself to large motorboats that would launch on this lake to do the waterskiing and other water sports that someone would have you to believe in order to get their (probably personal) agenda thru. So again there is no safety issue as the motors would be small and used for fishing. There isn't even a swimming beach on the lake to attract watersport type crafts and the problems they can attract.

3. If someone wants to cry safety for the Kayaks and Canoes, you would have to not allow any gas motors on any of the Black Hills Lakes (this is just a ploy to get their way). Let's look at Center Lake, which is, I believe smaller than Bismarck Lake, it has a beach a playground much larger lake use area than Bismarck and yet you can use a gas motor to help you fish. Is there, or has there been a problem with Center Lake, or any similar Lakes in the Hills with small motorboats (other that Stockade which is not similar to Bismarck)??? Soooooo don't regulate something that isn't a problem, and take away something that older folks use to enjoy activities. You know that the Public Lands aren't just for the Young and Healthy who can still even sit in a Kayak much less get out of one.

Side note: Had a Square backed canoe with a 3hp motor I used for fishing once.

4. Just being redundant but, a lot of folks who have certain agendas like to use the safety ploy when it isn't an issue and will not become an issue.

Also once agency's regulate something, it is difficult to get rid of whatever you regulated, sooo don't jump the gun just because it is someone's pet thing to do.

Could go on and on but you get the drift.

Richard Perkins

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

15 river otter should be caught and moved to where cobra mussels are. So they can each eat 10lbs of clams mussels a day forever. we're here you kill a renewable source that can reproduce zebra killers.

Melissa Savage

Santa Fe NM

Position: oppose

Comment:

Dear South Dakota Department of Game and Fish,

I am writing to express an opinion on the introduction of a harvest on river otters that is proposed in your 2020 South Dakota River Otter Management Plan, 2020-2029.

The report details an increase in population numbers of rivers otters in the State, primarily in the easternmost portion of the state. Based on this increase, the Department believes killing a certain number of otters every year is justifiable.

I disagree.

Otters, like wolves and other apex predators, are keystone species, and structure an ecosystem, thereby maintaining a healthy and natural balance. And river otters are aquatic apex predators native mammals in North America. The ecosystems they structure are riverine and lacustrine. Since they were once native to most water systems in North America, otters played a crucial role in structuring the biodiversity across the continent.

One of their most important ecosystem services at the present time is the regulation of non-native species in rivers. In many US states where otters were overharvested to extinction, non-native fish and crayfish have devastated aquatic systems, overwhelming native fauna. This is especially noticeable in the impact of non-native crayfish on river systems, where they eat fish eggs, small fish and vegetation. The reintroduction of river otters to 22 states has clearly improved the health of those rivers.

Besides these important ecosystem services, river otters have been hugely popular with the public, in those states where they have been reintroduced, and increasingly everywhere throughout the US, as watchable wildlife. This trend is increasing, as we can see from Citizen Science programs and news outlets. People love otters. This is a large and growing constituency...one might easily believe it is a larger constituency than that of trappers.

Moreover, your decision is based on a perception that there are enough otters in South Dakota to justify a harvest, based on your monitoring statistics. But how do you assess how many otters are enough otters? There appears to be no estimation of what an optimum otter population is for the sake of wetland ecosystems. Your harvest may keep otter numbers at a steady number—a “sustainable” number. But you do not know if this is the right number of otters. They are, after all, a native mammal. In the past, they were able to regulate their numbers perfectly well.

Essentially, your argument is framed for the benefit of the trapping constituency. There is no ecological justification for opening a harvest season in South Dakota. And we know that fur trapping is an activity of the past, not the future. Perhaps if this were honestly stated, the assessment might reveal the gaps in the argument for a harvest.

I encourage you to wait to open a harvest season. If in the future, your otters may become so abundant that you have a problem. Until that time, I strongly encourage you to wait to open a harvest season on river otters in South Dakota.

Thank you kindly,

Melissa Savage

Jorge D. Vicuna

Huron SD

Position: other

Comment:

I think that you should amend the requirement of 160 acres for a preference in deer hunting.

There aren't too many quarters of land that are short by a not significant amount because of the rectangular survey and also for rights of way and small parcels that have been sold off. Maybe an appropriate number would be 140 acres.

Mike Peterson

Piedmont SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Hi, can you explain when, how or mostly why you now came up with this stupid Habitat fee?! I thought the ridiculous \$40 we already pay covered habitat. Why not add a couple of bucks to every license instead of putting more of it on someone that only gets one tag? I am getting so close to quitting hunting.

Mark Nielsen

Yankton SD

Position: other

Comment:

I am not very good on the computer but this is the biggest vmess i have ever seen no wonder the hunting #s are down you can't get to the page to apply

Pheasant Hunting Season

Ben Brettingen

Waconia MN

Position: other

Comment:

I support the 10am start for the first week of the season and would even encourage an earlier 9am start. I however do not support raising the daily limit to 4. While it would bring more people to the state in the late season, which is great for tourism....the number of birds are well below the 10 year average. Although numbers largely depend on young of the year spring hatches, I don't support taking even more birds regardless.

Sincerely,

Ben Brettingen

Brock Heying

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have a feeling this is only being done because it's what Kristi Noem wants. Just a scheme to attract more out of state bird killers (be honest, they don't "hunt" anything). I don't see bird numbers like I remember from my childhood. When I'm seeing birds like that, then we can think about increasing limits

William Sprinkel

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

With the low pheasant numbers the last ten years it seems rather ridiculous to increase season length and bag limits. I also thought you were going to do away with brewed counts since it does not have bearing on season limits and length. Seems to me you are only interested in out of staters money and not what is good for wild life. Funny how brood counts were going to be stopped because out of state hunters used this info to decide if they were going to come and hunt here or not. If rood counts are going to be used again I hope this information will be accessible to all to see so people can use it to make their decision to come or not. We who live here all know pheasant numbers are way down and decisions like this are not going to help the numbers. Just remember not all who come what to hunt tame birds on a preserve. As far as resident hunter numbers being down it seems to me that if there were more places to hunt that you did not have to pay to hunt more would be interested in going again not every one has 150 dollars to pay to shoot three pheasants. Please use common sense when you consider making this decision it will greatly influence generations to come. Money should not be the sole consideration of decision like this consider your children's futures in outdoor sports or the lack of if we keep selling off our wildlife to the highest bidders. In my option it is only a matter of time before we see the same thing with our deer hunting.

David Peck

Cherokee IA

Position: oppose

Comment:

The reason that the hunter and harvest number have gone down since 2015 is because there are far less pheasants (West River). Without any real data these changes will hurt populations all for the almighty \$\$\$\$\$.

Joshua Weier

Windsor CO

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose early start and increased bag limits. Pheasant numbers have been down in recent years, if you try to bring in more hunters and increase limits... bird numbers would certainly get worse. Lower bird numbers would eventually drive hunters away even more.

Brent Schaap

Hartford SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am opposed to 10 o'clock shooting time on opening weekendS of pheasant season. There is plenty of daylight to have a good pheasant hunt before time change. For those of us who also waterfowl hunt on those days and meet up with the rest of the hunting party for the pheasant hunt. you'll be cutting into our waterfall time.

Jacob Geis

Emery SD

Position: support

Comment:

Extending the pheasant season to the end of January would be awesome! It would match Nebraska's season, a state which has seen pheasant numbers come back as of late, meaning the longer season has little effect on population.

Also, upping the limit in the later half of the season would be another great idea. By that point, for the most part only those of us hardy folks that actually live in the state are still hunting.

Jodie Schaap

Fedora SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As farmers we are opposed to starting time of 10 o'clock in the early season. I've never had a hunter that could outlast the day light that time of year and increasing amount of time the hunting the early season which seems to be a lot hotter now days we just add to increasing problems with hunters caring for overheated dogs Plus it's nice to get 1/2 day work done before the hunt.

As for the increase bird limit and lengthening the season I would think this would be foolish at our current bird numbers. If we had a population of birds we did a decade ago I would be all for it

Troy Kirsch

Platte SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Pheasant numbers have been down the last several years, so it is proposed to shoot more? This has to be introduced by the pheasant farms I assume. We farm next to a big public hunting area and we have enrolled some land into "walk in program" I have been buying hens and trying to rebuild the population the last 2 years, for this? I strongly oppose these changes.

Anthony Clark

Frankfort SD

Position: support

Comment:

Fully support 10:00am start time for entire season. Also 4 bird limit should be for entire season, not just after Dec 1. We need to bring new hunters in & entice nonresidents to return in this rough economy. Our small towns need the revenue generated from nonresident visitors

Tom Kewley

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have lived and hunted pheasants in South Dakota all of my life. It is very clear to me that pheasant numbers are historically low in South Dakota. I have hunted with roughly the same group of people all of my life, when I was younger opening day of the season to get a limit of birds with a 20 person group was a relatively easy accomplishment. The group I hunt with has not gotten a limit, or even close to it in well over 15 years. It is ridiculous to think that raising the limit and extending the hunting hours is in any way going to help the pheasant population. Between this and the decisions made earlier this year to spend more money on advertising for South Dakota Pheasant Hunting and stop the Brood counts, it is pretty obvious that this is just a big money grab. The only people that it helps is the pheasant preserves, while the rest of the state suffers. It has become harder and harder to find land to hunt due to the implementation of pay hunting/preserves and the current farming practices which have devoured most of the pheasant habitat. There is little that can be done about the farming as they need to make money too, but I do not appreciate state funding marketing for private industries such as pheasant preserves, stopping brood counts because when the low numbers are reported less people want to come to our state to hunt, raising harvest limits, and extending hunting hours. All of this will only hurt our pheasant population worse than it already has been and make it harder for the average person who loves to hunt and wants to get their children into hunting as there are important lessons about life that can be learned from it to pursue. The state needs to put less focus on bringing in out of state hunters and more on the needs of their own residents.

John Christensen

Lake Benton MN

Position: other

Comment:

Please consider changing how you do the Non Resident Pheasant license. It is no longer feasible for a group to take 5 days off to hunt. Most are only coming for 2 or 3 days as that is all the time people can get away from work and family commitments. Instead consider changing the 10 day format to 2 or 3 day time slots. This would increase the amount of time people spend in South Dakota. People would be coming out for 5 trips that is a lot more time and money being spent in South Dakota and could change the number of hunters willing to come back out and hunt.

Thanks,

John

Krysti Barnes

Murdo SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The birds in our area are stressed with high hunting already. The additional hours, length of season and bag limits will put higher stress on those numbers. In January, many birds tend to collect around tree shelters and buildings with the snow and cold increasing. Stretching the season into January will encourage hunters to also come to the protected areas where the birds are. I don't feel any landowner and or local hunters would be infavor of these changes. There are several reasons out of state hunters may not reach their bag limits which include the lack of birds, the increased growth of habitat areas and generally these hunters not securing hunting places and putting in the time you need to hunt those areas. I've experienced too many non-local hunters who want to drive to roads and hunt the easier areas and then complain they didn't limit. I've lived all my life in a community where pheasant hunting draws large numbers of hunters and I've hunted for 40 years and I don't see these changes being good for the hunters and especially not for the pheasants. PLEASE reconsider your actions on these changes!

Josh Luckett

Wessington Springs SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not think we need to up the limit of birds when we are all ready down numbers. yes might look good this year but i think we need to think about that an worry about it years down the road. an for making the season longer i think they should started it more the first part of november an then u can go longer.

Jason King

Belvue KS

Position: other

Comment:

As an out of state hunter that has been coming to South Dakota for a while now I hate to see you change things for the opening week. I like the hunt at noon for that first week. I do however like your idea to increase the limit to 4 later in the season. I think making that change earlier would increase hunter numbers even more though. Maybe increase it starting the 3rd or 4th weekend of the season.

Craig Oberle

Mellette SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am opposed to the proposed 10:00 am starting time for the pheasant opener and first two weeks. Lets stay with tradition. Noon openers work very well and most groups like not being rushed in the morning. Especially the first weekend. I am also opposed to not doing the brood surveys. It seems like all our game department is concerned with is working with tourism to bring in the out of state hunters and money. No thought anymore for the local hunters. Thank you for your time.

Will Hettinger

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

These ideas are nothing more than a pursuit of money. I can think of no better way to hurt the birds than by stressing them in Jan. As a land owner who has habitat for wildlife, most of it by choice, I dread an additional month of hunters hanging around. A small number of them causing problems, but enough that it gets real old, real fast. Stay with what has worked. Think of the birds, the landowners. Stop chasing money at their expense. Until you figure out a way to increase wildlife habitat, you can propose as many ideas as the Dept. Of Tourism comes up with they won't work.

Michael Kerns

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

I support the earlier shooting hours and extending the season. I do NOT support increasing the bag limit to 4 roosters, especially in light of the fact there is no roadside count this year so we don't even have an approximate idea of how the population looks going into Fall. Thank you for taking my comments into consideration!

Bill Barnett

Hartford SD

Position: other

Comment:

Support 10 am start time. Both residential only and state seasons
Oppose an increase in daily bag limit and lengthening the season.
Opposition is due to avoid sending the message to youth and general public that more is better.

Jacob Nyenhuis

Harrisburg SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I've been pheasant hunting in my home of South Dakota for as long as I can remember. The last several years have been beyond disappointing for the pheasant numbers. While I understand a lot of this has to do with the weather (the drought followed by the devastating floods) I can't possibly fathom how increasing the bag limit would help the resident hunters. It's been very difficult to even find a couple of pheasants on public land the last few years, much less 4. The only thing I see this accomplishing is bringing in more money for the preserves and the state bottom line. It does not help the resident hunters who have to march through 20 terrible public fields to find a single bird. If anything there should be a reduction in bag limit to allow the pheasants to recover. Disappointed that this is even being proposed.

Brent Schoulte

Presho SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The numbers are not there to lengthen season and up the limit to 4. If anything, the limit should be lowered. Until the number CRP acres go back in like they did in the 80s and 90s the bird population will stay down. 10 am start is fine. The noon for the first week was just confusing anyway.

Theresa Glissendorf

White Lake SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Why would you extend, length and add to the limit when we have not upped our pheasant numbers.

Jamie Worrall

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't think our population is at a level that justifies increasing the limit.

David Madsen

Arlington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Having hunted pheasants for 50 years in SD, I see no reason for raising the bag limit, or extending the hours or length of the season. Leave things as they are. I believe more habitat cover, and better access to land is key.

Jason Labrie

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

I am ok with starting early at 10am from opening on.

I strongly disagree with increasing the limit to 4.

Pheasant hunting is one of SD's main hunting attractions. We have struggled for awhile with numbers in Spink county and likely throughout the state. If the numbers are up let them get higher. We need to rebuild what we once had with numbers so we can reclaim our pride/tourism/\$for the state rather than turning it over to surrounding states whom are becoming more and more known for good pheasant hunting.

Mark Lindstrom

Shakopee MN

Position: support

Comment:

I understand there are several proposed changes for Pheasant hunting in 2021. The noon start time is a relic that needs to go. I would prefer 8 AM but 10 AM all season long would be great. I also like 4 birds after Dec 1.

Dean Cristman

New Egypt NJ

Position: support

Comment:

I am in favor of the proposed changes to the Pheasant season. 10am start ALL season and increase bag limit to four. I think thinning the rooster population will help the survival rate of hens over the winter.

Lucas Nogelmeier

Watertown SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

See uploaded file for comments.

Michael Schnipper

Oxford OH

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose stopping the bird counts and I oppose involving marketing to attract attempt to attract more hunters. My letter is attached.

Laura Tolzin

De Smet SD

Position: support

Comment:

I'm in favor of the season extension to January 31.
Neutral on the 10am start right from the beginning of the season since in the early season I don't hunt until late afternoon anyhow
Also neutral about the change from 3 birds to 4 birds limit.

Clint Assman

Winner SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Pheasant numbers are at a 50 year low in our county. All of these measures being proposed put additional pressure on the bird population, placing a recovery of the population in further jeopardy. If anything, the daily rooster limit should be reduced to two birds per day and hunting should start at noon through the entire season. Extending the season deep into winter will also put undue stress on population.

Ronald Glissendorf

White Lake SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

We do not have the population to up the limit. This is all about money.

Paul Rystrom

Brookings SD

Position: support

Comment:

I think all the proposed changes are a great idea.

John Rystrom

Lead SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Jason Malsom

Brookings SD

Position: support

Comment:

Please change to the proposed pheasant hunting season. It would give more opportunity to hunt, without really making a big dent in the population.

Jason Malsom
2202 primrose dr
Brookings Sd 57006

Steve Johnson

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Landowners will not want to deal with an extended season and trespassing etc

Wayne Booze

Hartford SD

Position: other

Comment:

Bottom line up front: I support extending the pheasant season til the end of January, but I oppose increasing bag limits on pheasants.

South Dakota has, in my opinion, taken several missteps regarding managing pheasant hunting. We know that numbers are down compared to the days of the early 2000's due in large part to the loss of CRP acres and small grains. Without the habitat, the numbers are going to be much more susceptible to weather fluxuations.

Now we've canceled the brood count so we can't even get a good idea of how the birds have done. Without that data, how on earth can anyone justify increasing the daily bag limit? It's not like there are more birds out there today than there were a decade ago when I could be done hunting in an hour. We have to stock birds on our farm now for our family hunts.

For those who only have public lands to hunt, an extra bird a day means one fewer for someone else on those heavily-hunted public grounds.

Without the brood counts, how can we prove the nest predator bounty program is working and worth investing taxpayer dollars.

I don't have a problem with extending the season. There aren't a ton of us out there anyway. But wow there seem to be some pretty silly proposals out there based on no evidence.

Branson Tolliver

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I wanted to take this opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed updates to the pheasant hunting season. I work as a pheasant hunting guide in Charles Mix county every fall for several out of state groups. I believe these updates are a short term solution to a much bigger issue. I can see that the GFP is trying to bring more pheasant hunters to South Dakota, but by lengthening the season and increasing the bag limit, they are going against everything they have been working towards. We claim to be working to increase bird numbers. How does lengthening the season into the toughest time for these birds to survive help those numbers? Anyone who hunts pheasants late season knows it is much easier as the birds are bunched up and pushed out of CRP fields due to weather conditions. I know I don't hear many 15 man limits before December, but I sure hear a lot of them in late December. I believe increasing the season and bag limit will have a detrimental impact on the population. Not only from harvest, but from increased stress when the animals are having the hardest time surviving. If we really wanted to work towards increased out of state hunter numbers, we should be focusing on habitat and public land acquisitions. It doesn't matter how long the season is if the out of state hunter can't find anywhere to hunt.

Thank you for your time and I really hope you rethink this initiative.

Branson

Cory Bratland

Willow Lake SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please do not increase the bag limit to 4 per person. We simple do not have the population to support that. Yes in areas we have lots of birds. Instead the GF&P should invest in a lot more money into their habitat. If the State folks and the Federal folks would seriously work together that would help but tearing out all the shrubs on the WFP land was a terrible idea. Also, open up the checkbook even more to those folks that will plant foodplots.

Rick Bartels

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

I support the idea of a 10am start for the season opening and even extending the season until later in January, but do not support the increased bag limit to four. We've seen the past several years of decline in numbers without an increase in bird population, it does not make sense to increase limit.

Nicholas Kniffen

Tyndall SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I appose starting at 10AM &any changes to the daily limit. I heard the commission wants to to change to a 4bird/day limit. I strongly oppose this. We have a limited number of birds & this will have a negative impact on the pheasant population. I do agree with the lengthened season through January but please do not increase the daily limit.

Thank you, Nicholas Kniffen, Tyndall

Mark Kaiser

Mobridge SD

Position: other

Comment:

I just read an article stating the daily limit may be raised to 4 birds and the possession limits raised accordingly. I strongly oppose raising the daily limit. I support raising the possession limit and adjusting the non-resident license lengths accordingly. 3 birds a day is plenty and it has been a few years since I've heard of mostly limits per day anyway. Allowing possession of an extra day's limit gives nonresident the option to lengthen their stay by one day each trip they make to our state.

Brad Siebler

Greenwood NE

Position: oppose

Comment:

This will eventually lead to fewer and fewer birds year over year. Keep it like it is.

Skyla Nicholas

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't think there is enough birds out there to increase the limit from 3 to 4. I know it's a short time but I would not do that.

Ron Stroucke

Roscoe SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

If 3 birds aren't enough 4 won't be either. Dont extend season but 10am start OK Too often he has witnessed NR flushing birds before a storm who don't return to cover and die of exposure

Todd Martell

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I, as a trapper, already wait until pheasant season is over to pursue my chosen pastime. Extending the pheasant season until January 31st would lead to more conflicts between dogs and fur harvesters.

Adam Gutzmer

Excelsior MN

Position: other

Comment:

I support the 10 am start time, and the season extension through January. However 4 birds per day is not a smart move for the long term future. We need habitat to draw more birds, and the hunters will follow. to confirm- I support the 10 am start, later season but not 4 roosters per day limit. Please reconsider the 4 rooster per day limit and keep it at 3.

Jeffrey Martin

Lititz PA

Position: oppose

Comment:

It would be nice to have other non resident pheasant hunting license options. Needing to buy multiple licenses per year if you want to hunt multiple weeks keeps me from coming back more often. Example I hunt 6 days in early season and have to use both of my 5 days time periods and that license is then done. Here in PA we charge more for a NR license but then get same hunting periods. If you want more hunters in SD change the NR pheasant licensing rules. I would favor that over more pheasants per day or earlier start times or later dates. I am not in favor of the later dates as disturbing pheasants in late season when they are dependent on conserving energy is likely to decrease their wintering survival. Let later season hunting be available to states like Kansas that don't have the same winter weather conditions.

Beuce Pieper

Yankton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

There is not enough birds to support a 4 bird limit I do support the 10:00 am start time for early season residents season but I oppose the longer season I own 280 acres in Bonn Homme county I manage to keep a good population of birds because we don't over harvest

Howard Goetsch

Cotopaxi CO

Position: support

Comment:

Good projected changes on SD Pheasant Season parameters! Appreciate your efforts on our behalf! Howard Goetsch, Cotopaxi, CO.

David Drake

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

with the low number of pheasant it to me make sense to extend the season or to raise the daily limit.

Jason Haskell

Aberdeen SD

Position: other

Comment:

I'm not sure if I agree or disagree with this stance. On the surface it appears to just be a money grab. I would like to see the scientific evidence that the increased take of wildlife won't negatively impact the overall population. It sells well as "increased Opportunity," but if it's just to add huntable days, sell more licenses and ends up negatively impacting the resource then I am against it.

Gregory Hubbard

Lake Andes SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Are you kidding me!!! Pheasant populations have continuously declined over the past several years and you want to EXTEND the season and INCREASE bag limits. You're only going to push pheasant hunting to the rich that can pay to shoot dizzy birds on preserves!!! Raising license fees, adding Sportsman Stamps and now this??

Brandon Kottke

Clark SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As correctly stated in the July 16, 2020 press release, many hunters do hang up the hunter gear by Thanksgiving, however it has nothing to do with the length of season or daily bag limits. It is directly related to the lack of habitat and access to hunting land. Those are the 2 key factors that are contributing to the reduction of pheasant hunters and harvested birds stated in the press release. That should be the primary focus of the commission to address the concern with lost revenue. Not promoting increased hunting days and limits that will place unnecessary stress on a species when that are at the most vulnerable stage of the year. Whether its December 2 or January 24, doesn't matter what the limit is or how long a person can hunt if they have no place to hunt or no habitat that will support the species in the first place. While the intent may be to balance out the rooster to hen ratio the extra pressure placed on hens while they get continuously flushed from thermal cover will not result in increased population in the following spring. I would encourage the commission to look at other avenues to increase revenue that is generated from pheasant hunting. I do support the standard season start time of 10 am for the duration of the season.

Kevin Hansen

Zell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I would like to voice my STRONG opposition to extending the pheasant season thru the end of January. Can you show scientific proof that extending the season is in the best interest of the wildlife affected by this extension? Without that proof it appears to me that the only benefits are economic. Again, I oppose lengthening the pheasant season.

Thank you for reading my comments.

Jay Spaans

Armour SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm against the 4 bird limit at the end of the season. Most hunters are not bagging a limit of 3 as it is. I feel numbers are down and this isn't necessary, but i also didn't understand the benefit to the game preserves? Maybe that explanation would change my mind.

Thanks

Ron Freeman

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Extend the pheasant season on an already decimated wild pheasant population? What a half baked idea. All you are going to accomplish is force pheasants out of their winter survival habitat (sloughs which are already in short supply due to drainage) and put more stress on an already depleted population. Leave the season and its limits where they are.

Thomas Steele

Lake Preston SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Whoever is recommending these changes is not a recreational "not-for-profit" hunter because us recreational hunters know chasing pheasants around for 79 days is more than enough time to pressure the birds. I am totally opposed to the thought of increasing pheasant limit to 4 birds as 3 is more than enough. also totally opposed to pressuring birds after the 1st week of January as no one knows the pressure they will experience with the severity of the winter weather to come. If you are going to increase season then why in the world would you increase it by 28 days- 35%. I love to pheasant hunt but this is way overboard. This seems all driven by dollar bills. Lets give the birds a chance.

Todd Youngbluth

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the lengthened pheasant season as well as the increase in daily limits later in the season. The number of pheasants has been low for the last several years and I do not believe there are so many that the limit should be increased. In addition, hunting pheasants until the end of January will put additional strain on the birds that have a hard enough time making it through the toughest part of winter. Thank you.

Dana Rogers

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Commissioners and Staff,

I am commenting on the proposal to extend the pheasant hunting season well into and in 2022 the very end of January. As well as the late 4 rooster limit.

The move to increase opportunity and hunter days afield is often a good and noble goal and endeavor. However, in a case like this I have to point out the severe weather and it's impact upon our wildlife. Not just the non-native cash cow but all SD wildlife. Recently, I fully supported the closure of all January archery and Muzzleloader antlerless deer seasons. That was directly due to our significantly lower deer numbers in most areas and the reasoning that wildlife needs to rest and recuperate after being pursued during our fall hunting seasons.

This proposal will NOT JUST effect pheasants, but all of our wintering wildlife. The increase in bag limit to 4 roosters during the late season may well have limited biological effects due to upland game birds being polygamous and being able to successfully breed with far fewer males to females. That point I am less concerned with.

Another point in addendum here is the mentioning and heightened reliance on the "Pheasant Marketing Group". I continue to be VERY concerned that our GFP is being lead and steered by tourism groups and politicians with only an eye for Non-Resident and commercial tourism interests VS. our SD resident Sportsmen and what I feel should be priority #1...Our SD Wildlife.

Please consider what is best for SD's wildlife, their health and longevity, followed by SD resident Sportsmen's interests before making this decision. Preserves have separate seasons and can certainly accommodate any well heeled NR hunters that wish to pursue pheasants earlier and later with an eye for a larger bag.

Please vote NO on this proposal. Thank You for your time and involvement.

Dennis Ulvestad

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a landowner I strongly oppose extending the season length to the end of Jan. What few hunters that would go afield at that time of the year would more than likely disturb as many deer as pheasants (hens as well as roosters), all of which need their reserves to make it thru the winter. The balance of the "hunters" would probably just end up road hunting and create unnecessary travel in the rural areas.

Stephen Sanders

Rapid City SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Randall Stewart

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

SDFG to a big financial hit in license sale last year but please don't try to fix it by changing rules. Leave things alone.

How about getting rid of the current out of state licensing

Allow oos hunters to by a license good for the whole season. If there are plenty of birds they will come back and bring their \$\$

Chuck Schroder

Brandon SD

Position: other

Comment:

With the pheasant count down and the number of hunters that are hunting, we don't need to increase the daily limit on birds. Yes, birds do dye if we have a bad winter, but they do comeback. We are again helping and inviting more out of state hunters.

We are getting more private preserves all the time. More and more individuals are charging people to hunt and out of state people are buying and leasing more land each year.

I feel we need to leave things the way they are.

Thank you.

Rick Hearn

Millington TN

Position: support

Comment:

Extending the hunting season would be beneficial in planning based on weather issues for out of state hunters.

William Axlund

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a lifelong S.D. resident pheasant hunter, landowner & pheasant hunting outfitter I am strongly opposed to the proposed changes to the pheasant hunting season. Under Kelly Hepler the SDGFP has switched from an agency concerned over preserving our pheasant resources to one who represents the marketing interests of all those non conservation entities like hotels, restaurants, & travel agencies. Any real hunter knows that the brood counts were great indicators of pheasant populations & why does the current Commission & Secretary suddenly know more than all those preceding them & decide to eliminate them; "because they didn't like what they were telling us". Opening earlier the first week, extending the season, & increasing the daily bag limit only puts more pressure on an already dwindling resource. These are the absolute opposite of what we should be doing to preserve our pheasant resource. January hunting pushes concentrated pheasant numbers out of prime winter cover into areas where they are more vulnerable to predation from hawks & owls and to winter cold & snow.

The only possible reason to support any of these three proposals is in the name of marketing on a short term. It in no way does anything to help preserve our proud pheasant hunting heritage.

There is a reason our license numbers are down & that is because our pheasant numbers have plummeted since 2009 due to greatly reduced habitat (CRP). Hunters are currently experiencing first hand far fewer pheasants & are choosing not to return for that single reason. Spinning the results today that "we're still your best option" is the marketing strategy of a desperate GFP. That strategy will lead us down the path of our neighboring states that "used" to have pheasants.

I urge you to reject all 3 proposals & instead implement sound pheasant habitat restoration measures in order to restore our pheasant numbers. When that occurs the hunters will follow just like they did before.

Cheryl Wilson

Hartford SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the change of extending the pheasant season until Jan. 31st. I am concerned about the pheasant population along with ALL of the other animals that will be pushed out of cover during the brutal S.D. January weather. Every animal is in survival mode! This change will have a negative impact on all wild life.

Dick Muth

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

I'm basically in agreement with all the proposed changes with the General pheasant hunting season except I would like to see the shooting hours end at 3:00 instead of sunset starting in January. If hunters are hunting right up to sunset there could be birds chased out into the open and may not survive the night if they don't have enough time to get back into cover. Late in the season most of these birds are hens. I make these comments based on almost 60 years of in SD. Thank you for your consideration.

Robert Jane

Martin SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Randall Stewart

Spearfish SD

Position: other

Comment:

This is a follow up on a comments I made earlier on this subject

Had a great visit with g&p staff regarding season changes and reasons for changes.

Personally I'd like the start hunting times left as they are. It works ok and does let the birds get back to cover after feeding

I don't care one way or the other about season length. Some years crop harvest is extremely late so extra hunt days would help

Daily limits should stay the same. Possession limits the same. Let controlled shooting preserves Set their daily limits if they hunt on designated private preserves. Let them do whatever they want. If they guide paid hunters on state or federal or non preserve indicated land then follow state rules

The proposed idea I have would be to allow out of state hunters the option of a say 5 day permit or the option to buy a season long permit. Let them decide weather permitting when to hunt. ALSO allow them to be able to hunt waterfowl! Many times while pheasant hunting we will come into a flock of ducks. I can shoot and my nonresident brother has to watch. We have a wealth of waterfowl that can be hunted. Give nonres hunters the option. Thanks for your time and good luck Randy. 509-929-4060

Dan Isaak

Boise ID

Position: other

Comment:

As someone born and raised in SD that looks forward to the long drive from Idaho to hunt pheasants most falls, I support the proposed season changes as they will provide more hunting opportunities without harming the population. However, because the fish&game department has terminated pre-season pheasant brood counts, out-of-state hunters will have little reliable data to rely on for trip planning and the added uncertainty this creates will probably decrease the number of hunters willing to make the trip and spend money in SD. The best option is to implement the new season changes and reconstitute the brood surveys. The latter are not only valuable for pheasant hunters and game&fish department biologists that manage the population but provide invaluable data for many of the state's other wildlife species. Dan

Dana Randall

Akaska SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I hope this BS of increasing the bag limit and extending the season is just a ploy to attract more hunters.

Why did you cancel brood counts? Because the numbers are Down!

The only reason to extend the season is so hunters can shoot 3 birds in the whole season.

Quit screwing around wasting money! Find out why our pheasants died! Improve our habitat!

Gregory Pauley

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

THE ONLY REASON YOU ARE EXTENDING THE SEASON AND THE BAG LIMIT TO 4 IS THAT YOU NEED THE MONEY. MAYBE YOU ALL SHOULD SELL YOUR GRANDMOTHERS INSTEAD, I AM SURE IF YOU CAN SELL OUT THE PHEASANT SEASON FOR MONEY, YOU CAN SELL GRAMMA

Mark Widman

Tea SD

Position: other

Comment:

I am writing to comment on the Pheasant Hunting proposal. I don't have a problem having an earlier starting time, although it breaks with tradition. I do oppose the increase bag limit from 3 to 4 roosters and extending the season through the end of January. There is no science behind these proposals. In my opinion, you aren't going to get more people in the fields, because they can shoot one more bird in late December and January. I also don't believe that you're going to get more people hunting in January than you already have hunting the last few days of the season now. Have you lived in South Dakota in January? Besides being damn cold and very windy for hunting, the science should be used to determine if more pheasants should be taken instead of how money can be made.

John Meyen

Rosholt SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose extending the Pheasant season in January. This proposal will not just effect pheasants, but all of our wintering wildlife. This is a time of year when Pheasants other small game and big game like deer need to conserve their energy. Depending on the temperature and weather they struggle to take in enough food to maintain their body condition. Having an extended Pheasant season would most likely interfere with small game and big game's daily foraging for enough food to survive.

Craig Olson

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As an agricultural rural landowner in South Dakota I would not be in favor of extending the pheasant season to the end of January because of the practice of people being able to drive around with fully loaded shotguns, slam on the brakes, jump out and shoot pheasants on the ground, including pheasants sitting on the ground on private property, even shooting through fences causing property damage. Pheasants tend to come out on gravel and dirt roads looking for grit and food in the winter increasing the potential for this problem I mentioned. Agricultural rural landowners have to look after their own land for law breakers and trespassers. Extending the season would just make the burden longer.

John Anderson

Maple Grove MN

Position: support

Comment:

As a MN resident, I have hunted SD Pheasants every year since 1989 and I average 3-5 trips per year. I own 2 houses in Tolstoy SD and I have leased a family farm to hunt pheasants and ducks for over 25 years. I have invested well over \$200,000 into my passion over the last 25 years and I believe these are all excellent proposals which will benefit Non residents hunters and the citizens of SD. I strongly encourage approval of these amendments.

John Dady

Mobridge SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose extending the season. January is winter time. Many animals need to conserve energy for next 3 months before spring. There are a lot of idiots out there that will be getting stuck on section lines and getting buried in ditches. The season is long enough. If the state cant make enough money off out of state hunters in Oct. Nov. Dec, maybe they should look at other sources of funding or cut back spending.

Dennis Mann

Piedmont SD

Position: support

Comment:

These comments are from the Greater Dacotah Chapter of Safari Club International, Paul Vinatieri chapter president

Clayton Larson

Selby SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

You already messed up the deer applications for the tax paying residents, to favor the out of state hunters. Now you want to mess up the pheasant season for the out of stater too. Leave well enough alone its all part of our heritage.

Joseph Oro

Watertown SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

David Grossklaus

West Des Moines IA

Position: support

Comment:

I wholeheartedly support the proposal for the extension of the pheasant season. I certainly would prefer a January hunt in South Dakota over a hunt in Kansas. This would add two more trips for to South Dakota. Thank you for a state that values increased hunting opportunities.

Joanne Hegg

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

There is no earthly reason to have a longer pheasant season when the bird count is WAY down. Why can't you people setting in Pierre in an office get it right once?? Ask a farmer about this ridiculous suggestion? We feed, water, have food plots for them ,and try to keep this great South Dakota beautiful tradition going. Why in heavens name do you want to destroy it..ALSO stop messing up the fishing we have here, and don't have the Minneasotans fish here before their season opens. Well hope you hear us and don't just put this situation aside..... Also some of the farmers just might close any hunting at all.....

Cj Lapp

Eureka SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am a rancher and avid hunter strongly oppose changes by longer season and increased bag limits seems crazy to even think about these changes ! Don't do it!

Randy Saager

Dakota Dunes SD

Position: support

Comment:

Having the entire season open at 10am makes sense. I never understood the noon start. Also, increased daily bag and extending the season would be helpful for our tourism.

Martin Vanderploeg

Martin SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Once again, hunter opportunity trumps wildlife management. Moving hens out of cover in January stress the birds and exposes them to predators.

Raising the limit will reduce hunter satisfaction as "getting a limit" has been shown to correlate strongly to hunter satisfaction, where the number of the limit has little correlation.

It is amazing how history and facts are ignored to create more hunter opportunity which has been shown not help to help bolster hunter numbers or license revenue. Focus on hunting quality and overall quality of the experience if you want to try to get young people in the field.

Marty Vanderploeg

Richard Kangas

Glenwood MN

Position: support

Comment:

I support extending pheasant season through January 31. I will buy additional license to hunt in January.

Pam Kohnen

Hitchcock SD

Position: support

Comment:

10 am start good idea

Raymond Scharrer

Kinsman OH

Position: oppose

Comment:

hi, no different than our perch fishing on lake erie in ohio, you can increase the limit to whatever you like.... the population isnt what it was but you cant harvest what isnt there. spend more time money on habitat

Steve Halverson

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

My name is Steve Halverson. I am a Pierre resident and a Lyman County Farmer and Rancher. I have also operated a commercial hunting operation on my farm since 1985. We host 400+ clients annually.

I am opposed to changing the start time for hunting season to 10am. My reason for saying this is it will hurt our rural businesses. I cannot tell you how many of my clients arrive at the farm with a brand new shotgun, hunting gear, etc. that was purchased on the morning of opening day because of the excitement. This will not affect my business. However, our rural main street businesses need all the help they can get in these trying times. Keeping the hunters in town for a few extra hours can have a huge impact.

I support lengthening the season to January 31. In my opinion, it will not have a negative effect on the pheasant population and may provide a few more opportunities for local and out of state sportsmen and women. In my opinion, late season hunts are the best!

Finally, I oppose changing the bird limit to 4 birds in Dec. of 2021. Our 3 bird limit has served us well for generations. Anyone who wants to shoot more than 3 has plenty of opportunities at area preserves. Ten years ago I would have supported this proposal. However, given our dismal pheasant numbers since 2012, we need to focus on improving pheasant numbers first.

Thank you,

Steve Halverson
118 Terri Ln
Pierre SD 57501
605-222-0270

Jeremy Hadrava

Laporte MN

Position: support

Comment:

For a non resident hunter the increased daily limit and possession limit are a nice addition. I would also like to see additional opportunities with maybe a trial of having the opening time adjusted to 9:00 AM for a trial period also. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

James Swenson

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not think it is a good idea or even a good thought to raise the bird limit this year !! I have seen less birds out in the fields this year than I have in the past !! Its great to have people that come to our state to hunt or fish and they can go home and say we got our limit !!! With that being said I think it would be a much better idea to LOWER the limit to two birds that way at least they MIGHT have a chance to get a limit !! 4 bird limit ar you kidding me ????? Also your going to stop the bird count ?? Is that just so you do not have to say how few of birds are REALLY out there ???

Lee Grabau

Smithville MO

Position: support

Comment:

I support and appreciate the proposal to extend the season to Jan 31 and increased bag limits late season. This means 2 more trips to SD on weekends for hunting AWESOME !! You will get even more \$\$ from me lodging, eating and shopping. I would really like SD to have a "Out of state annual license choice" vs the 2-5 day choice . Even if its \$300 (I buy 2 per year now and probably 3 this year if proposal passes). One annual license for those of us that frequent would be handy and probably promote more trips and spending.

Brent Bargmann

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I want to comment on the proposed changes to the pheasant season.

I am a landowner and avid hunter. I spend a significant amount of time, effort & personal expense on creating and maintaining pheasant habitat. This habitat includes annual food plots & creation of wooded habitat. I participate in NCRS & GFP programs.

The reason I marked "Oppose" to these changes is primarily based on the process used to propose/make these changes. If there is sufficient data which supports making these changes, please present it!!!

I think the average South Dakotan is capable of critical thinking and if presented with scientific data and analysis which supports these changes, we will agree. But just dropping the brood count because you don't like the numbers and then not providing another source of data to justify your position is simply irresponsible.

Here is a direct quote from the most recent article I have read on this topic; "South Dakota's hunting season is roosters only and the state knows from its data in the spring that it's going into the hunting season with plenty of roosters, Travis Runia, a senior upland game biologist with GFP, told the Argus Leader."

So, show us this data, show us the historical trend line, perform some statistical significance analysis to convince us that the decision is based on sound principles.

I and many other private citizens of this state work very hard to support pheasant numbers. When decisions like this appear to be made in a vacuum, or worse, are made only with financial benefits in mind, it really leaves a bad taste in our mouths.

Brent Bargmann

Leigh McMasters

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

After three years of the worst pheasant numbers the state has ever had, I cannot believe you are even talking about this. I have been hunting the public lands around the Pierre area and the numbers have diminished every year to the point of seeing NO BIRDS as often as seeing a couple of birds. Please, stay at three birds and also start putting in food plots again.

Mark Peterson

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the extension of the season into the months when pheasants are extremely vulnerable.

I also oppose the elimination of the brood county survey as it was a way for out of town hunters to hunt areas where the bird counts were still good. Elimination of this may keep this year's hunters coming, but when they show up to areas where there are minimal birds they will probably never return.

The only way to "fix" the pheasant issue is habitat. Habitat isn't road ditches its all the outlying ground that has been put into production which has eliminated nesting and brooding habitat where young chicks can grow and feed on insects. Current production with chemically resistant crops eliminates and sterilizes fields so even on crop ground there is limited habitat and food. Herbicides and Pesticides appear to also have an impact on mortality of the young pheasants, from comments I have gotten from multiple family farmers I know, stating they don't see the young birds anymore after late spray applications, especially on soybeans.

Also, with the decline in hunting the areas where pheasant hunting is good are limited. This pushes more to either give up hunting or pay for their hunts. Paying for hunting or fishing eliminates much of our youth from participation in the outdoor sports, especially when you factor in that a weekend 3 day pheasant hunt for a father/child can cost as much as a 1/2 of beef.

Fix those issues and you fix the pheasant number & hunter issues. The answer isn't to kill more and extend the season all while eliminating any information regarding current pheasant populations.

Benjamin Brown

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose the proposal to extend the season another month and increase the limit to 4 birds per person for the last 2 months of that season. The pheasant population has been on a downward spiral for the last decade and it's not looking promising that they will bounce back anytime soon. This is the last thing that we need to do, and hunt them when they're most vulnerable in tough weather conditions and in concentrated areas. Then to boot were going to kill more of them as well? This doesn't make any sense and it's all about the mighty dollar and getting more nonresidents into the state to spend money. The GFP has even mentioned several times that they're working with the Department of Tourism on this proposal. I know that these comments are all in vain, as we all know the SDGFP did NOT listen to the outdoorsmen and women of South Dakota on the deer proposal and they're not going to listen on this either. Please use a little common sense and reject this proposal.

James Chance

Smith Center KS

Position: other

Comment:

I think South Dakota should put more emphasis on habitat. When it comes down to it, it's the habitat that keeps birds alive and reproducing. Crp is the important thing I hope you consider. Dont be like kansas down here where the habitat is disappearing at an alarming rate. I hunt 60 plus days a year during pheasant and quail season. I see first hand of what good habitat will bring and I also see the habitat disappearing, along with the bird numbers. I remember when I was a kid when it wasn't nothing to kick out 50 plus birds in one spot. That's not the case anymore. Habitat is what keeps birds alive and reproducing. No habitat equals low number of birds, which then means low numbers of hunters. It a trickle down affect.

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Position: other

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Dennis Pugh

Akaska SD

Position: support

Comment:

why not last 2 weeks be SD hunters only

Thomas Oines

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I believe that increasing bag limits and hunting season lengths are a huge mistake. Our wild bird numbers are still way off from where they should be. If land owners need the extra season the current hunting preserve lawsgive them that option.

Christopher Lupo

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Public lands that hold birds already get hammered every weekend for 10-11 weeks straight (add another 4 weeks if including grouse). Extending adds another 3-4 weeks of pressure during one of the coldest months. Policy makers are likely mistaken if they think extending the season into January will draw more out-of-state upland hunters/money.

If all you're after is out-of-state money, I do agree ending the brood surveys will help tremendously because those reports can be deceiving with how much error is associated with the calculations/methods - I'm sure many hunting trips hinge on those data.

Doug Leschisin

Eden SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a resident of South Dakota, I oppose the proposal to increase the daily bag limit of pheasants to four birds. The goal to increase the number of pheasant hunters by increasing the bag limit will place additional stress on already reduced populations. Lack of habitat is the problem of reduced populations, and the disinterest of out-of-state hunters. Increased habitat will result in more birds and more hunters will show up. Increasing bag limits when habitat is lacking is the absolutely dumbest idea I've ever heard of.

Michael Duncan

Aberdeen Sd SD

Position: support

Comment:

This is a fantastic idea to extend the hunting season longer into January. Myself and a lot of friends always wish we had more opportunities to hunt late season. I also have a lot of out of state family that would love the chance to hunt later into the year which will continue to help bring additional revenue into the state. Would love to see shooting times start earlier in the morning before 10 for the last couple weeks as well.

I don't believe we should increase the limit of roosters to 4. 3 roosters per person per day is more than enough to continue making South Dakota pheasant hunting successful. This will really only help pheasant preserves allowing their hunters to shoot more birds. 3 is plenty for people out hunting public land or private not preserve hunts.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on this.

Melissa Oberle

Mellette SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I believe start time should not be till 12pm for the whole season. Especially opening weekend. To put it bluntly you have a lot of parties the night before, and no need to put them out in the fields early. Also late season hunts disturb habitat and make all animals anxious. Need to focus more on CRP and keeping habitat to get bird numbers back up.

Tod Johnson

Norfolk NE

Position: other

Comment:

I would propose that you go from two periods of five day non-resident license to a three periods of three day license.

Personally this would be more appealing to me a non resident.

Damon Opp

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Strongly oppose extending pheasant season dates, increasing daily bag limit/ possession limit. With reduced pheasant numbers, reduced CRP, reduced habitat and increased hunting pressure the season should be shortened if anything.

Curtis Kline

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Normally I think the GFP does a good job managing wildlife and people for the maximum benefit of both. However these new pheasant season proposals are nothing more than a money grab.

The state is trying anything and everything to entice more out of state hunters to come and hunt pheasants. This includes getting rid of the august counts so they wont know the bird numbers are down.

Extending the season until Jan 31 is irresponsible and will cause undue burden on the resource. Nebraska and Kansas can get away with it because those climates are no where near as harsh as a South Dakota winter. The stress on pheasants they will receive by being pushed out of sloughs, using up stored fat to avoid hunters will kill more pheasants than hunters will. This will lead to poor hatches and less pheasants the next year.

Also this will effect winter deer survival as deer use the same sloughs the pheasants do to survive the harsh winters.

Its not a hard concept to grasp. Habitat is the one factor that will exponentially restore pheasant numbers now and in the future. Year after year I see ditches mowed before the legal date but have never seen or heard of any enforcement action against this. In dry years the first thing out the window is the prohibition of haying walk in and crep lands. 750,000 dollar advertisement campaign, how about putting that money into permanent habitat. Paying 5-10 dollars for coon tails from Minnehaha county which does not have any pheasants any way is a waste of money. Put that money into permanent habitat.

Your not going to get more pheasants by creating a government task force. All you need is permanent habitat. Permanent habitat will produce more birds, winter more birds and provide more hunting opportunity for pheasants. With this hunters will come.

Patrick Teal

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I don't believe extending the season and bag limit is going to increase the number of hunters, resident or nonresident. Most hunters that continue to hunt late season have already purchased their license and have been hunting the earlier season. The number of wild birds in the state needs to be addressed. Today's farming practices, which I understand to be necessary, and the decreased number of acres in CRP have decimated the habitat and without additional habitat bird numbers are not going to increase substantially. The CREP and Walk in land that is available, for the most part is poor hunting ground and is not managed for birds. Money must be invested in food plots on these program lands if you want to increase the number of birds available to the hunters that are not pay to hunt nonresident and residents. If you want to excite hunters and increase the number of hunters in South Dakota, be choosier about the ground that you allow into the programs and initiate food plot programs and you will make a statement and increase your numbers. I am in the field 5 days a week during the season and can tell you that there is a lot of Dead Sea in the CREP and Walk in parcels. Focus on the programs you have and enhance the Land and market it and you will see a difference. Thanks for your time.

Jason Schuldt

Spearfish SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Where I grew up (west of Stickney in Aurora County), it used to be easy to get three pheasants in a half hour of hunting. In the last three seasons, I have taken a grand total of two birds. The population simply isn't there anymore. Making the season longer, and especially increasing the bag limit seems to me more like a tactic to sell more nonresident licenses and less like a plan to help turn the population trend around. Pheasants need good habitat and weather, with a minimum of predators to flourish. The habitat is still there, but if the population can't be increased, it certainly shouldn't be hunted harder.

David Oliver

Waubay SD

Position: other

Comment:

Who are you kidding raising the limit to 4 birds a day when the average harvest on non preserve hunting is less than 2 birds. It's also not much of a change allowing earlier shooting times when it's already 10 am two weeks after the season Opens. Extending the season is also meaningless as very few people hunt after Christmas. It's no great mystery that to increase license sales you need more land access and more birds. The increase in preserve hunting which most people can't afford is leading to the demise of resident pheasant hunting. Also, I wouldn't publish brood survey either with the dismal trend in the pheasant population.

Ethan Cole

Langford SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Regarding the proposed extension of the pheasant season. I am a predator trapper, i never set snares until pheasant season has closed due to the fear of possibly catching someone's hunting dog. January is a big month for predator hunters because of prime fur. Extending the pheasant season through January would be taking opportunities away from people like myself who enjoy more than just pheasant hunting. Not to mention in the case of a hard winter, deer and pheasants often congregate in similar locations. If people are out chasing pheasants in -20° temperatures they will also be putting stress on the deer herds. My suggestion would be leave the season dates and bag limits as they are and raise the non-resident license fee. If they want to open the season at 10am i don't see a problem with that.

Greg Morgan

Mellette SD

Position: other

Comment:

As a landowner and pheasant hunter, I am against extending the pheasant season to the end of January. There is no good reason to be pushing wildlife out of their cover during the hardest month of winter for survival. I support your other proposal's.

Kenneth Labrie

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

What additional good will moving a time for 1 week for the resident hunt from noon to 10? No way this will help with any issues. Brood counts should continue so you know what should or shouldn't be done with the harvest/production of more birds. You don't need to publish the counts. It doesn't have to be public information. Showing a huge decrease in bird population then advertising it is a real problem. CRP coming out has undoubtedly impacted the population therefore I believe more public hunting ground would help, and maintaining better food plots in the public ground would assist. Water drainage is a problem with the farm tiling occurring....raising an issue with water supply for birds. You are concentrating on issues to increase the hunting licenses without concentrating on the real problem that is the underlying reason the license sales being down. Do something to increase bird population and the license problem will solve itself. Raising the limit to 4 isn't going to work if there's no birds to be found anyways!

Chuck Crompton

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am writing in regards to the pheasant season proposal by game fish and parks. The time change WHY the seasons changes after the first weekend now. Hunters don't stay away because it opens at noon. Extending the season is OK. Very few hunters will participate, only the die hearts. The weather will dictate the season any ways. Changing the limit NO. There is no reason to shoot more birds. Three is plenty. Late in the season the birds will be bunched up and will be slaughtered. I feel the end of the brood survey was in deed done to get more hunters to come to South Dakota no matter what. Two years ago, the count was way down in our area, Ipswich. The next year the count was up 47% . 47% of nothing is still nothing. The GFP says it wants to be transparent. Maybe there should be a question on the bird kill survey that asks, of the birds shot, how many were shot on "canned" hunts. the GFP takes credit for the all the released birds that are shot as wild birds. This inflates the bird count, just like a good brood count in the spring.

Adam Karst

Watertown SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the extension of the season to January 31st to encourage more hunting participation.

I would also like the commission to consider opening the pheasant season 1 week or 2 weeks earlier to encourage more hunting participation.

Thank you,

Adam Karst

Denny Brahmer

Wittenberg WI

Position: support

Comment:

I totally support the 10 AM opening rather than noon. The scenting conditions are so much better as well as the cooler temperatures for the dogs. In addition, you wouldn't have to waste the morning sitting around waiting for hunting to start. Thanks, Denny

Jeff Ball

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

As a resident South Dakota pheasant hunting please register my support for the proposed season changes currently under consideration.

Joanne Hegg

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

You cannot even think of extending the pheasant season when the bird count is way down...do you want to do away with our great wonderful tradition of a bird hunt in SD...?? I will work to get a lot of our hunting lands to be closed to hunters..

Tim Plimpton

Beaver Creek MN

Position: support

Comment:

The out of state hunting fees could be addressed with the season as well. All neighboring states allows the out-of-state- hunter access to a full season. South Dakota limits the season to 10 days and you have to select your 2-5 day periods. Open the entire season to the out of state hunter and you will easily recoup the 10,000 you lost just in one year. The amount lost in license fees is \$1,300,000.00 in revenue. Open up your season to the out of state hunter and you will see revenues triple in the next 2 years, Tim Plimpton.

Alan Downen

Mcleansboro IL

Position: support

Comment:

I very much support the extension of the season to 1/31 and the increase in the limit after 12/1. In addition, I would suggest a start time in line with other states (30 minutes before sunrise). I see no purpose in the 10 a.m. start time and when the time changes you lose another hour of hunting. We drive a long way to hunt your great state and would like more hours in the field. Thanks for your consideration.

Leslie Smith

Albion IL

Position: support

Comment:

Please let the hunting time start at sunrise

Gary Hoelsing

Boise ID

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a former resident of SD., (from 82 to '89) and still an avid bird hunter, I believe SD holds a special place for Pheasant Hunters because you have held firm on solid laws regarding your bird season. I have hunted SD (last year), Nebr. Iowa and Kansas in previous years. All other states have fewer birds because of longer shooting hours, longer seasons and less good habitat. If you want to change anything, increase the 2 - 5 day periods to 3 for non residents. Maybe reward loyalty for those who are repeat / return hunters and/or bring a new hunter to SD. Do not mess - up a good thing by copying other places that have fewer birds!!

Jerry Awe

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Cody Miles

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

we are finally getting pheasant numbers to come back. why would we increase the limit and extend the season? I would rather see the limit go down to 2 and get the numbers where they should be

Jim Miles

Mitchell SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Mark Nixon

Frederick SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Todd Sundvold

Clark SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

while i love to hunt pheasants,i dont think we need to extend the season.i dont think we need to keep pushing the birds out of the little cover thats left that time of year,exposing them to the elements

Kit Hart

Spokane WA

Position: other

Comment:

I am a non-resident pheasant hunter and annually hunt in one or more of the prime pheasant states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska or Kansas. I am writing to let SD decision makers know that cancelling the brood survey should be reconsidered. Many hunters use this information to see that South Dakota often has the most birds per mile of survey route. The survey is also used to determine the best areas of the state to hunt. It was the brood survey that originally attracted me (and at least 10 other non-resident hunters in my group) to South Dakota (and away from North Dakota) during a down population year for both states. Frankly to dispense with the survey without first replacing it with another population index is foolish. There is great value in the survey results other than informing the pheasant hunting regulations, which was never the purpose. I believe not providing the information will put SD at a disadvantage.

The proposed changes in the SD pheasant hunting regulations will help attract non-resident hunters. Changing the daily start time to sunrise after the first two weeks of the season would also help and would provide the same opportunity available in the other states.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Rick Jackson

Maple Grove MN

Position: support

Comment:

What is the reason you will not be doing the counts this year, \$90,000 invested to make 200 million seems lie a light investment. No I do not change where I will go based on the road side survey, but I do keep tract and when the birds are up I try new places when they are down I go to the same old places that produced bird in the past. I have hunted SD for 46 yrs, was born and raised in SD and now live out of state. This seems to be a stupid move, guarantee not motivated by the cost to do it.

Fred Hart

Britton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The proposed season for January is the most difficult month for wildlife in South Dakota. Chasing hens, deer out of cover can be a death sentence for them. I strongly oppose this change.

Kyle Nehowig

Clitherall MN

Position: support

Comment:

I support extending the pheasant season.

James Berg

Papillion NE

Position: oppose

Comment:

I was born and raised in SD and return every year to hunt pheasants. A 12:00 start is tradition and should be kept for the opening week. A 3 bird bag limit is more than sufficient. Numbers are down and most hunters I know come for the camaraderie and hospitality, not the bag limit. We get plenty of shooting trying to bag 3 birds. Don't change something that works.

Rodney Mendel

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the lengthing the of the pheasant season.

Cooper Garnos

Presho SD

Position: support

Comment:

Dear SD GF&P Commissioners:

We are in support of the proposed changes to the SD Pheasant Hunting Season.

- 1) 10:00 am Start on opening weekends. Strong support.
 - 2) 4 bag limit after December 1st
 - 3) Extension of season through January
- Thank you for the consideration with these important matters.

Best Regards.
Cooper Garnos

Frank Russell

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support the present time change to 10:00 AM at the beginning of the pheasant season, I also support raising the bag limit to four per day. We need to get more young people involved and pheasant hunting on public land. Being a disabled hunter Every little bit helps. Thank you

Scott Olson

Corsica SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The Department of Tourism is only interested in exploiting our pheasant hunting resources. These resources are dwindling and instead of trying to bring more people to hunt public or private lands by adding more length or a four bird limit, we need to increase the number of birds in the state. Increasing our birds is the only honest way to sell more licenses, gasoline, lodging and increase sales tax revenue. The most untapped resource SDGFP has is the waterfowl hunting that should be given to the nonresident. Our state lands offer fantastic opportunity as well as the same economic benefits the Department of Tourism wants to achieve without exploiting already over tapped Pheasant hunting.

Jeffrey Bangma

Lake Elmo MN

Position: support

Comment:

Excellent idea to start at 10 AM on opening weekend. We can then more comfortably stay an extra day before heading back to MN. We've been hunting the opener for the last 35 years and would not miss it for the world. Thanks to all of you and we want Gov Noem for president!

Kent Siemonsma

Humboldt SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

What a joke. Less Pheasants so lets shoot more? All this is for is the almighty dollar.

John Mills

Volga SD

Position: other

Comment:

In general I support the season changes being considered, with 2 exceptions.

1) I think we should retain the current noon start for the beginning of the season.

Reason: The largest influx of non-resident hunters occurs in the first couple weeks of the season. Giving them additional time to explore the Main Street of our small towns increases business sales and sales tax collections.

2) I like the idea of extending the pheasant season through January, in fact I might even prefer it go even longer -with a caveat. I think that after January 1, the season should be able to be closed on short notice depending on the weather.

Reason: The stress on hens is the concern. With lots of snow, the birds are confined to limited remaining cover. Forcing them to exit that cover to avoid a hunter or dog increases the stress and calories used by hens and will increase hen mortality. Hen mortality is also increased under heavy snow conditions, as any dog owner knows, because dogs are much more likely to catch a hen before it flushes under these conditions. If we want to increase our bird population, we must try to give hens the best chance of surviving.

Steve Chilson

Watertown SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The grass Lake Conservation club recently voted to oppose the 3 proposed changes to the pheasant season. We strongly oppose extending the season to Jan 31. Chasing birds out of what little cover is left during the coldest and harshest weather of the year, will kill more birds (including hens) than the hunters will. The few nice days we have in January (which is when most people will hunt) the birds need those days to look for food and not be chased off those food sources by hunting. Winter mortality could increase and hurt the struggling population. Increasing the bag limit to 4 will give out-of-state hunters a false idea that the population is higher than ever. They will be very disappointed when it isn't and may decide not to come back next year after being "fooled" this year. Our club members have not heard of a single person in the last 30 years saying we should have a higher bag limit. (If its not broke) One member commented it would be a nightmare to enforce if you change the bag limit during the season (former gfp regional CO). We hear from biologists that you cannot hurt the population by killing too many roosters. Then why do we have any limits in the first place????? If you have to change it, start out with 4 for the whole season. On the shooting hour change, let the birds have a chance to feed. AT 10 in the morning there will be more birds in the roads that will lead to increased road hunting which will cause more problems with trespass, etc. (is "road hunting an ethical way to hunt in the first place????) After all its about the hunt-working the dogs, good times with friend and relatives in the field, NOT ON THE ROADS. Thanks for hearing the publics input. Grass lake Cons. Club is a small group made up of landowners and sportsmen located in the Watertown area. We have a membership of around 25 longtime members. thanks again Steve Chilson, President.

Kenneth Johnson

Yankton SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

see attachment

Jere Hieb

Brookings SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

see attachment

Derek Schiefelbein

Pierre SD

Position: other

Comment:

see attachment

Jeffrey Clow

Harrisburg SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Game Fish and Parks Commission

I would like to comment on the proposed changes to the 2020 and 2021 Pheasant Season. Changing the start time to 10 a.m. for

the whole season along with ending all of the upland hunting on the same day simplifies the regulations which is a good thing.

The item that I have a problems with is the 4 bird limit. With no size limit to group hunting, birds bunching up when the weather

turns cooler and a bag limit of 4 birds I can see no other way to describe this but as being greedy. 3 birds per hunter is great

plenty, 3 birds make a big meal and 3 birds is what the surrounding states have as a bag limit. If the only way non residents will

come to hunt late season pheasants is with a 4 bird limit I'm not so sure that's the type of hunters that we want in our state. Just a

side thought if you wanted to do some thing for the resident hunters of this state increase the resident only season to the week

before the traditional opener instead of just 3 days a week before.

Thank You for your time

Jeff Clow

Justin Allen

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm opposed to lengthening the pheasant season as well as raising the limit from 3 to 4 at any point in the season. Does thinning out some additional roosters help the remaining birds over the winter? In high densities with hard winters it might. But doing so in Jan. I think does much more harm than good. Pushing birds continuously out of winter cover does in fact stress the birds and reduce fat reserves. So while you might kill a few more roosters you will be putting the remaining hens behind the 8 ball going into another 3 months of winter. This is especially true when we get early snow in December and much of the cover is blown in by Mid December. These birds already have a long tough winter ahead of them as is. They don't need to be pushed out of cover for another month. I like to think I'm as avid pheasant hunter in the state as they get and live for late season hunting in the snow but I think the proposal is a bad idea. My biggest concern isn't the concept but who is likely pushing the proposal. It isn't GFP but the governor's office and Dept. of Tourism. It isn't by chance this proposal is in the same year we have dropped roadside survey while spending \$750k of out of state advertising instead. This proposal is all about selling more out of state licenses and lodges making some more money, Nothing more. Pretty sad. The season is already 11-12 weeks long. Leave the limit and season length as is.

Thank for your time.

Mike Burr

Huron SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I vehemently oppose the proposed new Pheasant regulations of extended season, earlier time start, discontinuation of Pheasant count, and bag limit of 4 birds. This is such a blatant move to make more money at the expense of the pheasants. Whoever thought of these couldn't have been a biologist but a bean counter trying to keep the budget propped up. Come on are you seriously going ahead with these cockamamie proposals. No one I have discussed this with thinks the GFP should go ahead with these disastrous proposals.

Kevin Cromer

Las Vegas NV

Position: support

Comment:

Letting the Grass Grow in the Ditches would be a very great help to the population of Pheasants! Have the farmer leave a buffer around their land for the birds and other animals! Stop stripping every square inch of land of crops and CRP! Thanks I Love your State but have seen it decline over last 10 years! Maybe put a bounty on coyotes! Thanks Kevin C

Private Shooting Preserve Bag Limits

Bill Mullium

Volga SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Come on GFP, you are supposed to be a state wildlife agency that supports ethics and manages wildlife in this great state. If rich hunters that come to our great state want to drink, have a good time, and shoot roosters until the chickens crow, let's tell them to go somewhere that condone such behavior. In our great state, we respect wildlife and value the harvest, not buying a service where we disgrace it. If someone what's to shoot that many birds, have them shoot clay pigeons or shoot targets and retain the respect that wildlife deserves. This proposal is a disgrace to ethical hunters.

Tom Covey

Winner SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

It has come to my attention that at least one game cleaning contractor has to throw away hundreds to thousands of birds every year because the lodges do not pick them up. And then these birds can not even be donated to food banks. I am sure this is not an isolated incident. Until there is a solution to this, I can not support more waste of our natural resources.

Patricia Braun

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

do NOT allow unlimited pheasant hunting on private reserves. Good grief, it doesn't make sense wild or farm raised! It is obscene to shoot as many as you wish!

Mike Carlbom

Interior SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

More revenue for the pheasant farmers verging on wanton waste of game. Most out of staters don't take home and eat the pheasants they get now. As bad of idea as using the bighorn sheep high dollar license money to support the pheasant farmers. Regular SD hunters can't even find a place to hunt pheasants anymore.

Bob Waterbury

Herrick SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

South Dakota Game Commission, I have been a shooting preserve operator for over 30 years And I have seen a lot of changes. But, offering hunters a license to shoot an unlimited number of birds on a shooting preserve makes me worry about how the public and anti hunters will view us. With the current limit of 25 birds per hunter I think this should be plenty of birds for anyone to take in one day if they choose. Also, how much more pressure will be put on the wild bird population if hunters are allowed to shoot an unlimited number of birds? We, as preserve operators, need to look at what presumptions will be made by the general public. We want to get along with the general public And work very hard To hunt ethically and protect habitat and the wild bird population. We want to keep our preserves. A lot of public hunters see preserves as taking away the rights of the general population, in allowing preserve hunters to harvest an unlimited number of Birds are we confirming these very misconceptions? In closing, I hope that you will look at what I have to say carefully and not pass this unnecessary proposal.

Public Waters

Bill Barnett

Hartford SD

Position: support

Comment:

East River mirranding water continues. Please revisit land owner opposition to public use. Mindsets are changing. Small farms are facing critical financial status would welcome new water access leases.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

1255 23rd Street, NW
Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037
P 202-452-1100
F 202-778-6132
humanesociety.org

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Co-Chair

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Co-Chair

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August 12, 2020

Gary Jensen, Commission Chair
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Tony Leif, Wildlife Division Director
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Comments on the proposed bobcat hunting and trapping season

Dear Chairman Jensen, Director Leif and Members of the Commission,

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States and our South Dakota supporters, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed expansion of bobcat hunting and trapping in the state.

Most states, including South Dakota, do not have a firm grasp on their bobcat population sizes, densities and demographics because they heavily rely on anecdotal data, such as hunter surveys.¹ Bobcat population density is largely determined by the availability of prey² and, competition with other carnivores,³ among other limiting factors. As such, sport hunting and trapping is wholly unnecessary for keeping their populations in check. Beyond unnecessary recreational hunting, South Dakota's bobcats face a multitude of other threats, including loss of habitat and climate change. Despite these concerns and uncertainties, hunters and trappers in South Dakota kill approximately 350 bobcats every year. With no quota in place, nearly doubling the area where bobcats can be killed would allow an unknown number of additional bobcats to be taken.

Bobcats can live up to 15 years in the wild⁴ but face a variety of threats over that time—most from people, including hunters, trappers, poachers, vehicle collisions,⁵ and predator-control agents (for perceived or real livestock losses).⁶ Yet, economic analysis shows that these rare, native cats are worth far more alive than dead. Trappers in South Dakota make up less than 0.5% of the population and those who trap bobcats typically sell their furs to overseas markets, such as to China and Russia.⁷ In comparison, wildlife-watchers – those who enjoy catching a bobcat on film – vastly outnumber and outspend those who wish to catch them in a steel-jawed leghold trap.⁸ In addition to income generated through wildlife watching, bobcats benefit farmers by preying on rabbits, mice and other small rodents that may damage crops.

For further information regarding our position, please see the attached appendix, which includes a comprehensive analysis as to why expanding bobcat trophy hunting and trapping in South Dakota is irresponsible and goes against the best available science. For all of these reasons, I urge the Commission to not approve the proposed bobcat trapping and hunting expansion and, instead, protect these small native carnivores from unnecessary killing.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Nickerson
Nebraska and South Dakota State Director
The Humane Society of the United States



¹ Elbroch et al., "Contrasting bobcat values."

² D. B. Lesmeister et al., "Spatial and Temporal Structure of a Mesocarnivore Guild in Midwestern North America," Article, *Wildlife Monographs* 191, no. 1 (May 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1002/wmon.1015>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000353896300001.

³ J. S. Lewis et al., "Contact Networks Reveal Potential for Interspecific Interactions of Sympatric Wild Felids Driven by Space Use," *Ecosphere* 8, no. 3 (2017); J. Witczuk et al., "Niche Overlap between Sympatric Coyotes and Bobcats in Highland Zones of Olympic Mountains, Washington," *Journal of Zoology* 297, no. 3 (2015); Hias Melville et al., "Prey Selection by Three Mesopredators That Are Thought to Prey on Eastern Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris Gallopavo Sylvestris*) in the Pineywoods of East Texas," *Southeastern Naturalist* 14, no. 3 (2015); D. B. Lesmeister et al., "Spatial and Temporal Structure of a Mesocarnivore Guild in Midwestern North America," *Wildlife Monographs* 191, no. 1 (2015).

⁴ Luke Hunter, *Carnivores of the World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011).

⁵ Alisa Ellsworth et al., "California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Inland Deserts Region: Eastern Sierra Nevada Bobcat Study: Annual Report," <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=135918&inline> (2016); S. A. Poessel et al., "Roads influence movement and home ranges of a fragmentation-sensitive carnivore, the bobcat, in an urban landscape," Article, *Biological Conservation* 180 (Dec 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2014.10.010>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000346211700022.

⁶ The Humane Society of the United States, "Government data confirm that cougars have a negligible effect on U.S. cattle and sheep industries," https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/Cougar-Livestock-6.Mar_.19-Final.pdf (2019).

⁷ Bobcat: *Lynx rufus*. Threats. <https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/12521/50655874#threats>.

⁸ U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau. 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation



Appendix

I. Bobcat density estimates vary and are poorly understood

A bobcat's home range is a fixed area that includes necessary resources for life, such as sufficient prey, water resources, and denning sites where mothers can rear their kittens.¹ Male and female bobcats establish home ranges with considerable overlap. Male bobcats generally occupy larger home ranges than females – typically two to three times the size.² The average range size for a female bobcat is from 1 km² to 86 km² while the average range for a male bobcat is from 2 km² to 325 km².³ Bobcats' home range size is strongly correlated with their population density, which is dictated by prey availability.⁴ But unless an intensive study has been undertaken, states have a poor grasp on their population sizes, densities and demographics.

Bobcat density estimates vary widely, including 4 to 6 bobcats per 100 km² (e.g., in Idaho, Minnesota, Utah) and 20 to 28 per 100 km² (e.g. Arizona and Nevada).⁵ Most states have neither reliable statewide population nor trend data; wildlife managers are wholly reliant on untrustworthy anecdotal data including from states' hunter surveys, sightings and vehicle collisions.⁶

II. Bobcats' preferred habitat is vanishing

Bobcats' ability to adapt to many different natural habitats increases their survival. Bobcats have a wide habitat tolerance and can live in almost any natural habitat that provides cover, which they require in order to hunt. However, bobcats are sensitive to human activities,⁷ including human development and disturbance.⁸

Bobcats avoid urban and exurban (that is, low density housing in formerly pristine areas) lands,⁹ and deep snow.¹⁰ Alarming, exurban areas are gobbling up wildlife habitats and are many times greater in size than all suburban and urban areas combined.¹¹ Studies show that adult females avoid urban areas and fragmented habitats.¹²

Subadult bobcat transients need safe passages in order to find new habitats and establish home ranges. Yet, bobcats are threatened by habitat fragmentation and can become locally extinct in habitats that are highly fragmented.¹³

¹ Hansen, K. 1992. *Cougar: The American Lion*. Northland Publishing, Flagstaff, AZ.

² Hunter, L. 2015.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ D. B. Lesmeister et al., "Spatial and Temporal Structure of a Mesocarnivore Guild in Midwestern North America," Article, *Wildlife Monographs* 191, no. 1 (May 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1002/wmon.1015>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000353896300001.

⁵ Hunter, L. and P. Barrett. 2011. *Carnivores of the World*. Bobcat *Lynx rufus*. Princeton University Press, p. 34.

⁶ Elbroch et al., "Contrasting bobcat values."

⁷ Erica Goad et al., *Habitat use by mammals varies along an exurban development gradient in northern Colorado*, vol. 176 (2014).

⁸ J. S. Lewis et al., "Interspecific interactions between wild felids vary across scales and levels of urbanization," Article, *Ecology and Evolution* 5, no. 24 (Dec 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.1812>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000368136600018.

⁹ R. N. Larson et al., "Food habits of coyotes, gray foxes, and bobcats in coastal southern California urban landscape," Article, *Western North American Naturalist* 75, no. 3 (Oct 2015), <Go to ISI>://WOS:000365250700010.

¹⁰ Hunter, L. 2015.

¹¹ Goad et al., *Habitat use by mammals varies along an exurban development gradient in northern Colorado*, 176.

¹² Seth P. D. Riley et al., "Effects of Urbanization and Habitat Fragmentation on Bobcats and Coyotes in Southern California," 17, no. 2 (2003), <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2003.01458.x>, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2003.01458.x>; Seth Riley et al., *A southern California freeway is a physical and social barrier to gene flow in carnivores*, vol. 15 (2006).

¹³ Lesmeister et al., "Spatial and Temporal Structure of a Mesocarnivore Guild in Midwestern North America."; Lewis et al., "Interspecific interactions between wild felids vary across scales and levels of urbanization."



Because their habitats and corridors are in decline, South Dakota's bobcats should not endure expanded hunting and trapping.

III. Bobcats are limited by available prey, competition, predation, excluded from small urban habitats, and susceptible to disease

Sport hunting and trapping is wholly unnecessary to keep bobcat populations in check, as they are self-regulating and limited by other factors. For instance, bobcats also compete for food resources with coyotes, gray foxes and even birds of prey such as great horned owls, and to a lesser extent, with mountain lions.¹⁴ They also face competition with other carnivores for prey and may be killed themselves by coyotes, domestic dogs and mountain lions.¹⁵

Researchers found that coyotes and gray foxes enjoyed omnivorous diets that included mammals, fruit and seeds, invertebrates, and birds.¹⁶ But bobcats were not detected in small urban fragments, because they, as obligate carnivores, required a more specialized diet. Because of bobcats' food specialization, they were excluded from small urban areas, unlike more opportunistic carnivores.¹⁷

In a Colorado study, authors found that bobcats and mountain lions shared the same habitats, but in wildlands bobcats avoided areas where lions had been for a few days.¹⁸ In exurban areas, however, bobcats did not avoid mountain lions and were more likely to come into contact with them—risking deadly strife. Lewis et al. (2015) conclude that human development has a potential to alter felid communities with its associated changes in ecological communities.¹⁹

Opportunistic hunters, bobcats consume a wide variety of prey, but their main foods of choice include lagomorphs (e.g. snowshoe hares, cottontail rabbits and jackrabbits) and rodents (mice, voles, squirrels and beavers).²⁰ Bobcats are an "obligate" carnivore – meaning that they require an all-meat diet.²¹ Prey populations generally far exceed the biomass of their predators, and the number of prey generally determines the numbers of their predators.²² But in a ground-breaking 2015 study published in *Science*, biologists reviewed more than 1,000 studies and came to a

¹⁴ J. S. Lewis et al., "Contact Networks Reveal Potential for Interspecific Interactions of Sympatric Wild Felids Driven by Space Use," *Ecosphere* 8, no. 3 (2017); J. Witzuk et al., "Niche Overlap between Sympatric Coyotes and Bobcats in Highland Zones of Olympic Mountains, Washington," *Journal of Zoology* 297, no. 3 (2015); Hias Melville et al., "Prey Selection by Three Mesopredators That Are Thought to Prey on Eastern Wild Turkeys (*Meleagris Gallopavo Sylvestris*) in the Pineywoods of East Texas," *Southeastern Naturalist* 14, no. 3 (2015); D. B. Lesmeister et al., "Spatial and Temporal Structure of a Mesocarnivore Guild in Midwestern North America," *Wildlife Monographs* 191, no. 1 (2015).

¹⁵ M. J. Cherry et al., "Coyote diets in a longleaf pine ecosystem," Article, *Wildlife Biology* 22, no. 2 (Mar 2016), <https://doi.org/10.2981/wlb.00144>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000377803600005.

¹⁶ Larson et al., "Food habits of coyotes, gray foxes, and bobcats in coastal southern California urban landscape."

¹⁷ Larson et al., "Food habits of coyotes, gray foxes, and bobcats in coastal southern California urban landscape."

¹⁸ Lewis et al., "Interspecific interactions between wild felids vary across scales and levels of urbanization."

¹⁹ Lewis et al., "Interspecific interactions between wild felids vary across scales and levels of urbanization."

²⁰ C. C. Hass, "Competition and coexistence in sympatric bobcats and pumas," Article, *Journal of Zoology* 278, no. 3 (Jul 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7998.2009.00565.x>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000267173900002; Oregon State University, "Species at a Glance: Nutria,"

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjV3cyUic7hAhUPcq0KHct_DAgQFjAAegQIABAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fseagrant.oregonstate.edu%2Ffile%2F1341%2Fdownload%3Ftoken%3D-q6VIsqk&usg=AOvVaw3ivkVuXjFVEb5z8YiB_f_d

²¹ Kitchen, A.M., E.M. Gese, and E.R. Schauster. 1999. Resource partitioning between coyotes and swift foxes: space, time and diet." *Canadian Journal of Zoology-Revue Canadienne De Zoologie*. 77(10).

²² Barbara L. Peckarsky et al., "Revisiting the Classics: Considering Nonconsumptive Effects in Textbook Examples of Predator-Prey Reactions," *Ecological Society of America* 89, no. 9 (2008).



different conclusion: Even as prey biomass increases, predator numbers do not necessarily follow. That is because predators mainly eat the young and old prey animals, and prey animals who live in crowded conditions breed more slowly, leaving fewer animals for carnivores to eat.²³ For example, on the Kalahari, Hatton et al. (2015) found 200kg of prey (buffalo, impala etc.) per square kilometer, but only 4kg of lions and hyenas in that same space.²⁴

Furthermore, bobcats do not pose a credible threat to livestock. Data show that farmers and ranchers lose nine times more cattle and sheep to health, weather, birthing and theft problems than all carnivores (including domestic dogs) combined.²⁵ Bobcats are opportunistic hunters. They may kill livestock such as sheep, goats, piglets and poultry, but data show that those attacks are miniscule.²⁶

Bobcats are susceptible to disease, including from domestic cats. If domestic cats do not receive regular veterinary care and are free-roaming, they become the source for numerous diseases to wildlife including rabies, feline leukemia virus and numerous parasites.²⁷ Researchers have documented the transmission of diseases from domestic cats to wild felids.²⁸ In urban areas, mountain lions and bobcats are susceptible to feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) from domestic cats.²⁹

IV. Bobcats reproduce slowly, and the species is harmed by recreational hunting and commercial trapping

While females are sexually mature at about one year of age, they do not breed until after they are two years old.³⁰ Males can start to mate at two years of age, but most do not until they become territorial residents after they are about three years old.³¹

Bobcats can reproduce year-round but typically breed during winter and spring, with most young born during the spring and summer months.³² Females prefer secluded den sites to raise their litter of one to six kittens (the

²³ I. A. Hatton et al., "The predator-prey power law: Biomass scaling across terrestrial and aquatic biomes," *Science* 349, no. 6252 (2015).

²⁴ Marc Montgomery, "Predators, prey, and the mathematics of nature," *Radio Canada International* (<http://www.rcinet.ca/en/2015/09/09/predators-prey-and-the-mathematics-of-nature/>) 2015.

²⁵ The Humane Society of the United States, "Government data confirm that cougars have a negligible effect on U.S. cattle and sheep industries,"; The Humane Society of the United States, "Government data confirm that wolves have a negligible effect on U.S. cattle and sheep industries," <https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/HSUS-Wolf-Livestock-6.Mar..19Final.pdf> (2019); The Humane Society of the United States, "Government data confirm that grizzly bears have a negligible effect on U.S. cattle and sheep industries," https://www.humanesociety.org/sites/default/files/docs/HSUS-Grizzly-Livestock_6.Mar..19Final.pdf (2019).

²⁶ Hunter, L. and P. Barrett, 2011.

²⁷ R. W. Gerhold and D. A. Jessup, "Zoonotic Diseases Associated with Free-Roaming Cats," *Zoonoses and Public Health* 60, no. 3 (2013), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1863-2378.2012.01522.x>, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1863-2378.2012.01522.x>.

²⁸ Gerhold and Jessup, "Zoonotic Diseases Associated with Free-Roaming Cats."

²⁹ Lewis et al., "Interspecific interactions between wild felids vary across scales and levels of urbanization,"; Gerhold and Jessup, "Zoonotic Diseases Associated with Free-Roaming Cats,"; Ashley Gramza et al., "Understanding public perceptions of risk regarding outdoor pet cats to inform conservation action," 30, no. 2 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12631>, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/cobi.12631>.

³⁰ *Ibid*; V. Segura, "A three-dimensional skull ontogeny in the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) (Carnivora: Felidae): a comparison with other carnivores," Article, *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 93, no. 3 (Mar 2015), <https://doi.org/10.1139/cjz-2014-0148>, <Go to ISI>://WOS:000352214400008.

³¹ Hunter, *Carnivores of the World*.

³² Crowe, D. M. 1975. Aspects of Ageing, Growth, and Reproduction of Bobcats from Wyoming. *Journal of Mammalogy*, Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 177-198; Fritts, S. H. and J. A. Sealander. 1978. Reproductive Biology and Population Characteristics of Bobcats (*Lynx rufus*) in Arkansas. *Journal of Mammalogy*, Vol. 59, No. 2, pp. 347-353; Lawhead, D. N. 1984. Bobcat *Lynx rufus* Home Range, Density and Habitat Preference in South-Central Arizona. *The Southwestern Naturalist*, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 105-113.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

average is three kittens per litter), and will often move their kittens around between multiple den sites to prevent detection from other predators.³³ Birth intervals vary, with some bobcats having one litter per year or even one litter every two years.³⁴

Bobcat kittens depend on their mothers for survival for eight to ten months.³⁵ They are weaned at approximately two to three months of age, after which they follow their mothers on daily hunts to master the craft of survival. By wintertime, kittens make their own kills.³⁶ When kittens are self-sufficient, typically nine to 24 months of age, these subadult transients disperse from their natal areas (the area where they were born) in an attempt to find their own home range and mates. Dispersal distances vary widely among young bobcats.³⁷

Hunting and trapping bobcats orphans dependent kittens, leaving them to starve or die of predation or exposure.

³³ Arizona Game and Fish Department. Bobcat Fact Sheet: Understanding Bobcat Management in Arizona. Retrieved from <https://www.azgfd.com/PortalImages/files/hunting/Bobcat%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>. Segura, "A three-dimensional skull ontogeny in the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) (Carnivora: Felidae): a comparison with other carnivores."

³⁴ Hunter, *Carnivores of the World*.

³⁵ Hansen, Bobcat: Master of Survival Segura, "A three-dimensional skull ontogeny in the bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) (Carnivora: Felidae): a comparison with other carnivores."

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Hunter, L. 2015

GFP commission proposed changes to upland bird hunting regulations for 2020

Increasing the bag limit on a diminishing game population is certainly counter to enlightened game management and reduces the value of the resource. It usually creates more dissatisfied hunters with unreasonable expectations of increased harvest and reduces the hunting experience to just killing more game. Do you have any statistics on how frequently public land pheasant hunters limit out, and how many of those harvested birds go in the freezer on the way to the landfill? From what I have experienced since moving to SD four years ago the majority of "hunting" effort involves driving around county roads and shooting birds off the road right-of-way while the walk in areas remain unused.

Additional pressure on the birds at the end of the season when they are vulnerable to extreme weather, avian predators, and insufficient winter cover is absolutely the wrong thing to do and can produce devastating reductions in hen pheasant numbers. It is really disappointing to see the resource managers only focus on increasing license sales at the expense of the public resource they are supposed to effectively manage.

In contrast to this type of management look at the stream restoration programs occurring across the country. These programs focus on improving habitat and water quality to enhance fisheries by cooperative projects involving government agencies, private land owners, resource user groups, and school kids. Involving those who will ultimately inherit and cherish the resource they helped improve is critical to true resource management. It is imperative to involve the general public in caring for and about our natural resources instead of just taking.

Robert T. Jane
Martin, South Dakota

To the members of the SDGFP Commission,

Upon reading the proposed changes to pheasant hunting hours, limits and season dates, I felt compelled to reach out with my perspective. I am a 4th generation pheasant hunter and typically enter the field to hunt this amazing bird 25+ times each fall. I grew up in Florence and live in Watertown, and while I have access to excellent hunting opportunities on private land, I do the bulk of my hunting on public land in this area. Sometimes I shoot a limit, sometimes I get skunked, but most of the time I harvest a bird or two. From 12:00pm on the resident opener to sunset on the first Sunday in January, my four-legged hunting partner, Sage, and I are out there. All this to say, I am more than a casual hunter and the time logged on public ground is more representative of what the DIY non-resident hunter will experience. I will address my thoughts on the three major changes that I read in the Keloland article. I'm hopeful that my tone will convey respect and understanding for your position on the commission as I can only imagine the pressure to increase license sales and hunter numbers, however, I am in opposition to the proposed changes.

Regarding the 10:00am start time, I could live with this change, but there is something deeply cultural about the noon start time. Opening Day is a family reunion of sorts for my family. Grandpa, aunts, uncles and cousins all come out to the farm between 10am and 11am. We eat, visit, shoot clay pigeons, etc., until its time to load up and head to the first spot. I understand that we could still do this with a 10am start, but it wouldn't be the same. A lot of bars and restaurants have a greater reason for opposing the change, so I think careful thought should be put into all of the effects a change like this would bring.

Regarding the change in limit to 4 roosters (after December 1st, if I recall correctly), I am adamantly opposed to this proposal. While I think it would be fair to argue that an increase in harvest would be compensatory (versus additive), my concern is quality of hunt. As I mentioned, I do most of my hunting on public land. It should come as no surprise that the numbers I see early in the season dwindle as the season progresses. Which would make sense when hunters are harvesting the roosters. While I'm satisfied with a hunt where I don't harvest anything, folks travelling from out of state to enjoy South Dakota are going to be a little different as they come here to see and harvest pheasants. Public land is challenging to hunt regardless, but an increase in allowable harvest simply means a less satisfactory hunt for those who come along after.

Regarding the consideration to move the season close to the end of January, this is the one that generally causes me the greatest concern. In my younger days, there was nothing I loved more than hunting just as a blizzard was setting in. The birds would hold tight and there was something deeply reverent about it. As an adult, I no longer hunt these conditions as I know that the pheasants are soaked in and busting them from their roost could very well be the difference between life and death if they aren't able to find adequate protection from the storm. As I alluded to in the opening, I live in northeastern SD. January here is different from January in Scotland or Winner. To have hunters continually flushing hens from their roost for an additional month at a time when cold temps, limited daylight and, typically, snow covered food resources is providing a great amount of stress would be devastating. Hens have a brutal challenge in the winter to only have a short recovery time before they have to begin nesting. Let's continue to protect them by keeping the bipedal predators out of their homes as winter truly sets in.

As I talk about hens in the winter, I will acknowledge that too many roosters do put pressure on hen survival as they compete (and win) for vital winter resources. But this isn't the case on public land. The pockets of large pheasant numbers that survive the winter (numbers that can handle a 4 rooster limit and could handle the extended season) are on private ground. The only way we will ever increase hunter numbers is to expand access to high quality hunting ground. Which is easier said than done, but that is where the commission needs to focus their energy – Gaining access to high quality habitat or producing high quality habitat. License fees, limits, season dates, etc., are short sighted, secondary attempts that I think we all know deep down are not going to bring the pheasant hunters back to South Dakota. The only thing that is going to bring them back is more pheasants.

It is with the “more pheasants” notion in mind that I want to talk about the perception of South Dakota on social media. There are a few pheasant hunting pages, but the most frequented is Pheasant Hunting Junkies and it is interesting to see the comments about our state and its pheasant hunting. Some is good, a whole lot of it is not. And, yes, we are the best state for pheasant hunting and you'll always have detractors simply for being the best, but there is a common theme that pheasant hunting in South Dakota equals pen raised birds and exorbitant fees. While we all know that the pen raised birds are going to be limited to preserves and perhaps a mile radius around them, that doesn't mean anything to folks who grab onto stereotypes and misinformation. The truth is, I've been hunting pheasants for nearly 30 years and can count the flared nostril pen raised roosters I've harvested from public and private land on one hand. Wild roosters are present in abundance. They are often wily and hunting should never be easy, but this is one image piece that I feel the SDGFP should work to dispel the myths.

One other good thing about social media is, as noted, people love to air their grievances. One of the big ones is how the non-resident license works as far as allowable hunting days. I think considering adjusting how that works would be a good start. Like the fact that I no longer hunt pheasants in blizzards, I also have come to the realization that we need non-residents to hunt in South Dakota. Both for revenue and to perpetuate the culture and tradition of hunting. While I might not want to see Minnesota plates parked in front of my favorite public hunting spot, I'm willing to accept it for the survival of pheasant hunting.

Lastly, bring back the brood survey. I get that people only see the declines and don't see the overall health of our pheasant populations, but it was a valuable tool. And if you want to get the numbers from the early 2000's, we all know what needs to be done. Do that and we won't have to worry about hours, limits and longer seasons. Or long, drawn out letters from pheasant hunters like me. 😊

Anyway, thank you for your time. I used a lot of words to simply say “no”, but the reasons for my opposition are not merely emotional. They are based on what I have seen and continue to see each fall when I don the blaze orange, and Sage and I team up to put a rooster or two in the vest. The parameters for South Dakota's hunting season are successful and well defined. Let's keep them that way.

Lucas T. Nogelmeier



Greater Dacotah Chapter SCI
PO Box 9455
Rapid City, SD 57709

SD GFP Administration-Commission
Proposed pheasant season revisions
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
523 East Capitol Avenue Pierre, SD 57501

Director Kirschenmann

The Greater Dacotah Chapter of Safari Club International (GDC-SCI) prepared response to GFP Commission proposals for the pheasant season. SCI and the Greater Dacotah Chapter are science-based conservation organizations based on scientific wildlife management and not emotionally driven agendas. These changes are biologically sound since winter surveys indicate that rooster/hen ratios are higher than the 1 rooster to 10 hen ratios supported by past pheasant research in South Dakota and other states. The Greater Dacotah Chapter is proud of the support we have with SD GFP in the projects we have partnered with over the years to improve wildlife, habitat management, and research in South Dakota! Our organization is in support of the following changes:

1. The 10:00AM start time for the residents only pheasant season.
2. The Extension of the 2020 pheasant season to January 31, 2020. This will allow more hunters more time to hunt the most popular upland bird in the state.
3. In addition, GDC/SCI also supports increasing the daily bag limit to 4 birds and increasing the possession limit from 15 to 20 rooster pheasants after December 1st, 2021 through the end of the season.
4. GDC/SCI also supports the Departments alignment of other upland bird seasons (prairie grouse, quail, and partridge) to end on January 31st.

We ask that the Department of Game, Fish and Parks continues to keep us informed on additional opportunities to comment on revisions!

Safari Club International is the leader in protecting the freedom to hunt and in promoting wildlife conservation worldwide. The Greater Dacotah Chapter achieves this mission in part by evaluating the principals involved in proposed public actions that affect wildlife and habitats. Our Chapter goals and objectives are more clearly outlined at: <http://greaterdacotahchapter-sci.org/main/>

Respectfully Submitted

Paul Vinatieri

Paul Vinatieri
President GDC-SCI

To: SD Game Fish & Parks

From: Kenneth Johnson 2205 Burleigh St. Apt 109 ^{Yorkton 57078}

Subject: Increasing Pheasant Limits

Date: July 22, 2020

(605-661-5500
Phone #)

Raising Pheasant limits from 3 Birds to 4 Birds and lengthening the Season is not a good idea - (Just BS.)

It is all about MONEY not about the birds. You could care less about the Pheasants. I am a retired farmer who has been around the birds all my life (74 years) I visit with ranchers, farmers and sportsmen all the time, they think the same way I do.

The out of State Hunters numbers was down last year now you are trying to get them back to South Dakota it is all about the Almighty DOLLAR. Maybe the Season should be closed for 1 year to build the Pheasant population up.

I trapped the predator bounty program for tails, I do believe that program has helped.

Maybe try lifting Federal Law that protects the HAWKS. You see hawks everytime you take a drive in the country. The hawks are hurting the bird population.

We can not built up the Pheasant population by killing more birds.

Kenneth D. Johnson

South Dakota Game Fish & Parks Commission Meeting
September 2-3 2020 Meeting

Dear Commissioners:

August 11, 2020

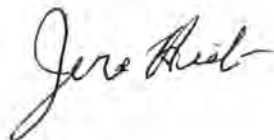
I am writing this letter in regards to the proposed pheasant season extension and increased bag limit to 4. I am very much opposed to both and will give you my reasons why.

I believe the pheasant season dates are long enough. These birds are hunted from early October through early January (three months) with one season or another. I am concerned the birds are continually pushed from cover and sanctuary, especially the later cold weather part of the season. Even if none are shot, which is difficult as they have become terribly wild by then, they are pushed or harassed and use up precious calories in escaping and are more vulnerable to predators. This is the same reason I oppose an early start time to 10:00 until later in the season, well into November in my opinion. Give these creatures time to feed, rest and move into cover. I have hunted pheasants for 50+ years and I believe the seasons and bag limits are plenty liberal already. Why do we keep tinkering with this matter in the name of hunting opportunity when the real problem is lazy hunters who don't use the opportunities they already have. Give it a rest. Think of the wildlife first.

In regards to the 4 rooster limit later in the season, I am opposed as this is nothing more than a misleading ploy to attract non-resident hunters. These hunters will believe that there must be an enormous amount of birds out there when we can shoot 4, "wow, let's go". This will again lead to over pressure and be detrimental to the pheasants as mentioned above. I've heard all the arguments about pheasant hunting (you can't shoot too many roosters, they only compete with the hens for food, the mortality rate is high anyway, you can't stockpile wildlife), yada, yada, yada. I appreciate the work the wildlife biologists do but sometimes a degree in common sense is useful too. I am more than a little tired of the push by the GF&P for catering to the out-of-state hunter. Every fall we hear about all the money they will spend in South Dakota, they are met at the airport with greeting bags and hats, TV interviews, etc. What about the poor shmoe resident that supports the sporting goods stores, gas stations and restaurants year around? Is it any wonder the resident hunting license sales continue to plummet?

I don't have a problem with non-resident hunters with limitations, some of my family come back for a couple days each year. But this seemingly endless scenario of pretending we have unlimited resources, unlimited access and room for thousands more hunters is false. Let's put the wildlife first and give them some breaks please. Groups like *Pheasants Forever* are no help either in my opinion, as their statements and actions are geared to commercialization. They don't get my support. I would not be opposed to an increase in license fees if it stays in South Dakota for more WIAs and predator control, but that's a whole another subject. Thank you for your time and efforts to make South Dakota a great place to live.

Jere Hieb
3620 Pleasant View Dr.
Brooking, SD 57006
605-690-7315



Comes, Rachel

From: Comes, Rachel
Sent: Monday, August 17, 2020 9:29 AM
To: Comes, Rachel
Subject: FW: Pheasant proposal

From: Schiefelbein, Derek <Derek.Schiefelbein@state.sd.us>
Sent: Wednesday, August 5, 2020 8:32 AM
To: Hepler, Kelly <Kelly.Hepler@state.sd.us>
Subject: Pheasant proposal

Good Morning Mr. Hepler,

I thought I would reach out for what its worth.

*I am in support of a 10 am start all season.

*I am in support of 4 rooster limit from December 1st through the 1st Sunday in January. Harvesting an extra rooster won't hurt and may increase hunter participation in the late season. Great idea without biological harms.

*I and many are NOT in favor of extending the season from 1st Sunday in January to January 31st in the harshest time in winter. Winter cover is limited (we know habitat loss is an issue)pheasants and other upland birds struggle that time of year the most. They need time to rest and maintain their bodies. Strong/Health birds will nest stronger in the spring. Harvesting roosters is not an issue but to harvest roosters you have to push all birds out of the winter cover and expose them to the harshest of winter and predators. January is usually the harshest time of year. The mortality rate on the hen pheasant is the concern. After that being said, hunter participation that time of year has always been low as conditions are tough for hunting (walking) and transportation through fields.

Thank you for your consideration.

Derek Schiefelbein
29504 Marble Rd Pierre
605-280-2519

The bottom line to this is that we find the pheasant surveys extremely important to our plans and not having that information will be a large factor as to whether we decide to hunt SD in the future. Without it, we are already prejudiced to NOT hunt SD.

Let me give you a little Kansas back ground. When I started hunting Kansas we were still using spears and rocks. No, it just seems like that long ago. Anyway, there was the Kansas Department of Wildlife, or KDW. Hard working honest people that would give you a straight answer to a straight question. They would return calls and would respond to your written requests on what the upcoming season may hold. Then they rolled Parks into the mix and it became KDWP. Still pretty good and at about the same time, the walk in areas were really taking off, so a hunter almanac became part of the mix. The almanac includes an upland bird forecast by region.

Then Tourism got involved and it became KDWPT, and things went to shit. All tourism wanted to do was get hunters to come to Kansas and bring their wallets. It did not matter what the bird forecast was, Tourism said they had to lock the doors to keep them out of the house. At the depth of the most recent drought, when estimated statewide rooster harvest was the lowest since the counts started in 1955 at only 155,000 birds, Tourism said they had 200,000 acres loaded with birds statewide. They kind of forgot to mention that it was all shooting preserve land.

So now SD, is going to go the same way. You can hunt earlier, longer and take more birds. Oh, and we are not going to publish the bird counts that have been used since 1949. I am betting that Tourism will take care of the forecast, and it will always be rosy. On two occasions, having those numbers made the difference in our deciding to go to SD. Tom and I were going to make our first trip in 2013, but based on the counts, the population was down badly from the previous year, and we canceled. Last year was the same, combined with weather and bad road conditions.

And I am sure Tourism will do a great job in attracting more aging hunters. We are a declining population. Tourism cannot change that. Tourism cannot change the weather, and Tourism cannot produce more birds.

There is a place you can offer comments, and I urge you do to so. <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/> The changes to timing, bag limit and season length are no big deal. Kansas has been doing that same thing for decades. The loss of data and the inclusion of marketing is what bothers me. If you really dig into the way SD has done it in the past, they had it broken down to how many dollars each hunter meant to the local economy, and they obviously know that their budget is tied to the number of licenses sold. But do not become a whore and do what Kansas has done, which is "we don't care if there are birds or not, just bring your wallet"

Your turn.

Michael L Schnipper
Oxford, OH

Public Comments

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Season

Barbara Papik

Mission Hill SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am very much opposed to this.

Colleen Muller

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

It's cruel please don't

Vince Logue

Oelrichs SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I object to the expansion of the area to include more of eastern SD and to extend folks can trap/hunt east river by I think about 3 weeks.

There does not seem to be very much habitat east river and fewer bobcats. We should be able to have bobcats as part of the ecosystem across the state. They will help keep populations of rodents in check. Wildlife watchers and photographers should be able to see them and/or their tracks across the state. You should address the conflict between wildlife watchers/photographers and hunter/trappers when the supply of animals is low.

Trapping is allowed for 3 and a partial days West River and 2 and a partial days East River. When we petitioned for a 24 hour trap check times, bobcat trappers objected as if they checked traps that frequently the bobcats would detect humans and avoid traps. This means bobcats are left to suffer in traps likely longer than most animals. Bobcats can be hunted by dogs which I believe to be cruelty to dogs and bobcats, especially if the area does not have tall trees for bobcats to climb up.

I object to the changes entirely and ask you not to implement. Please also consider possible mitigations to your season that would reduce it, such as more limits on take per hunter west river, smaller expansion of the area, smaller time extension. Please consider outlawing trapping and/or hound hunting as a method of harvest. Please also consider asking them to report how the bobcat was killed - via a boothunt, hounds or traps. As they are bringing them in to be inspected, they should be required to report on the method.

Fall Turkey

Wolfgang & Kathleen Schmidt

Nemo SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Turkey populations are down in the Northern Hills and there should be no Fall or Spring 2021 season to hunt turkeys--it doesn't make any sense. Living here since the 1970s, for the past two years we have seen NO turkeys in Vanocker Canyon. This is a bad sign that shows they are not reproducing. We always saw hens and their young, but this year and last year, we've seen NONE. Hunting licenses should not be issued for Fall 2020 PERIOD until the turkey population comes back to a sustainable number. Not only that, with all the timber cutting, the turkey habitat has been greatly reduced. A suggestion would be to work with the Forest Service and figure out now to bring back these birds and create new habitat for them. Until that is done, no new licenses should be issued.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The title on this is Fall Turkey and I think you mean Spring Turkey. If it is fall turkey please grant amendment to limit fall hunting to only bearded turkeys, as we need to keep all female turkeys due to low population numbers.

As for spring turkey, I think that you will say hunting only bearded turkeys, not male turkeys. 10% of bearded turkeys are females. Your turkey populations are not doing well due to adverse weather for several years in spring and fall.

I object to the changes in the season. It should be reduced or mitigated or changes not made.

You can be creative with changes and investigate ways to reduce the number of turkeys killed, such as shorter season, restricted number of hunters, harvest limits, smaller bag limits etc.

Thanks,

Other

Rodney Sather

Vivian SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the 4 bird limit after December 1.

Jeffrey Johnson

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

4 bird limit is crazy. hunters can rarely get the 3 bird limit. this puts big pressure and expense on all preserves!!

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society,

To Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

I have e-mailed our petition for rule-making to Jon Kotilnek, asking the Commission to list the Lake Chub as a SD endangered species but I am also posting it to this web page. It has an attachment. As you just accept one attachment per posting, I must submit that attachment in the next posting.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society,

To Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

In the last posting I attached our petition to list the Lake Chub as a SD endangered species. It has an attachment. As you just accept one attachment per posting, I must submit that attachment via this -my next posting.

Nancy Hilding

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilding@rapidnet.com,

Dear Commission

On your finalization sheets you always ask these questions.

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

The answers seem to always be about how it will effect the hunting, fishing and trapping public and not about other "outdoor recreationists". Proposals that increase hunting and trapping may provide increased opportunity for hunter/trappers, but do so by reducing the population of a species on the land which may adversely effect wildlife watchers who are wildlife watching or taking photographs.

The answers seem to always be about how it will effect the hunting, fishing and trapping public and not about other "outdoor recreationists". These uses can be diametrically opposed and you just seem to perpetually forget this.

For example if turkey hunting reduces further the number of turkeys on the land (the population is already very low), it reduces the ability of home owners or renters to watch turkeys in their yards or people who travel to watch birds seeing them on the land while hiking/driving.

The recreation for hunters can come at the expense of others, especially when species population numbers are low, uncertain or depressed. Are hunters/trappers more important to you than wildlife watchers or photographers? It would seem so, as staff perpetually does this even when we complain, and even though Sec Hepler promised he would speak to staff and tell them to consider other recreators as well. They didn't seem to be obeying him.

In my reading thus far, this comment applies to all the September finalizations I have read. - Why does requiring electric motors on Canyon Lake, have no impact on recreators. What about the tons of people who recreate at Canyon lake (without hunting/fishing) won't the quiet or lack of oil spills - enhance their experience? Why are we invisible?

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
6300 West Elm,
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilshat@rapidnet.com

Dear Game, Fish and Parks Commission,

For the last Commission meeting Prairie Hills Audubon Society submitted 2 comment letters on the river otter trapping season proposal and one letter had 5 attachments. Both comment letters were received on-time as the on-line transmittal cover letter for them were included in the public comments. The first letter and all attachments were eventually included in a revised public comment file (thanks). But you forgot however to include the second attached letter.

PHAS generally submits letters in a formal way, as an PDF attached file. We noticed one other person (James Elsing) did not have his attached letter about turkeys included.

We hope that staff will now attach our missing July letter to the September public comments. (we include it again). We hope they attach Elsing's letter. We hope staff will do a search of the 3 public comment files from July to see if they missed any other attached documents and if any more exist, please include those in the September public comments.

We appreciate very much all the work staff does and we appreciate all the help they give us. We imagine it is chaotic getting ready for a Commission meeting. We will however start sending any attached letters also directly to the Commissioners at their e-mails, as the attaching function may not be working correctly. It takes time to write these letters and effort to get them in by the deadline.

Our letter would not have been read before the Commission made its decision. "After the written comment period", SD Game, Fish and Parks is required by SDCL 1-26-4 (7), to "fully consider all amendments, data, opinions, or arguments regarding the proposed rule". Thus you all did not comply with the law, due to this process problem.

Thanks,
Nancy Hilding

Other Upland Bird Hunting Seasons

Jeff Paulus

Superior WI

Position: other

Comment:

1 Please place link on License page to Application Availability and Season Dates
2 Please label NR Waterfowl Maps "3 day" and "10 Day" thanks 3) perhaps a word of explanation why for survey page is first.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I object to increasing the amount of time to hunt grouse...just to make it match the pheasant season time frame. I worry about populations of greater prairie chicken, sharp tailed grouse and ruffed grouse. I want them protected and if anything the hunting season reduced. I worry about pheasants adverse impact to greater prairie chicken as pheasant males drive off the prairie chicken males and females pariticize the nests. I think pheasant hunting should be increased in greater prairie chicken areas to reduce their population and protect the greater prairie chicken.

Pheasant Hunting Season

Gordon Heber

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am encouraged by the recent recommendations by the Commission to extend the pheasant season to January 31st, the earlier 10 AM start at the beginning of the season and the added bird limit after Dec 1st. I feel these are very good proposals and am hopeful that they will be approved at your next meeting.

Tom Howatt

Wausau WI

Position: oppose

Comment:

Let's see...pheasant numbers have declined for years to near historic lows. So, let's stop brood surveys so no one will know the actual bird population. And let's spend far more funds on marketing—that should go over well with out if state hunters deciding whether to come to South Dakota. And let's increase hunting hours and late season bag limits—that should help the population. I've come to South Dakota to hunt wild pheasants, not planted birds, for 35 years. Based on the decisions you've made I won't be back. Perhaps you should spend your resources expanding habitat and demonstrating increased natural bird counts through science rather than slick marketing. Count me as one out of state hunter disgusted with current administration.

Kyle Sipma

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

A larger bag limit and extended season is not a good selling point and in my opinion will degrade the resource as this will only attract those who already push the limits. Also all species of wintering wildlife has enough to handle without the added disruption. This seems like putting a few extra hunters in the field to boost department numbers will do more harm than good. If we want more hunters, How about reduced fees for first time Non resident hunters. Maybe they will come back in future years if they just get that first taste.

Eric Paulson

Cold Spring MN

Position: other

Comment:

As a non resident hunter I support lengthening the season to January 31. However I DO NOT support raising the limit to a 4 rooster and 20 rooster possession. I also travel to Kansas to pheasant hunt. Kansas has a 4 bird limit and by the end of the season on public assessable land it is very hard to find roosters.

Charles Wiesner

East Bethel MN

Position: support

Comment:

i am in support for a longer pheasant hunting season that ends 1/31. also a bigger bag limit after 12/1 . I am also in support of a 15 day hunting season for nonresident per licence. I am also in support of a full season licence for nonresident pheasant hunting

Paul Reynolds

Keystone SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Changing the start time to 10:00 am is reasonable. Increasing the bag limit would be detrimental to the pheasant population. Likewise extending the season to the end of January, bad idea.

Thomas Laycock

Indianapolis IN

Position: oppose

Comment:

I wanted to add my voice to the objection for SDGFP to abandon science and stewardship of the state's natural resources in favor of marketing to out of state hunters.

My small group of 6-12 hunters who trek to SD annually are public land hunters. We rely heavily on the science based pheasant data to make our decisions about where and when we will hunt.

We have spent literally thousands of dollars on local hotels, restaurants and services over the years that we have been coming to SD. Not some \$1000 as day fancy hunting lodge outfitter, this is real money into the local businesses.

When marketing trumps science and habitat you have lost sight of the purpose of SDGFP. It is game and fish NOT selling licenses.

Not one hunter coming to SD is wanting more hunters. We are wanting more birds and better habitat. It is the "if you build it, they will come" syndrome. Kansas has already gone down this path with dismal results.

I would challenge you to reconsider this position. If you are spending more money on marketing than you are on science and habitat and making game and fish biology decision based on marketing, you have totally lost sight of your purpose and mission.

Brad Swofford

Reeds Spring MO

Position: support

Comment:

I want to thank you for considering the 10 am start for the first week of season. I, with several other avid bird hunters from Missouri, have been coming to South Dakota for several years. We have always wanted to stay an additional day but the noon start always puts us getting back so late that we never stay. With a 10 am start we will definitely stay that additional day and hunt and enjoy South Dakota. We consider it a privilege to get to hunt and just thank you for the opportunity and the changes you are considering.

Renee Allen

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a avid upland hunter I'm opposed to extending the season for pheasants. The season is plenty long. Wildlife in has to already endure hard enough winters. By New Years many years the wintering cover is already blown in. I understand killing a few extra roosters would help the remaining birds but I see more birds dying from predators and stress after hunters continually push birds from the cover if the season as proposed is extended. Wildlife needs a break. It is the same reason we don't hunt deer, antelope, elk, turkey all winter. I see no season why we need to hunt pheasants thru Jan. Leave the season ended the first Sunday in Jan. and leave the 3 birds daily the same as well.

Thanks

Renee Allen

Pierre, SD

William Sipovic

Norton Shores SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support a 10AM start time so that the entire season has the same time. This allows for more time in the field and potentially cooler mornings if we can start hunting earlier in the day.

Terry Murray

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

James Zirbel

Aberdeen, Sd SD

Position: other

Comment:

I can support the earlier start time. More time in the field is always a good thing.
I can support the increased limit . But I do not support any additional hunting days by extending the season into the end of January. Disturbing the birds during typically extreme cold weather can and will cause increased losses to both hens and roosters. If it was up to me the pheasant season would always end around Christmas time. This still allows for family hunts around the holidays.

Curtis Bossert

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Until pheasant numbers significantly increase in the state, I CANNOT support extending the pheasant season beyond the current end date of first Sunday in January
Additionally, and for the same reason as indicated above, I a CANNOT support a higher bag limit at this at this time.

Brian Havlik

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am concerned about raising the bag limits when we as a state are struggling to get our wild bird population back to the numbers that made our state the pheasant hunting capital of the world. Raising preserves limits is something that only benefits a very few number of preserves. I don't believe that should be done also because it could put pressure on the availability to purchase pheasants and may raise the price of buying them under certain circumstances.

Don Forrest

Norwood SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in support of changing the hunting time at the start of the season to 10:00 a.m. I come each year usually twice from Missouri. This will allow me to hunt another day and return for work. I hope you will consider the time change.

David Olson

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Against raising season numbers. Against lengthening season.

Jace Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Against the raising of bird limits and extended season dates. Not ideal for the commercial pheasant hunting operator. More released birds and more chicken shoots. Breaking away from South Dakota tradition.

Lee Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose changing the season length to the end of January. The season is long enough as it stands. I strongly oppose raising the bag limits to 4. We need to keep our limit at 3 it has been a tradition for years no need to change. Thank you

Scott Handel

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose changing the limit from 3 to 4 cocks. I oppose extending the season to the end of January. I oppose the preserves to shoot unlimited birds. We need to keep South Dakota's tradition alive and not become a border state.

William Zirbel

Aberdeen SD

Position: other

Comment:

agree with early start

agree with increase bag limit

disagree with hunting in JANUARY! Also feel it would put unnecessary stress on all wildlife

Michael Kroupa

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm writing to voice my concerns and disappointment towards the proposed changes to the pheasant hunting season.

I'm located in Brule Co which used to be one of the best pheasant hunting areas of South Dakota. It's no secret that the pheasant numbers and habitat have declined substantially over the last 10 years. The roosters that are around and that you can get close enough to shoot on Dec 1 are predominately pen raised, most of those don't make the winter due to predators and lack of survival skills. If the season is extended to Jan 31, the birds will move into shelter belts and where feed is more easily accessible. This is usually around people's farmsteads, I for one don't like the thought of road hunters shooting around my place considering that's where birds congregate and children and livestock are always close. We all know what SD weather can be in January. I feel it would be terribly irresponsible to extend the season and put the birds at risk of being shot as well as being chased out of their habitat during times of poorer weather. If you chase the hens out into the elements, they will perish as well.

In conclusion, please don't extend the season or raise the limit. I think it is irresponsible and short sided for the long term health and well-being of the South Dakota pheasant population. I really feel we can get it back to what it used to be, maybe we could lower the limit and shorten the season a few years to see if that would help.

Ed Hiller

Arlington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tad Jacobs

Flandreau SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

John Knoblauch

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

One of our highlights of the year is our annual pheasant hunting trip to Pierre with my 10 life long friends. This is our 21st year. We spend money at hotels, we eat out every meal...we buy supplies, and we pay landowners to hunt. Most of the issue on why we do not make a second trip to your state is the mobilization and cost for the opportunity to shoot only 3 roosters a day...Some of us have sons and daughters, and we have talked about adding a trip in mid January to bring them out as a young persons hunt if you make these changes.. Bottom line. We would greatly support these changes... and you would be fools not to support these changes to allow more opportunities to pheasant hunt . We need young people to get involved in the outdoors and this can only help....

Bill Muenzberg

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

The increased bag limit after December 1st will provide a material inducement to travel to SD and conduct late season hunts. The increased out-of-state travel will assist motels and restaurants after the initial opening season rush.

Daniel Ryan

Aitkin MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steve Prosser

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

I support legislation to increase pheasant harvest to 4 roosters after December 1st. I have bought a non resident license the last 20 years

Mark Bielski

Chanhassen MN

Position: support

Comment:

Please extend pheasant hunting season until end of January.

William Bernstein

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

I support extending the pheasant season to the end of January. I also support increasing the pheasant bag limit to 4.

Joe Morton

Edina MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steve Bielski

Chanhassen MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

William Delay

Long Lake MN

Position: support

Comment:

Bag limits starting December 1st should be 4 roosters/day.
This increases SD tourism numbers for the late season which is where you want the increase.

Chris Hughes

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not support extending the pheasant season or raising the limit at any point during the season. Wildlife needs a break. In Brown Co. The amount of snow in Jan makes hunting basically impossible and most of the good cover is covered in snow. No reason to be hunting birds and pushing them out of cover when surviving winter is hard enough. I do support 10am start time season long though.

Chris

Robert Underkofler

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Robert Foote

Whittier CA

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have been hunting in SoDak my entire life and the last 4 years have been poor pheasant hunting in NE SoDak. Last year was about my worst season ever! The state discontinued the mail pheasant count and all of a sudden now you think there are so many pheasants that you need to extend the season and increase the limit. This sounds like a stupid plan! There can be only one reason for these two decisions and that has to be MONEY. Please do not proceed with these two propositions and make the pheasants suffer for such unrealistic decisions and the hunters in future years to come!

Todd Terveen

Emery SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please leave things the way they are. The bird populations anywhere in SD are not sufficient enough to sustain a longer season or or increased bag limit. One thing that has never really been clear is where did these proposed changes originate from????? I operate a hunting lodge and have preserve land. We have been in business for 16 years and I have never had a client complain about the length of the season or the 3 bird limit. Their option to be able to shoot extra birds is where the preserve comes in to play if they so chose to participate. Obviously my opinion and motives may be somewhat different than that of a resident hunter, but even as a SD hunter my opinion is to leave thing the way they are until we can get the bird populations back to the way they were in the early to mid 90's. We are far from that and it is going to be a big uphill battle to get anywhere close to that point. Thanks for the chance to give you my opinion.

Marvin Kroupa

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Ronald Brodrecht

Presho SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I own/operate a hunting business. Unless you release birds, they're unable to limit out at the current limit of 3 birds in 3-5 days. Increasing the limit of birds per day will further hinder their ability to limit out. Each hunter who comes to hunt has the idea of being able to limit out. Passing this new proposal of 4 birds is a poor choice that will have detrimental and economical downfalls for the state of South Dakots. I encourage you to not pass this new law.

Jeff Young

Onalaska WI

Position: support

Comment:

love the 10Am Start time. Benfits the hunters and the birds. Late season opportunities is nice also. Many hunters I talked to love this idea. Sad to see SD going to more preserve hunting. Personally I never would do that. Love the public opportunities about the hunt not numbers.

Neal Konda

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am an avid upland game hunter and spend every day I can pursuing pheasants and grouse however, I am opposed to extending the season through January and opposed to increasing the bag limit during the late season. Modifications to the start time of 10:00 vs noon really makes no difference to me as the time change only includes a week of the main season and the resident public land season.

My opposition to extending the season is due too the weather conditions in South Dakota in January. South Dakota weather is much different than that of Nebraska or Kansas. I have hunted pheasants in Kansas in late January and can attest conditions are much different. It is a much milder climate than South Dakota. I do not see the need to be forcing animals, not just pheasants, out of cover when the available cover is condensed down due to snow, wind, and cold temperatures. I invite you to look at the 1981-2010 NOAA data for weather in say Aberdeen vs Phillipsburg, Kansas.

Increasing the bag limit to 4 in the late season also ties back to forcing animas out of cover. I hunt every opportunity I get for pheasants and toward the end of the season public ground is pretty well beat down with a single man limit of 3 very difficult to find, even on a full day hunt with multiple dogs running. A 3 or 4 man limit is nearly unheard of. There simply are not the numbers there to support it in much of the state.

I urge you to deny this proposal and maintain the season dates and bag limits as they have been in the recent past.

Frank Stukel

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose changing the daily limit to 4 roosters at beginning of December. Farming practices with today's large equipment to not favor pheasant production at all. We also see a very serious loss basic habitat for various other reasons. Bald Eagles have moved in to good winter cover areas and are just one more predator the birds have never had to deal with. Honestly, in my opinion, it does not look good that we will ever have a great rebound in our native bird numbers - just too many things added to the equation that do not favor them. Most hunters unfortunately measure their success by killing their sought after game or in the case of birds by getting their daily limit. It is very difficult to get hunters a 3 bird (natives) limit after the fist week of the season so trying to get 4 native birds in a late season day is almost out of the question. Especially when there are fewer available, they are very spooky and they fly much faster. So in some ways you are just building a situation in which hunters will feel dissatisfied with their South Dakota hunting experience. Not great publicity for future license sales! I am just not aware that there has been this great pressure from hunters to increase the daily limit!

Kevin Teveldal

Wessington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Changing the start time to 10 am the first week of the season is a good idea.

I'm not sure that the extended season or the 4 bird limit is going to bring in any extra hunters. I fact I think it makes us look a little Stupid to be blunt. WE have heard from many hunters and the comments are all similar.

" our group did not even get one bird/hunter a day opening weekend, do they think we are that dumb to come out there in January and thinking we will harvest 4 birds. I don't think so"

"January is for ice fishing you can't get close to the birds then anyway"

"We can't get any hunters at our lodge in December because of unpredictable weather so why would any groups come in January"

In my opinion most of those roosters you are seeing in the winter bird counts are released. Most all land owners in the state that have hunters or family comming opening weekend to hunt have been buying birds the last few years. The roosters that make it through to winter are no match for a native hen when it comes time to compete for food. They do help feed the raptors and varmints leaving more hens for the spring.

At the end of the day it is the perception of it.

the hunters that are going to come here and spend money know the facts and they are not going to travel any distance to hunt a couple hours in bone chilling cold weather.

Locals will jump in the car drive around and shoot those birds you are seeing in the counts in the ditches under a tree on a sunny sub-zero afternoon. I don't fault them for this I'm just saying it is not a revenue generator for SD.

I say it was a good discussion point but I do not see the 4 bird limit or the extended season as adding any value to our state.

Kevin Teveldal

Private Shooting Preserve Bag Limits

Charles Johnson

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As to my knowledge only about two businesses want to change this.

A 3 bird limit is plenty for 99% of the hunters/groups I have guided over the last 30 years especially in this current era of low wild birds.

Bruce Haines

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

This has been needed for a long time.
If people want to pay then let them play.

Jace Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Opposing unlimited bag limit. Develop more ways to introduce birds to SD habitat.

Lee Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose an unrestricted limit on private shooting preserves. I believe there should be a maximum number of birds to be harvested. There must be a limit enforced. Thank you.

Tad Jacobs

Flandreau SD

Position: support

Comment:

I suspect that this will not impact the majority of PSP but support it for the few that have requested it.

David Olsen

Huron SD

Position: support

Comment:

On proposal for unlimited harvest

Not sure why we need the special license. The lodge will charge more for this service and the state will receive more tax money from the sale. Some preserves will not be affected and others will take advantage. I feel the preserves have the privilege under our current system to set our own limits and if this proposal passes I would like discussion of amendment to not implement extra fees on the license. We as smaller preserves may make use of this one day a group or one group a year as an add on to the hunt. The extra fee is not needed. And my feeling is to make this option as easy as possible to sell to our guests. Perhaps spur of the moment while having a great day shooting.

My comment on shooting hours as I approve of that change.

To comment on the length of season I understand the marketing concept I'm not sure about the science behind the non-effect of the bird population. I'm afraid in the month of January Birds that are flushed out of cover during subzero temperatures may be negatively impacted.

As for the limit change as long as it does not negatively affect our wild population in anyway I am in favor.

Respectfully

Dave Olsen

Marshall Springer

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am strongly opposed to both the shooting preserve unlimited bag limit and the changing the non-preserve limit from 3 to 4. I would like to know how many individuals asked for the change to get the gfp to act on it?



August 20, 2020

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission
523 E. Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Proposed change to 2020 pheasant hunting season

Dear Game, Fish and Parks Commission members,

South Dakota Farm Bureau (SDFB) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission's proposed change to change to lengthen the 2020 pheasant hunting season and requests that the Commission not move forward with the proposal.

SDFB policy, written and passed by our statewide grassroots members, states, "We oppose extending the pheasant hunting season beyond December 1."

While we certainly commend the Commission and the Department for their dedication to improving communication and relationships between hunters and landowners, there are still too many incidents of hunters trespassing on private property, leaving gates open so livestock are able to get out, or other harmful activities. Expanding the hunting season into the beginning of calving season could be especially detrimental should a gate be left open or a fence knocked down.

Rather than expand the current pheasant season, we would request that the Commission and the Department continue to focus on work, like the "Recreation and Respect" campaign, to ensure positive experiences for both hunters and landowners.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scott VanderWal'.

Scott VanderWal, President
South Dakota Farm Bureau

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Krystil Smit'.

Krystil Smit, Executive Director
South Dakota Farm Bureau

Opposition to proposed improvements to pheasant seasons

I oppose changing the daily bag limit from three roosters to four roosters because hunting, in my opinion, it is about the experience not about the number of birds a hunter bags. Also, commercial hunting operations already allow for this.

Something serious has changed in pheasant country. Farming practices have changed – there are less small grain and winter wheat acres, more row crops, and the spraying of herbicides and insecticides more frequently. There are less CRP acres which provide an excellent habitat. Older grass stands are not conducive to increasing pheasant numbers because they have less weeds and insects for the pheasants.

I oppose lengthening the season as well. I believe it is a mistake to drive birds out of their winter habitat at that time of the year. When they are hunted and driven out of their habitat their exposure to the elements increases. I do believe that one probably cannot overhunt roosters, however, one can cause the hens to leave their natural winter habitat and cause a higher mortality rate. Without the survival of the wild hens we will have no pheasants. Again, commercial hunting operations can hunt at that time of the year.

Please leave the hunting hours the same as it is a tradition. I understand that license sales are down, however, we had 20 – 30 years of exceptional hunting. But in the past 8 – 10 years we have seen a decrease in wild bird numbers. People were used to coming to South Dakota and having much success and that is no longer the case. We own a family farm for over 100 years and there are weeks in between seeing a brood of pheasants. Seeing a dead pheasant on the roadside is rare while seeing a dead coon or skunk is common.

I wonder if we want to bring more people to SD to hunt, why do we not allow more waterfowl hunters to our state? Waterfowl is a migratory bird, they are here and then leave. Why don't we take advantage of this opportunity?

Sincerely,

Marvin Kroupa

Kimball, SD

January is typically the coldest month of the year. Pheasants, big game and non game species congregate in diminishing habitat. There can also be substantial snow cover. Some hunters will drive as close as possible to the few pockets that hold birds before walking out the cover. The people and dogs open the cover up leaving easy trails for the predators to use. Snow will then fill in, leaving some of it unsuitable for the rest of the winter. Non target birds and animals will also be pushed out making them vulnerable to the weather and predators.

If somebody really wants to hunt pheasants there are preserves open thru March.

Ed Hiller

8-23-2020

To: SDGFP Commission

Re: Comments on Proposals made during
July meeting

The first proposal for a 10:00 AM start time for the resident only and the traditional pheasant seasons in 2020 would be an acceptable change since there is adequate time for the pheasants to feed before a 10:00 AM start time.

However the proposal to extend the pheasant season to January 31 should be rejected. Hunting during a season extension will subject the pheasants to detrimental stress during a period of typically extreme weather conditions. Historically the most severe cold is the first couple weeks in January. The birds are in need of good safe cover and additional food to keep warm. Hunting would drive them from limited cover and increase the losses of both hens and roosters due to this unnecessary exposure.

A better strategy as proposed is to reduce the excess rooster population by increasing the daily bag limit to 4 roosters per day for the month of December. Serious sportsmen should find this as a benefit for their efforts in late season hunts.

Sincerely,

Charles Boulais
37124 130th ST
Mina, SD 57451

RECEIVED
AUG 26 2020
Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

Tom K
Aug 17, 2020

RECEIVED
AUG 25 2020
Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

Pheasant Hunters Deserve Better (and so do the Pheasants)

I was born and raised in South Dakota, and am a SD pheasant hunter to this day. One of our family friends was Pete. Pete's family still has his land in Faulk/Spink counties. Pete was very protective of his wildlife, he always left the low ground alone for all wildlife. Pete is no longer with us, but his common sense is still here **"if you don't see large brood counts and at harvest you don't see the pheasants then it's time to back off, limit your take."**

The last two years there have been very few birds, and last year the low ground had standing water up to 3 feet deep. There went the winter habitat and nesting grounds.

I'm lucky Pete's family still lets me hunt some of their acres, but it's mostly to watch my son and dog hunt. We don't need 4 roosters (x2) to make it a good hunting day. As far as changing the start and end times, leave it alone - if it's not broke don't fix it! We should not be pushing the pheasants, or any wildlife, out of their home habitat in January! In many areas all they have is plowed fields!

Bring back the brood count for hunters, land owners, Game Wardens, biologists, etc. The brood count provides data on how pheasants are responding to weather trends, habitat changes, gives critical reproductive data, and wildlife management needs. I hate to see any wildlife born with a dollar sign on them. This is common sense, just what Pete had when it came to giving wildlife a helping hand. So, try using some common sense, or a little heart, instead of dollars and politics.



Colin Hogue

Life long SD hunter and SD land owner

16151 Olivine St., NW
Ramsey, MN 55303



James Larsen
300 W. 40th St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

I've been hunting Pheasants for 50 yrs. in S.D. I think extending The season AND INCREASE pheasant bag limit to 4 is CRAZY.

Pheasants plus other wild life need A break After 3 months of hunting. JANUARY is the coldest month of the year AND sloughs ARE their PRIMARY cover. So this makes for limited cover.

When you ARE hunting Roosters in JANUARY you ARE ALSO chasing hens out of their protective cover. In turn This will hamper hens survival.

The best way to get more hunters ARE

- ① get more public hunting land with good cover for Pheasants AND other wild life,
- ② get more programs like CREP, CRP, waik-in with good cover.

8-12-20

To: Director - Game, Fish & Parks

I have pheasant hunted in S.D. every year since the late 1960's. I remember the 5 day & 25 in possession days. It was great fun hunting the shelter belts, sloughs and corn fields with my best friends. As the years passed so did my best friends and my ability to hunt the fields.

The disability permitted me to be in S.D., but really wasn't very productive (one bird in 3 years).

I now am able to be with my son and his friends, which is great, but I can't hunt with them. The shotgun has become too heavy for me to handle, and is unsafe in the car.

Here's my request. Could you allow me to use a 22 caliber pistol. I have never owned a pistol but I think I could handle it weight wise.

(2)

I am able to drive my car with no problem and what I do is drive the roads, by myself, and look for pheasants in the ditches. Not productive but allows me to think I am hunting.

I do this while the young guys are in the field.

Being I will be 92 in October 2020, I don't think I will be visiting S.D. too many more years. Let me know your thoughts.

Jack Lundeto
3380 Westlawn
Jackson, MI 49203

Lins

My name is Richard Mathey. I live in Eastern S.D. Aurora County which used to be in one part of pheasant County. We have your production acres around us and I have C.R.P. I plant winter food for wildlife because I also hunt. For the last ten or twelve years we are running out of pheasants. Right now we have no pheasants. They are being farmed out and varmints are taking their toll on them. eating all the eggs and killing the raised ones. Chickens hawks are a good example. Like I said I hunt and hold pheasant hunts but I have to buy and release pheasants in order to have a hunt. All my neighbors that hunt release birds so they have some to shoot.

You folks tell the papers and hunters there are plenty of birds well that is not true. When you send out mail surveys to ask hunters how their hunt went most say good. but they are shooting released birds more than likely.

I am very much opposed to your extended Dec and Jan. season. Hunting that late will drive the hens out to the open and they can freeze. All the extended season is for the people that sell pheasants.

Another issue is your habitat fee. your habitat areas are a mess weeds thickets no food. We furnish the habitat for pheasants pay us.

I know you will properly throw this letter away. but you should at least read it to the Committee

Thank you.

White Lake, SD

Richard.

WMA-HOES

Tom K

RECEIVED
AUG 25 2020

Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

Bob Pollack
W 4555 27th ST
Necedah WI 54646

I have a comment on the proposed changes. I didn't see any change in the season for non resident why can't we hunt the season not just two six day periods.

Should change for N/R to hunt every day of season.

Bob Pollack

There are other States to hunt with out picking set dates.

August 26, 2020

David Sigdestad
42449 133rd St.
Pierpont, SD 57468

RE: Sec. Hepler & SD Dept. Game Fish & Parks & Commission Members

I am writing this letter because of one of your proposals for the pheasant season. I'm totally against extending the season further into January. I have visited with at least 20 people who share my view. Our weather here in NE South Dakota can be horrible in January. Last year we were consistently 10-15 degrees colder than Sioux Falls. You kick out the pheasants from the cat tail weeds and trees where are they to go to roost? If you vote to open the season at 10:00AM instead of noon and can bag 4 roosters instead of three, that's a big change for now. In the future, if you extend the season please consider the opening date and leave the closing date where it is. Thanks for your consideration.

David Sigdestad
Former Dist. #1 Legislator and farmer

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P. O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718

Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilding@rapidnet.com
July 12, 2020

SD GFP Commission
523 East Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Commissioners

We write in opposition to the river otter trapping season, we don't think you should have one in 2020. However in case you disagree with us and want a season, we also suggest some mitigations to make such a season less harmful.

CART BEFORE THE HORSE - Unseemly Rush

You went forward with the delisting proposal before folks could see the revised otter management plan, that was releasing on May 8th after you decided to delist (May 7th). Now your deadline on public commenting on the proposed trapping season, happens before we can see the final draft of the revised River Otter Management Plan. Its' final version has not yet been posted on the Commission web page nor to GFP's management plan web page. Maybe it will be in the Commission Book, so maybe those folks who can testify orally can read it a few days before the Commission meeting (or not)

The May 2020 draft Revision was very inadequate, providing very poor information on otters West River and along the main stem of the Missouri River. It is 12 pages long before the appendix and 44 pages with appendix and bibliographies). It did not plan for re-introduction West River & just gave West River short shrift. You should not be approving a trapping season until we have an opportunity to read the July draft of the River Otter Management Plan and see answers to our many questions (if they are provided). Perhaps you are rushing this through to get an otter season approved before the Interim Rules Review Committees Sept meeting, so you can start a season on Nov. 1st, even if that means lack of transparency and poor planning. Why the rush, why the delisting and season before the Management Plan?

ILLEGAL DELISTING

We have written in our first letter about the trapping season, explaining that the de-listing of the river otter in May 2020 was done illegally, as you did not provide the public notice required by law. We are not sure if you did the required consultation with tribes, federal agencies and neighboring governors.

Thus this trapping season is dependent on an illegal rule, thus resting on a very insecure foundation. We object to this process and suggest you go back and reconsider the delisting of the otter, using proper procedure.

TOO FEW OTTERS

The highest level of verified otter sighting in any year was 42 verified sightings of otter (2016). Over the last 5 years you had an average of 35 verified otter sightings. We believe you haven't yet figured out a monitoring plan. You have not proved you have enough otters to support a trapping season anywhere in the state. You haven't identified a reliable otter monitoring plan yet and we think you should delay any trapping.

TOO LARGE AN AREA - PROTECT WEST RIVER

It is totally unclear from the information provided in the May 2020 draft River Otter Management Plan, if you have any recent verified sightings of otters West River or in the Missouri River main stem above Lewis & Clark Lake. You may have no otters currently West River or maybe a few at or near La Creek National Wildlife Refuge, as we are aware of a verified sighting at La Creek National Wildlife Refuge in 2018 and an unverified sighting in 2019. (This understanding is not from the Management Plan, but other sources).

It makes absolutely no logical sense to have a trapping season in an area where there are no otters. It makes absolutely no logical sense to have a trapping season in an area, with just a few otters, who are maybe barely hanging on and barely surviving. If you are to have natural recovery West River, you need the Missouri River main stem left un-trapped so you can have connectivity with the East River's otter producing habitat. If you are to reintroduce West River, we need no trapping at least in the recovery area(s). SDGFP is not the only entity that could have re-introductions, there are 4 reservations West River and 2 along the east side of the main stem Missouri River.

We have no clue why staff proposed a statewide otter season except for sloppy and cavalier planning or an extreme bias towards trapping industry. Please don't allow trapping West River and leave the entire Missouri River, even down stream of Lewis and Clark trapping free.

BEAVER TRAPPING REFORM

Otters are killed accidentally in beaver, raccoon and mink traps. More are killed in beaver traps. The current West River beaver trapping season - except for the Black Hills - is 365 days. The East River season is 6 months. The Black Hills Season is 3 months, at the request of the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF). The beaver is a management indicator species on the BHNF.

The reason for this longer West River season is alleged to be, that West River ranchers complain more about "conflict" beavers than East River folk. Why not require them to apply for permit to take a "conflict" beaver, as provided in SDCL [41-8-23](#), rather than have yearlong trapping? Why not make both East and West River have a six-month season? Beaver's provide habitat to many other species. Why not make all trapping on public lands (who have at least a partial wildlife management objective) just three months, like the BHNF has asked for?

Why not provide that all beaver traps, that are not set during an otter season, have the trip wire off to

the side, as thus beaver trappers will be less likely to incidentally take otter. You could make this a requirement in a beaver season rule, not a matter for "trapper education". Why not get this change done, before having an otter trapping season?

VALUE WILDLIFE WATCHING AND SPECIES VIABILITY, NOT JUST TRAPPING INDUSTRY

We ask that the needs of wildlife watchers, photographers & hikers, are given adequate respect by SD GFP and that enough otters be kept to expand to West River. West River citizens should be able to view otters, without driving to far eastern SD. Let South Dakotans enjoy watching otters across all suitable habitat in SD. We don't have enough otters yet. Please recognize that viewing otters provides the benefits to quality of life for residents and reasons to visit for tourists. The trapping industry should not be more important to SDGFP than wildlife watchers or securing wide spread viable populations of otters.

OTTER MONITORING PLAN

We want an actual otter monitoring plan in place before they start otter trapping, not guidance for how to develop a monitoring plan. We want the monitoring plan to be peer reviewed. We want SD GFP to spend some money on monitoring costs, not just rely on incidental reports submitted by public or trapping reports. We wonder if the de-listing, will cause people to not value the otter as much and if de-listing will reduce the input you receive from the public. If otter is no longer listed, will people report the road kill or the incidental take in a trap?

CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES AND USFWS

Before approving the trapping season, the GFP should prove to the public that it has consulted with all SD tribes about the otter recovery, the trapping season and the otter de-listing and also with the USFWS and neighboring governors about the delisting.

AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION AND DRAINAGE TILLING IMPACTS

Please discuss and consider water quality problems in eastern SD -- that arise due to agricultural run-off and drainage tiling before setting a season. Please discuss water quantity problems due to drainage tiling and climate change. In the 2018 Status Review, GFP fudged on the issue of water pollution, saying it did not know about threat level from water pollution in eastern SD.

CUMULATIVE TAKE HARVEST LIMITS

All human caused otter "take" should be counted against the next years harvest limit. So all motor vehicle (road kill) and all incidental take of otters via other species trapping (after the otter season is closed) should count against next year's harvest limit.

SMALLER HARVEST LIMIT NEEDED

If GFP insists on a season in 2020, we ask for a smaller "harvest" cap.

A commissioner, I think at the May meeting, said trappers told him the proposed 15 otter "harvest cap" would be trapped out in the 1st week of the season. Staff testified that about 15 otter per year were incidentally/accidentally trapped in recent years. Most were taken in beaver traps.

We could see 15 otters taken in the first week of season and then another 15 otters incidentally taken during the rest of the year - thus giving a total otter trapping kill in 2020-2021 of 30 otter. Remember we just have 42 verified sightings of otter (2016) as highest level verified in any year and a 35 verified otter sighting as the average over last 5 years. Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe reintroduced 35 to start recovery.

Quote from draft 2020-2029 River Otter Management Plan at page 3 follows:

" incidental trap reports (n = 216) over the last 41 years (Figure 4).....Incidentally caught river otter were reported in all months of the year but were most frequent in March (n = 27), April (n = 43), and November (n = 86)".

If we assume 15 otters incidentally trapped per year, this would mean that 6 otter are normally taken in the entire month of November and 9 in other months. The GFP could be permitting a not sustainable take from the existing population.

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

Submitted on behalf of the Society and myself as an individual,



South Dakota Migratory Bird Association

19052 Hwy 1804
Pierre, SD 57501

Aug 27, 2020

To: GFP Secretary Kelly Hepler, Members of the SD GFP commission: Gary Jensen, Russell Olson, Doug Sharp, Jon Locken, Mary Anne Boyd, Travis Bies, Robert Whitmyre, Charles Spring.

From: Larry Steffen, president S.D. Migratory Bird Assn.

RE: Proposed pheasant season changes

This is to let you know that the SD Migratory Bird association is opposed to any changes in the pheasant season regulations as proposed, especially those that would lengthen the season and the 4-bird limit.

For the following reasons we would ask you to not adopt those two changes.

1. Extending the season—South Dakota winters are among the harshest in the Midwest. When the birds move into winter survival cover they should be left alone. Once they are driven out of their survival cover their chance for survival drops dramatically. Many birds would be lost unnecessarily, and the numbers of birds surviving

the winter and going into the breeding season could drop dramatically. Most of the hunting done on those bitter-cold winter days would be road-hunting. Most of the hunting would take place near farms and ranches where there is adequate winter survival cover, a strong possibility noted by our farmers and ranchers.

2. Increase of limit—At the present hunters harvest 1 ½ birds of the three bird limit. There's no reason or need for an increase to four, if they cannot harvest three. Keeping the limit down would make more roosters available in the spring for breeding purposes.

The support for not extending the season was unanimous among our board members and officers.

We would hope at the very least, you would vote down the season lengthening and 4-bird limit increase.

Sincerely,



Larry Steffen, president S.D.Migratory Bird assn.