

Public Comments

Other

Jodean Joy

Miller SD

Position: other

Comment:

We are volunteers at a West Bend. When the emergency alert came the other day people were very concerned. It needs to begin with "This is a test." It needs to be repeated several times through out the warning. Please address this with whoever does the alerts. Thank you and may God bless your efforts.

Brad Crouche

Mitchell SD

Position: other

Comment:

Hope this doesn't fall on deaf ears (it has for the last couple of years)
Could you consider dropping the legal fps for air rifles from the now 1,000 fps to a more reasonable mathematical equation such as foot pound of energy. I have a \$1,000 air rifle in 22 cal that will shoot dime sized groups all day at 30 yards and beyond that I can not legally hunt with, yet someone who can't hit pie plate three times in row with a 1000 fps rifle can legally try his luck. My rifle will generate in the neighborhood of 22 foot pound of energy at the muzzle and estimating 16 fpe at 40 yards or so and it only takes 6 fps to kill game such as rabbits, squirrels, coons ect.
I believe in Europe they have a 600 fps limit on all air guns and they are all very capable of taking small game. I know a few years ago it was voted down when someone wanted to bring the limit from 1000 to 600 fps but 40% is a big jump if it were voted on without doing some homework. Please think about it, discuss it, and take a look a some YOU TUBE videos. Air rifles that generate 5 to 6 hundred fps are adequate for taking game at a reasonable range and modern air rifles are absolutely astonishing performers at most ranges. My rifle has the power and the accuracy to make clean one shot kills yet falls 80 to 120 fps short depending on the weight of the pellet.
Thank you for your time
Brad Croucher

Raymond Martinmaas

Orient SD

Position: other

Comment:

Disabled hunter access

River Otter Season

Daniel Bjerke

Rapid City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am a property owner in Grant County that has the South Fork of Yellowbank River running through it. This property has been in our family since the late 1930s. The number of river otters that I have seen in my 71 years I counted on one hand. It is such a rare sighting to see a river otter on our property that I don't know why a season would even be under consideration. In reviewing the data available on verified sightings in South Dakota over the period of 2014-2019, there were less than 50 sightings per year. I would like to know who is requesting this season? Is it the trappers? I am opposed to having a season of river otters. Dan Bjerke

Marlin Bjerke

Clear Lake SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Having lived in Deuel County nearly all my life and spending a considerable amount of time around the south fork of the Yellowbanks River, it was a rare site to see a river otter. Not sure why you would even consider opening a season on this rare animal. I am strongly opposed to killing of any river otters in South Dakota.

Deane Bjerke

Buffalo WY

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am a landowner in Grant County with a river going through the property. I know of only one sighting of a river otter on our property. It seems to me this is a political thing rather than a game management plan. I live in Wyoming where we have many more river otters than South Dakota. No one here has even suggested a season on river otters. I cannot believe the river population has reached a point where some need to be eliminated. We would like to see more on our property. Because they are territorial, I am not worried about too many on our property.

Paul Lepisto

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please see the attached comments on behalf of Kelly Kistner, President of the South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America, on the river otter proposal. Thank you.

Ray Maize

Pierre SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support a River Otter Season based on South Dakota Game Fish and Parks studies of the population of the River Otter since they have been introduced by the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe over twenty years ago.

Steven Peterson

Ramona SD

Position: support

Comment:

The river otter is a valuable resource to the trappers of South Dakota. I am 100% in favor of our South Dakota outdoor enthusiasts being able to tag and keep the otter they catch.



SOUTH DAKOTA
DIVISION

The Izaak Walton League of America

DEFENDERS OF SOIL, AIR, WOODS, WATERS, AND WILDLIFE

May 29, 2020

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Commissioners,

The South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America (Division) thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed river otter trapping season. This proposal, if adopted, would establish a state-wide trapping season in November and December or until 15 otters are reported to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP).

While the Division supports responsible trapping and sustainable harvest of furbearers; we strongly oppose this proposal and ask you to reject it as we believe this goes too far, too fast.

During your May meeting this commission voted to delist the river otter and then later approved development of this proposal. The Division believes this marked the first time a governing game and fish body ever delisted then approved development of a proposed harvest season on that specie during the same meeting.

The state's river otter management plan, currently undergoing revision, states otters are difficult to monitor making development of a suitable monitoring program a "challenge". The Division agrees with the GFP that a healthy, growing population of otters would be a welcomed addition to watersheds across our state.

The current population of river otters in South Dakota emanated from a reintroduction effort conducted by the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe in Moody County along the Big Sioux River in 1998 and 1999.

Current findings show much more suitable otter habitat and most of the documented otter sighting are in watersheds in eastern and northeastern South Dakota. We believe this makes opening even a limited state-wide season extremely premature.

The existing science and data show the river otter population in the western two thirds of the state is very low or non-existent. We're concerned the current relatively small population of otters couldn't withstand even a "limited" harvest without suffering a major setback at a time the GFP would like to see the specie expand its range into new areas in the state.

The reason given for this proposed trapping season is the GFP has received about 16 incidentally taken otters in each of the last five years, mostly taken during the beaver trapping season. The Division is concerned that same level of incidental take will continue and coupled with this proposed trapping season could result in possibly doubling the annual harvest of otters before information could get out that shuts down this season. The higher harvest could lower, not expand, the current river otter population.

Otters require high water quality and access to open water year-round in order to survive and successfully reproduce. Increased surface and tile drainage and grassland conversion are contributing to a decline in water quality in many of the state's watersheds. That factor, combined with the ongoing riparian habitat loss and fluctuating water levels due to our highly varied climate, makes accurately predicting long-term river otter population growth very difficult.

We ask that the following be addressed before a river otter trapping season is considered:

- Research possible impacts of agricultural run-off on otters
- Development of a peer reviewed otter monitoring program
- Establish peer reviewed otter survey methods to accurately determine population
- Peer reviewed otter population goals and objectives and how they can be achieved
- Methodology to track otter reproduction and population movements
- Coordination of otter management with agencies, tribes and other stakeholders
- A plan to inform trappers on ways to avoid incidental otter catches
- A public outreach program to educate the public about otters

Until the above steps are implemented, the South Dakota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America respectfully requests the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission reject this and any other otter trapping proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration and for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Kelly Kistner

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