

# Public Comments

## Elk Hunting Seasons

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**Dennis Unkenholz**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

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**Doug Hansen**

**Webster SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

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**James Riis**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

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

## Other

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**Matt Staab**

**Brandon SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

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

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**Billy Boejingles**

**Gayville SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Very Good Stuff

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**Todd Deneui**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

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

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**Michael Costanzo**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

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

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**Mark Peterson**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

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

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**Dan Loge**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

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

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**Tom Yseth**

**Brookings SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

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

## River Otter Delisting

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**Susan Braunstein**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

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

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**Ray Maize**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

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

## Comments regarding finalization of Black Hills Elk regulations for 2020

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

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

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT ON PROPOSED 2020 & 2021 BLACK HILLS ELK SEASONS**

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Doug Hansen  
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