



# SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

MAY 8-9, 2025 | CUSTER STATE PARK | EVENT BARN

## MEETING INFO

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

**Date and Time:** May 8, 2025, from 1-5 pm MT | May 9, 2025, from 8 am-12 pm MT

**Meeting Location:** Custer State Park Event Barn, 13389 US HWY 16A, Custer, SD 57730

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

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

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

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

**Meeting ID:** 912 6417 6710

**Passcode:** 970458

**Call In:** +16699009128,,91264176710# US

**Video Conference ID:** [91264176710@zoomcrc.com](mailto:91264176710@zoomcrc.com)

## AGENDA

### Call Meeting to Order (2 pm CST / 1 pm MT)

#### Division of Administration

##### Action Items

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

##### Informational Items

4. Staff Introductions

### Public Hearing (3 pm CST / 2 pm MT)

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

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

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

#### Petitions

5. #239 Purple Heart Recipient Rule
6. #240 Beaver Hunting and Trapping Season-Prairie Hills Audubon Society
7. #241 Beaver Hunting and Trapping Season – Izaak Walton League of America

#### Finalizations

8. E-Tagging
9. Mentored Hunter
10. Deer Hunting Seasons
  - a. Apprentice Hunter Deer Season
  - b. Archery Deer Season
  - c. General Muzzleloading Deer Season
  - d. Black Hills Deer Season
11. Black Hills and Custer State Park Elk Hunting Seasons



# SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

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## Proposals

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12. Furbearer Hunting and Trapping
  - a. Beaver Hunting and Trapping Season
  - b. Skunk, Opossum, Fox, Raccoon and Badger Season
  - c. Mink, Weasel and Muskrat Hunting and Trapping Season
13. River Otter Proposal and Status Update
14. Eliminate Closed Area on Lake Francis Case

## Division of Parks and Recreation

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### Action Items

15. Spring Creek Recreation Area Restaurant Prospectus Update

### Informational Items

16. CSP Concession Lease
17. Bridge City Concession Lease
18. CSP Bison Research
19. CSP Interpretive Programming
20. April Park Camping Unit and Revenue Reports

## Division of Wildlife

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### Action Items

21. Deer Hunting Licenses Administrative Action
22. Elk Hunting Licenses Administrative Action

### Informational Items

23. Youth Nest Predator Bounty Program Participation
24. Beaver Action Plan
25. AIS Field Operations Update
26. Spawning and Stocking Update
27. State Wildlife Action Plan
28. License Sales

## Solicitation of Agenda Items

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

## Adjourn

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The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on June 5-6, 2025, starting at 1 pm CST at the Dakota Event Center, in Aberdeen, SD.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

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Agenda Item #2

### REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

#### Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the Matthews Training Center in Pierre, SD on April 3, 2025. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Bruce Cull, Jon Locken, and Travis Theel were present, with Jim White, Julie Bartling, and Travis Bies joining virtually. With seven commission members present or online, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 110 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

#### 1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

[Action Item]

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

#### 2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

[Action Item]

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

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE MARCH 2025 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 3. Additional Salary Days

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. Additional days were submitted for approval for Commissioner Theel for one day.

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

#### 4. New Staff Introductions

[Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced two new employees: A) Hunter Olson, West Whitlocks Assistant Manager B) Sam Parrish, Spring Creek Assistant Manager

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, introduced three new employees: A) Tonya Nayman, Rapid City Regional Office Secretary B) KayCee Smith, Outdoor Campus West, Naturalist C) Cierra Colvin, Mobridge Wildlife Damage Specialist

#### Public Hearing

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:12 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as finalization. No testimony was provided by the public, so the Public Hearing was closed at 2:49 pm CST.

#### Agenda Item #6: Waterfowl Hunting Season

No testimony provided.

#### Agenda #7: Prairie Mountain Lion Hunting

2:14 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audobon Society testified virtually in opposition of prairie mountain lion hunting.

2:18 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition of prairie mountain lion hunting.



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2:21 pm: Paula von Weller of Deadwood, SD representing testified virtually in opposition of prairie mountain lion hunting.

2:23 pm: Tate Wells of Piedmont, SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified virtually in support of prairie mountain lion hunting.

2:24 pm: Bret Robertson of Rapid City, SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified virtually in support of prairie mountain lion hunting.

2:25 pm: Jeremy Wells of Sturgis, SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified in person in support of prairie mountain lion hunting.

2:27 pm: Cody Johnson of Belle Fourche, SD testified virtually in support of prairie mountain lion hunting

2:29 pm: Patrick Weimer from SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified virtually in support of prairie mountain lion hunting.

### **Agenda #8: Boating Safety**

Note testimony provided

### **Agenda #9: Big Horn Sheep Hunting Season**

2:31 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audobon Society testified virtually in opposition of big horn sheep hunting.

2:32 pm: Paula von Weller of Deadwood, SD testified virtually in opposition of big horn sheep hunting.

### **Agenda #10: Prairie Elk Hunting Season**

2:33 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD testified virtually in opposition of a prairie elk hunting season.

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

2:37 pm: Tyler Frederick of Reliance, SD representing Karlen Ranch testified in person in support of a prairie elk hunting season.

2:39 pm: Charlie Boe of Chamberlain, SD representing Boe Ranch testified in person in support of a prairie elk hunting season.

2:41 pm: Ben Dorman of Kennebec, SD representing Dorman Ranch testified in person in support of a prairie elk hunting season.

2:42 pm: Dalton Grassle of Lower Brule, SD representing Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Wildlife, Fish and Recreation Department testified in person in opposition of a prairie elk hunting season.

2:43 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audobon Society testified virtually in opposition of a prairie elk hunting season.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the public hearing closed at 2:49 pm.



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### Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 3:07 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda, not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda.

3:09 pm: Matt Tucker of Rosebud, SD representing the Rosebud Sioux Tribe testified virtually in opposition of the prairie elk hunting season.

3:10 pm: John Jarding of Rapid City, SD testified virtually concerning the Unit 27A deer population.

3:13 pm: Mike Jarding of Rapid City, SD testified virtually concerning the Unit 27A deer population.

3:17 pm: Penny Svenkeson landowner in Fall River and Custer Counties, SD virtually concerning the deer population in Unit 27A.

3:20pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audobon Society testified virtually in opposition of beaver trapping, the nest predator bounty survey, and the river otter action plan.

3:23 pm: Bret Robertson, SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified virtually in support of mountain lion hound hunting and deer population in 27A.

3:26 pm: Jeremy Wells of Sturgis, SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified in person in support of mountain lion hound hunting.

3:28 pm: Tate Wells of Piedmont, SD representing SD Houndsmen Association testified in person in support of mountain lion hound hunting.

3:29 pm: Jim McDougal from southwestern SD testified virtually in support of mountain lion hound hunting.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the open forum at 3:31 pm CST.

### 5. #236 Petition to Eliminate Closed Area on Lake Francis Case

[Action Item: Petition]

Eric Storms presented his reasons to the GFP Commission for removing the current regulation which does not allow fishing between December 1 to April 30 in the area between the railroad bridge and I-90 bridge Causeway in Brule and Lyman County waters. Director Kirschenmann described the current regulation creates more complexity to rules, does not positively impact fish populations, and that fact that internally GFP has been begun preliminary discussions around this same regulation. Kirschenmann shared the department recommendation of accepting the petition and opening it up for public comment. The GFP Commission unanimously accepted the petition and will begin the rule promulgation process.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO ACCEPT THE PETITION AND BEGIN THE RULE PROMULGATION PROCESS. The motion carried unanimously.

### 6. Waterfowl Hunting Season

[Action Item: Finalization]

The Commission took action to finalize all waterfowl proposals presented by Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator. Specific changes to administrative rule are to increase the daily bag limit for pintails from one to three and decrease the bonus blue-winged teal season from 16 to 9-days. In addition, the Commission took action to repeal the Special Canada Goose hunting season in Bennett County and all rules referencing this season and absorb Unit 3 for the Canada Goose Hunting season into Unit 2. This will add additional days of Canada Goose hunting opportunity in Bennett County.



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MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE DUCK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE EARLY FALL CANADA GOOSE FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE GOOSE HUNTING SEASONFINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL CANADA GOOSE HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

### 7. Prairie Mountain Lion Hunting

[Action Item: Finalization]

The commission took action to finalize changes to the prairie mountain lion season. John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented changes including allowing the initiation of the pursuit of a mountain lion with dogs outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District to occur anywhere, where permitted by the landowner. Because this season is open year-round, this change would become effective twenty days after the modified rule is filed with the Secretary of State's Office. The commission also took action to exclude examples of closed areas Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Park, and Mount Rushmore National Memorial.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE PRAIRIE MOUNTAIN LION HUNTING FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

### 8. Boating Safety

[Action Item: Finalization]

Law Enforcement Section Chief Sam Schelhaas presented a finalization recommendation of two boating rules. Schelhaas pointed out that there were a few style and form changes made by the Legislative Review Committee, however, none of the changes affected the substance of the original proposal. The commission voted to approve the finalization recommendation.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE BOATING SAFETY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 9. Big Horn Sheep Hunting Season

[Action Item: Finalization]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief presented a finalization recommendation for the big horn sheep hunting season. The commission took action to expand the unit boundary for BHS-BH4 to include those portions of Lawrence and Meade counties west of Interstate 90 and clean-up unit descriptions. The commission also voted to reduce the total number of bighorn sheep licenses from ten in 2024 to seven in 2025.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE BIG HORN SHEEP SEASON FINALIZATION. Yea Votes (6) Rissler, Bartling, Locken, White, Cull and Theel. Nay Votes (1) Bies. The motion carried.

### 10. Prairie Elk Hunting Season

[Action Item: Finalization]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented a finalization recommendation for the Commission to take action on for all changes to the Prairie Elk hunting season. Specific changes to administrative rule are to increase the season length in Prairie units PRE-09A and PRE-27A to Sept. 1 through Dec. 31 and allow landowner-own-land resident only antlerless elk hunting in these units. In addition, administrative rule changes would expand the Prairie unit PRE-WRA to include all areas west of





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the Missouri River that are not currently in a Prairie, Black Hills, or Custer State Park elk hunting season unit.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE PRAIRE ELK HUNTING SEASON FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY WHITE TO APPROVE THE PRAIRIE ELK HUNTING SEASON LICENSES FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

### 11. E-Tagging

[Action Item: Proposal]

Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, presented a proposal for changes to the tagging and transportation rules for the implementation of an e-tag system. With these changes and upon successful comprehensive testing of the e-tag system, the current locking seal tagging requirement and allow for e-tagging will be a legal method and operate concurrently until e-tagging is implemented for all hunting seasons (big game and tundra swan) that require tagging.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE E-TAGGING PROPOSAL FOR MAY FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

### 12. Mentored Hunter

[Action Item: Proposal]

Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, presented a proposal for the GFP Commission resulting from Senate Bill 41 from the 2025 Legislative Session. The proposed will streamline the mentored hunting program by the following: 1) the mentored hunter, or mentee, would be issued their respective license and be the holder of their license (previously, the license was issued to the mentor); 2) there would be no group size restriction for mentoring hunting; 3) consent for mentored hunting would now be verbal or written (previously, written consent was required); and 4) the proposed change would allow the GFP Commission to establish criteria and conditions for other mentored hunting season.

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

### 13. Deer Proposal and Population Status Update

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented an information to the Commission to review deer hunting seasons and proposed several changes to administrative rule for the Apprentice, Archery, Muzzleloader, and Black Hills Deer seasons. The most significant change would be to expand the Sioux Falls municipal archery deer hunting unit and create a municipal archery deer hunting unit in Hot Springs. In addition, administrative rule would be modified to allow the Commission to specify archery and muzzleloading deer antlerless only hunting units and license types via administrative action. License number recommendations were shared with the Commission for firearm deer hunting seasons, which consisted of a 17% reduction in the number of licenses to increase deer population growth rates across much of South Dakota. These proposals and recommendations are scheduled for finalization at the May Commission meeting.

Andrew Lindbloom, Senior Wildlife Biologist, and Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented a proposal for deer license allocation and presented a population status update. GFP conducts multiple biological and harvest surveys to evaluate mule and white-tailed deer populations across South Dakota. Overall harvest in 2024 was approximately 47,100 deer and slightly lower than 2023. Recruitment rates for both species improved in 2024 compared to previous years and the past 2 winters have been mild with minimal estimated overwinter losses. Hemorrhagic disease losses in most areas of the state have been minimal, but southeast South Dakota experienced substantial losses. The commission proposed reducing



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approximately 12,900 firearm tags and closing 19 additional units to antlerless archery and muzzleloader hunting to address lower deer populations.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON MENTORED AND YOUTH DEER HUNTING SEASON. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2025.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY BIES TO ADOPT THE APPRENTICE HUNTER DEER PROPOSAL FOR MAY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY LOCKEN, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO ADOPT THE ARCHERY DEER PROPOSAL FOR MAY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT THE GENERAL MUZZLELOADING DEER SEASON PROPOSAL FOR MAY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY CULL TO ADOPT THE BLACK HILLS DEER SEASON PROPOSAL FOR MAY FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN FOR THE CUSTER STATE PARK DEER SEASON. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2025.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN FOR THE WEST RIVER DEER SEASON. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2025.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN FOR THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE DEER SEASON. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2025.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN FOR THE EAST RIVER DEER SEASON. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2025.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN FOR THE DEER HUNTING SEASON LICENSES ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE COMMISSION IN MAY 2025.

### **14. Black Hills and Custer State Park Elk Hunting Seasons**

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented a proposal to the Commission to review Black Hills and Custer State Park Elk hunting season structures. License number recommendations were shared with the Commission. A 15% increase to any elk licenses and a 63% increase to antlerless elk licenses was recommended as a result of elk helicopter population survey conducted in February. These license number recommendations are scheduled for finalization at the May Commission meeting.

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

#### **14a. Elk Survey Results**

Byron Buckley, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented results from the 2025 Elk Aerial Survey and related information on license changes. The winter 2025 elk estimates for the Black Hills and Custer State Park were 7,922 and 795, respectively. GFP staff were excited to announce that due to the higher elk populations, we can recommend more hunting opportunities in the Black Hills and Custer State Park this year. Staff proposed an increase in the Black Hills from 1,582 to 2,197 (Including Any Elk tags, Antlerless tags, Firearm, and Archery) and in Custer State Park from 20 to 35 (Including Any Elk tags, Firearm, and Archery).





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### 15. Fish Production Development Plan Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Michael Barnes, program administrator presented information that provided an overview of the state hatchery system and hatchery operations. The overall goal of maximizing angler satisfaction was emphasized along with principles guiding hatchery operations. The 2021 hatchery plan was revisited. While hatchery construction at the Ft. Pierre office and in collaboration with SDSU were abandoned, considerable progress occurred with RAS fabrication and installation at all three hatcheries. These RAS systems are producing fish in numbers and sizes not previously available. Walleye production in particular has increased dramatically since 2021. The return-on-investment has been exceptional. Additional RAS systems are under construction at Cleghorn Hatchery, with even more planned at Blue Dog Hatchery. The emphasis moving forward will be at Blue Dog hatchery, focusing on water supply improvements and RAS construction. State hatchery production has increased dramatically in the past 15 years, with additional increases expected as more RAS systems become operational.

### 16. Hunting 101 Program Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Derek Klawitter and Clint Whitley presented on the hunting 101 program that happens at the Outdoor Campus' in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. They shared the history, purpose and impact of the program. They also shared some stories of participants that took the program and how they showed success. This highlighted the value that data can't always show. Lastly, they shared the plans for the future of this program and what they plan to do to continue its growth and impact.

### 17. River Otter Action Plan

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented the "North American River Otter Action Plan, 2025-2029. This action plan guides management efforts for river otters for the next five years. Objectives of this plan include determining the population status of otters, using sustainable harvest strategies, informing the public on river otter ecology, and promoting the conservation of riparian habitat. The department will ask The Commission to adopt the action plan at the June meeting.

### 18. Prairie Dog Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Mark Ohm, Wildlife Regional Supervisor and Mike Klosowski, Wildlife Regional Supervisor presented and update on prairie dogs. Prairie dog control requests for service continue to increase, with 132 requests in 2024 and over 16,000 acres being treated. Average costs per acre treated remained similar to FY24 at \$29.44/acre with total expenditures from SDGFP topping \$381,000. With continued dry weather increased requests for service are expected again for this coming year. Several other bait types were evaluated including Rozol and Kaput. While these products may be useful in limited circumstances, average costs of three times zinc phosphide and significant time commitments make their widespread use in our program unlikely.

### 19. License Sales Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Director of Wildlife Tom Kirschenmann shared some general information on license sales from December 15 through March 31. In all, license sales remain strong. In particular, fishing license sales are better at this point than compared to the last three years. The department will continue to monitor license sales; however, all indications would suggest sales to remain ahead of last year.

### 20. Go Outdoors Management System

[Info Item: Parks]

Cassy Behnke and Ashley Waibel presented information to the commission regarding updates on the new events management system through GoOutdoors South Dakota. Their presentation covered the user journey within the system, demonstrated its functionality, and highlighted key features such as waiting lists, HuntSAFE, internal data collection, and customer feedback. They also discussed how these tools can help achieve the department's and division's goals.



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### 21. Park Volunteer Recruitment Effort

[Info Item: Parks]

Rachel Comes, Statewide Volunteer Program Coordinator, updated the Commission on the state park volunteer program recruitment. The variety of recruitment efforts used were presented including social media and print ads. It was noted that recruitment costs are under \$5,000 for a program with a fiscal impact of \$1.4M. To date onsite park host position vacancies are at 2% and the focus for 2025 is to increase commuter, event, and group volunteers to meet the goal of increasing volunteer hours by 5%.

### 22. Ft. Sisseton Festival Preview

[Info Item: Parks]

Fort Sisseton manager Ali Tonsfeldt provided the GFP Commission a sneak peek at the Annual Fort Sisseton Festival being held the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> of June. This event the second largest event held by GFP and typically target up to 10,000 attendees and over 200 campers. Staff focus on a family friendly, inviting atmosphere with many activities for kids and history buffs alike with the intent to keep folks engaged for the entire weekend. She also formally invited the GFP Commissioners to stay a bit longer after the June meeting in Aberdeen and take the time to visit this festival event.

### 23. Statewide and Missouri River Boat Ramp

[Info Item: Parks]

Pat Buscher, Regional Park Supervisor and Jason Jungwirth, Senior Wildlife Biologist addressed the April 2025 US Army Corps of Engineers Missouri River Run-off forecast with commissioners. The virtual spring meeting on April 1<sup>st</sup> was attended and forecast information was shared during this annual presentation. Lake Oahe will see run-off from improved mountain snowpack conditions, and this expected run-off coming into the Missouri River Reservoir can only be improved with localized moisture yet to be seen this spring. The elevation of Lake Oahe is expected to decline gradually and remain stable once mountain snowpack flows into the system. Lake Oahe boating conditions will remain like 2024, with 17 of 23 State Park boat ramps placed and to remain in service throughout the summer. Marina offering at Spring Creek and Indian Creek are expected to operate at full capacity this season.

Statewide drought conditions are on the increase causing potential access issues on smaller bodies of water while larger bodies of water are holding their own. Most fish populations are also doing very well as can be seen in the participation levels so far this winter and spring. Low water should not deter anglers and users from opportunities as there are ample ways to recreate, which can be found on the Aquatic Access Map on the GFP website. The aquatic access map is a great location to stay in the know on any and all types of fishing access from boat, shore, ice and streams as well as stocking and survey reports.

### 24. March Park Camping Unit and Revenue Report

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, presented the March monthly and year-to-date report numbers for the Division of Parks & Recreation related to camping units and revenue. With the cool weather in March camping units were down for the month and YTD approx. 120 units but remain relatively close to the 2024 numbers. The Parks Division revenue is up 3% YTD with entrance license sales remaining strong. Various graphs and charts were shared with the Commission to depict how park revenue comes in on a monthly basis throughout the year as well as the impact of the new non-resident park entrance license fees as compared to other entrance fees. Commissioners were also shown a graph that depicted how reservations come in over a typical 90-day reservation window, which staff will be used to market unreserved available camping sites.



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### 26. Adjourn

[Action Item]

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

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 11:19 AM CST ON APRIL 4, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary



**South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks****Petition for Rule Change**

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

ID:	239
Petitioner Name:	Connie Stone
Address:	47912 187th St Brandt , SD 57218
Email:	connie.stone@sdstate.edu
Phone:	605-651-3649
Rule Identification:	Rule 41:03:03 and 41:03:04:03
Describe Change:	“I would like to submit a petition for consideration to amend South Dakota Administrative Rule 41:03:03 and 41:03:04:03 to include South Dakota residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart decoration as eligible recipients of the lifetime park entrance license and discounted camping and camping cabin fees. These state park benefits are currently authorized for South Dakota veterans who have been awarded the United States Veterans Administration K Award, have been classified as 100% disabled, or were held as a prisoner of war.”
Reason for Change:	As how we fight in war changes, so does our veterans. The original rule is a wonderful one that encourages veterans to get outdoors and gives a break to those to whom may need it most. In the current rule, POWs are marked as a population of veterans who will be allowed lifetime pass. However, POWs are extremely rare in todays warfare and most from past wars, have passed away. I purpose by including Purple Heart Recipients, who are also rare, we are offering the same respect that was originally designed for POWs. In the state of South Dakota there is approx. 150 registered Purple Heart Recipients.





## South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

### Petition for Rule Change

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

ID: 240

Petitioner  
Name: Nancy Hilding

Address: P.O. Box 788  
Black Hawk, , SD 57718

Email: phas.wsd@rapidnet.com

Phone: 605-787-2806

Rule Identification: 41:08:01:07. Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide and year-round, except as provided in this section. The season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30 to catch, trap, or hunt beaver within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31.

Describe Change: Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide for 5 months from November 1st to March 31st each year, except as provided in this section. There will be no beaver trapping and hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, an area that is defined in SDCL 34-35-15,

Reason for Change: We have submitted an 8 page formal petition saved as a PDF file. Please use that - use our formal petition not this web site notice. -- Beaver provide many benefits to us that we delineate in our formal petition. We are also concerned about needing reintroduction of river otters to western SD, who are strongly associated with beaver...Please use our formal petition



ID: 241

Petitioner  
Name: Christine Sandvik

Address: 4810 Powderhorn Dr  
Rapid city, SD 57702

Email: christie.sandvik@gmail.com

Phone: 605-393-5128

Rule  
Identification: SDCL 1-26-13

Decribe  
Change: The South Dakota State Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) and Rapid City Chapter Director Christine Sandvik are concerned about protecting water, and wildlife in the Black Hills and West River South Dakota. At our state conference last month, it was voted that we would support a full ban on beaver harvest in the Black Hills Fire Protection Area as well as a reduced 5 month trapping season in the remainder of West River South Dakota. A complete petition document has been sent to Scott.Simpson@state.sd.us .

Reason for  
Change: Beavers are a critical and useful part of our ecosystem, and are currently listed as a keystone species for the Black Hills National Forest, despite being themselves a shrinking resource. Beavers increase groundwater storage and raise water tables protecting a critical and shrinking resource in West River South Dakota. Beaver dams can also filter sediments and clean water. Additionally, beavers help with fire mitigation, and resilience of nearby lands after a burn which is absolutely necessary in the Black Hills. Finally, beavers keep ephemeral and intermittent creeks flowing year-round creating aquatic habitat for aquatic species as well as habitat for other wetlands and riparian associated or dependent terrestrial species. Additional details can be found in an email with attachments sent to Scott.Simpson@state.sd.us .



## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### POSSESSION, PROCESSING AND TRANSPORTATION OF GAME Chapter 41:06:00, 41:06:03, 41:06:16

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

#### Requirements and Restrictions:

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

#### Proposed changes from last year:

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

#### Recommended change from proposal:

- Withdraw the modification of § 41:06:00 to include a definition in ARSD for "Tagged/Tagging" based on feedback from South Dakota Legislative Research Council.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

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

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

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

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

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

**41:06:03:01.01. Electronic license registration required.** Each electronic swan or big game license must be electronically registered at the time of harvest or prior to the transport of a harvested swan or big game, as provided in SDCL 41-14-14. Upon being electronically registered and prior to the transport, the licensee shall affix the Department of Game, Fish and Parks-provided harvest confirmation number. The harvest confirmation number must be legible and affixed using durable material around one leg of a mountain lion, turkey, or swan, and to all hoofed big game animals as follows:

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

**41:06:16:09.01. Tundra swan season established -- Open units -- Shooting hours.**

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

## RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None

## RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

None

## FISCAL IMPACT

None

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## **Mentored Hunter Hunting Season** Chapter 41:06:01, 41:06:02, 41:06:16, 41:06:49

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

### **PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Duration:** Beginning Fall 2025 Hunting Seasons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

or

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

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

**Licenses:** Unlimited, except:

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

Nonresident youth and mentored waterfowl licenses are limited to 100.

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

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

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

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

## **SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

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

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

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

#### End results.

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

## **DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

### **Application for license**

**41:06:01:12. Mentored youth ~~big game~~ license -- Restrictions.** ~~A resident parent or guardian child under the age of sixteen~~ may purchase no more than one mentored youth

- 1) Small game license;
- 2) Nonresident waterfowl license;
- 3) "any ~~Any~~ antlerless deer" license or "antlerless whitetail deer" license;
- 4) ~~fall~~ Fall "any turkey" license; or
- 5) spring Spring "male turkey" license; ~~for a designated mentored child, as provided in SDCL 41-6-81.~~

~~The hunting of antelope by a mentored child is not currently permitted. No child participating in~~ A child who possesses a mentored youth big game ~~hunt~~ license may not apply for a regular season license for that corresponding species and season. A child who has an active application or possesses a big game license may not purchase a mentored youth big game license for that species and season.

**41:06:01:12.01 Mentored youth hunting seasons -- Restrictions.** An individual with a mentored youth fall "any turkey" or a mentored youth spring "male turkey" license shall adhere to date, weapon, and unit restrictions for that season. An individual with a mentored youth "any antlerless deer" license or a mentored youth "antlerless whitetail deer" license shall adhere to date, weapon, and unit restrictions for the youth deer hunting season, as described in chapter 41:06:63. An individual with a mentored youth small game or a mentored youth nonresident waterfowl license must adhere to the date, bag limit, weapon, and unit restrictions for that species and season, as described in article 41:06.

### **License forms and fees**

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

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

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

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

### **Waterfowl hunting season**

#### **41:06:16:11. Maximum number of nonresident waterfowl licenses -- Open units --**

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

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

### **Youth waterfowl hunting season**

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

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

### **RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

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

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

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

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

## Apprentice Hunter Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:44

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

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

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

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

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

Custer State Park is closed to those with Apprentice Hunter Deer License and National Wildlife Refuges are closed unless specified by the refuge.

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

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

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

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

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

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

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

License number recommendations for this hunting season are included on the following administrative action sheet.

Figure 1. Map of Apprentice Deer hunting units APD-03 and APD-13.

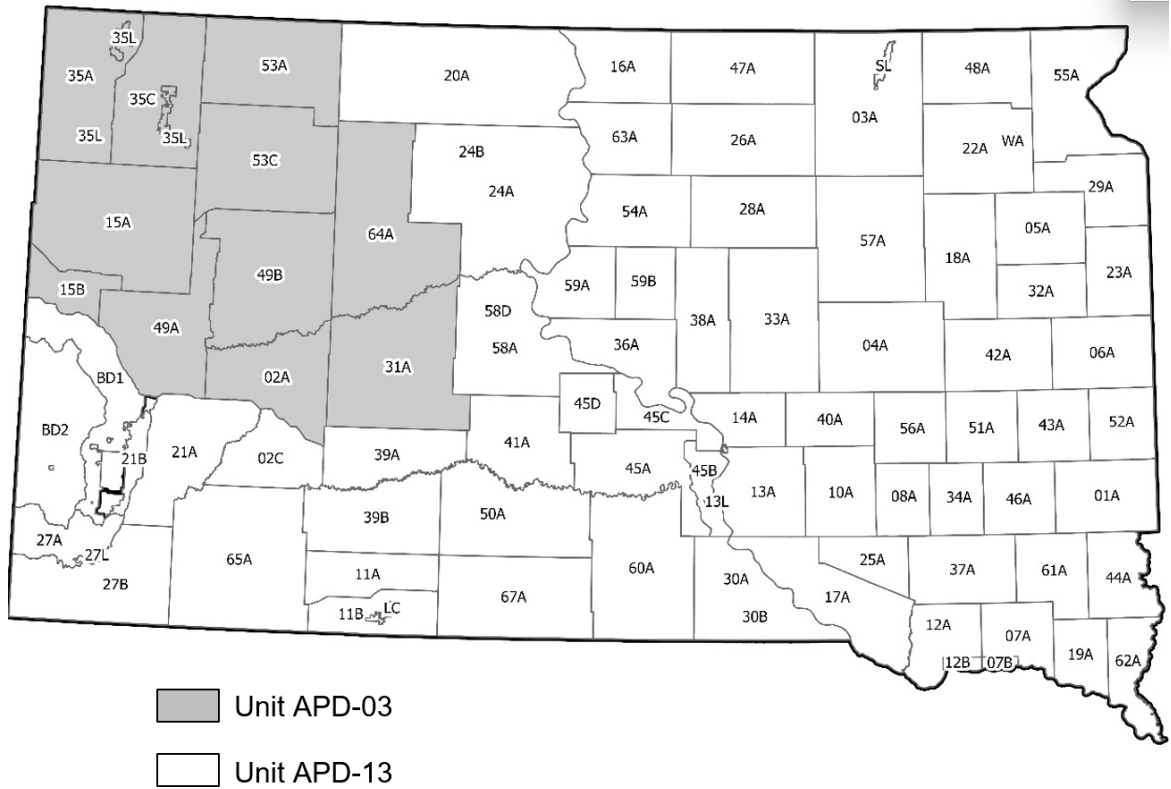


Table 1. Apprentice Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2018 to 2024.

YEAR	Licenses Sold	Harvest						Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
		Bucks		Does		Total	Success		
		WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2018	4,845	264	35	1,823	377	2,499	52%	3.85	5.72
2019	4,424	263	37	1,722	297	2,319	52%	3.93	5.70
2020	4,302	249	26	1,846	372	2,493	58%	3.71	5.73
2021	641	21	0	323	18	362	57%	3.09	6.10
2022	527	29	4	210	22	263	50%	4.10	5.82
2023	653	36	3	292	29	361	55%	4.27	5.69
2024	567	25	6	276	12	318	56%	4.38	5.65

\*The Apprentice season was separated into Youth and Apprentice seasons in 2021. See separate Youth season report for license sales and estimated harvest.

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

**41:06:44:02. Number and type of licenses available.** An unlimited number of "antlerless deer" and "antlerless whitetail deer" licenses may be issued for the apprentice hunter deer hunting season. ~~Apprentice hunters are~~ An apprentice hunter is limited to one "antlerless deer" or "antlerless whitetail deer" license for areas open to the apprentice hunter deer hunting season. The following describes the open units:



- (1) Unit APD-03: West River Units 02A, 15A, 15B, 31A, 35A, 35C, 35L, 49A, 49B, 53A, 53C, and 64A. Only a single tag "any antlerless deer" license is valid in this unit; and
- (2) Unit APD-13: That portion of the state not included in Unit ~~YOD-03~~ APD-03. Only a single tag "antlerless whitetail deer" license is valid in this unit.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

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

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

## Archery Deer Season

Chapter 41:06:22

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

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

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

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

Archery deer licenses are restricted in the following areas:

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

### **Open Unit:**

ARD-ST1: Statewide, excluding Custer State Park.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

License number recommendations for this hunting season are included on the following administrative action sheet.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

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

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

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

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

License number recommendations for this hunting season are included on the following administrative action sheet.

Table 1. Archery Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2015 to 2024.

YEAR	Licenses Sold		Harvest				Total	Tag Success	Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
			Bucks		Does					
	Res	Nonres	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2015	23,507	3,180	5,042	632	1,593	73	7,340	28%	11.24	5.14
2016	24,531	3,474	4,780	824	1,987	89	7,680	27%	10.80	5.06
2017	25,512	3,800	4,750	961	1,775	136	7,622	26%	10.94	5.24
2018	26,660	4,449	4,930	1,115	1,902	141	8,088	26%	10.59	5.23
2019	25,970	4,325	5,436	910	2,210	140	8,696	29%	10.57	5.25
2020	29,551	4,692	6,253	1,234	2,807	150	10,445	31%	11.14	5.25
2021	30,530	5,851	6,100	1,112	2,261	163	9,635	26%	11.87	5.23
2022	29,757	5,463	5,279	1,095	2,472	178	9,023	26%	12.19	4.94
2023	29,800	4,974	5,276	1,051	2,062	150	8,539	25%	10.64	4.57
2024	29,372	5,182	5,258	1,152	1,858	137	8,405	24%	10.45	4.46

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

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

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

Unlimited nonresident-~~any~~ deer licenses valid on private land not leased by the ~~department~~ Department of Game, Fish and Parks for public hunting may be issued for unit ARD-ST1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) Unit ARD-ST1: statewide, excluding Custer State Park;
- (2) Unit ARD-ER1: all counties east of the Missouri River;

- (3) Unit ARD-WR1: all counties west of the Missouri River, excluding Custer State Park;
- (4) Unit ARD-LM1: ~~antlerless whitetail deer licenses are available in Commission-designated~~ hunting units that offer a ~~deer~~ license for antlerless deer in the lottery drawing for the Black Hills, West River, and East River deer seasons;
- (5) Unit ARD-MP1: for those municipally-designated areas within the city limits of Custer;
- (6) Unit ARD-MP2: for those municipally-designated areas within the city limits of Rapid City; ~~and~~
- (7) Unit ARD-MP3: for those municipally-designated areas within the city limits of Sioux Falls ~~and on private land surrounding the city limits of Sioux Falls within the area defined as 258<sup>th</sup> Street from 466<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 484<sup>th</sup> Avenue, then south to 268<sup>th</sup> Street, west on 268<sup>th</sup> to 480<sup>th</sup> Avenue, south on 480<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 271<sup>st</sup> Street, west along 271<sup>st</sup> Street to 466<sup>th</sup> Ave, and north along 466<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 258<sup>th</sup> Street; and~~
- (8) Unit ARD-MP4: for those municipally-designated areas within the city limits of Hot Springs.

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

All units referenced above are described in § 41:06:22:01.01.

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

None.

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

None.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

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

## General Muzzleloading Deer Season Chapter 41:06:45

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

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

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

**Open Unit:**

MZD-ST1: Statewide.

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

Muzzleloading deer licenses are not valid in:

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

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

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

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

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

License number recommendations for this hunting season are included on the following administrative action sheet.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

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

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

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

License number recommendations for this hunting season are included on the following administrative action sheet.

Table 1. Muzzleloading Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2015 to 2024.

YEAR	Licenses Sold		Harvest						Avg Days Hunted	Average Satisfctn
			Bucks		Does		Total	Success		
	Res	Nonres	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2015	3,303	143	313	77	539	16	935	27%	4.03	4.76
2016	2,914	134	334	89	699	6	1,127	37%	4.06	5.03
2017	3,304	128	263	117	865	4	1,251	36%	4.39	5.10
2018	3,263	120	275	110	808	14	1,208	36%	4.44	5.01
2019	3,200	140	295	112	795	17	1,219	36%	4.95	5.10
2020	3,550	157	272	170	882	17	1,341	36%	4.36	5.14
2021	3,358	133	235	110	711	8	1,065	31%	4.87	5.01
2022	3,083	104	275	83	760	8	1,125	35%	5.03	4.73
2023	3,529	130	213	119	600	12	945	26%	5.75	4.22
2024	2,994	117	201	135	446	12	794	26%	5.81	4.14

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

**41:06:45:01. General muzzleloading deer hunting season established -- Open unit -- Number and type of licenses.** The general muzzleloading deer hunting season is open statewide from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day beginning on December 4 first through January 4 first. ~~Unlimited single tag "antlerless whitetail deer" licenses may be issued for unit MZD-LM1 and no more than 1,500 "any deer" one thousand five hundred licenses may be issued for unit MZD-ST1.~~

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

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

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

- (1) A person may possess ~~no more than two one~~ general muzzleloader muzzleloading deer licenses, of which only one can be an "antlerless whitetail deer" license valid in MZD-LM1, as described in § 41:06:45:02; and



(2) Only residents of the state may apply for a general ~~muzzleloader~~ "any deer" muzzleloading license valid in MZD-ST1, as described in § 41:06:45:02, and they may only possess a single license valid in this unit.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

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

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

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

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

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** November 1 - 30

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

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

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

### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

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

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

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

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

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

License number recommendations for this hunting season are included on the following administrative action sheet.

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

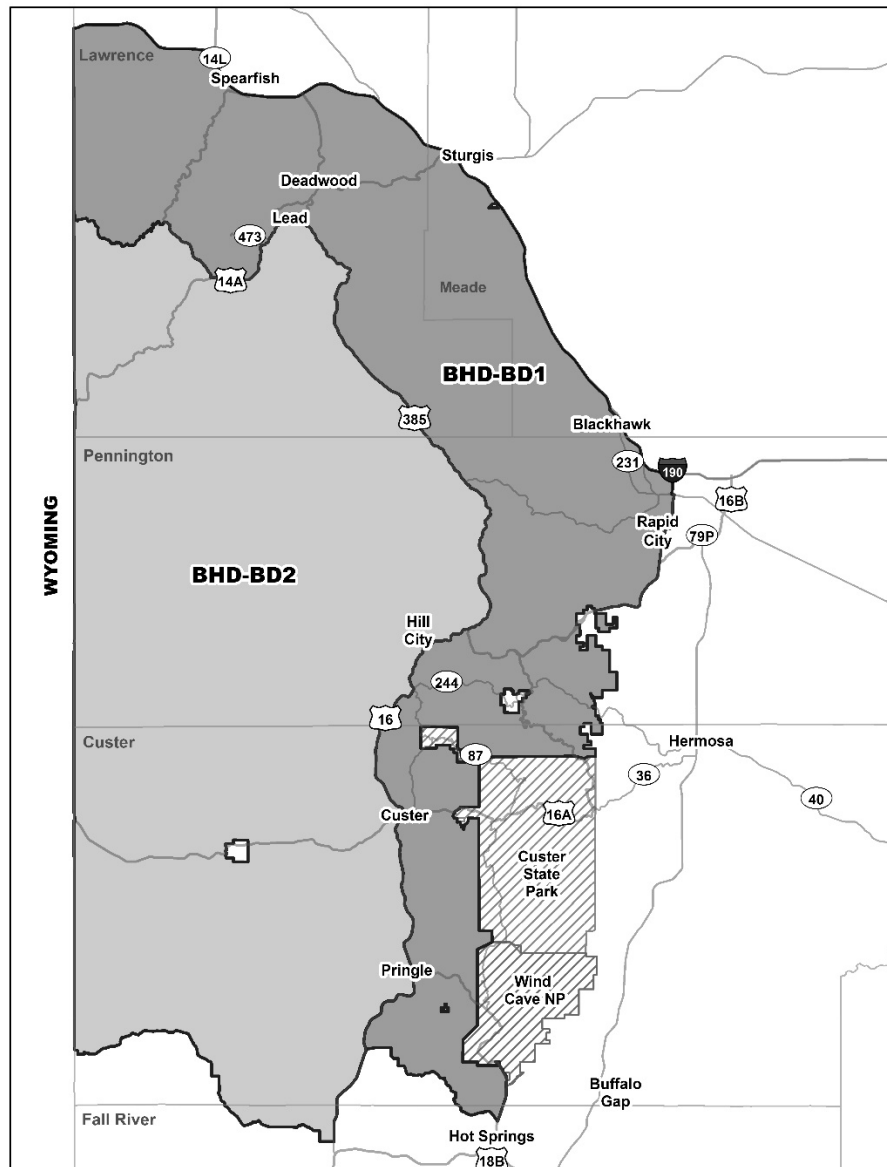


Table 1. Black Hills Deer hunting season hunter and harvest information from 2015 to 2024, including landowner-own-land data.

YEAR	Licenses Sold		Bucks		Harvest Does		Total	Success	Avg Days Hunted	Avg Satis
	Resident	Nonres	WT	Mule	WT	Mule				
2015	3,741	294	2,533	74	307	2	2,917	72%	4.61	5.75
2016	4,120	325	2,604	86	505	2	3,198	72%	4.38	5.76
2017	4,319	343	2,616	79	630	0	3,325	71%	4.39	5.76
2018	4,366	344	2,260	86	643	12	3,001	64%	4.54	5.52
2019	4,838	375	2,258	57	847	0	3,161	60%	4.09	5.50
2020	4,889	343	2,311	81	909	7	3,307	63%	4.87	5.44
2021	3,547	269	1,916	76	422	8	2,420	63%	4.88	5.49
2022	3,565	291	1,789	75	437	10	2,310	60%	5.01	4.96
2023	3,016	234	1,645	73	242	6	1,967	60%	5.26	4.75
2024	3,034	235	1,722	86	265	0	2,073	63%	5.12	4.96

**41:06:19:02. Open Unit.** The unit open to deer hunting in the Black Hills is Unit BHD-BH1. Unit BHD-BH1 is: those portions of Custer, Fall River, Lawrence, Meade, and Pennington, Custer, and Fall River Counties within a line beginning at the South Dakota-Wyoming border and Interstate 90, then easterly and southerly along Interstate 90 to its junction with the city limits of Rapid City, then westerly and southerly along the city limits of Rapid City to its junction with U.S. Highway 16, then southwesterly along U.S. Highway 16 to its junction with the eastern boundary of the Black Hills National Forest, then southerly along the eastern ~~boundaries~~ boundary of the Black Hills National Forest, western boundary of Custer State Park, and Wind Cave National Park to the southeast southwest corner of Wind Cave National Park, ~~then westerly along the southern boundary of Wind Cave National Park to its junction with U.S. Highway 385,~~ then southwesterly along U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with Fall River County Road 18 (Argyle Road), then northwesterly along Fall River County Road 18 and Custer County Road 333 to its junction with State Highway 89 at Argyle, then southerly along State Highway 89 to its junction with Fall River County Road ~~317~~ 12 (Minnekahta-Dewey Road), then westerly along Fall River County Road ~~317~~ 12 to its junction with Custer County Road ~~319~~ 317, then westerly along Custer County Road ~~319~~ 317 to its junction with Custer County Road 715, then westerly along Custer County Road 715 to its junction with Custer County Road 769, then westerly along Custer County Road 769 through Dewey to its junction with the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then northerly along the South Dakota-Wyoming border to its junction with Interstate 90, the point of beginning.

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

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

(2) Unit BHD-BD2: those portions of Custer, Lawrence, and Pennington Counties within a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border and Forest

Service Road 222 (Schoolhouse Gulch), then easterly along Forest Service Road 222 (Schoolhouse Gulch) to its junction with Forest Service Road 134 (Tinton Road), then easterly along Forest Service Road 134 (Tinton Road) to its junction with Forest Service Road 222.3 (Roughlock Falls Road), then easterly along Forest Service Road 222.3 (Roughlock Falls Road) to its junction with U.S. Highway 14A at Savoy, then southeasterly along U.S. Highway 14A to its junction with U.S. Highway 85 near Cheyenne Crossing, then northeasterly along U.S. Highway 85 to its junction with U.S. Highway 385 at Deadwood, then southerly along U.S. Highway 385 to its junction with State Highway 89 at Pringle, then southerly on State Highway 89 to its junction with Fall River County Road-~~347~~ 12 (Pilger Mountain Road), then westerly along Fall River County Road ~~347~~ 12 to its junction with Custer County Road-~~349~~ 317, then westerly along Custer County Road-~~349~~ 317 to its junction with Custer County Road 715, then westerly along Custer County Road 715 to its junction with Custer County Road 769, then westerly along Custer County Road 769 through Dewey to its junction with the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then northerly along the South Dakota-Wyoming border to its junction with Forest Service Road 222, the point of beginning.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

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

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

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

## ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

### Deer Hunting Season Licenses

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

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

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

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

### COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

#### ARCHERY AND MUZZLELOADING DEER LICENSE TYPES

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

#### 2025-2026 ARCHERY ACCESS PERMITS

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

#### 2024 vs. 2025 Comparison

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

**ARCHERY AND MUZZLELOADING  
ANTLERLESS DEER UNITS**

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

**LANDOWNER-ON-OWN-LAND FREE  
ANTLERLESS DEER UNITS**

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



### 2025-2026 MUZZLELOADER DEER

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

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

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

### 2025-2026 BLACK HILLS DEER

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

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

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

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

**2025-2026 CUSTER STATE PARK DEER**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**2025-2026 WEST RIVER DEER**

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident Licenses													Nonresident Licenses												
		AnyD 01	AnyB 02	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P	AnyD 01	AnyD 02	AtID 03	AtID 03P	AD+AtID 08	2 AtID 09P	AnyW 11	AtIW 13	AtIW 13P	3 AtIW 17P	AW+AtIW 18	2 AtIW 19	2 AtIW 19P
02A	Pennington	400								50		200			32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	16	0	0
02C	Pennington		100					25							0	8	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
11A	Bennett		125					50							0	10	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
11B	Bennett		25					50							0	2	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
15A	Butte	200										600		500	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	40
15B	Butte	150										400		200	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	16
20A	Corson	200		50				350							16	0	4	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0
21A	Custer		100					200		50					0	8	0	0	0	0	16	0	4	0	0	0	0
21B	Custer	50						50							4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
24A	Dewey	100						250	100						8	0	0	0	0	0	20	8	0	0	0	0	0
24B	Little Moreau							10	10						0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
27A	Fall River		100					50		25					0	8	0	0	0	0	4	0	2	0	0	0	0
27B	Fall River		200					100		50					0	16	0	0	0	0	8	0	4	0	0	0	0
27L	Fall River		5					10							0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
30A	Gregory							450		100					0	0	0	0	0	0	36	0	8	0	0	0	0
30B	Gregory							450		100					0	0	0	0	0	0	36	0	8	0	0	0	0
31A	Haakon	600			100	75						100	150		48	0	0	8	6	0	0	0	0	0	8	12	0
35A	Harding	275						75				50		75	22	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	6
35C	Harding	200			50			75				50		75	16	0	0	4	0	0	6	0	0	0	4	0	6
35L	Harding	75						25							6	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
39A	Jackson	175						50		50					14	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	0
39B	Jackson	275						50	50						22	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	0
41A	Jones	200						200							16	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
45A	Lyman	100						350							8	0	0	0	0	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0
45B	Lyman	50						175							4	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	0
45C	Lyman	30							20						3	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
45D	Lyman	30						50							3	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
49A	Meade	500							150			250			40	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	20	0	0
49B	Meade	600						100							48	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
50A	Mellette	150						400							12	0	0	0	0	0	32	0	0	0	0	0	0
53A	Perkins	400					100					250		100	32	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	20	0	8
53C	Perkins	500					100					250		100	40	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	20	0	8
58A	Stanley	150										150			12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0
58D	Stanley	5							3						1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
60A	Tripp	50						600							4	0	0	0	0	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	0
64A	Ziebach	250						75						50	20	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	4
65A	Oglala Lakota		75												0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
67A	Todd	75						75							6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,790</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>4,345</b>	<b>333</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1,100</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>88</b>

**2025-2026 WEST RIVER DEER**

Unit #	Unit Name	License Totals									
		RES 1-tag	RES 2-tag	RES 3-tag	RES Licenses	RES Tags	NR 1-tag	NR 2-tag	NR 3-tag	NR Licenses	NR Tags
02A	Pennington	450	200	0	650	850	36	16	0	52	68
02C	Pennington	125	0	0	125	125	10	0	0	10	10
11A	Bennett	175	0	0	175	175	14	0	0	14	14
11B	Bennett	75	0	0	75	75	6	0	0	6	6
15A	Butte	200	1,100	0	1,300	2400	16	88	0	104	192
15B	Butte	150	600	0	750	1350	12	48	0	60	108
20A	Corson	600	0	0	600	600	48	0	0	48	48
21A	Custer	350	0	0	350	350	28	0	0	28	28
21B	Custer	100	0	0	100	100	8	0	0	8	8
24A	Dewey	450	0	0	450	450	36	0	0	36	36
24B	Little Moreau	20	0	0	20	20	2	0	0	2	2
27A	Fall River	175	0	0	175	175	14	0	0	14	14
27B	Fall River	350	0	0	350	350	28	0	0	28	28
27L	Fall River	15	0	0	15	15	2	0	0	2	2
30A	Gregory	550	0	0	550	550	44	0	0	44	44
30B	Gregory	550	0	0	550	550	44	0	0	44	44
31A	Haakon	700	325	0	1,025	1350	56	26	0	82	108
35A	Harding	350	125	0	475	600	28	10	0	38	48
35C	Harding	325	125	0	450	575	26	10	0	36	46
35L	Harding	100	0	0	100	100	8	0	0	8	8
39A	Jackson	275	0	0	275	275	22	0	0	22	22
39B	Jackson	375	0	0	375	375	30	0	0	30	30
41A	Jones	400	0	0	400	400	32	0	0	32	32
45A	Lyman	450	0	0	450	450	36	0	0	36	36
45B	Lyman	225	0	0	225	225	18	0	0	18	18
45C	Lyman	50	0	0	50	50	5	0	0	5	5
45D	Lyman	80	0	0	80	80	7	0	0	7	7
49A	Meade	650	250	0	900	1150	52	20	0	72	92
49B	Meade	700	0	0	700	700	56	0	0	56	56
50A	Mellette	550	0	0	550	550	44	0	0	44	44
53A	Perkins	400	450	0	850	1300	32	36	0	68	104
53C	Perkins	500	450	0	950	1400	40	36	0	76	112
58A	Stanley	150	150	0	300	450	12	12	0	24	36
58D	Stanley	8	0	0	8	8	2	0	0	2	2
60A	Tripp	650	0	0	650	650	52	0	0	52	52
64A	Ziebach	325	50	0	375	425	26	4	0	30	34
65A	Oglala Lakota	75	0	0	75	75	6	0	0	6	6
67A	Todd	150	0	0	150	150	12	0	0	12	12
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11,823</b>	<b>3,825</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15,648</b>	<b>19,473</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,562</b>
	<b>RES &amp; NR:</b>	<b>12,773</b>	<b>4,131</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16,904</b>	<b>21,035</b>					

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

Unit #	Unit Name	2023-2024 Resident Licenses	2025-2026 Resident Licenses	# Change	% Change	2023-2024 Resident Tags	2025-2026 Resident Tags	# Change	% Change
02A	Pennington	600	650	50	8%	800	850	50	6%
02C	Pennington	150	125	-25	-17%	150	125	-25	-17%
11A	Bennett	175	175	0	0%	175	175	0	0%
11B	Bennett	125	75	-50	-40%	125	75	-50	-40%
15A	Butte	1,200	1,300	100	8%	2,200	2,400	200	9%
15B	Butte	750	750	0	0%	1,350	1,350	0	0%
20A	Corson	700	600	-100	-14%	1,200	600	-600	-50%
21A	Custer	350	350	0	0%	350	350	0	0%
21B	Custer	100	100	0	0%	100	100	0	0%
24A	Dewey	450	450	0	0%	450	450	0	0%
24B	Little Moreau	20	20	0	0%	20	20	0	0%
27A	Fall River	200	175	-25	-13%	200	175	-25	-13%
27B	Fall River	425	350	-75	-18%	425	350	-75	-18%
27L	Fall River	15	15	0	0%	15	15	0	0%
30A	Gregory	925	550	-375	-41%	1,825	550	-1,275	-70%
30B	Gregory	925	550	-375	-41%	1,825	550	-1,275	-70%
31A	Haakon	850	1,025	175	21%	1,000	1,350	350	35%
35A	Harding	525	475	-50	-10%	650	600	-50	-8%
35C	Harding	475	450	-25	-5%	600	575	-25	-4%
35L	Harding	100	100	0	0%	100	100	0	0%
39A	Jackson	325	275	-50	-15%	325	275	-50	-15%
39B	Jackson	375	375	0	0%	375	375	0	0%
41A	Jones	500	400	-100	-20%	500	400	-100	-20%
45A	Lyman	800	450	-350	-44%	1,000	450	-550	-55%
45B	Lyman	300	225	-75	-25%	475	225	-250	-53%
45C	Lyman	50	50	0	0%	70	50	-20	-29%
45D	Lyman	80	80	0	0%	80	80	0	0%
49A	Meade	825	900	75	9%	1,075	1,150	75	7%
49B	Meade	700	700	0	0%	700	700	0	0%
50A	Mellette	700	550	-150	-21%	700	550	-150	-21%
53A	Perkins	825	850	25	3%	1,250	1,300	50	4%
53C	Perkins	925	950	25	3%	1,350	1,400	50	4%
58A	Stanley	350	300	-50	-14%	500	450	-50	-10%
58D	Stanley	8	8	0	0%	8	8	0	0%
60A	Tripp	1,350	650	-700	-52%	2,350	650	-1,700	-72%
64A	Ziebach	400	375	-25	-6%	450	425	-25	-6%
65A	Oglala Lakota	75	75	0	0%	75	75	0	0%
67A	Todd	300	150	-150	-50%	300	150	-150	-50%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,948</b>	<b>15,648</b>	<b>-2,300</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>25,143</b>	<b>19,473</b>	<b>-5,670</b>	<b>-23%</b>

**2025-2026 EAST RIVER DEER**

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



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

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

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

## Black Hills and CSP Elk Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:26, 41:06:27, 41:06:28, 41:06:43, 41:06:47

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

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

**Duration of Proposal:** 2025 hunting seasons

#### Licenses:

897 any elk licenses and 1,335 antlerless elk licenses are recommended for the 2025 Black Hills and Custer State Park elk hunting seasons. This would result in 115 additional any elk licenses and 515 additional antlerless elk licenses representing a 15% increase in any elk licenses and a 63% increase in antlerless elk licenses from 2024 to 2025.

*From the April recommendation for the Black Hills (Firearm) Elk season, 25 antlerless elk licenses were removed from units H1B and H7B each and 25 antlerless elk licenses were added to units H2B and H2C.*

#### Season Dates:

Black Hills and CSP Archery: September 1 – 30

CSP Firearm: October 1 – 31

CSP Antlerless Elk Late Firearm\*: 9 days beginning 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday following January 1

*\* no licenses were available for this season in 2024*

Black Hills Firearm:

Units	Season Dates
Any Elk Units: H1A, H2A, H3A, H4A, H5A, H7A, and H9A	October 1 - 31
Antlerless Elk Units: H1B, H4B, H7B, and H9B	October 15 - 31 AND December 1 - 16
Antlerless Elk Units: H2B, H2E, H2H, H3B, and H3E	October 15 - 31
Antlerless Elk Units: H2C, H2F, H2I, H3C and H3F	December 1 - 16
Antlerless Elk Units: H2D, H2G, H2J, H3D, and H3G	December 17 - 31

#### Requirements and Restrictions:

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

Summary comparison of the 2015-2024 Archery Elk seasons

Year	# Apps 1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	Licenses Sold	Harvest			Success Rate	Avg. Days Hunted	Average Satisfaction
			Bulls	Cows	Total			
2015	4,761	196	55	12	66	34%	11.74	5.39
2016	4,965	280	57	25	82	29%	11.11	5.40
2017	4,892	269	50	20	70	26%	11.29	5.60
2018	5,006	219	65	19	84	38%	11.70	5.50
2019	5,382	216	77	14	91	42%	11.08	5.61
2020	5,884	204	80	12	92	45%	11.24	5.90
2021	5,966	219	82	14	96	44%	11.18	5.89
2022	6,319	269	89	18	107	40%	12.27	5.87
2023	6,375	258	103	10	114	44%	11.64	5.66
2024	6,855	278	77	17	94	34%	12.66	5.46

Summary comparison of the 2015-2024 Black Hills Firearm Elk seasons

Year	# Apps 1 <sup>st</sup> Choice	Licenses Sold	Harvest			Success Rate	Avg. Days Hunted	Average Satisfaction
			Bulls	Cows	Total			
2015	12,126	922	312	345	657	71%	6.66	5.54
2016	12,692	1,745	363	724	1,087	62%	4.59	5.42
2017	12,201	1,581	364	682	1,047	66%	4.77	5.50
2018	11,871	1,124	315	402	717	64%	5.08	5.36
2019	12,396	1,108	332	354	686	62%	5.00	5.48
2020	13,198	926	360	224	585	63%	5.35	5.33
2021	12,656	954	370	249	619	65%	5.70	5.40
2022	13,447	1,265	426	381	808	64%	5.78	5.51
2023	12,999	1,232	435	344	779	63%	6.13	5.41
2024	13,742	1,290	427	355	783	61%	6.36	5.05

Summary comparison of the 2015-2024 CSP Archery elk seasons

Year	Applications	Licenses	Bull Harvest	Cow Harvest	Success	Avg. Days Hunted	Average Satisfaction
2015	3,600	4	3	0	75%	16.3	6.50
2016	3,707	3	1	0	33%	15.0	6.00
2017	3,704	3	1	0	33%	9.7	5.67
2018	3,772	3	2	0	50%	11.0	5.50
2019	4,055	3	3	0	100%	5.0	7.00
2020	4,353	3	1	0	33%	13.7	6.50
2021	4,456	3	1	0	33%	11.3	6.33
2022	4,904	4	2	0	50%	20.0	5.50
2023	5,028	4	2	0	50%	16.8	7.00
2024	5,498	5	3	0	50%	10.3	5.50

Summary comparison of the 2015-2024 CSP Firearm Any elk seasons

Year	Applications	Licenses	Bull Harvest	Cow Harvest	Success	Avg. Days Hunted	Average Satisfaction
2015	9,136	8	8	0	100%	1.9	6.88
2016	8,958	9	8	0	89%	2.8	6.56
2017	8,828	9	8	0	88%	2.3	6.71
2018	8,670	9	8	0	86%	5.7	5.71
2019	8,949	9	8	0	89%	2.8	6.25
2020	9,385	9	8	0	89%	5.8	6.89
2021	9,215	8	8	0	100%	1.6	6.86
2022	9,672	11	11	0	100%	4.0	6.75
2023	9,725	11	11	0	100%	3.4	6.86
2024	10,456	15	15	0	100%	5.3	5.79

Summary comparison of the 2007-2024 CSP Antlerless elk seasons

Year	Applications	Licenses	Bull Harvest	Cow Harvest	Success	Avg. Days Hunted	Average Satisfaction
2007	3,763	60	1	31	53%	3.3	NA
2008	3,646	40	2	21	55%	2.8	NA
2009	3,548	20	0	19	95%	2.5	NA
2010	3,192	5	0	4	80%	NA	NA
2011-15	Closed						
2016	3,138	20	0	18	90%	2.20	6.20
2017	3,436	29	1	24	86%	2.10	5.83
2018	3,175	23	0	4	19%	3.35	2.19
2019-24	Closed						

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

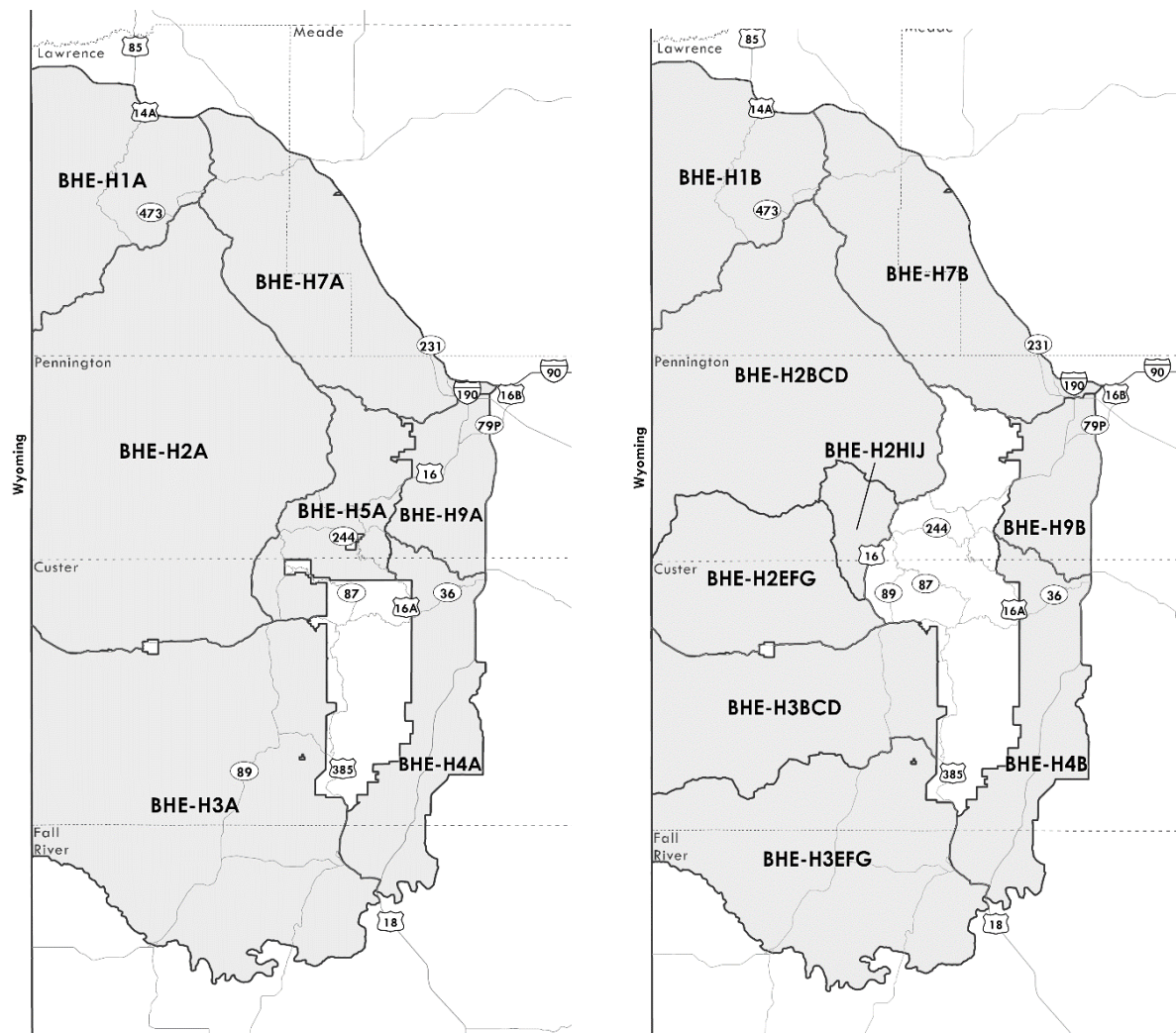
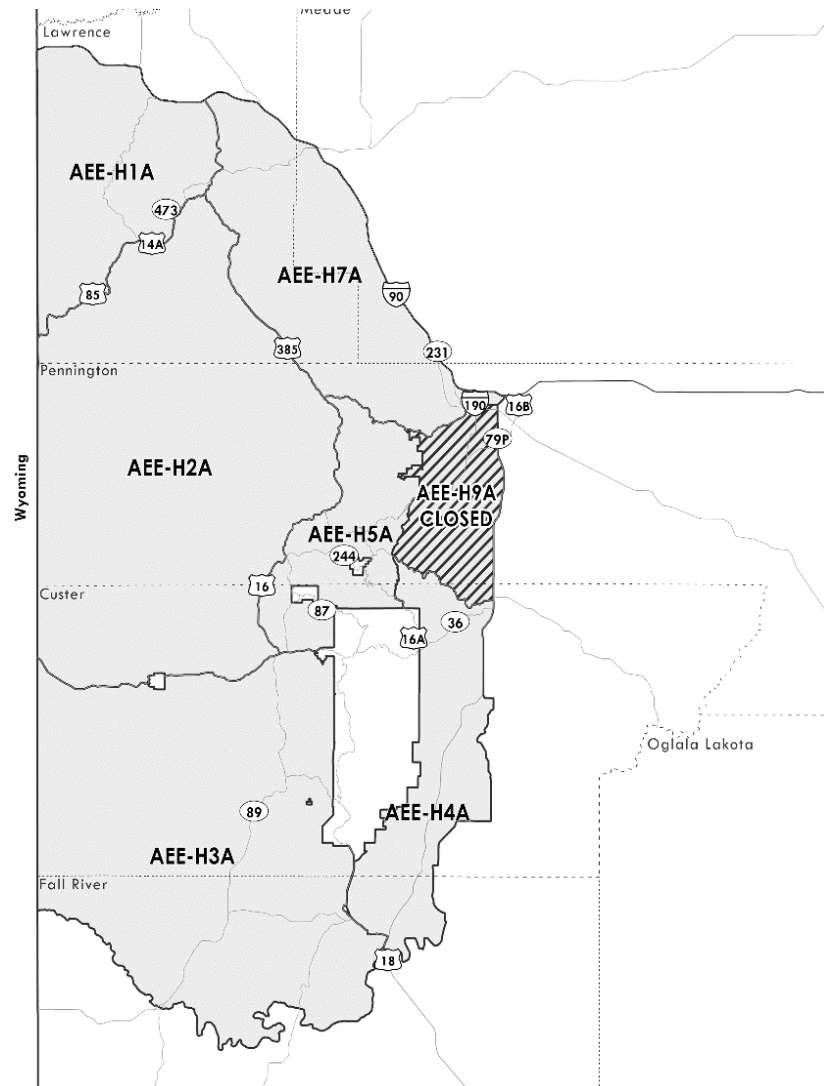


Figure 2. Map of Archery Elk Season hunting units in the Black Hills.



**COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

2024			
Black Hills (Firearm) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	60		
H1B		65	
H2A	300		
H2B		50	
H2C		50	
H2D			
H2E		40	
H2F		40	
H2G		40	
H2H		10	
H2I		10	
H2J		10	
H3A	120		
H3B		45	
H3C		45	
H3D		45	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	40		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	30		
H7B		20	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>570</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>1,300</b>

2025			
Black Hills (Firearm) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	80		
H1B		75	
H2A	350		
H2B		125	
H2C		125	
H2D		50	
H2E		125	
H2F		125	
H2G		125	
H2H		10	
H2I		10	
H2J		10	
H3A	120		
H3B		45	
H3C		45	
H3D		45	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	40		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	35		
H7B		25	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>1200</b>	<b>1,845</b>

2024			
Archery (Black Hills) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	30	10	
H2A	100	40	
H3A	40	30	
H4A	10	10	
H5A	2		
H7A	10		
H9A			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>282</b>

2025			
Archery (Black Hills) Elk			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	30	15	
H2A	125	70	
H3A	40	30	
H4A	10	10	
H5A	2		
H7A	10	10	
H9A			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>352</b>

**2024**

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

**2025**

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

**2024**

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

**2025**

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

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

## Beaver Hunting and Trapping Season

Chapter 41:08:01

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park Aberdeen Aberdeen
	Public Hearing	June 5, 2025	
	Finalization	June 5-6, 2025	

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 hunting and trapping seasons

#### Season Dates and Open Areas:

Year-round: Statewide, except that portion of the Black Hills Fire Protection District\*.

*\* Recommended change to close season in Black Hills Fire Protection District.*

*Nonresidents may not take any beaver from March 16 - November 30.*

#### Requirements and Restrictions:

1. A person must have a permit issued by the park manager to trap in any area within the state park system during established furbearer seasons. Permits may only be issued for the period of November 1 - March 31 of the following year and are free. No permit may be issued for trapping in Beaver Creek Nature Area, Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, or Custer State Park or on any privately owned lands within those areas.
2. The following restrictions apply to the use of body grip traps, commonly known as conibears:
  - a. No person may set or operate above the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water a body grip trap with a jaw spread greater than eight inches; and
  - b. On all public lands and public road right-of-way statewide, no person may set or operate a body grip trap used in conjunction with any bait, lure, or scent with a jaw spread greater than six and three-quarter inches unless:
    - i. The trap is recessed in a plastic, wood, or metal cubby a minimum of seven inches from the front edge of the cubby to the trigger of the trap; or
    - ii. The trap is set below the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water.
3. No person may place any trap whether set or unset, stake, cable, chain, wire, or other device used for the purpose of attaching a trap, or otherwise attempt to claim or mark a trap site on any public road right-of-way or public land or water open to trapping within 30 feet of water from October 1 - 31.
4. No person may dig, disturb, or molest any beaver house for the purpose of capturing any of these animals. No person may use poison, gas, or smokers of any kind to kill, take, or capture beavers.

#### Proposed changes from last year:

1. Modify § 41:08:01:07 to close the beaver trapping and hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting or trapping furbearers, there were a projected 1,888 resident and 5 nonresident active hunters/trappers that held a furbearer license during the 2023-24 seasons. An estimated 4,142 beaver were harvested during the 2023-24 season by furbearer license holders. Of furbearer licenses holders, one individual reported trapping a beaver in the Black Hills.

**Comparison of the 2014-2023 Beaver seasons**

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	2,445	343	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	3,806	864	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	1,773	326	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	1,835	603	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	1,201	143	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	2,063	350	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	2,582	274	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	3,395	266	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	2,515	750	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	3,681	461	5.09	6.00

Historically, monitoring beaver in the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD) has been done via helicopter cache surveys. Beaver monitoring within the BHFPD occurred in 2007, 2012, and 2023 (Table 1). The number of caches observed between the 2012 and 2023 surveys suggested a decrease in abundance and distribution.

Table 1. Beaver abundance and distribution from 2007, 2012, and 2023 within the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

Monitoring Indices	Year		
	2007	2012	2023
Number of caches observed	38	60	16
Abundance (cache/km)	0.020	0.038	0.009
Distribution (% of watersheds occupied)	42.3%	51.9%	23.1%

Restoration efforts have begun in several riparian systems within the BHFPD to attempt to restore highly degraded riparian waterways. In places, beaver and their associated activity is paramount to the success of these restoration efforts. Beaver numbers have declined over time, likely due to habitat degradation. Predation and disease could also be contributing to declines in abundance. Harvest is not the cause for the widespread decline throughout the Black Hills. However, with ongoing restoration efforts, it is prudent to protect beavers so they may recolonize degraded habitats and restore functioning riparian waterways.



Figure 1. The gray shaded area below represents the area that would be open to beaver trapping year-round. In 2024 and 2025, the hashed region of the Black Hills Fire Protection District was open from November 1 to April 30, except U.S. Forest Service Lands where the season was open from January 1 to March 31.



#### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:08:01:07. Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide and year-round, except as provided in this section. ~~The season is in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, as defined in SDCL 34-35-15. open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30 to catch, trap, or hunt beaver within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31.~~

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

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

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? Very few recreational trappers attempt to trap beaver in the Black Hills. However, the change would limit the ability to trap beaver in the Black Hills.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? This would remove opportunity for an individual wanting to trap in the Black Hills.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? It is unknown how much the closure of the season will affect beaver recolonization.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Skunk, Opossum, Fox, Raccoon and Badger Season Chapter 41:08:01

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park Aberdeen Aberdeen
	Public Hearing	June 5, 2025	
	Finalization	June 5-6, 2025	

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025 and 2026 hunting and trapping seasons

#### Season Dates and Open Areas:

Year-round: Statewide.

*Nonresidents may not take any raccoon from March 16 - November 30.*

#### Requirements and Restrictions:

1. A person must have a permit issued by the park manager to trap in any area within the state park system during established furbearer seasons. Permits may only be issued for the period of November 1 - March 31 of the following year and are free. No permit may be issued for trapping in Beaver Creek Nature Area, Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, or Custer State Park or on any privately owned lands within those areas.
2. The following restrictions apply to the use of body grip traps, commonly known as conibears:
  - a. No person may set or operate above the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water a body grip trap with a jaw spread greater than eight inches; and
  - b. On all public lands and public road right-of-way statewide, no person may set or operate a body grip trap used in conjunction with any bait, lure, or scent with a jaw spread greater than six and three-quarter inches unless:
    - i. The trap is recessed in a plastic, wood, or metal cubby a minimum of seven inches from the front edge of the cubby to the trigger of the trap; or
    - ii. The trap is set below the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water.
3. No person may place any trap whether set or unset, stake, cable, chain, wire, or other device used for the purpose of attaching a trap, or otherwise attempt to claim or mark a trap site on any public road right-of-way or public land or water open to trapping within 30 feet of water from October 1 - 31.

#### Proposed changes from last year:

None.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting or trapping furbearers, there were a projected 1,888 resident and 5 nonresident active hunters/trappers that held a furbearer license during the 2023-24 seasons.

### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Striped Skunk seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	9,913	2,055	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	10,336	2,238	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	5,366	1,478	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	6,712	1,071	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	5,173	1,272	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	5,673	1,315	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	8,024	1,435	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	10,145	1,763	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	5,388	1,106	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	5,576	1,212	5.09	6.00

### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Opossum seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	2,505	387	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	3,024	351	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	3,496	843	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	4,499	372	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	3,980	664	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	3,003	401	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	3,321	369	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	4,295	559	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	2,687	367	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	3,755	389	5.09	6.00

### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Red Fox seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	1,599	354	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	1,882	426	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	679	283	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	1,535	346	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	889	151	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	541	194	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	1,377	239	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	771	180	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	592	241	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	694	163	5.09	6.00

### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Raccoon seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	38,620	12,493	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	29,936	8,290	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	16,672	5,873	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	21,754	5,850	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	19,247	5,665	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	22,520	5,937	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	21,529	4,746	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	22,775	5,553	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	15,843	6,548	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	18,220	6,921	5.09	6.00

### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Badger seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	1,400	294	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	1,937	361	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	881	303	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	1,515	372	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	1,090	290	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	941	281	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	1,344	296	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	1,104	239	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	683	252	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	712	344	5.09	6.00

### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

None.

### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

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

None.

### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## Mink, Weasel and Muskrat Hunting and Trapping Season

Chapter 41:08:01

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	May 8-9, 2025	Custer State Park Aberdeen Aberdeen
	Public Hearing	June 5, 2025	
	Finalization	June 5-6, 2025	

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** 2025/2026 and 2026/2027 hunting and trapping seasons

#### Season Dates and Open Areas:

Mink and Weasel Hunting and Trapping  
November 1 – January 31: Statewide.

*Nonresidents may not take any mink or weasel from February 1 – November 30.*

Muskrat Trapping  
Year-round: West of the Missouri River, except that portion of the Black Hills Fire Protection District\*.

November 1 – April 30: East of the Missouri River and portions of the Black Hills Fire Protection District\*.

*\* Recommendation to reference Black Hills Fire Protection District Boundary described in state statute.*

Muskrat Hunting  
April 1 – August 31: Open to landowners and lessees, including School and Public Lands surface lease holders, on land they own or operate. State, county, or township highway officials are allowed to take muskrats from within public road rights-of-way during the season. Non-toxic shot is required for shotguns.

*Nonresidents may not take any muskrat from March 16 - November 30.*

#### Requirements and Restrictions:

1. A person must have a permit issued by the park manager to trap in any area within the state park system during established furbearer seasons. Permits may only be issued for the period of November 1 - March 31 of the following year and are free. No permit may be issued for trapping in Beaver Creek Nature Area, Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, or Custer State Park or on any privately owned lands within those areas.
2. The following restrictions apply to the use of body grip traps, commonly known as conibears:
  - a. No person may set or operate above the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water a body grip trap with a jaw spread greater than eight inches; and
  - b. On all public lands and public road right-of-way statewide, no person may set or operate a body grip trap used in conjunction with any bait, lure, or scent with a jaw spread greater than six and three-quarter inches unless:
    - i. The trap is recessed in a plastic, wood, or metal cubby a minimum of seven inches from the front edge of the cubby to the trigger of the trap; or
    - ii. The trap is set below the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water.

3. No person may flag, mark, or otherwise attempt to claim a muskrat house on public land or waters before sunrise on November 1. No person may flag or mark any muskrat house during the muskrat season, except those houses containing an operational trap set.
4. No person may molest, injure, or destroy any muskrat house, except in the open season for the taking, catching, or killing of muskrats. However, muskrat houses may, for the purpose of placing traps therein, be opened in such manner as will not destroy, damage, or injure them as a place of habitation for muskrats.
5. Trapping in or on any muskrat house is prohibited east of the Missouri River from Mar. 16 – Apr. 30.
6. No person may place any trap whether set or unset, stake, cable, chain, wire, or other device used for the purpose of attaching a trap, or otherwise attempt to claim or mark a trap site on any public road right-of-way or public land or water open to trapping within 30 ft. of water from Oct. 1 - 31.
7. The size of colony traps used for muskrats may not exceed 36 inches in overall length. If using a round colony trap, the diameter may not exceed 12 inches. If using a box colony trap, the height may not exceed 12 inches, and the width may not exceed 12 inches.
8. Muskrats may be hunted by shooting with rimfire cartridges of .22 caliber or smaller, muzzleloaders of .45 caliber or smaller, shotguns, or legal archery equipment.
9. No person may hunt any mink or muskrat with the aid of any dog, or dig, disturb, or molest any mink den for the purpose of capturing any of these animals. No person may use poison, gas, or smokers of any kind to kill, take, or capture mink or muskrats.

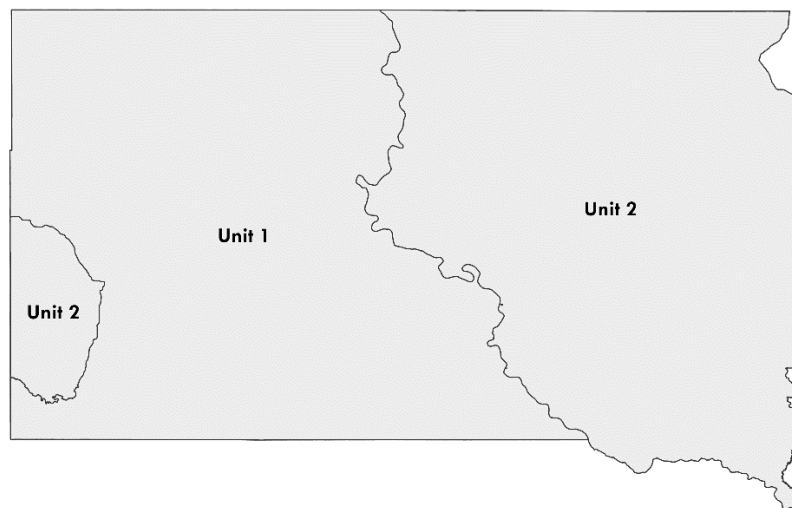
**Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:08:01:02 unit description to match the Black Hills Fire Protection District, as defined in SDCL.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting or trapping furbearers, there were a projected 1,888 resident and 5 nonresident active hunters/trappers that held a furbearer license during the 2023-24 seasons.

Figure 1. Two units describing the season dates for muskrat trapping. The area represented by Unit 1 is open year-round and the area represented by Unit 2 is open from November 1 - April 30.





### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Muskrat seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	24,137	452	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	25,256	1,198	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	18,717	255	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	14,382	545	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	20,678	319	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	61,923	318	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	92,477	307	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	25,101	238	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	5,344	252	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	8,223	220	5.09	6.00

### Comparison of the 2014-2023 Weasel seasons

Year	Furbearer Licenses		Active Hunters/Trappers		Harvest		Satisfaction	
	Resident	Nonresident	Resident	Nonresident	Trapping	Hunting	Resident	Nonres
2014	4,227	12	2,304	10	265	12	4.89	5.00
2015	3,940	14	2,065	14	161	0	4.93	4.40
2016	3,620	11	1,804	5	42	7	4.95	5.00
2017	3,915	17	2,120	15	65	2	5.05	5.63
2018	4,154	14	2,168	12	40	0	4.97	5.44
2019	4,334	17	2,237	13	47	0	5.09	4.43
2020	4,689	15	2,295	15	95	0	5.22	5.50
2021	4,726	13	2,200	0	48	4	5.21	NA
2022	4,024	4	1,826	0	52	19	5.16	NA
2023	4,007	6	1,888	5	24	0	5.09	6.00

### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:08:01:02. Muskrat trapping season established. The ~~West River~~ muskrat trapping season is open year-round to trap muskrat in all counties west of the Missouri River, except in the ~~portion of the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90.~~

The ~~Black Hills~~ muskrat trapping season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30, to trap muskrats in the ~~portion of the Black Hills Fire Protection District, as defined in SDCL 34-35-15, and all counties east of the Missouri River, south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79. The season is open year-round to trap muskrats in the portion of the Black Hills Fire Protection District north of Interstate 90.~~

~~The East River muskrat trapping season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30, to trap muskrats in the portion of the state lying east of the Missouri River.~~

### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

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

None.

### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

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



# GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## River Otter Trapping and Hunting Season

Chapter 41:08:01

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>May 8-9, 2025</b>	<b>Custer State Park Aberdeen Aberdeen</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>June 5, 2025</b>	
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>June 5-6, 2025</b>	

### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration of Recommendation:** 2025 and 2026 hunting and trapping seasons

**Season Dates:** November 1 - December 31 or until 30\* river otters have been harvested, whichever occurs first.

*\* Recommendation is to increase the harvest limit from 20 to 30 river otters.*

**Open unit:** Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Brown, Charles Mix, Clark, Clay, Codington, Davison, Day, Deuel, Douglas, Grant, Hamlin, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, Marshall, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, Turner, Union, and Yankton Counties.

**Season limit:** One river otter per season per individual.

### Requirements and Restrictions:

1. Open to residents only with furbearer license.
2. River otter shall be reported to the Department within 24 hours of harvest. At time of reporting, arrangements will be made to check-in carcass and detached pelt at a GFP office or designated location for registration and tagging of the pelt within 5 days of harvest. Additionally, once the season has closed (last day of season or harvest limit reached), a person has 24 hours to notify the Department of a harvested river otter.
3. The pelt shall be removed from the carcass and the carcass shall be surrendered to the Department. After the pelt has been tagged, it shall be returned to the trapper. Upon request, the carcass may be returned to the trapper after the carcass has been inspected and biological data collected.
4. Any river otter harvested after the 24-hour period following the close of the season, will be considered incidental take and shall be surrendered to the Department.
5. A person may only possess, purchase, or sell raw river otter pelts that are tagged through the eyeholes by the department, or, if harvested from another jurisdiction, properly and securely tagged with a tag supplied by the governmental entity issuing the license.
6. A person must have a permit issued by the park manager to trap in any area within the state park system during established furbearer seasons. Permits may only be issued for the period of November 1 - March 31 of the following year and are free. No permit may be issued for trapping in Beaver Creek Nature Area, Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, or Custer State Park or on any privately owned lands within those areas.
7. The following restrictions apply to the use of body grip traps, commonly known as conibears:
  - a. No person may set or operate above the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water a body grip trap with a jaw spread greater than eight inches; and
  - b. On all public lands and public road right-of-way statewide, no person may set or operate a body grip trap used in conjunction with any bait, lure, or scent with a jaw spread greater than six and three-quarter inches unless:
    - i. The trap is recessed in a plastic, wood, or metal cubby a minimum of seven inches from the front edge of the cubby to the trigger of the trap; or
    - ii. The trap is set below the water's edge of a stream, river, or other body of water.

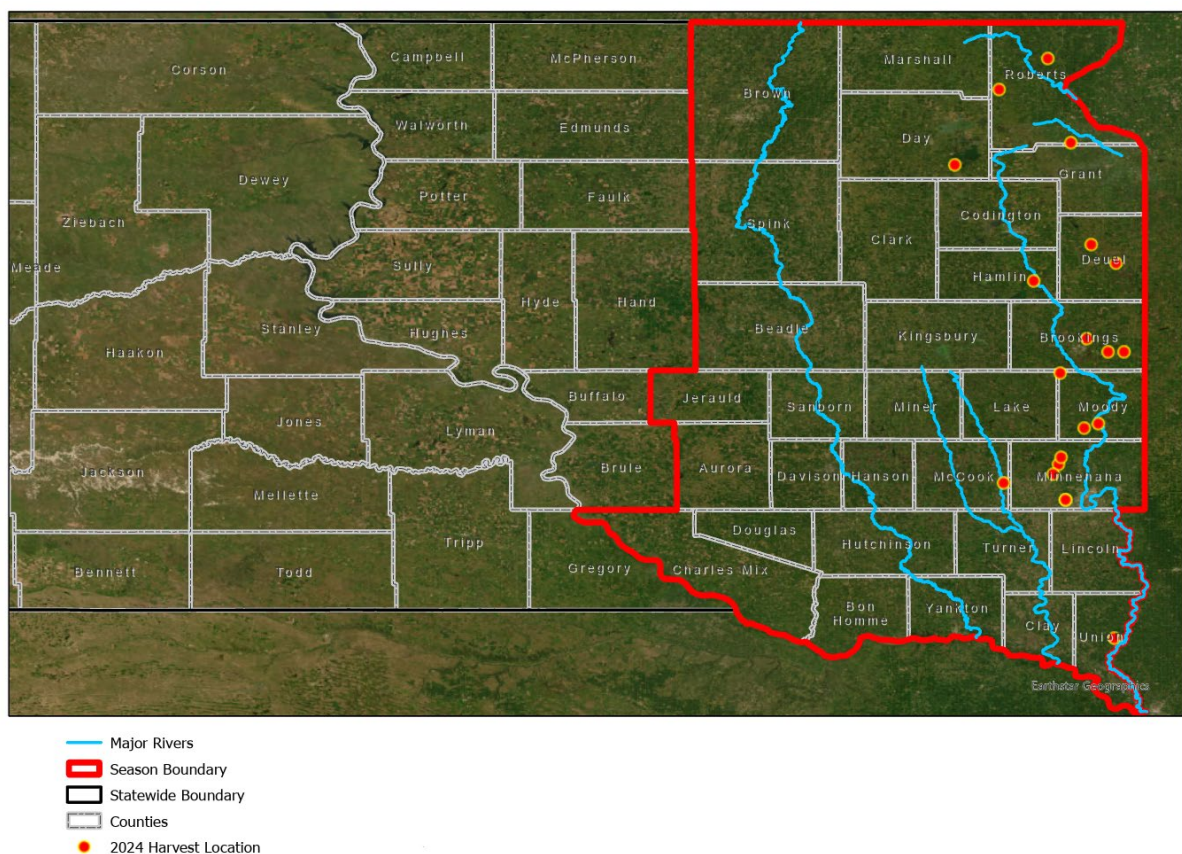
8. No person may place any trap whether set or unset, stake, cable, chain, wire, or other device used for the purpose of attaching a trap, or otherwise attempt to claim or mark a trap site on any public road right-of-way or public land or water open to trapping within 30 feet of water from October 1 - 31.

**Proposed changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:08:01:08.05 to increase the harvest limit from twenty to thirty river otters.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

The 2024 river otter hunting/trapping season began November 1 with a harvest limit of 20 river otters. This harvest limit was reached on November 12 and the season officially closed November 13 with a total of 20 river otters harvested. River otters were harvested in Brookings (3), Day (1), Deuel (2), Hamlin (1), McCook (1), Minnehaha (5), Moody (3), Roberts (3), and Union (1) counties within the designated open season boundary. Over the previous four seasons, it has taken trappers an average of 13.5 days to reach the harvest limit of 20 river otter to end the season.



GFP monitors river otter populations through the collection of river otter, harvest surveys, necropsies, and latrine surveys. Data from these population assessments show the river otter population is stable and can support an increase in harvest. Verified reports of river otter and their sign have steadily increased in the last 5 years (Figure 1). Reports of river otters have also increased in areas within the current season boundary where they were not previously documented. This trend indicates the westward expansion of river otter into locations of suitable habitat. In addition, the number of incidental catches of river otter has increased in the last 5 years to 27.8 river otters trapped per year (Figure 2).

Landowner concerns in southeaster South Dakota are increasing due to river otter-related issues, suggesting the need for more harvest opportunities.

Figure 1. Historic river otter reports including reports of river otter, sign, sightings, and incidental harvests.

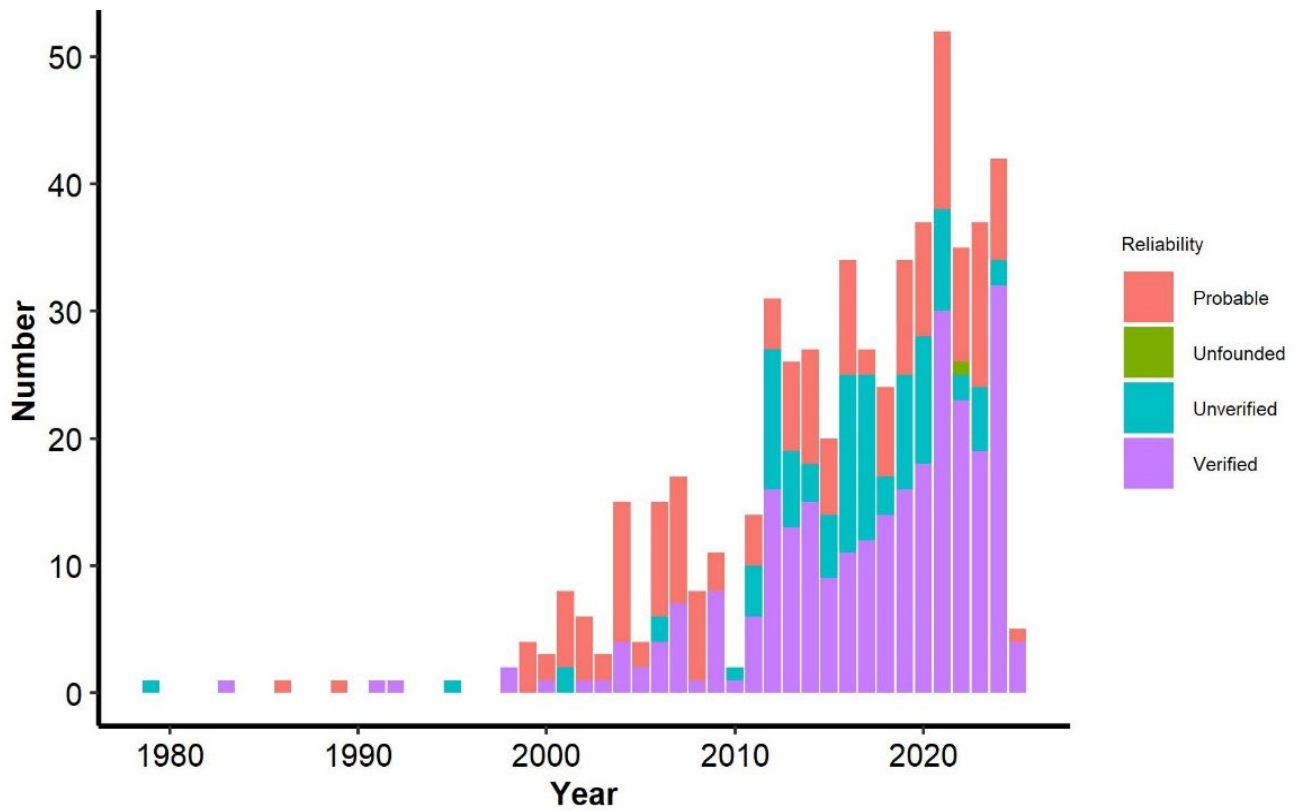
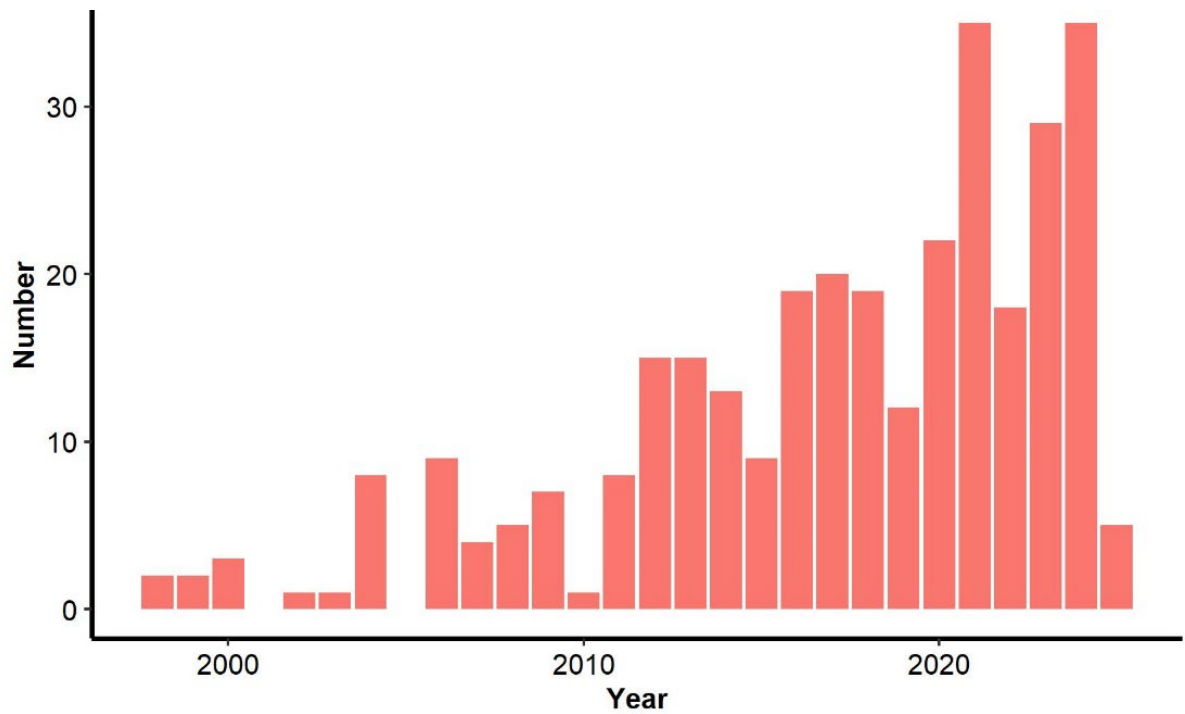


Figure 2. Historic incidental river otter trapping events.



## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:08:01:08.05. River otter trapping and hunting season established -- Harvest limit -- Tagging requirements. The river otter hunting and trapping season is open to residents in Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Brown, Charles Mix, Clark, Clay, Codington, Davison, Day, Deuel, Douglas, Grant, Hamlin, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, Marshall, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, Turner, Union, and Yankton Counties. The season is from sunrise on November ~~4~~one through sunset on December ~~31~~thirty-one or until ~~20~~thirty river otters have been harvested, whichever occurs first. A person is limited to one river otter per season.

Any person harvesting a river otter during the season shall notify the department within 24 hours of harvest. The entire carcass, along with the detached pelt, must be submitted to the department representative within five days of harvest. Once the season has closed, a person has 24 hours to notify a department representative of any untagged river otter harvested during the season. The tagged pelt must be returned. The carcass must be surrendered to the department and may be returned upon request. A person may only possess, purchase, or sell raw river otter pelts that are tagged through the eyeholes by the department, or, if harvested from another jurisdiction, properly and securely tagged with a tag supplied by the governmental entity issuing the license. If the governmental entity issuing the license does not issue a tag, other proof that the river otter has been lawfully harvested is required. Any river otter harvested ~~24~~twenty-four hours after the close of the season will be considered incidental harvest and must be surrendered to the department.

## RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

## RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, trapping opportunity will be expanded.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? More individuals will be able to trap river otter.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes, this change increases sustainable trapping opportunity.

## FISCAL IMPACT

None.

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

## GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

### FISHING SEASONS

Chapter 41:07:02

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>April 3,2025</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>June 5,2025</b>	<b>Aberdeen</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>June 5-6,2025</b>	<b>Aberdeen</b>

### PROPOSED CHANGES

1. Allow year-round fishing in the dredge-hole area of Lake Francis Case between the railroad bridge and the Interstate 90 bridge and causeway in Brule and Lyman Counties.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

1. Currently, the waters of Lake Francis Case, between the railroad bridge and the Interstate 90 bridge and causeway in Brule and Lyman Counties are closed to fishing from December 1 through April 30, except that shore fishing from the Brule County side of this area remains open year-round.
2. By removing the December 1 through April 30 fishing closure for the dredge-hole area of Lake Francis Case, the Department believes angling opportunity will be increased and fishing regulations will be simplified with no detrimental impacts to the fish population.
3. The dredge-hole fishing closure is a very specific, local regulation and many non-residents and non-locals may not be aware it exists, causing them to unintentionally violate the law.

### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

The following are proposed draft changes that are intended to incorporate the changes recommended for Commission proposal.

**41:07:02:01. Inland waters.** Unless prohibited by § 41:07:01:05, all species of fish, other than those listed in §§ 41:10:02:05 and 41:10:02:06, may be fished by hook and line year-round within inland waters.

The following restrictions apply to inland waters:

~~—(1) The waters of Lake Francis Case, between the railroad bridge and the Interstate 90 bridge and causeway in Brule and Lyman Counties are open to fishing from May 1 through November 30, except that shore fishing from the Brule County side of this area remains open year-round;~~

(21) In Clark County the waters of Indian Springs and Antelope Lake west of a line from 42750 174th Street to 42750 177th Street to 424th Avenue are closed to fishing from a boat from October 20 through December 31; and

(32) Baitfish may be taken year-round by licensed bait dealers and legal anglers in these waters except as provided in § 41:09:04:03.

### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue – NA
2. Historical Considerations – NA
3. Biological Considerations – NA
4. Social Considerations – NA
5. Financial considerations – NA

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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### RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? NA
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, by allowing users to fish year-round in the dredge-hole area.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? NA
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA

### FISCAL IMPACT

Not applicable

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





## April 2025 Camping

Agenda Item #20

4/1/2024 - 4/30/2024

4/1/2025 - 4/30/2025

Camping Units

Camping Units

5875

6255

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	21	30	43%
	Pickerel Lake Recreation Area	47	34	-28%
	Roy Lake State Park	88	114	30%
	Sica Hollow State Park	9	4	-56%
	Fisher Grove State Park	2	17	750%
2	Lake Louise Recreation Area	9	14	56%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	47	47	0%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	9	27	200%
	Hartford Beach State Park	83	110	33%
	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	2	4	100%
3	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	67	90	34%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	21	15	-29%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	37	49	32%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	81	88	9%
	Lake Herman State Park	83	112	35%
5	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	89	40	-55%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	19	18	-5%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	15	0	-100%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	70	64	-9%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
6	Platte Creek Recreation Area	26	62	138%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	170	136	-20%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	382	442	16%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	265	285	8%
	Palisades State Park	325	384	18%
8	Newton Hills State Park	222	220	-1%
	Union Grove State Park	23	38	65%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	248	239	-4%
	Clay County Park	49	19	-61%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	684	611	-11%
9	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	86	94	9%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Springfield Recreation Area	17	55	224%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	North Point Recreation Area	103	108	5%
10	North Wheeler Recreation Area	2	0	-100%
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	36	26	-28%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	39	50	28%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	5	0	-100%
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	2	0	-100%
11	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	2	16	700%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	93	164	76%
	West Bend Recreation Area	123	123	0%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	55	71	29%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	239	229	-4%
12	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	2	4	100%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	45	10	-78%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	0	3	NA
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	82	72	-12%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	3	3	0%
13	West Pollock Recreation Area	5	7	40%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	33	18	-45%
14	Bear Butte State Park	15	29	93%
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	2	3	50%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	136	167	23%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	27	117	333%
	Custer State Park	1029	1118	9%
16	Angostura Recreation Area	465	419	-10%
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	40	33	-18%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5875</b>	<b>6255</b>	<b>6%</b>



## April YTD 2025 Camping

1/1/2024 - 4/30/2024	1/1/2025 - 4/30/2025
Camping Units	Camping Units
7809	7951

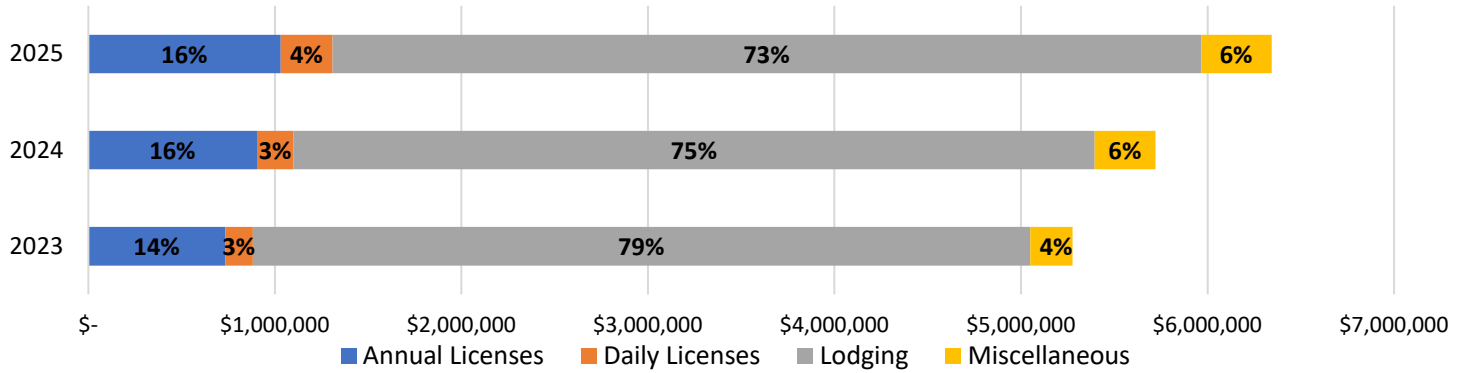
District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	25	38	52%
	Pickerel Lake Recreation Area	59	59	0%
	Roy Lake State Park	209	226	8%
	Sica Hollow State Park	9	6	-33%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Fisher Grove State Park	6	17	183%
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	11	30	173%
2	Mina Lake Recreation Area	61	79	30%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	20	36	80%
	Hartford Beach State Park	108	129	19%
3	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	57	5	-91%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	77	107	39%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	29	20	-31%
4	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	57	60	5%
	Oakwood Lakes State Park	104	107	3%
5	Lake Herman State Park	96	140	46%
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	171	102	-40%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	55	101	84%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	18	1	-94%
	Buryanek Recreation Area	85	69	-19%
6	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	26	62	138%
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	184	155	-16%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	570	532	-7%
7	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	311	329	6%
	Palisades State Park	485	518	7%
	Newton Hills State Park	325	304	-6%
8	Union Grove State Park	33	56	70%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	294	255	-13%
	Clay County Park	49	19	-61%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	797	703	-12%
9	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	96	100	4%
	Sand Creek Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Springfield Recreation Area	21	56	167%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	North Point Recreation Area	144	121	-16%
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	37	27	-27%
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	53	56	6%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	5	0	-100%
10	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	2	19	850%
11	Farm Island Recreation Area	119	186	56%
	West Bend Recreation Area	130	132	2%
	Cow Creek Recreation Area	60	76	27%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	257	369	44%
12	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	2	6	200%
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	48	15	-69%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	2	3	50%
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	95	102	7%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	3	7	133%
13	Swan Creek Recreation Area	0	2	NA
	West Pollock Recreation Area	7	10	43%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	42	29	-31%
14	Bear Butte State Park	32	59	84%
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	2	5	150%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	156	196	26%
15	Shadehill Recreation Area	50	134	168%
16	Custer State Park	1369	1464	7%
	Angostura Recreation Area	550	466	-15%
	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	64	43	-33%
17				
Total		7809	7951	2%

Division of Parks and Recreation					
April 2025 Revenue by Item					
	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	Change
Resident Annual	3,356	\$ 120,810	1,661	\$ 103,810	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	827	\$ 48,900	
Resident Double	3,188	\$ 172,132	3,065	\$ 182,974	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	436	\$ 39,060	
Transferable	233	\$ 18,630	276	\$ 24,800	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	404	\$ 6,060	493	\$ 9,860	
2nd Annual	324	\$ 5,832	-	\$ -	
<b>Annual Licenses</b>	<b>7,505</b>	<b>\$ 323,464</b>	<b>6,758</b>	<b>\$ 409,404</b>	<b>27%</b>
Resident Daily License	2,240	\$ 17,920	1,594	\$ 15,900	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	1,049	\$ 15,735	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	16	\$ 315	30	\$ 580	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	109	\$ 436	232	\$ 1,155	
Motorcoach Permit	15	\$ 45	8	\$ 32	
CSP 7 Day Pass	4,286	\$ 85,720	4,576	\$ 114,335	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	8	\$ 160	54	\$ 1,080	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	-	\$ 300	11	\$ 1,100	
<b>Daily Licenses</b>	<b>6,674</b>	<b>\$ 104,896</b>	<b>7,554</b>	<b>\$ 149,917</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Licenses</b>	<b>14,179</b>	<b>\$ 428,360</b>	<b>14,312</b>	<b>\$ 559,321</b>	<b>31%</b>
Camping Services		\$ 1,498,534		\$ 1,594,926	6%
Pet Fees	199	\$ 1,990	99	\$ 987	-50%
<b>LODGING</b>		<b>\$ 1,500,524</b>		<b>\$ 1,595,913</b>	<b>6%</b>
Picnic Shelters		\$ 2,130		\$ 1,440	-32%
Boat Rentals		\$ 1,575		\$ 384	-76%
Firewood	354	\$ 2,123	424	\$ 2,822	33%
Gift Card	8	\$ 803	12	\$ 941	17%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 16,753		\$ 80,206	379%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ -		\$ 67	
Retail		\$ 1,306		\$ 2,040	56%
Call Center Fee	1,821	\$ 3,642	1,397	\$ 8,306	128%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 695		\$ -	-100%
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>		<b>\$ 29,028</b>		<b>\$ 96,206</b>	<b>231%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 1,957,911</b>		<b>\$ 2,251,441</b>	<b>15%</b>

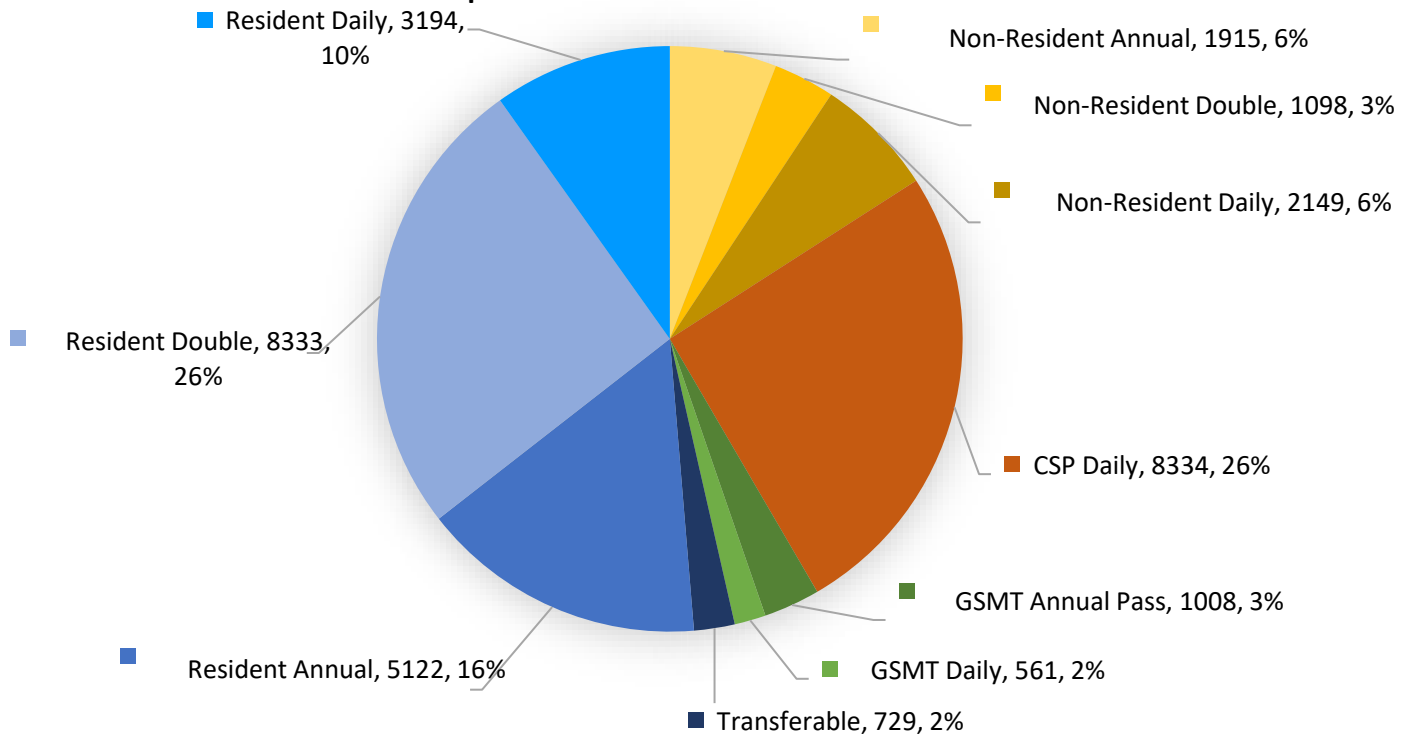
**Division of Parks and Recreation**  
**April YTD 2025 Revenue by Item**

	2024		2025		%
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	Change
Resident Annual	8,606	\$ 309,810	5,122	\$ 238,621	
Non-Resident Annual	-	\$ -	1,915	\$ 112,355	
Resident Double	9,531	\$ 514,652	8,333	\$ 496,944	
Non-Resident Double	-	\$ -	1,098	\$ 98,100	
Transferable	688	\$ 55,030	729	\$ 65,210	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	871	\$ 13,065	1,008	\$ 19,965	
2nd Annual	652	\$ 11,736	-	\$ -	
<b>Annual Licenses</b>	<b>20,348</b>	<b>\$ 904,293</b>	<b>18,205</b>	<b>\$ 1,031,195</b>	<b>14%</b>
Resident Daily License	4,967	\$ 39,736	3,194	\$ 31,842	
Non-Resident Daily License	-	\$ -	2,149	\$ 32,205	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	78	\$ 1,560	89	\$ 1,725	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	250	\$ 1,000	561	\$ 2,663	
Motorcoach Permit	19	\$ 57	104	\$ 325	
CSP 7 Day Pass	7,641	\$ 152,820	8,334	\$ 207,695	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	8	\$ 160	-	\$ -	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	-	\$ 499	4	\$ 1,800	
<b>Daily Licenses</b>	<b>12,963</b>	<b>\$ 195,832</b>	<b>14,435</b>	<b>\$ 278,255</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Licenses</b>	<b>33,311</b>	<b>\$ 1,100,125</b>	<b>32,640</b>	<b>\$ 1,309,450</b>	<b>19%</b>
Camping Services		\$ 4,290,792		\$ 4,652,890	8%
Pet Fees	474	\$ 4,740	343	\$ 3,426	-28%
<b>LODGING</b>		<b>\$ 4,295,532</b>		<b>\$ 4,656,315</b>	<b>8%</b>
Picnic Shelter		\$ 3,290		\$ 4,150	26%
Boat Rentals		\$ 1,960		\$ 744	-62%
Firewood	466	\$ 2,795	560	\$ 3,730	33%
Gift Card	57	\$ 6,379	64	\$ 5,950	-7%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 155,752		\$ 123,806	-21%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 205		\$ 242	18%
Retail		\$ 3,513		\$ 5,396	54%
Call Center Fee	4,377	\$ 8,754	3,456	\$ 20,598	135%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 143,141		\$ 213,899	49%
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>		<b>\$ 325,789</b>		<b>\$ 378,514</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 5,721,446</b>		<b>\$ 6,344,279</b>	<b>11%</b>

### April 2025 YTD Revenue Comparison



### April 2025 YTD License Sales





# Black Hills Beaver Action Plan 2025–2029



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS  
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA

**WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT TBD**

May 2025



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

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Cover photo by Mike Klosowski, Castle Creek 2022. All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision from corrections, updates, and data analysis.

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### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

A draft of the “Black Hills Beaver Action Plan, 2025 – 2029” was available for public comment from INSERT DATES HERE.



## INTRODUCTION

American beaver (*Castor canadensis*; hereafter, beaver) are an economically important furbearer valued for their pelt, castor, and other resources. Beaver occur in aquatic ecosystems throughout much of the continental United States, including South Dakota. Beaver are associated with specific features on the landscape such as perennial water (Novak 1987), food availability (Allen 1983), and topography with low gradients and flat flood plains (Retzer et al. 1956, Olson and Hubert and 1994).

Beaver are social animals that live in a family group typically consisting of a mating pair along with kits from the past two years. Dispersion from the family lodge occurs most often during the spring of the subadults second year. Dispersion distances from 2–17 km have been documented which are dependent on many factors including sex, population density and habitat (McNew 2005). Once a beaver reaches its new location at 2 years old, it is sexually mature and will breed that winter with a litter of 1–7 kits being born the next spring (Brenner 1964). Beaver range expansion is a slow progression due to these lifecycle and social structure factors.

Although ecological services provided by beaver are beneficial, their populations can reach a level where they exceed social tolerance. When populations reach this level, beaver can damage infrastructure resulting, in flooding, or the destruction of valued trees or crops. Managing beaver populations requires the acknowledgement of their ecological value while also maintaining population levels that support recreational opportunity and minimize infrastructure damage.

Beaver serve as a vital role in ecosystems by altering wetland topography, vegetation, and other landscape features (Johnston 1994, Naimen et al. 1994, Wright et al. 2002, Rossell et al. 2005). These alterations provide positive impacts on stream hydrology by reducing sediment transportation, increasing water storage, reducing downstream nutrient transport, and attenuating high-flow events (Puttock et al. 2017, 2018, 2021; Westbrook et al. 2020), in addition to other biodiversity benefits (Rosell et al. 2005). Because of these positive environmental influences, beaver were selected as a Management Indicator Species (MIS) for the BHNF as part of the Phase II Amendment (USDA Forest Service 2006) to the revised 1997 Land and Resource Management Plan.

By the early 1900s, beaver were extirpated from many portions of their traditional range due to excessive harvest (Baker and Hill 2003). However, through the implementation of harvest protection measures and reintroduction efforts, beaver are generally abundant, and their populations are restored in much of their range (Rosell et al. 2005), including South Dakota. Nonetheless, recent survey efforts within the Black Hills Fire Protection District (BHFPD) have indicated a decrease in beaver abundance and distribution since more intensive survey efforts in 2007 (GFP and BHNF 2023).

The Black Hills National Forest (BHNF) comprises approximately 1.2 million acres in western South Dakota and northeastern Wyoming. There are approximately 300,000 acres of non-National Forest System lands, mostly in private ownership, within the BHNF administrative boundary (USDA Forest Service 2005). Many of these inholdings occur adjacent to streams determined as suitable for beaver.

In the Black Hills of South Dakota, beaver were so numerous at the time of the Custer expedition that troops often had a difficult time crossing streams. By 1887, beaver populations had diminished to the point that a two-year closed season was implemented. The season

remained closed until 1909 when it was then re-opened, and beaver were protected from April 1 to November 15. However, the season was subsequently closed again in 1925, and only beaver causing damage were removed. In response, the South Dakota Game and Fish Department, now South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP), started a beaver relocation program. From 1936 to 1944, a total of 395 beaver were relocated to suitable sites across the northern Black Hills, a third of which were released at sites where a dam and lodge were artificially prepared by staff. By 1946 they were said to be well distributed throughout the northern Black Hills and the season was reopened. During that same time, 1,892 beaver were trapped and pelleted across a 700 square mile area encompassing the northern Black Hills (Harris and Aldous 1946).

This is an action plan for all constituents interested in the conservation of beaver within the BHFPD of South Dakota. With careful coordination among stakeholders, South Dakota's trapping and outdoor heritage will be preserved for future generations. GFP will manage beaver populations within the BHFPD with scientific 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.

## **POPULATION DYNAMICS**

Age-specific survival rates are major predictors in determining population growth in beaver (Boyle and Owens 2007). Survival rates are influenced by human induced mortality (Vanden Berge and Vohs 1977, Novak 1987, Wilson and Ruff 1999), habitat destruction (Henderson 1960) and environmental factors such as, drought, winter severity, and extreme water fluctuations (Henderson 1960, Novak 1987, Rutherford 1964). Outbreaks of diseases, such as tularemia, can affect beaver populations, locally (Novak 1987). Predation is generally not a significant cause of mortality (Boyle and Owens 2007). However, predation can have significant impacts on beaver populations locally (Baker and Hill 2003). Specific declines in the BHFPD are undetermined and more research is needed on this population to determine specific limiting factors and sources of mortality.

## **POPULATION MONITORING**

Historically, monitoring beaver in the BHFPD to collect baseline occupancy and abundance has been done via helicopter cache surveys in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) because of their MIS status. In addition, GFP annually conducts furbearer harvest surveys to estimate county-wide harvest in South Dakota. Harvest survey requests are sent electronically to all resident and non-resident furbearer license holders. Opportunistic reports of beaver and their sign are also used as indices to occupancy and distribution.

The first beaver MIS monitoring occurred October 22–26, 2007 (Table 1). The second round of beaver population monitoring occurred October 29 through November 2, 2012 (Table 1). The third and most recent round of beaver population monitoring was a collaborative effort between GFP and USFS; it occurred October 23–31, 2023 (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Beaver abundance and distribution from 2007, 2012, and 2023 within the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

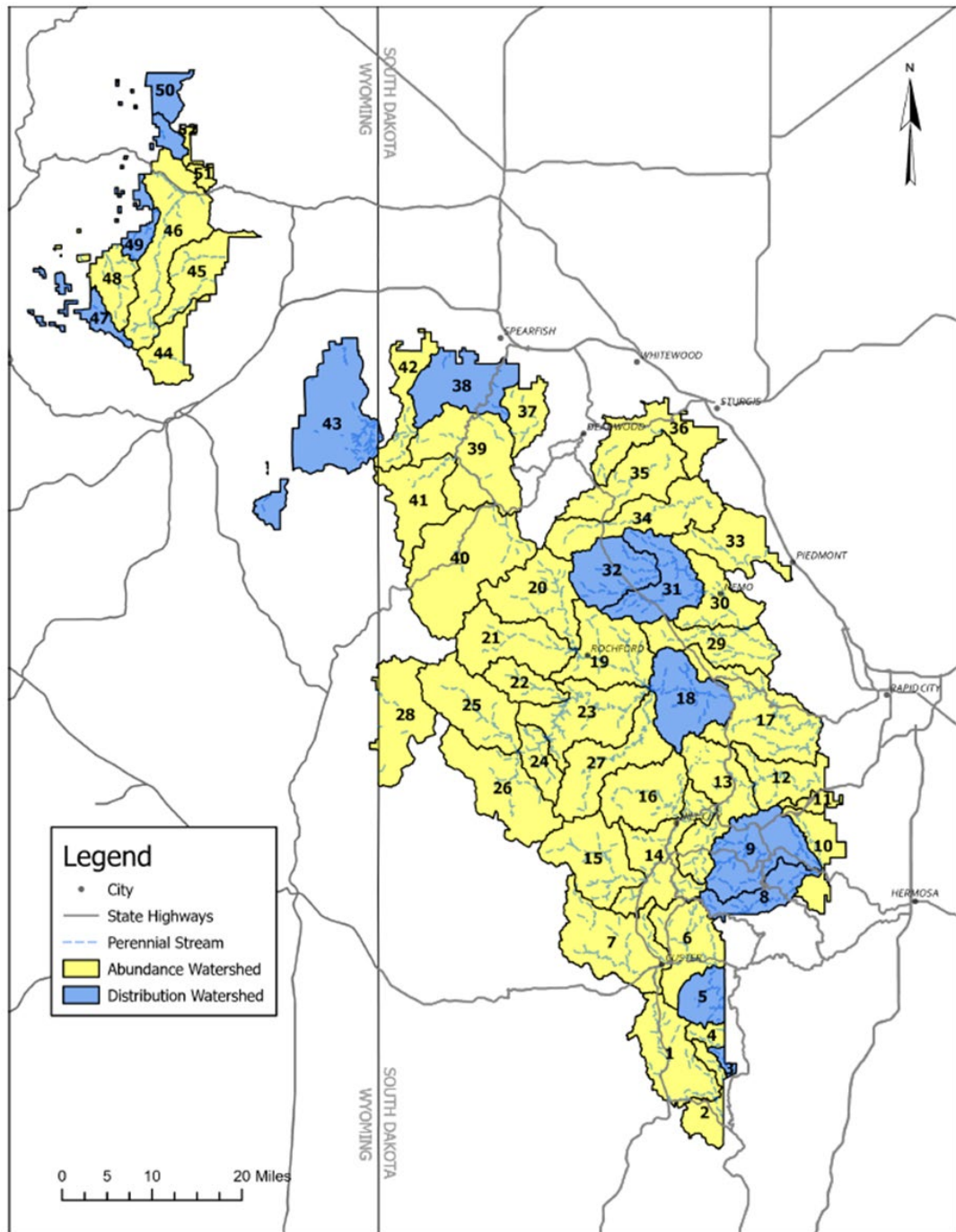
Monitoring Indices	Year		
	2007	2012	2023
Number of caches observed	38	60	16
Abundance (cache/km)	0.020	0.038	0.009
Distribution (% of watersheds occupied)	42.3%	51.9%	23.1%

Survey methods follow the protocol prepared by Beck et al. (2008). This protocol identifies food caches as the indicator of beaver abundance and distribution. Watersheds relating to fifty-two, 12-digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC12) are monitored (Figure 1). Hydrological Unit Codes are a nationwide system that delineate watersheds based on surface hydrologic features. Forty of these are monitored for beaver abundance where all food caches observed are counted. These watersheds are rated as having “high” and “moderate” habitat suitability. Twelve, HUC12s are only surveyed for beaver distribution. Once a food cache is observed in a distribution watershed the survey proceeds to the next watershed because presence has been confirmed.

Reports of beaver are collected to help determine occupancy and distribution throughout the BHFPD. Reports of beaver are categorized based on the primary method used to identify the animal as beaver: sighting, sign, incidental trap, and vehicle kill. Sightings are based upon the actual observation of a beaver. Reports of sign are based on, but not limited to, tracks, slides, castor mounds, dens, circular or vertical chewing of trees, beaver dams, and food caches. Incidental trap reports are of beaver that were incidentally caught while targeting other species. Vehicle kills are reports of beaver found dead on the road or hit by a vehicle. A report can be of an individual animal or a group of animals.

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

- A **verified report** is one of a carcass or live-captured individual(s) or where evidence exists that proves the report was a beaver. Photos where the animal or sign can be clearly identified as a beaver may also be considered verified. Knowledgeable reviewers may include agency staff familiar with beaver or experts.
- A **probable report** is a sighting or presence of sign not accompanied by a photo but is observed by someone with beaver experience and knowledge.
- An **unverified report** is a report with no evidence to support or reject the report.



**Figure 1.** Fifty-two, 12-digit watersheds sampled for beaver abundance and distribution.

## HARVEST STRATEGY

Beaver populations are managed to maintain a level within social tolerance of the damage they might cause while allowing for the use of their valued pelt. Season length (Erickson 1981) and market prices influence beaver harvest more than high or increasing beaver populations (Novak 1987). Harvest can negatively influence beaver population density (Nordstrom 1972, Parsons

and Brown 1978); however, reproduction can replace annual mortality when habitat is adequate (Novak 1987).

Within the BHFPD, beaver trapping is open from January 1 to March 31 on U.S. Forest Service Lands and on non-U.S. Forest Service lands within the BHFPD from November 1 to April 30. Non-residents may only trap beaver from December 1 to March 15 within the constraints described above. Current season dates are in place to bridge the gap between a restrictive season on public lands in the Black Hills and unlimited seasons across the rest of South Dakota. These restrictive dates allow trappers the recreational opportunity of fur harvesting, while allowing them to address potential depredation issues.

At low densities, a conservative approach to harvest is needed to sustain beaver in the BHFP. A minimum of 60% distribution rate of beaver in HUC12 watersheds is recommended to initiate a modified trapping season limited to residents (Table 2). A less restrictive season could occur when distribution is above 80% in HUC12 watersheds (Table 2). Below 60% distribution, no season is recommended (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Black Hills Fire Protection District harvest strategies for beaver trapping season recommendations, 2025–2029.

Monitoring Indices	BHFPD <sup>A</sup> Season Recommendation	Wildlife Damage Response
≥ 80% distribution of watersheds occupied by beaver	Option for trapping season open to private and public lands. Non-resident trappers may be restricted in their trapping dates.	Depredation issues are addressed with technical advice from GFP Wildlife Damage staff (WDS). Lethal removal can occur if WDS staff deem necessary, or trap and transfer may occur.
50-79% distribution of watersheds occupied by beaver	Option for restricted trapping season, including harvest limits, and open to private lands, but closed on public lands. Non-resident trappers may be restricted in their trapping dates.	
< 50% distribution of watersheds occupied by beaver	No trapping season	

<sup>A</sup> Black Hills Fire Protection District as outlined in statute, 34–35–15.

## **REQUESTS FOR SERVICE**

Beaver pond water, chew trees, and can negatively affect utilities such as culverts. These actions can cause significant damage to private property and public infrastructure. GFP employs 28 Wildlife Damage Specialists (WDS) statewide in part to assist private landowners manage damage caused by beaver. Outside the Black Hills, where most of the land is privately owned, lethal removal is used to address requests for service involving damage or issues caused by beaver. In the Black Hills, WDS respond to depredation requests by providing technical advice such as recommending fencing or other deterrents to prevent damage. Lethal removal can occur on a case-by-case basis, typically when infrastructure is threatened, and other tools may cause undue delay. Where beaver threaten culverts or other infrastructure, devices such as a “Beaver Deceiver” are used to prevent water levels from reaching a level where they cause damage. Hog paneling or other welded wire paneling is used to block the mouth of culverts and prevent beaver from plugging culverts. In situations where deterrents or technical advice fail, or there is a need for supplemental beaver within remote portions of the Black Hills, beaver can be live trapped and relocated to suitable habitat.

## **MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

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

### **Objective 1: Determine the status of beaver populations.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 1.1** Annually monitor distribution and abundance of beaver throughout HUC 12 watersheds within the BHNH using various survey methods (i.e., ground-based and/or aerial observations) within the calendar year.
  - 1.1.1** Recommend trapping season harvest strategies, based on survey results (see Table 2).
- 1.2** Annually collect and summarize beaver reports of signs and sightings to improve knowledge of distribution and abundance using Survey 123; refine reporting process as needed.
- 1.3** Annually collect and summarize beaver depredation reports to improve knowledge of distribution and document abundance; refine reporting process as needed.
  - 1.3.1.** Relocation of nuisance beaver to suitable habitat, as necessary.

### **Objective 2: Coordinate with private landowners and conservation partners to promote the restoration of streams and riparian habitat.**

#### **Strategies:**

- 2.1** Restore degraded beaver habitat through the construction of low-cost-low-tech devices such as Beaver Dam Analogues (BDAs) or Post Assisted Log Structures (PALS) (Appendix 1), as well as planting native hardwood species such as willow and aspen.

- 2.1.1.** Increase BDA restoration monitoring efforts (e.g., habitat succession, water quality, beaver presence) with assistance from conservation partners. Strive for the influence of 2 miles of stream, annually, through these restoration efforts.
- 2.2** Provide financial and technical support to interested landowners through GFP private lands cost-share programs, and partner programs to create or improve existing wetland and riparian habitat through restoration projects, rangeland management projects, and grazing and forestry practices.

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## **APPENDIX**

**Appendix 1.** Photo of a Beaver Dam Analogue (BDA) installed in the Black Hills of South Dakota.





# **SOUTH DAKOTA WILDLIFE ACTION PLAN - 2025 REVISION**

**REVIEW  
DRAFT**

**South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks**

**Wildlife Division Report 2025-02**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

The South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan (SDWAP) uses a science-based approach to assess the health of South Dakota's fish, wildlife, plants, and associated habitats; evaluate the problems they face; and outline actions to help conserve them for the long term. This plan encourages voluntary partnerships among governmental entities, Native American tribes, organizations, and private citizens to help prevent fish and wildlife from becoming endangered and to provide for the needs of the full array of fish and wildlife and habitat diversity for the future sustained enjoyment and use by South Dakota's residents and visitors. The Plan provides a strategic framework to allow cooperators to identify and implement priorities at various scales, whether linked to habitats or fish, wildlife, or plant species.



This document is a revision of a previous SDWAP, finalized in 2014 and approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 2015. State Wildlife Action Plans maintain state eligibility for certain federal funding sources and present collaborative opportunities within the state and across political boundaries to improve the status of species and habitats. The revision process is an opportunity to review new data and incorporate emerging conservation challenges. In general, South Dakota's plan presents information separately for aquatic, terrestrial, and riparian-wetland

ecosystems. Our planning approach applies a coarse-fine/filter method to consider major habitat changes since European settlement and associated loss or modification of important natural disturbance regimes since then. This approach is expected to accommodate the needs of the majority of species. The array and distribution of ecosystems across South Dakota shaped and sustained the region's biological diversity, and most fish, wildlife, and plant species in the state today resulted from historical ecosystems on the Great Plains. This coarse filter approach is supplemented by a fine filter component that addresses species and habitats needing additional management to meet their conservation challenges.

The 2025 Revision identifies 245 plant and animal SGCNs and describes their conservation challenges and actions needed to address those challenges. We used standardized classification systems to describe threats and actions to allow better collaboration within species' ranges and across state boundaries. We revised conservation opportunity areas (COAs) for terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems to continue encouraging collaboration among conservation partners. We present a new habitat classification description to supplement the Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA) classification, although the MLRA system maintains its relevance to landowners and rangeland and grassland experts. We report on environmental attitudes of the general public and critical partners regarding the previous plan's relevance and ways to improve it. We expanded consideration of the importance of environmental education and wildlife-associated recreation to hopefully expand activities with new funding opportunities.

## Chapter Overview

### Chapter 1 – Introduction

This chapter sets the stage by describing the history behind the need for state wildlife action plans and the voluntary, proactive philosophy behind the SDWAP. Also discussed are the challenges associated with traditional funding sources and the opportunities that new users and expanded programs present in keeping state wildlife agencies relevant with changing times.

The importance of State Wildlife Grants funding is discussed in the context of understanding the critical need for expanded funding to meet the ambitious goals of state wildlife action plans. The most significant changes since the previous SDWAP are summarized. Updates include incorporating new data; discussing emerging conservation challenges; considering species groups of recent national concern, such as native insect pollinators; discussing expanded opportunities for standardization and collaboration; including a revised list of SGCNs and revised terrestrial and aquatic COAs. Also included is an expanded discussion of the importance of environmental education and wildlife-associated recreation.

This chapter lists the 8 key (required) elements that must be satisfied for the SDWAP to be approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Eleven specific goals of the SDWAP are presented. Overview sections are included for SGCNs and the plan's overall conservation strategy.

### Chapter 2 – Species of Greatest Conservation Need

In this chapter, we describe the procedures followed for the review and revision of the state list of plant and animal Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCNs), including involvement of internal and external taxonomic experts and the opportunity for the public, other agencies, and Native American tribes to review the revised draft list. One minor modification was made to the selection criteria, with the addition of a subcategory for species with significant information or data needs. The 245 SGCNs are composed of 5 amphibian species, 10 aquatic insects, 52 birds, 4 crayfish, 28 fishes, 11 freshwater mussels, 5 gastropods, 28 mammals, 40 plants, 17 reptiles, and 45 terrestrial insects.

New species profiles were generated for this revision. A sample profile is presented with an explanation of the content. The full set of SGCN species profiles are presented as appendices in this plan.

### Chapter 3 – Conservation Background – Terrestrial and Riparian-wetland Ecosystems

Chapter 3 describes the ecological framework for terrestrial ecosystems that defines South Dakota habitats in two primary ways. The Major Land Resource Area (MLRA) framework developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) matches our most critical terrestrial habitats by providing detailed descriptions and predictive species compositions for the many and varied grassland habitat types in the state.

We also introduce a simple habitat classification system that may be more meaningful to those not familiar with MLRAs. We used various data sources and well-established landscape classification systems to sort the state's general habitat types into 8 categories. Also in this chapter is a description of natural disturbance factors, such as climate, fire, grazing, black-tailed prairie dogs and other herbivores, beaver, and flood events.

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## South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan 2025 Revision

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These disturbances have been modified or controlled to suit modern land uses. Those management decisions have altered the habitats and dependent fish and wildlife, which is noted in later sections where conservation threats and actions are described for SGCNs.

We present the ecological concepts and data sources associated with understanding riparian-wetland ecosystems. The dynamic and complex nature of these systems is described to acknowledge impacts of South Dakota's extreme fluctuations in temperature and precipitation and other influences, such as beavers and other herbivores.

### **Chapter 4. Aquatic Ecosystems**

This chapter describes the goals of aquatic ecosystems, particularly related to meeting the needs of aquatic SGCNs. The aquatic conservation opportunity area (COA) process is introduced. The overall planning approach of using coarse and fine filters is reviewed. We describe steps involved in the aquatic COA process at a general level, with more detailed descriptions and illustrations found in Chapter 6.

The riverine ecosystems' hierarchical framework for the 14 major river basins is detailed, with additional descriptions provided to the Basin (HUC\_6) level.

### **Chapter 5. Conservation Challenges and Threats to Native Ecosystems**

This chapter presents a brief overview of the ecological planning model that forms the basis of designing the actions component of South Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan; that is, the impact of direct and indirect habitat and ecosystem changes since European settlement. Potential conservation threats associated with changes to native ecosystems are initially discussed from a broad perspective.

A change from the previous SDWAP is the use of a standardized approach to describing conservation threats. This allows easier categorization within the state and across state and international boundaries. The Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed this system, which is used for habitat systems, SGCNs, and the 8 habitat categories defined for this revision.

Conservation challenges associated with terrestrial, riparian-wetland, and aquatic systems are examined in detail, using the relevant CMP/IUCN categories. Following this evaluation is a similar assessment of conservation threats to SGCNs, which are evaluated individually and results available in a conservation threats appendix. Within the chapter is a discussion of the most common conservation threats categories by SGCN taxonomic groups. An additional discussion of climate change impacts to SGCNs shares relevant results of a Competitive-State Wildlife Grant project award to the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.

### **Chapter 6. Conservation Actions**

Similar to Chapter 5, this chapter reviews the ecological background for South Dakota's planning approach, but from the perspective of habitat- and species-specific actions needed to address the loss of ecosystem function and diversity and associated historical disturbance regimes.

## South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan 2025 Revision

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Also in common with Chapter 5 is the use of a standardized approach to describing conservation actions. This standardization facilitates sharing species and habitat goals and partnering across political boundaries. Conservation actions associated with terrestrial, riparian-wetland, and aquatic systems are examined in detail, using the relevant CMP categories. Following this evaluation is a similar assessment of conservation actions relevant to SGCNs. SGCNs are evaluated individually, with results available in a conservation actions appendix. Also discussed are the most prevalent conservation actions categories for each SGCN taxonomic group.

One of the most meaningful conservation actions is the identification of terrestrial and aquatic COAs, which were introduced in the previous SDWAP. This process also reinforces the importance of this document as a statewide planning document. The COA identification process, including data sources and resulting maps, can assist partners interested in prioritizing rare species and native habitat efforts. This chapter includes detailed descriptions of how COAs were developed.

### **Chapter 7. Agency Coordination, Cooperator Interactions, and Public Involvement**

This chapter describes efforts made by SDGFP to engage internal staff, other agencies, Native American tribes, and the public to inform them of the SDWAP revision process and its various opportunities for input. To better engage internal staff, a more formalized working group structure was used. Lists were generated of appropriate contacts with agencies and Native American tribes with significant land and water areas and programs affecting relevant species and habitats. SDGFP's website was the primary input tool for the public and partners, which is consistent with other similar SDGFP planning activities.

In keeping with the original Plan and the previous major revision in 2014, SDGFP conducted two attitude surveys. The first was a public attitude survey to monitor opinions about wildlife and habitat issues. The second survey dealt with relevancy of the SDWAP, to assist the agency in identifying and improving upon weaknesses in how and where the information is presented. Highlights of the surveys are included, with links to final reports.

### **Chapter 8. Monitoring**

We present examples of ongoing monitoring in South Dakota for species, species groups, habitats, and relevant land uses. Most are programs conducted by SDGFP or other efforts relevant to the agency's work. Monitoring may include discrete, time-limited projects, such as those accomplished with State Wildlife Grant or Section 6 endangered species match dollars as well as programs supported by more extensive and longer-term funding sources.

Without significant additional funding, a comprehensive monitoring program is not feasible for all species and habitats. We encourage partnerships with other agencies, Native American tribes, and NGOs to identify potential duplication, evaluate current shortfalls in monitoring, and address those deficits as funding and personnel allow. We have described 4 potential monitoring prioritization methods, based on threatened or endangered species designations, established rare species classifications systems, and primary habitat types.

### **Chapter 9. Review Schedule**

## South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan 2025 Revision

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This chapter describes the timing and general process for reviewing and revising the SDWAP. SDGFP will comply with the 10-year maximum interval unless changes are needed beforehand.

### **Chapter 10. Engaging the Public and Partners Through Watchable Wildlife, Environmental Education, and Wildlife-associated Recreation**

This chapter begins with a discussion of outdoor recreation's importance in the state, including the extensive participation rates of hunters, anglers, and birders; the economic importance of these activities; and the relationship between outdoor experiences and mental health. The two opinion surveys discussed in Chapter 7 are mentioned in the context of South Dakotans' strong commitment to wildlife and natural resources.

The role and activities of a working group on this topic are discussed. Included is a preliminary list of outdoor education and recreation needs, based on internal expertise.

AFWA's Fish and Wildlife Relevancy Roadmap is introduced and, in combination with South Dakota's 2020 census results and attitude survey findings, the potential applicability of this tool is discussed as a way that SDGFP can broaden its reach and impact with lapsed and untapped outdoor users.

### **Appendices**

Critical material is included in the plan's appendices, either in the appendices package or as linked content. These include concise species accounts for the 245 plant and animal SGCNs, summaries of SDWAP completion accomplishments since the 2014 SDWAP, a climate change assessment report created during the previous plan revision and a more recent analysis relevant to some SGCNs using different methodology, conservation threats and conservation actions spreadsheets for SGCNs, current monitoring programs for species and habitats, supplemental data related to conservation opportunity area revisions, reports from 2 public opinion surveys conducted during this plan revision, and a summary of comments received and resolution of comments received during the public input opportunity (*to be completed following public review*).



### **The Power of Partnerships**

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” Helen Keller

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is responsible for leading the review and revision of this plan and for the wise use of funds allocated to the state to help implement actions identified for species and habitats. However, the SDWAP is intended as a statewide, multi-partner strategic vision to benefit fish, wildlife, and plant species, particularly SGCNs, and the habitats they need. Enhancing existing connections and establishing relationships with new conservation partners must happen for this effort to succeed.

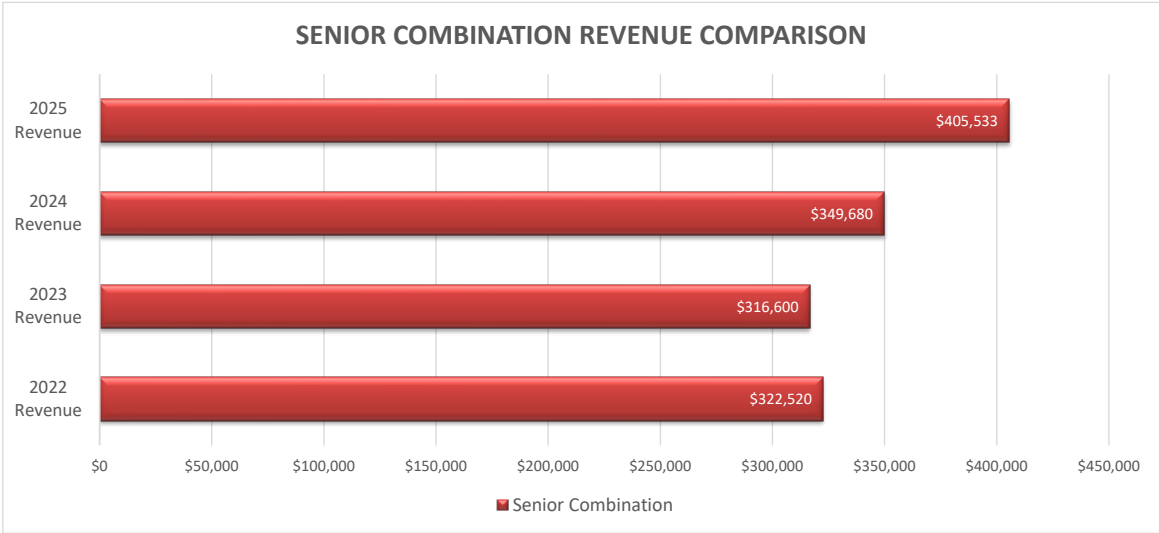
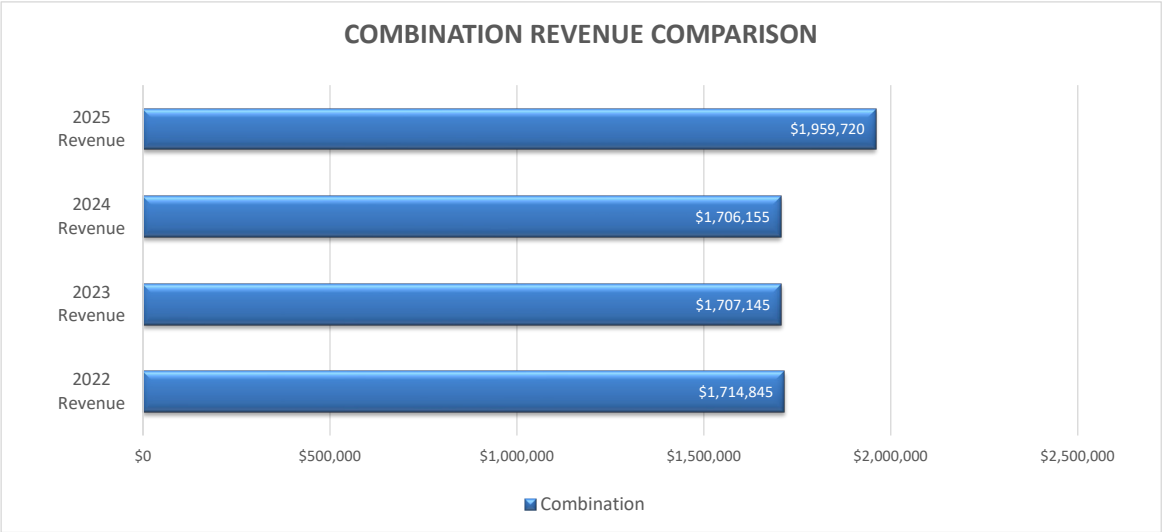


Full South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan is available at this link:  
[https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/SDWAP\\_complete\\_draft\\_9\\_Apr\\_2025.pdf](https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/SDWAP_complete_draft_9_Apr_2025.pdf)



COMBINATION LICENSES  
December 15 - April 30

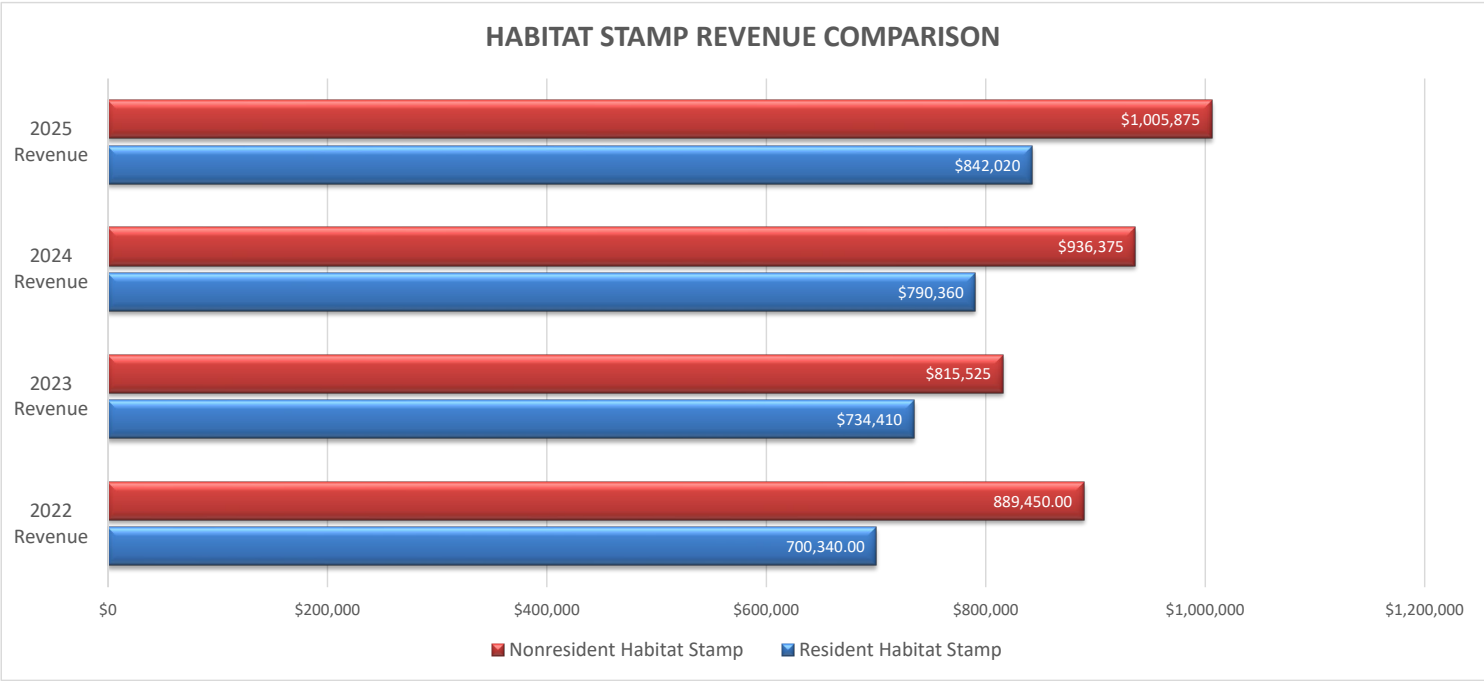
License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Combination	31,179	31,039	31,021	31,080	32,662	\$ 1,959,720	1,641	1,582	\$253,565	\$250,338	5%
Senior Combination	8,063	7,915	8,742	8,240	9,431	\$ 405,533	689	1,191	\$55,853	\$75,933	14%
Combination License Totals	39,242	38,954	39,763	39,320	42,093	\$ 2,365,253	2,330	2,773	\$309,418	\$326,271	7%



HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - April 30

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Resident Habitat Stamp	70,034	73,441	79,036	74,170	84,202	\$ 842,020	5,166	10,032	\$284,130	551,742	14%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	35,578	32,621	37,455	35,218	40,235	\$ 1,005,875	2,780	5,017	\$111,200	200,680	14%
Habitat Stamp Totals	105,612	106,062	116,491	109,388	124,437	\$ 1,847,895	7,946	15,049	\$395,330	752,422	14%

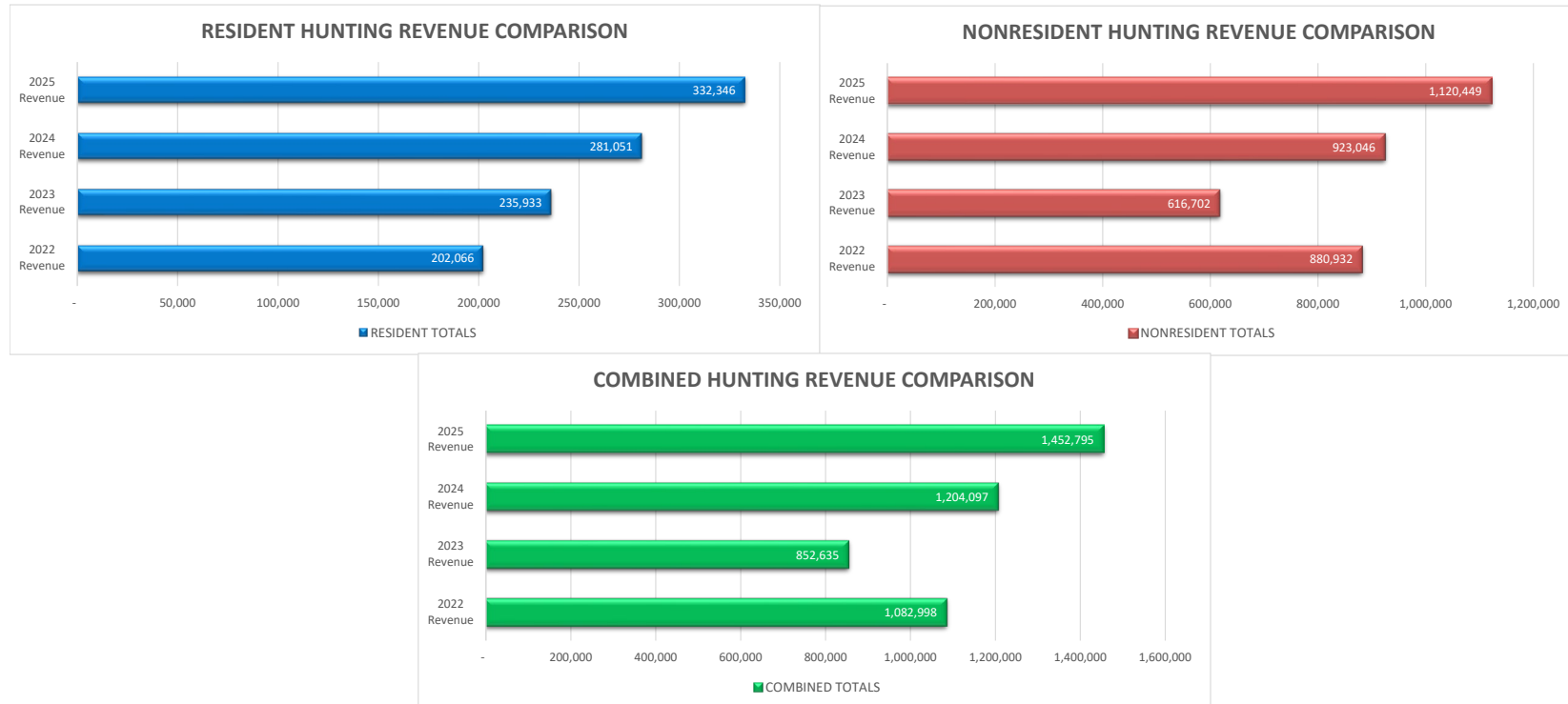


## SMALL GAME LICENSES

December 15 - April 30

License Type						+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change	
	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	from 3 Yr. Avg
Small Game	2,293	4,050	5,202	3,848	5,980	\$ 215,280	778	2,132	\$43,614	\$88,285	55%
1-Day Small Game	151	94	195	147	197	\$ 2,955	2	50	\$615	\$1,195	34%
Youth Small Game	1,037	970	1,052	1,020	965	\$ 4,825	(87)	(55)	(\$435)	(\$656)	-5%
Furbearer	2,732	2,637	2,824	2,731	3,005	\$ 93,155	181	274	\$8,435	\$11,225	10%
Predator/Varmint	1,359	1,236	1,031	1,209	816	\$ 4,896	(215)	(393)	(\$259)	(\$1,147)	-32%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	177	194	154	175	102	\$ 510	(52)	(73)	(\$260)	(\$365)	-42%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	5,952	2,009	2,228	3,396	2,145	\$ 10,725	(83)	(1,251)	(\$415)	(\$6,257)	-37%
<b>RESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>13,701</b>	<b>11,190</b>	<b>12,686</b>	<b>12,526</b>	<b>13,210</b>	<b>332,346</b>	<b>524</b>	<b>757</b>	<b>\$ 51,295</b>	<b>\$ 92,280</b>	<b>6.05%</b>
Small Game	4,232	2,464	4,756	3,817	5,179	\$ 735,418	423	1,362	\$ 159,942	\$ 273,521	36%
Youth Small Game	293	157	316	255	329	\$ 3,290	13	74	\$ 130	\$ 737	29%
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	197	102	165	155	191	\$ 9,550	26	36	\$ 1,960	\$ 2,435	23%
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	1,178	798	987	988	1,199	\$ 115,104	212	211	\$ 40,092	\$ 40,041	21%
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	91	56	59	69	63	\$ 9,198	4	(6)	\$ 2,059	\$ 889	-8%
Furbearer	3	0	5	3	1	\$ 325	(4)	(2)	\$ (1,050)	\$ (408)	-63%
Predator/Varmint	841	960	1,091	964	1,240	\$ 57,040	149	276	\$ 13,400	\$ 18,480	29%
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	3	28	28	20	113	\$ 565	85	93	\$ 425	\$ 467	475%
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	215	3,358	4,215	2,596	3,736	\$ 18,680	(479)	1,140	\$ (2,395)	\$ 5,700	44%
Spring Light Goose	4,247	3,626	4,034	3,969	3,662	\$ 223,382	(372)	(307)	\$ (20,460)	\$ (13,815)	-8%
Youth Spring Light Goose	324	317	329	323	309	\$ 6,489	(20)	(14)	\$ (420)	\$ (301)	-4%
<b>NONRESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>11,624</b>	<b>11,866</b>	<b>15,985</b>	<b>13,158</b>	<b>16,022</b>	<b>1,179,041</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>2,864</b>	<b>\$193,683</b>	<b>\$327,746</b>	<b>21.76%</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTALS</b>	<b>25,325</b>	<b>23,056</b>	<b>28,671</b>	<b>25,684</b>	<b>29,232</b>	<b>1,511,387</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>3,548</b>	<b>\$244,978</b>	<b>\$420,026</b>	<b>13.81%</b>

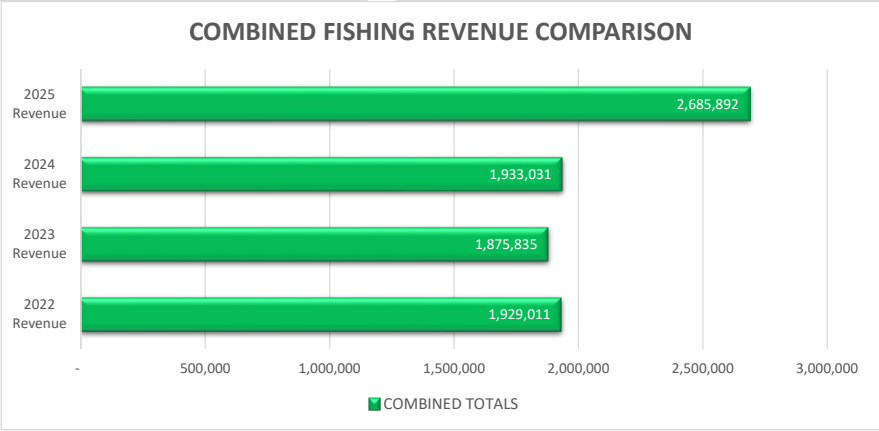
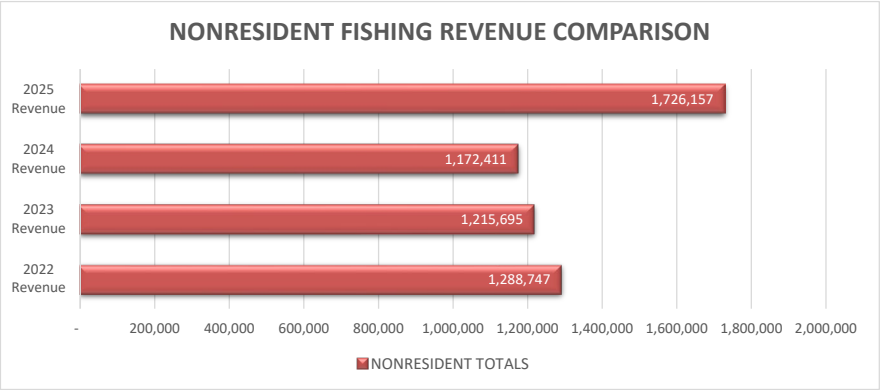
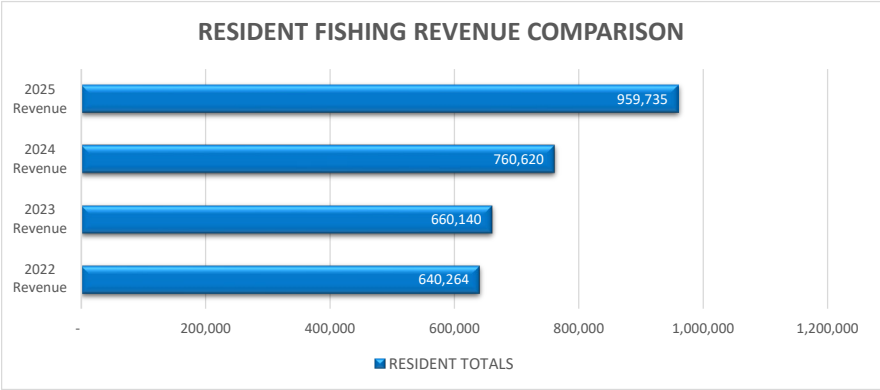
\*Spring Light Goose decreased by \$5 when the migratory bird certificate was no longer included.



# FISHING LICENSES

December 15 - April 30

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
1-Day Fishing	720	878	941	846	1,289	\$ 12,890	348	443	\$5,362	\$6,119	52%
Annual Fishing	20,128	20,851	23,834	21,604	26,425	\$ 819,175	2,591	4,821	\$151,823	\$214,254	22%
Senior Fishing	5,910	5,774	7,145	6,276	7,510	\$ 127,670	365	1,234	\$41,930	\$52,354	20%
RESIDENT TOTALS	26,758	27,503	31,920	28,727	35,224	959,735	3,304	6,497	\$199,115	\$272,727	22.62%
1-Day Fishing	5,614	4,765	4,431	4,937	4,272	\$ 111,072	(159)	(665)	\$40,176	\$32,085	-13%
3-Day Fishing	4,075	4,083	2,958	3,705	4,769	\$ 214,605	1,811	1,064	\$105,159	\$77,508	29%
Annual Fishing	15,644	14,752	14,807	15,068	17,506	\$ 1,400,480	2,699	2,438	\$408,411	\$390,946	16%
NONRESIDENT TOTALS	25,333	23,600	22,196	23,710	26,547	1,726,157	4,351	2,837	\$553,746	\$500,539	11.97%
COMBINED TOTALS	52,091	51,103	54,116	52,437	61,771	2,685,892	7,655	9,334	\$752,861	\$773,266	17.80%



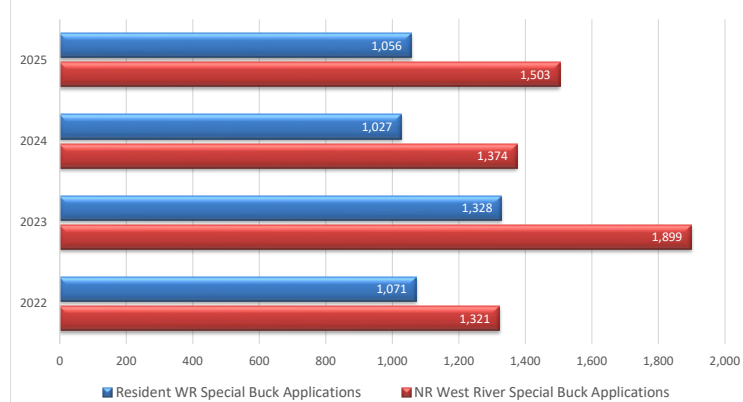
## 2025 BIG GAME LICENSES

License Type	2022	2023	2024	3-yr Avg	2025	2025 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	2024 vs 2025	3 Yr. Avg vs 2025	
Mountain Lion	2,896	2,610	2,826	2,777	3,045	\$ 91,350	219	268	\$1,752	\$2,141	10%
Resident Mentored Spring Turkey	1,501	1,567	1,659	1,576	1,717	\$8,585	58	141	\$290	\$707	9%
NR Mentored Spring Turkey	60	60	90	70	99	\$990	9	29	\$90	\$290	41%
Resident Archery Spring Turkey	4,102	4,176	4,278	4,185	3,889	\$ 108,892	(389)	(296)	\$1,942	\$4,259	-7%
Nonresident Archery Spring Turkey	535	612	641	596	671	\$ 81,191	30	75	\$17,091	\$21,591	13%
Resident Black Hills Spring Turkey	2,682	2,555	2,681	2,639	2,710	\$ 75,880	29	71	\$8,855	\$9,897	3%
East River Special Buck	498	500	500	499	500	\$ 100,000	0	1	\$12,500	\$12,617	0%
Resident WR Special Buck	693	701	745	713	758	\$ 151,600	13	45	\$21,225	\$26,825	6%
NR West River Special Buck	977	1,000	995	991	999	\$ 649,350	4	8	\$92,150	\$94,577	1%
Resident Special Antelope	48	50	50	49	50	\$ 10,000	0	1	\$1,250	\$1,367	1%
NR Special Antelope	47	50	50	49	50	\$ 32,500	0	1	\$4,500	\$5,060	2%
Resident Archery Paddlefish	254	255	255	255	255	\$ 7,650	0	0	\$1,275	\$1,283	0%
NR Archery Paddlefish	21	20	20	20	20	\$ 1,000	0	(0)	\$500	\$492	-2%

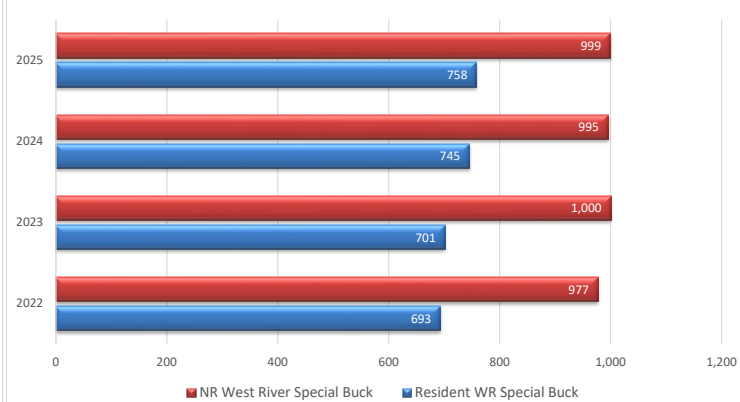
### Applications Submitted

East River Special Buck Applications	1,250	1,175	1,360	1,262	1,102	n/a	(258)	(160)	n/a	n/a	-13%
Resident WR Special Buck Applications	1,071	1,328	1,027	1,142	1,056	n/a	29	(86)	n/a	n/a	-8%
NR West River Special Buck Applications	1,321	1,899	1,374	1,531	1,503	n/a	129	(28)	n/a	n/a	-2%
Resident Archery Paddlefish Applications	446	702	765	638	604	n/a	(161)	(34)	n/a	n/a	-5%
NR Archery Paddlefish Applications	119	172	209	167	148	n/a	(61)	(19)	n/a	n/a	-11%
Resident Special Antelope Applications	240	255	276	257	234	n/a	(42)	(23)	n/a	n/a	-9%
NR Special Antelope Applications	92	139	170	134	225	n/a	55	91	n/a	n/a	68%

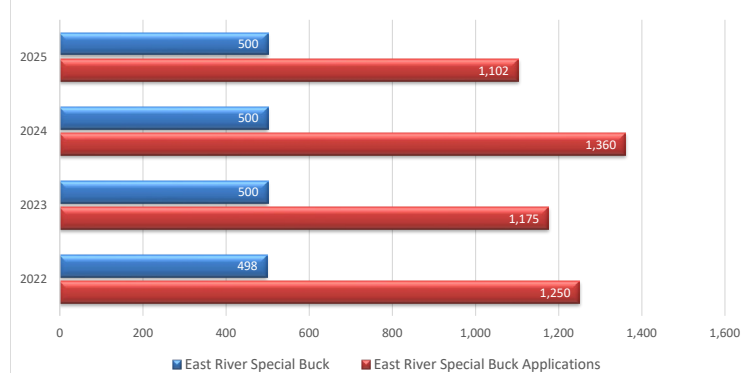
### WEST RIVER SPECIAL BUCK APPLICATIONS



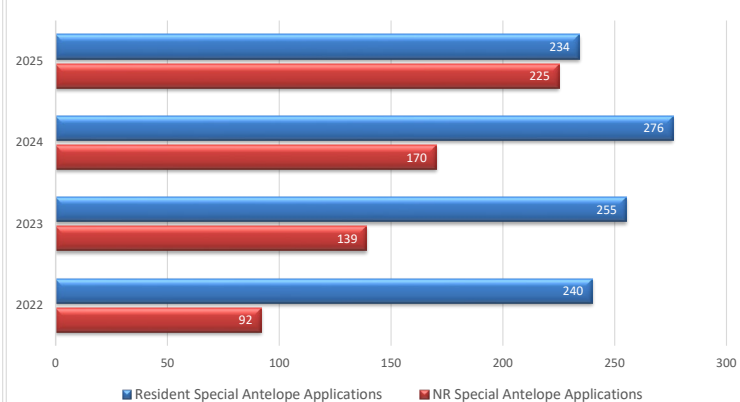
### WEST RIVER SPECIAL BUCK LICENSES ISSUED



### EAST RIVER SPECIAL BUCK APPLICATIONS AND LICENSES ISSUED



### SPECIAL ANTELOPE APPLICATIONS







# Public Comments

## Black Hills and Custer State Park Elk Hunting Seasons

---

**Mary Shabbott**

**Arkadelphia AR**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a moratorium on beaver trapping and hunting in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. I also support reducing the months beaver hunting and trapping is allowed from 12 months to 5 months outside of the Black Hills.

## Deer Proposal and Population Status Update

---

**Justin Broughton**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

## Mountain Lion Hunting Season

---

**Elena Murphy**

**Wall SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Hound hunting is a cruel & unsporting practice where packs dogs chase an animal until it's too exhausted to run, allowing a hunter to shoot it at close range. When dogs catch them before a hunter arrives, lions can be mauled, kittens killed and dogs seriously injured.

Hound hunting on the prairie is especially inhumane. The lack of trees can make these encounters even more violent, as there is no place for the lion to escape the dogs until the hunter can shoot it. To make things even worse, hunters are allowed to kill lactating females, which results in kittens starving after their mother is killed.

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

---

**Yvette Rubery**

**Pittsford NY**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

It's time to stop these senseless and brutal killings of these mountain lions!

---

**Dale Kringen**

**Belle Fourche SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

This is not hunting. It's time for South Dakota to start being better.

---

**David Williams**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Science based mountain lion management is greatly lacking in our state, and hounds are the only way to ensure proper mountain lion management.

---

**Bureau Of Land Management  
South Dakota Field Office**

**Belle Fourche SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Would like verbiage added to prohibit starting dogs on FT. Meade Recreation area South Unit.

Jake Williams  
BLM South Dakota Field office Manager.

---

**Nathaniel Alexander**

**Hermosa SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

As.  
A resident of south dakota I support hunting with hounds. It's the right way to manage lions.

# North American River Otter Action Plan

---

**Russell Townsend**

**Canton SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I support the conservation plans that include increases to river shed habitat. I do not believe that there should be an increase in harvest numbers. This species is already elusive, and I would like to see the numbers grow substantially before increases are made. I am appreciative of the efforts to return this species to any sort of prevalence in our state. It is powerful to see what good management can do!

---

**Michael Bryan**

**Highmore SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Otters have a very tight knit family community. When observing them, after each dive , they come up and touch noses. They play with each other and are THE most enjoyable creatures to watch. I've hunted. I've even trapped in my life but otters would never be my quarry. NEVER!!

---

**John Gillaspie**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

"Hey! River otters just came off the protected list! Quick, let's start killing them!" What is it with you guys anyway?!? BTW, lifetime FAIR CHASE hunter here...

---

**Rosanne Bryan**

**Highmore SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Are you kidding me??? Of course I am OPPOSED! Where is the necessity? What? That it is even being considered is absolutely ridiculous. How about we leave them to their families and not kill an animal for its skin.

---

**Mike Rhodes**

**South East Todd County SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

The ponds along the Niobrara river south of Valentine, NE have been about wiped out by otters. Most of the smaller streams along the Niobrara don't have trout anymore because of the otters. The trout in the Snake river south of Valentine are being wiped out. My opinion is they should have never been introduced, they are nothing but a viscous predator.

---

**Martin Hunt**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I see no reason to allow any trapping of River Otters. What would be the purpose? Are you going to sell Otter furs? No. Do they eat too many fish? Not even close to what people kill. Let River Otters live in nature undisturbed.

---

**Makai Obregon**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Jeff Anderson**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support the plan to move to er otters to western South Dakota. Otters will help stream and riparian habitat.

## Other

---

**Joshua Harvey**

**Mitchell SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

please move the archery spring turkey season back so we may have an week without shotgun hunters in the fields with us.  
Thanks

---

**Annette Hof**

**Crooks SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**John (Jack) Freidel Freidel**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I strongly oppose the regulation change to the "Dredge Hole" area on Lake Francis Case. Prior to this regulation hundreds of walleyes were killed due to their taking in deep water when anglers tried to release them due to their short size. As a rule, this regulation has been well accepted by the public. Very few violations occurred after the first couple years of the regulations inception. You can check the past arrest and/or warning tickets issued in your records to prove this point. Most people, GFP staff included, were not around when this regulation was initiated so they don't understand what occurred prior to the regulation. This particular area is easily defined by visible landmarks and enforcement is not an issue. Please consider leaving the regulation as is. Why fix it if it ain't broke? Thanks.

---

**John (Jack) Freidel Freidel**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I strongly oppose the regulation change to the "Dredge Hole" area on Lake Francis Case. Prior to this regulation hundreds of walleyes were killed due to their taking in deep water when anglers tried to release them due to their short size. As a rule, this regulation has been well accepted by the public. Very few violations occurred after the first couple years of the regulations inception. You can check the past arrest and/or warning tickets issued in your records to prove this point. Most people, GFP staff included, were not around when this regulation was initiated so they don't understand what occurred prior to the regulation. This particular area is easily defined by visible landmarks and enforcement is not an issue. Please consider leaving the regulation as is. Why fix it if it ain't broke? Thanks.

---

**Clarence Belitz**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Dredge hole chamberlain sd I can remember late 70s and early 80s there were a lot of small fish in dredge hole many being caught and released with many dead fish floating on surface but now I don't think the area is holding that many small fish any more since it is closed now I think it should be kept closed because people are used to it being closed I think we have other problems to be solved I don't think biologists are basing there research on the correct sources I think they should be talking to people who have fished the system for many years and not fishing guides and store owners although I know these people have to make a living we have gotten to a point where now we cannot satisfy both sides so I guess nature will have to sacrifice

---

**Clifton Stone**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

GFP Commissioners: My name is Cliff Stone, I was the Lake Francis Case (LFC) fisheries biologist at the time that the area known as the "Dredge Hole" was closed to fishing during the late fall/winter. The Dredge Hole in most winters attracted and held many, mostly smaller walleye and a very intense fishery developed each year, late fall/winter – either by boat or through the ice depending upon weather conditions. Large numbers of small fish were released – many not surviving being because of the depths at which they were caught. The anglers who fished this area developed concerns over the waste and impact to the overall LFC walleye fishery. In my career as the LFC Senior Fisheries Biologist, this was one of the only regulations that I was involved with that came from and was supported by the anglers who were fishing this deep- water area. What makes this regulation unique, successful and relatively easy to enforce is the well-defined location where it occurs – between the I-90 causeway and the railroad bridge. A modification was made to this regulation after its implementation, to allow shore fishing on the Brule County side of this area, where the water is not as deep. It is also important to understand that this regulation is not a "stand-alone" regulation, but an important part of the overall package of regulations that manage the LFC walleye fishery. Other regulations in the LFC walleye regulation package include the daily limit and the partial year minimum length limit. With a few modifications, this regulation package has stood the test of time, successfully managing this fishery for over 30 years. Please reject this proposal and not begin the break-down of the LFC walleye regulation management package. Thank you.

---

**Brian Hertling**

**New Ulm MN**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

My concern is the purpose of the habitat stamp. I feel as though it's unfair to have to pay \$25 for a stamp to apply for a limited draw, and if not selected lose the \$25 when I'm not hunting in SD. I would like to know WHY it's required and where does the money go. CONTACT NUMBER +1 507-382-3025

---

**Jerrad Adams**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Proposal to keep the dredge hole open year round. I would like to voice my opinion on this, I strongly disagree with the dredge hole being open year round. This area holds a high amount of fish in the closed time. A big majority of the fish are smaller, or under the size limit. It almost always kills the fish when they are caught in the depths of the dredge hole. This would be a huge detriment to the health and population of the fish. I actually can't believe this is even being considered.

---

**Jennifer Wingler**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I wanted to get my hunting and fishing license to and I am 100% disabled as determined by law, but I am not qualified to apply for this license according to your rules because my disability isn't bad enough? Isn't that discrimination against the disabled? Asinine.

---

**Jennifer Wingler**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I am sorry, this is public comment #2 to specify I was going to apply for my disability hunting n fishing permit. I believe that I accidentally erased the disability part. I am appalled and so upset I cannot get a disability permit. Unreal.

---

**Bill Meyers**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

McCook Lake: Heard an invitation for comment on SDPR. This was the only place I could find to provide comments. The State does not have any public access to the lake, the City owned ramp is accessed with a fee. The lake shorelines are privately owned. I don't see where any investment in the lake improves public access or is a good expenditure. The press release should state where the funding is coming from; that may generate the public interest this deserves.

Bill Meyers, Pierre

---

**Dave Simpson**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on commercial/ recreational beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Joelle Simpson**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3-year moratorium on commercial/ recreational beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Val Simpson**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on commercial/ recreational beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Delaney Marsden-Loetscher**

**Colorado Spgs CO**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on recreational/commercial trapping of beavers in the black hills. As keystone species that are critical to ecosystems and ecosystem services, this species needs to be protected not hunted

---

**Makai Obregon**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on recreational/commercial beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Thomas Haar**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on recreational/commercial beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Anna Lagrange**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on recreational/commercial beaver trapping in the Black Hills.



---

**J. S.**

**Mitchell SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3 year moratorium on recreational/commercial beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Kevin Swenson**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

See attached file.

---

**Rick Hargens**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

To whom it may concern,

These comments are in opposition to the petition filed to open the dredge hole to public fishing year around. I have lived in Chamberlain for the past 43 years. In my time here I have witnessed and participated in the fishing of the dredge hole. As a young man in the 80's I really never gave much thought to the conservation of the young walleyes that called the dredge hole home for the winter months. Now that I look into the past what a needless killing of fish that was. It was so common to see fisherman slide fatally injured walleyes back into the lake, only to see the too short fish float back up to the bottom of the ice.

When the dredge hole was closed to fishing for those five months it was one of the best decisions the SDGFP has made concerning Lake Francis Case. I am sure a few people may have complained at the time but being a local I have not heard of one complaint concerning not being able to fish this area for years. My hope is that people will use good judgement in regards to opening the dredge hole area again.

One last thought. People can be crazy at times concerning their ice fishing. They will do some crazy things to get on that ice to catch a fish. The winter months on Francis Case can fluctuate so much as can the ice with the current. Please take this into consideration as many people will wander onto the ice only to find out when they come off in the dark that the current has ate away inches of ice. Take it from a young man who found out the hard way.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Rick Hargens  
Chamberlain

---

**Keaton Fierro**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3-year moratorium on recreational/commercial beaver trapping in the Black Hills.

---

**Phil Lentz**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

We need to address the massive deer kill off from last year. The populations are critically low and yet the license proposal has not reduced any tags? Why not close effected counties? OR just end doe harvest so they can recover. The pressure is very high and the disease impact has been great. The population needs some time to recover and recoup. I thought the mission was to manage the population and not just sell tags, then later do a buyback? This isn't management this is sales. Please help the wildlife!

---

**Mary Zimmerman**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Support for moratorium on beaver trapping and hunting in the Black Hills. Letter attached.

---

**Jon Olson**

**Madison SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Deer tag allocations need to be reduced in many areas with low populations due to EHD. I have been speaking out for a while about more protection for mule deer. Eliminating the east/west river tag options for a single state wide archery deer tag is a good start.

---

**Chris Stover**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I fully support and encourage the South Dakota Game Commission to enact a moratorium on lethal beaver trapping within the Black Hills Fire Protection District. I also support and would encourage a reduced season and take limit for beaver in West River.

---

**Stacey Juhnke**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose opening the Dredge Hole in Chamberlain secondary to damage that will occur to fish caught and brought up from that depth.

---

**Patty Juhnke**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the opening of the dredge hole in Chamberlain, SD

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**Natalie Ketelhut**

**Pukwana SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose of the opening of the dredge hole in Chamberlain SD

---

**Rick And Valerie Moore**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

It has come to our attention there has been a request to remove seasonal fishing restrictions from the area known locally as the Dredge Hole located between the I-90 and Railroad bridges at Chamberlain, SD. We wish to state our firm opposition to any changes to the current regulations.

During the season when the Dredge Hole is closed a huge population of fish congregate in this small, deep area as a refuge to spend the winter/early spring months. Opening the Dredge Hole to fishing during this time will result in the death of nearly any fish caught at this location due to the water depth. Many of those fish will be smaller than legal length to keep but will die nonetheless.

There are many other areas near Chamberlain which provide ample opportunity for fishing with the ability to release viable fish back into the habitat.

In comparison, waterfowl have refuges where no hunting is allowed. Please protect the Dredge Hole near Chamberlain by not changing the current regulations and continue to protect this area as the refuge is it during the restricted season. All signage regarding the restrictions are currently in place and making no changes will cost the GF&P department nothing. Because of the Dredge Hole's prominent location, patrol and enforcement of fishing restrictions should not be a burden to department staff.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Rick and Valerie Moore  
Chamberlain, SD

---

**Nancy Haney**

**2101 West Flormann SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Customer would like to request information on possibly adding sr hunts for limited draws.

---

**Nancy Hilding**

**Black Hawk SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Nancy Hilding  
Black Hawk, SD 57718  
605-787-6466 (land line)

Dear Commission

I support a moratorium on beaver hunting/trapping in the Black Hills Fire Protection District.

Also I support a decrease in the hunting season in the rest of SD from 12 months to the 5 months. Nov 1st to March 31st, in order to increase beaver & river otter statewide & to prevent trapping/hunting when otter and beaver are having babies in the spring.

I ask SDGFP to contact managers of other public lands in SD to see if they want reduced or no hunting of beaver, to allow their beaver populations to recover. It is time to recognize the ecological importance of beaver and stop treating them like a varmint or problem animal.

Beaver provide many ecological benefits to SD. Here is a link to sheet with beaver benefits on it <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/Benefits-of-Beavers-2025.F2.pdf>

I also ask for SDGFP to have a program to reintroduce river otter to western SD and to work to increase quality riparian habitat along streams and rivers in SD as the streams move westward from their mouths with the Missouri River.

I ask that SDGFP stop wasting at least \$500,000 a year on the useless Nest Predator Bounty Program. The Department spent 4.4 million on this program over 6 years and will likely have spent about 5 million by the end of 2025. The NPBP does not work to help ground nesting birds (impacts are too diffuse) and 5 million over 7 years is enough \$\$ and time spent on bribing folk to go trapping. If you stop that annual waste of money, you can then invest instead in other efforts, such as river otter reintroduction..

---

**Jeff Anderson**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support a 3-year moratorium on commercial/ recreational beaver trapping in the Black Hills. I also support a 5 month beaver trapping season in Western and Eastern South Dakota.

---

**Stephen Farghali**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Alexey Egorov**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Support "Beaver Hunting and Trapping Season" petition. Reduce hunting/trapping months to either November 1st to March 31st (5 months) or November 1st to April 30th (6 months). Killing pregnant/nursing females is unsportsmanlike and unethical. It is the ignorant and barbaric destruction of natural resources.

## Public Lands and Waters

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**Bret Brown**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the opening up of the "Dredge Hole" on Lake Francis Case. The reason is that I feel protecting the large breeding females during staging and pre spawn, is vital to the ecosystem of the river. The pressure on our river system has increased to the point that parking on most weekends when it's nice, has become very difficult for the people that want to have a nice leisurely day and not be out at the crack of dawn. Another important reason is that I've sat out there and watched people pull "shorts under 15", one after another. I leave when they are too small to harvest. How many fish are dying there then from the "bends"? It's no longer like the old days when maybe 2 boats where out there on a 50 degree day in November, there are 50-100 now. I'm not sure who proposed this change, but I hope common sense will prevail and keep the area closed and the future of our resources safe. Please vote NO! Thank you

---

**Billy Hansen**

**Chamberlain SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I am in support of opening the area of discussion. Though I am not an avid walleye fisherman I am a huge catfishermem and would love to be able to fish that area at first ice out.

Thank you for the consideration

Billy Hansen

Nancy Hilding  
President  
Prairie Hills Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 788  
Black Hawk, SD 57718  
nhilshat@rapidnet.com  
605-787-6466  
605-787-2806

Nancy Hilding  
6300 West Elm  
Black Hawk, SD 57718,  
[nhilding@rapidnet.com](mailto:nhilding@rapidnet.com)  
May2nd, 2025

Game, Fish and Parks Commission  
Joe Foss Building  
523 East Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
C/o Scott.Simpson@state.sd.us

Dear Commissioners,

FOR BEAVER RULEMAKING Submitted pursuant to SDCL 1-26-13.

Nancy Hilding and Prairie Hills Audubon Society of Western SD submit this petition. Nancy Hilding is a resident of Meade County, SD. Prairie Hills Audubon Society is a non-profit corporation registered in SD and as such is a person by SD law and Supreme Court decisions.

**RULE TO BE AMENDED** - SD beaver trapping-hunting rule(s)

[41:08:01:07.](#)

*Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide and year-round, except as provided in this section. The season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30 to catch, trap, or hunt beaver within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31.*

We suggest these changes to existing rule:

*Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide ~~and year-round for 5 months from November 1st to March 31st each year,~~ except as provided in this section. ~~The season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30 to catch, trap, or hunt beaver within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31.~~ There will be no beaver trapping and hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, an area that is defined in SDCL 34-35-15.*

*Or simply:*

*Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide for 5 months from November 1st to March 31st each year, except as provided in this section. There will be no beaver trapping and hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, an area that is defined in SDCL 34-35-15,*

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

### **BEAVER IN THE BLACK HILLS**

We believe that SDGFP staff are going to propose ending trapping/hunting of beaver in the Black Hills Fire Protection District on May 8th. We thank them for supporting this needed change.

### **Stopping beaver hunting/trapping in the Black Hills Fire Protection District**

Beaver are a keystone species.

Here is a quote from USFWS's "The Beaver Restoration Guidebook Working with Beaver to Restore Streams, Wetlands, and Floodplains, Version 2.0, June 30, 2017 Please see page iv

*"Increasingly, restoration practitioners are using beaver to accomplish stream, wetland, and floodplain restoration. This is happening because, by constructing dams that impound water and retain sediment, beaver substantially alter the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the surrounding river ecosystem, providing benefits to plants, fish, and wildlife. The possible results are many, inclusive of: higher water tables; reconnected and expanded floodplains; more hyporheic exchange; higher summer base flows; expanded wetlands; improved water quality; greater habitat complexity; more diversity and richness in the populations of plants, birds, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals; and overall increased complexity of the riverine ecosystems.*

*In many cases these effects are the very same outcomes that have been identified for river restoration projects. Thus, by creating new and more complex habitat in degraded systems, beaver dams (and their human-facilitated analogues) have the potential to help restoration practitioners achieve their objectives. Beaver have become our new partner in habitat restoration."*

The beaver provide many benefits to the ecosystem, other wildlife, fish and to humans;

- Beavers are a critical and useful part of our ecosystem.
- Beavers are a keystone species.
- Beavers increase groundwater storage and raise water tables.
- Beavers increase surface water.
- Beavers keep ephemeral and intermittent creeks flowing year-round.
- Beavers filter sediments and pollutants from streams.
- Beavers decrease flooding.
- Beavers create aquatic habitat for aquatic species as well as habitat for other wetlands and riparian associated or dependent terrestrial species. Some of these other species generate hunting/fishing license sales & wildlife watching opportunities.
- Beaver habitat is moist and more resistant to fires
- Beavers (and associated otters) are fun & interesting to watch
- We value river otters. Trapping of beaver results in incidental killing of river otters who are strongly associated with beavers.



- Many public land acres are managed for multiple use- including wildlife, recreation/scenery and watershed protection values and beaver help with those values.
- SD statute provides for landowners to call up SD GFP and get permission to remove conflict beavers 365 days of the year. SDGFP will remove them as service for land owners.
- Non-lethal methods exist to reduce or eliminate beaver/human conflicts
- Beavers create habitat that helps store carbon and reduce threats of climate change.

### Black Hills National Forest Beaver Populations

Beaver are hard to find in the Black Hills and in July of 2021 Travis Bies and some other Commissioners indicated support for a three year moratorium on beaver trapping/hunting in the Black Hills National Forest -- to allow for beaver recovery in the Hills. The staff asked the Commissioners to delay that moratorium's rule making, while the staff researched data on the Forest's beaver population.

They reported back in December of 2023 with the results of an aerial survey of beaver winter caches, that showed a 73% reduction in beaver winter caches from the last BHNF survey in 2012. It also shows many drainages lost beaver over the last 11 years. In 2023, the last time the Federal and State agencies did a beaver survey of the Black Hills, they found only 16 locations that had beaver sign. I will attach the PDF of that GFP December 2023 power-point "Black Hills Beaver Information Item" on the beaver winter cache survey. Here is the link to view that document - <https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/BH-Beaver-Information-Item-GFP-Dec-2023-final-1.pdf> I suggest folks look at the chart and maps on pages 10, 11 and 12, to see the loss of beaver in the Black Hills. We request this hunting/trapping moratorium in the Black Hills to help the beaver recover their sinking population.

Beaver are designated as a "management indicator species" on the BHNF so the Forest Service is actually required by the 1982 Forest Planning Rule to do beaver habitat inventories, but prior to 2023 the last BHNF inventory was in 2012. The Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan Phase 2 Amendment, says at page II-32:

#### "Management Indicator Species

\*The following species should be used as management indicator species (MIS). The indicators or their habitats will be monitored to indicate overall changes in the forest ecosystem. MIS will generally be monitored using trends in habitat; however, when available, population trends may be used as a strong indicator of management response. Population monitoring will be discretionary as provided by 36 CFR 219.14.f.(2005).

Black-backed woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)  
 Brown creeper (*Certhia americana*)  
 Golden-crowned kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*)  
 Grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)  
 Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)  
 Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)  
**Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)**  
 White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)  
 Mountain sucker (*Castostomus platyrhynchus*)"  
*(Emphasis added)*

●●●●●●●●

GFP and BHNH have worked to identify good existing beaver habitat, they have worked in 2024 to relocate seven “conflict beaver” to the Black Hills and have done beaver habitat improvements. We thank both agencies for their work and their plans to benefit beaver. The seven beaver that were reintroduced last year disappeared - they either dispersed or died/were killed. We question the wisdom of spending money to relocate beaver to have them killed by trappers, if that is what happened.

We have listed some of the benefits of beaver above. We now refer you to an 8-page letter that conservation organizations sent to President Biden asking for an emergency closure of federal public land to beaver trapping/hunting – This letter indicates the benefits of beaver in much greater depth than this petition. Letter to President Biden from environmental groups on 2/27/23 – <https://www.westernwatersheds.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Biden-Beaver-Letter.pdf>

We also include a link to the recording from June 2021 of Michael M. Pollock of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration speaking at one of our meetings on: “Working with beaver for the benefit of people, fish, wildlife and biological diversity” - <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/585509489>

## BEAVER OUTSIDE THE BLACK HILLS – REDUCE LENGTH OF SEASON

We go further than GFP staff and propose reducing the 12-month hunting/trapping season outside of the Black Hills to 5-months of trapping/hunting in the rest of the state. This will still provide trappers with winter trapping, when fur is thick and the beaver pelts are worth more, but it will also stop beaver trapping/hunting when river otters are having babies in April. River otter are strongly associated with beaver and a study in the SE USA showed 1 otter killed per 6—10 beaver trapped. A dead mother otter means dead otter pups. It also prevents beaver trapping in May when beaver start having babies.

Prairie Hills Audubon Society wants northern river otter to recover their population in western SD. The increase in habitat, created by more beaver, will help with otter natural migration and/or reintroduction by humans. Less beaver hunting will reduce the incidental take of otters in beaver traps, especially during spring breeding. More beavers on the land, means more of them will engage in the wonderful functions, they provide as a keystone species.

The "2018 Game, Fish and Parks Threatened and Endangered Species Status Review" says at pages 123:

*"River otters have a commensal relationship with beavers as beaver dams provide year-round open water and beaver bank dens and lodges are used by river otters as rest and natal sites"*

SD 2018 Endangered and Threatened Species Status Review says at page 124:

*"Of 117 reported river otters killed in South Dakota from 1979 through 2016, 73% were killed incidental to legal trapping activities....."*

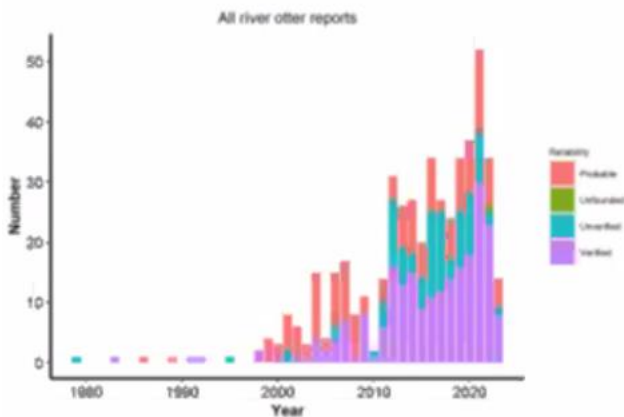
*A year-round beaver trapping season west of the Missouri River and a focus on non-native trout management in Black Hills streams will impair statewide recovery of river otters."*

Melquist in his 2015 report to SDGFP on his 4-year study of SD river otters writes on page 71:

"I do not believe current regulations for harvesting and controlling beaver populations in South Dakota are conducive to the expansion of otters in West River and could hinder the rate of growth in East River. In South Dakota, female otters give birth on approximately 1 April. Any lactating female otter trapped and killed will result in the loss of her offspring. To reduce the possibility of trapping female otters with dependent young, beaver trapping seasons should not extend beyond 31 March. The unrestricted 31 March take of beaver that is currently allowed in West River should be replaced with a harvest season not to extend beyond 31 March if SDGFP plans to try and recover otters in that region of the State. Unregulated shooting of beaver should be discouraged or prohibited to avoid accidentally shooting an otter"  
**(Emphasis added)**

We are also concerned for northern river otter east river, as we see in GFP's otter monitoring data, a loss of otter population numbers – sightings are down, it takes longer to meet harvest limits of 20 otter and the number of discreet individuals at latrine sites is down.

1. GFP's colored bar graph shows otter sightings are going down (significantly in a recent year, perhaps 2023). This is from a Power-point shown at the GFP April 2025 Commission meeting.



2. A SDGFP data chart shows individual otters seen at latrine sites on the Big Sioux are going down (In 2021 there were 31 otters, in 2022 there were 26 and in 2023 there were 16 otters)

Table 2. Summary of transect data for river otter latrine surveys on the Big Sioux River using non-invasive genetic sampling, South Dakota, USA, 2021-2024.

Year	Transects with a latrine	Total latrines found	Total samples collected	Total unique river otter determined	Total stream length surveyed (km)	Index of abundance (river otter/km surveyed)
2021	14	36	101	31	107.52	0.29
2022	14	43	172	26	107.52	0.24
2023	13	52	186	16	107.52	0.15
2024	15	46	124	TBD	107.52	TBD

3. A SDGFP chart shows the number of days it takes to meet the otter harvest limit is going up. At first it was 6 days, then 10, then 13, then 18 and then 13 days. The number of nights that trapping needed to occur has also gone up from at 27 nights, then 17.5, then 40.3, then 53.5 nights.

Table 1. River otter harvest statistics for South Dakota, USA, 2020–2024.

Year	Harvest Limit	Season Length (days)	Male	Female	Adult <sup>a</sup> (>2)	Sub-Adult <sup>b</sup> (1)	Juvenile <sup>c</sup> (<1)	Total Trapped	Traps <sup>d</sup> set	Trap nights <sup>e</sup>	CPUE <sup>f</sup>	Targeted Otters <sup>g</sup>
2020	15	6	9	6	5	5	5	15	9.60	27.1	0.0	11
2021	20	10	9	12	8	6	7	21	7.31	17.5	0.1	13
2022	20	13	11	10	7	6	8	21	7.63	40.3	0.1	14
2023	20	18	14	4	11	8	1	20	8.09	53.5	0.1	11
2024	20	13	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	20	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

<sup>a</sup> River otter greater than 2 years of age at harvest determined through analysis of cementum annuli

<sup>b</sup> River otter 1 year of age at harvest determined through analysis of cementum annuli

<sup>c</sup> River otter less than 1 year of age at harvest determined through analysis of cementum annuli

<sup>d</sup> Average number of traps set per trapper with the intent of catch river otter

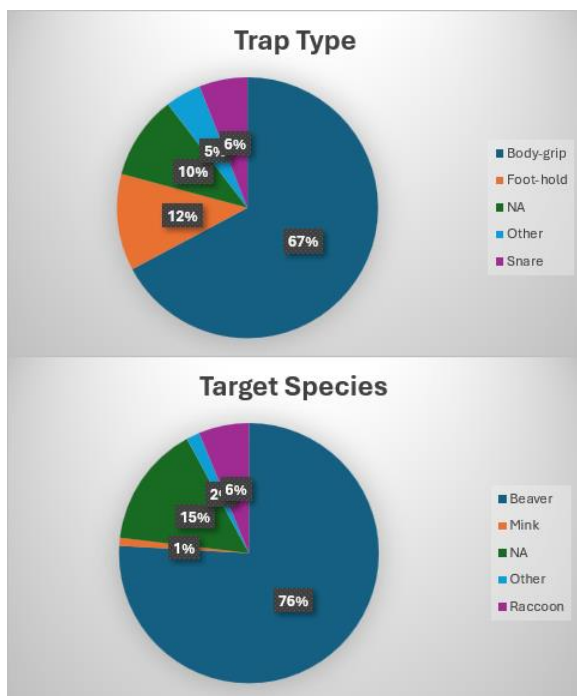
<sup>e</sup> Average number of trap nights (traps\*nights) for trappers targeting river otter

<sup>f</sup> Average catch per unit effort of trappers targeting river otter

<sup>g</sup> Number of river otter harvested which were targeted by hunter/trappers

The data seems to indicate otter numbers have been decreasing since the otter season was enacted and the beaver hunting season was increased from 6 to 12 months. With a longer beaver hunting season you will see more incidental take of otters. A reduction in the months of the beaver hunting season will help with increasing river otter east river

The attached JPEG is data on the last 10 years of incidentally trapped river otter and graphs below with the trapping information.



SDGFP's Draft 2020-2029 SD River Otter Management Plan July Version at page 3

*"Target species was known for 146 of the 216 (67.5%) incidentally trapped river otter (Table 5). Of these, 116 (53.7%) were caught in traps targeting beaver, 19 while targeting raccoon (8.8%), 5 in fish nets or traps (2.3%), and 3 in sets targeting mink (1.4%). "*

Reduction in beaver trapping/hunting to five months, especially stopping hunting when otter pups are born, will be useful to increasing otter population east river. This means more otter will be available forGFP to live trap in order to relocate some to western SD.

Beaver provide great benefits to the ecosystem, biodiversity, water quality, surface and ground water retention, and help with the storage of carbon. Beaver historically, were much more widespread in America. We believe the benefits provided by increasing their populations, far out-weigh the loss due to a reduction in the sale of furs or recreational enjoyment of hunter/trappers.

If public land managers are not seeing beaver recover and exist on their lands at a stocking level they desire, they need to figure out why that is happening – is it: human or animal predators, disease, too much or too little rainfall, inadequate riparian or marsh habitat, too much cattle grazing? Removing hunting for a while, will help us understand its’ impact on the populations.

### **Human Reintroductions of Otter**

SDGFP has no plans to reintroduce river otter west river. There is no plan offered in the otter’s 2025 Draft Action Plan. Your 2024 “North American River Otter Management in South Dakota” report says at page 19:

Melquist (2015) suspected there is not an adequate supply of otter East River to augment and establish a viable population west of the Missouri River and purchasing river otter from an outside source would be required. Purchasing a source population would add to the reintroduction expense. The trap and transfer of in-state river otter for reintroductions in western South Dakota would require a large time and financial commitment from SDGFP and is not a current SDGFP priority. (Emphasis added).

Thus, it seems the northern river otter must colonize western SD themselves. Stopping beaver trapping will help to make that colonization happen faster.

### **Interim Rules Review Committee allows changes to proposals at finalization.**

Maybe some members of the Commission may like a part of this proposed rule but might object to another part of this proposed rule and are thus afraid to move it forward to finalization. The Interim Rules Review Committee allows you to make significant changes to a proposed rule, if the changes are a result of testimony at the public hearing. So, you could modify the petitioned rule proposal after the public hearing in July, if folks object to parts of it or suggest amendments.

[1-26-4.7](#). *Reversion to step in adoption procedure.*

*The Interim Rules Review Committee may require an agency to revert to any step in the adoption procedure provided in § [1-26-4](#) if, in the judgment of the committee:*

*(1) The substance of the proposed rule has been significantly rewritten from the originally proposed rule which was not the result of testimony received from the public hearing;*

**See this link to the law about** The Interim Rules Review Committee process  
[https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/Codified\\_Laws/2031417](https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/Codified_Laws/2031417)

### **Mixing Our Petitions**

Staff will be proposing a beaver hunting rule change. We think that Christine Sandvick may also be proposing another possible rule change to the beaver/hunting trapping rule. We would support combining some elements

from the various petitions into one rule change and/or mixing/matching text, if the Commission wants to do that. We would support editing our proposed rule text for clarity, grammar or spelling errors.

Sincerely,



Nancy Hilding

President Prairie Hills Audubon Society

For the Society and myself as an individual

1 Attachment. SDGFP power-point “Black Hills Beaver Information Item” saved as a PDF

Citations:

SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, “Black Hills Beaver Information Item” Trenton Haffley & Mike Klosowski, Powerpoint 2023

<https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/BH-Beaver-Information-Item-GFP-Dec-2023-final-1.pdf>

SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, North American River Otter Management in South Dakota, 2024, WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2024-16

SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, SOUTH DAKOTA RIVER OTTER MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2020-2029, Wildlife Division Report, 2020-02, Pierre, South Dakota, July 2020

SD Department of Game, Fish and Parks, STATE T&E SPECIES STATUS REVIEWS APPROVED BY SDGFP COMMISSION, 5 APRIL 2018

United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region Black Hills National Forest, Black Hills National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, Custer South Dakota, March 2006  
[https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd592921.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd592921.pdf)

Wayne E. Melquist, Ph.D., FINAL REPORT, Determination of river otter (*Lontra canadensis*) distribution and evaluation of potential sites for population expansion in South Dakota , 1 October 2011 - 30 January 2015, Prepared for: Wildlife Diversity Program South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks , May 2015  
<https://gfp.sd.gov/images/WebMaps/Viewer/WAP/Website/SWGSummaries/FINAL REPORT>



This is Mike Allen from Allen's Missouri River Guide Service and Hillside Motel.

We are opposed to petition #236.

The petition on the table is to open the Dredge Hole in Chamberlain year round. From rumors I have heard it was wrote by a bass fisherman (Eric Storm, correct me if I am wrong but couldnt find the author of the petition).

This law has been in place since the 80's. Reason for the law is to protect the fish on upper Lake Francis Case that stage in the dredge hole in late fall, through winter, and early spring. They will stage there by the thousands. Water is 45 plus feet depending on what level in Lake Francis Case. Back in the old days there would be nothing of having 40 ice shacks or 75 boats stacked in that area. Every fish you catch in that deep cold water dies. So any unders caught there and released will die. It was a slaughterfest in the winter. when that season was open.

I heard one of the biggest concern is why enforce this little piece of water. Well It is a little piece of water so easy to enforce, And "if" my info is correct why would a bass fisherman propose this? I have not talked to one person that is in favor to change the law. If I wrote the law it would start Nov 1.

Thanks for your time. Appreciate everything you guys do.

Mike Allen

If any questions or



This is Mike Allen from Allen's Missouri River Guide Service and Hillside Motel.

We are opposed to petition #236.

The petition on the table is to open the Dredge Hole in Chamberlain year round. From rumors I have heard it was wrote by a bass fisherman (Eric Storm, correct me if I am wrong but couldnt find the author of the petition).

This law has been in place since the 80's. Reason for the law is to protect the fish on upper Lake Francis Case that stage in the dredge hole in late fall, through winter, and early spring. They will stage there by the thousands. Water is 45 plus feet depending on what level in Lake Francis Case. Back in the old days there would be nothing of having 40 ice shacks or 75 boats stacked in that area. Every fish you catch in that deep cold water dies. So any unders caught there and released will die. It was a slaughterfest in the winter. when that season was open.

I heard one of the biggest concern is why enforce this little piece of water. Well It is a little piece of water so easy to enforce, And "if" my info is correct why would a bass fisherman propose this? I have not talked to one person that is in favor to change the law. If I wrote the law it would start Nov 1.

Thanks for your time. Appreciate everything you guys do.

Mike Allen

If any questions or

Secretary Robling, Staff, Chair Rissler, and Esteemed Commissioners,

I am writing today to respectfully urge the Commission to take decisive action at the upcoming May meeting to address the alarming decline of our deer herds across South Dakota. Deer populations are currently well below established objectives in nearly every DAU across the state. The situation is especially dire in southeastern South Dakota, where the deer herd is facing an unprecedented crisis.

Chairwoman Rissler and Commissioner Cull have already been contacted by landowners in this region who are deeply concerned about the ongoing impacts of EHD and the severe reduction in deer numbers. I personally spoke with two of these landowners recently who each reported finding over 40 dead deer on their respective properties in the southeast from last fall. These individuals have reached out to the South Dakota Bowhunters Association, asking for our support and advocacy in requesting significantly reduced tags. The future of these herds hinges on the decisions made by this Commission, and we cannot afford to delay action until 2026. The time to act is now.

In response to these requests and the requests of other concerned sportsmen, the South Dakota Bowhunters Association has engaged our membership and the broader community of hunters through social media, email, and direct outreach. We've gathered ideas on how we can continue to enjoy quality hunting experiences while safeguarding this vital resource for future generations. Below are the recommendations developed through these discussions and endorsed by our board and membership:

- Convert all Type 01 (Any Deer) tags to Type 02 (Buck Only) in counties that are below population objectives and where antlerless rifle tags are not issued (this would include archery, rifle, and muzzleloader tags). Additionally, eliminate mule deer doe harvest statewide by any method, as all units are currently below objective.
- Align non-resident tag allocations with the current antelope tag system, using population-based objectives managed at the county level. Tags would be limited according to population status: Restrictive (2% allocation to increase population), Moderate (4% to maintain population), and Liberal (8% to decrease population). Continuing to provide South Dakota resident sportsmen with opportunity is paramount in the face of reduced overall tag numbers. Please put our citizens first when opportunity is limited. No reduction was made to Special Buck tag numbers anywhere in the state regardless of our struggling herds, nonresidents have plenty of opportunity, especially those planning to use an outfitter.

- Restrict mentored and apprentice hunting opportunities to only those counties where rifle antlerless tags are available and eliminate nonresident mentored and apprentice tags. All tags should be type 13 as well to eliminate mule deer harvest statewide until all DAU's have a chance to recover their mule deer populations.
- Eliminate the late antlerless rifle season, this places undue stress on deer heading into winter and is no longer necessary for population control. Sportsmen understand the reasons for this, it is not a social issue to discontinue this season in the name of conservation and preservation of our resources.
- Significantly reduce tag allocations in the southeastern counties that have been heavily impacted by EHD over the past two years, as identified by department biologists.
- Further reduce archery LAU permits in northwestern South Dakota (specifically LAU 35L) to 300 resident and 75 non-resident permits. We continue to hear from hunters specifically in 35L that the pressure and permit numbers are far too high and it negatively impacts the hunt and experience.

We believe these proposals strike a balance between maintaining hunting opportunities and promoting meaningful recovery of our deer populations. These steps—combined with favorable environmental conditions—can help ensure a more sustainable future for both whitetail and mule deer in South Dakota.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and continued dedication to our state's parks and wildlife resources.

Sincerely,

Justin Broughton

South Dakota Bowhunters Association

Dennis Carlson  
100 N Sunridge  
Chamberlain, SD 57325

April 25, 2025

SDGF and P  
523 E Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Subject- Dredge Hole Refuge between the bridges on Francis Case

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express opposition to opening this refuge during the winter months. As a life-long resident I have observed this fishery since the building of the I-90 causeway. I have fished it through the ice and open water. Like many others I witnessed and realized that the fish caught from this deep water were severely compromised and needed to be kept as they would not survive. When the size limit was imposed, I stopped fishing in this area through the ice and during open water would avoid the deep 'holes'. On more than one occasion I picked up a limit of walleye without wetting a line by netting mortalities downstream of the active boats.

I have also been in the Buryanek area and witnessed similar effects on deep water fish. Through the ice it was impossible to see the mortalities that occurred when fish were released but I am certain the results were and are the same as the Dredge Hole.

Due to location near I-90 and directly downstream of the dam, this fishery on Francis Case receives a tremendous amount of pressure year-round, but it is even more profound at ice out. Protecting these young fish when they are most vulnerable was a commonsense regulation and needs to be continued.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Carlson", written in a cursive style.

Dennis Carlson

Name: MIKE JARDING

Address: 27203 VALLEY RD  
HOT SPRINGS, SD 57747

Email: mjarding@gwtc.net

Phone: 605-890-2422

The Mule Deer population has been decreasing for years in Fall River and Custer Co. as well as the southern and eastern plains surrounding the Black Hills. GFP has not been able to maintain or increase the mule deer population. Black Hills and the Southwest SD has been on GFP "substantially increase" mule deer population agenda since 2019 and has failed to do so. GFP has not factually determined the reason why mule deer populations have decreased. GFP has decreased or eliminated most of the mule deer doe harvest in these units but has not determined the reason for the continuous drop in mule deer numbers. GFP is only going off harvest data and one yearly roadside survey to determine tag allocation. The yearly study conducted by GFP indicated that the fawn recruitment was extremely low and not enough to maintain or increase the population. Until the mule deer population increases, the buck tags should be lowered. On February 2025 GFP put on a presentation in Hot Springs and all the landowners, over 75,000 acres of private land, indicated the mule deer numbers are the lowest they have seen.

Proposal Tag Allocation: 27A North Fall River/South Custer Co. Tag Allocation = Resident 100 to 75 Buck License/Nonresident 8 to 6 Buck License – keep GFP proposal for 50 any whitetail licenses – 25 any whitetail private land license. 27B Fall River Co. Tag Allocation = Resident 200 to 150 Buck License/Nonresident 16 to 12 Buck License– keep GFP proposal for 100 any whitetail licenses -50 any antlerless whitetail licenses- and 50 any whitetail private land license. 21A Custer Co Tag Allocation = Resident 100 to 75 Buck License/Nonresident 8 to 6 Buck License – keep GFP proposal for 200 any whitetail licenses – 50 any antlerless whitetail private land license. 21B Custer Tag Allocation = Resident 50 to 40 Any Deer License/Nonresident 4 to 3 Any Deer License – keep GFP proposal for 50 any whitetail licenses

Christine Sandvik

Izaak Walton League

May 1st, 2025

Game, Fish and Parks Commission  
Joe Foss Building  
523 East Capitol  
Pierre, SD 57501  
C/o Scott.Simpson@state.sd.us

Dear Commissioners,

FOR BEAVER RULEMAKING Submitted pursuant to SDCL 1-26-13.

Christine Sandvik and SD Division of Izaak Walton League of America submit this petition. Christine Sandvik is a resident of Pennington County, SD. SD Division of Izaak Walton League of America is a non-profit corporation registered in SD and as such is a person by SD law and Supreme Court decisions.

**RULE TO BE AMENDED** - SD beaver trapping-hunting rule(s)

[41:08:01:07.](#)

*Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide and year-round, except as provided in this section. The season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30 to catch, trap, or hunt beaver within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31.*

We suggest these changes to existing rule:

*Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open statewide in west River SD and year round for 5 months from November 1st to March 31st each year and for 12 months of the year in east River SD, except as provided in this section. ~~The season is open from sunrise on November 1 through sunset on April 30 to catch, trap, or hunt beaver within the Black Hills Fire Protection District south of Interstate 90 and west of State Highway 79, except U. S. Forest Service lands where the beaver season is open from January 1 through March 31.~~ There will be no beaver trapping and hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, an area that is defined in SDCL 34-35-15.*

*Or simply*

*Beaver trapping and hunting season established. The season to catch, trap, or hunt beaver is open in west River SD for 5 months from November 1st to March 31st each year and for 12*

*months of the year in east River SD, except as provided in this section. There will be no beaver trapping and hunting season in the Black Hills Fire Protection District, an area that is defined in SDCL 34-35-15,*

## **STATEMENT OF REASONS**

We believe that SDGFP staff are going to propose ending trapping/hunting of beaver in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. We thank them for this proposed and needed change.

We go further and propose reducing the 12-month hunting/trapping season outside of the Black Hills to 5 months of trapping/hunting in western SD. West river this will still provide winter trapping when fur is thick and beaver pelts worth more, but also stop beaver trapping/hunting when river otters are having babies in April. River otter are strongly associated with beaver and a study in the SE USA showed 1 otter killed per 6—10 beaver trapped. It also prevents beaver trapping in May when beaver start having babies. This will help with the goal of recovery of river otters in western SD.

Christine Sandvik and SD Division of Izaak Walton League of America want the northern river otter to recover their population in western SD. The increase in habitat created by more beaver will help with natural migration or reintroduction. Less beaver hunting will reduce the incidental take of otters in beaver traps, especially during spring breeding.

## **Stopping beaver hunting/trapping in the Black Hills Fire Protection District**

Beavers are a keystone species.

They provide many benefits to the ecosystem, other wildlife, fish and to humans;

- Beavers are a critical and useful part of our ecosystem.
- Beavers are a keystone species.
- Beavers increase groundwater storage and raise water tables.
- Beavers help with fire mitigation, and resilience of nearby forests after a burn.
- Beavers keep ephemeral and intermittent creeks flowing year-round.
- Beavers filter sediments and pollutants from streams.
- Beavers decrease flooding.
- Beavers create aquatic habitat for aquatic species as well as habitat for other wetlands and riparian associated or dependent terrestrial species. Some of these other species generate hunting/fishing license sales & wildlife watching opportunities.
- Beaver habitat is moist and more resistant to fires
- Beavers are fun & interesting to watch
- Trapping of beaver results in incidental killing of river otters who are strongly associated with beavers.
- Beavers are hard to find in the Black Hills of SD
- Many public land acres are managed for wildlife, multiple use, recreation/scenery and watershed protection values.

- SD statute provides for landowners to call up SD GFP and get permission to remove conflict beavers 365 days of the year. SDGFP will remove them as service for land owners.
- Non-lethal methods exist to reduce or eliminate beaver/human conflicts
- Beavers create habitat that helps store carbon and reduce threats of climate change.

### Black Hills National Forest Beaver Populations

Beavers are hard to find in the Black Hills and in July of 2021 Travis Bies and some other Commissioners indicated support for a three-year moratorium on beaver trapping/hunting in the Black Hills National Forest to allow for beaver recovery in the Hills. The staff asked the Commissioners to delay that moratorium's rule making while the staff researched data on the Forest's beaver population.

They reported back in December of 2023 with the results of an aerial survey of beaver winter caches, that showed a 73% reduction in beaver winter caches from the last BHNF survey in 2012. It also shows many drainages lost beaver over the last 11 years. I will attach the PDF of that GFP December 2023 power-point "Black Hills Beaver Information Item" on the beaver winter cache survey. I suggest folks look at the chart and maps on pages 10, 11 and 12, to see the loss of beaver in the Black Hills. We request this hunting/trapping moratorium in the Black Hills which is needed to help the beaver recover their sinking population.

Beavers are designated as a "management indicator species" on the BHNF so the Forest Service is actually required by the 1982 Forest Planning Rule to do beaver habitat inventories, but the last BHNF inventory was in 2012. The Black Hills Land and Resource Management Plan Phase 2 Amendment, says at page II-32:

#### "Management Indicator Species

\*The following species should be used as management indicator species (MIS). The indicators or their habitats will be monitored to indicate overall changes in the forest ecosystem. MIS will generally be monitored using trends in habitat; however, when available, population trends may be used as a strong indicator of management response. Population monitoring will be discretionary as provided by 36 CFR 219.14.f.(2005).

Black-backed woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*)  
 Brown creeper (*Certhia americana*)  
 Golden-crowned kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*)  
 Grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)  
 Ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*)  
 Song sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*)  
**Beaver (*Castor canadensis*)**  
 White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*)  
 Mountain sucker (*Castostomus platyrhynchus*)"  
(Emphasis added)



●●●●●●●●

GFP and BHNH have worked to identify good existing beaver habitat, they have worked in 2024 to relocate seven “conflict beaver” to the Black Hills and have done beaver habitat improvements. We thank both agencies for their work and their plans to benefit beaver. The seven beaver reintroduced last year disappeared -- they either dispersed or died/were killed. We question the wisdom of spending money to relocate beaver to have them killed by trappers, if that is what happened.

We have listed some of the benefits of beaver above. We now refer you to an 8-page letter that conservation organizations sent to President Biden asking for an emergency closure of federal public land to beaver trapping/hunting – This letter indicates the benefits of beaver in much greater depth than this petition. Letter to President Biden from environmental groups on 2/27/23 –<https://www.westernwatersheds.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Biden-Beaver-Letter.pdf>

We also include a link to the recording from June 2021 of Michael M. Pollock of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration speaking at one of our meetings on: “Working with beaver for the benefit of people, fish, wildlife and biological diversity” - <https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/585509489>

#### Reporting on beaver take;

Beavers provide great benefits to the ecosystem, biodiversity, water quality, fire mitigation, surface and ground water retention, and help with the storage of carbon. Beaver historically, were much more widespread in America. We believe the benefits provided by recovering more of their population, far out-weigh the loss due to a reduction in the sale of furs or recreational enjoyment of hunter/trappers.

If land managers are not seeing beaver recover and exist on their lands at a stocking level they desire, they need to figure out why that is happening – is it: human or animal predators, disease, too much or too little rainfall, inadequate riparian or marsh habitat, too much cattle grazing? Removing hunting for a while, will help us understand its’ impact on the populations.

#### **Interim Rules Review Committee allows changes to proposals at finalization.**

Maybe some members of the Commission may like a part of this proposed rule but might object to another part of this proposed rule and are thus afraid to move it forward to finalization. The Interim Rules Review Committee allows you to make significant changes to a proposed rule, if the changes are a result of testimony at the public hearing. So, you could modify the petitioned rule proposal after the public hearing in July, if people object to parts of it or suggest amendments.

[1-26-4.7.](#) *Reversion to step in adoption procedure.*

*The Interim Rules Review Committee may require an agency to revert to any step in the adoption procedure provided in § [1-26-4](#) if, in the judgment of the committee:*

*(1) The substance of the proposed rule has been significantly rewritten from the originally proposed rule which was not the result of testimony received from the public hearing;*

**See this link to the law about** The Interim Rules Review Committee process  
[https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/Codified\\_Laws/2031417](https://sdlegislature.gov/Statutes/Codified_Laws/2031417)

Sincerely,

Christine Sandvik  
(Director Rapid City Izaak Walton League of America)

And SD Division of Izaak Walton League of America

1 Attachment. SDGFP power-point “Black Hills Beaver Information Item” saved as a PDF