



South Dakota

GAME, FISH AND PARKS
2014 ANNUAL REPORT
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



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SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

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2014 HIGHLIGHTS

SERVING PEOPLE, MANAGING WILDLIFE.

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Division of Wildlife strives to protect and enhance the natural resources of South Dakota and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. You will find the 2014 highlights of these activities in this report. In addition to these noteworthy accomplishments, many additional goals and objectives were met in the course of striving to meet our mission, *Serving People, Managing Wildlife*.

We have made great progress this year in moving towards a comprehensive and proactive approach to management of our state's rich outdoor resources. Building off the strategic guidance document that we adopted in 2013, we completed a plan for a Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Adaptive Management System and four geographic-specific strategic management plans for the aquatic systems in our state. We also made major revisions and upgrades to our State Wildlife Action Plan for species of management concern and our Pronghorn Management Plan. Finally, we brought the GFP Commission a Sage Grouse Management Plan for their approval and completed the first draft of an Elk Management Plan for South Dakota. All of these plans are compilations of scientific based strategies that were crafted with input from our state's stakeholders.

Beyond the outreach efforts in crafting these management plans, 2014 was a year of significance in our continuing efforts to connect with the people we serve. In July 2014, we launched a responsive website and

throughout the year built connections with stakeholders through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and a new blog site. We solicited management input using opinion surveys of landowners, elk hunters, deer hunters and anglers and launched a more user-friendly online hunting and fishing licensing system.

While the resource management responsibilities of the Division of Wildlife originate in statute, it is the obligation of service to the citizens of South Dakota and its visitors that motivates our actions. At the same time, our actions are guided by the science of wildlife management. Maintaining and enhancing the rich wild resources come foremost in management decisions and policies. The wants and desires of people that enjoy these rich resources figures a very close second.

Each year of success brings with it a new set of challenges. The accomplishments of 2014 provide the motivation for us to continue to move forward in 2015. We are committed to working with the people we serve to help us identify goals that we will diligently pursue in 2015 and beyond.

We feel fortunate to have wildlife management responsibilities in a state with rich natural resources where outdoor recreational opportunities abound and we take pride in telling you our story.

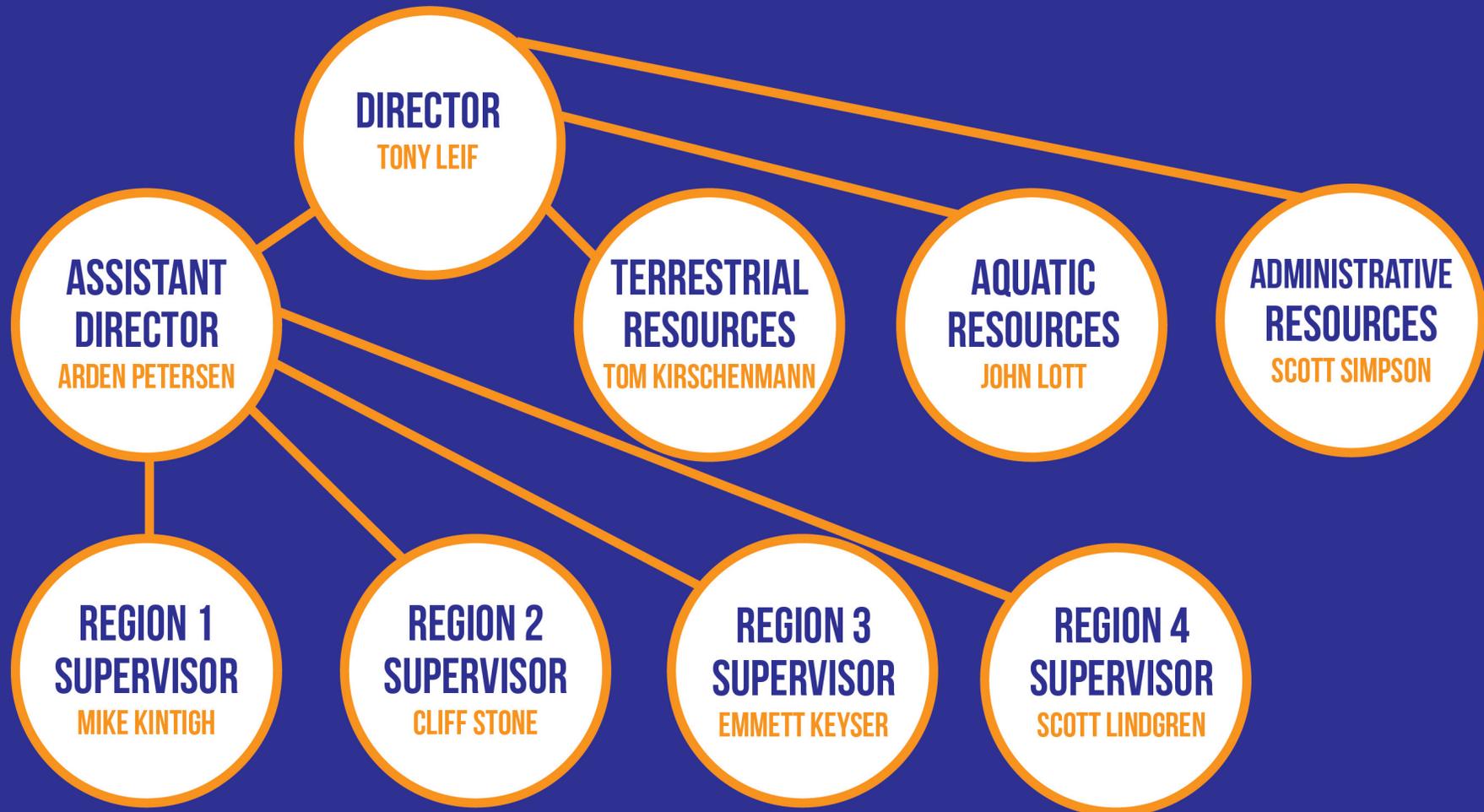
Tony Leif

2014 AT A GLANCE

- 1 Provided \$5.3 million in direct payments to private landowners to lease 1.4 million acres of private land for public hunting access.
- 2 Partnered with 923 private landowners to enhance wildlife production and habitat on 23,654 acres; making \$807,000 in direct payments to these partners.
- 3 GFP annually spends between \$2-3 million to operate the Wildlife Damage Program. In 2014, staff responded to more than 2,500 requests for service or assistance directly impacting nearly 2,000 landowners/producers.
- 4 Documented a 76 percent increase from 2013 in the Pheasants Per Mile (PPM) index, however, the index remains 53 percent lower than the 10-year average.
- 5 Reduced antlerless licenses for deer by 42,000 in response to reduced populations across the state.
- 6 Finalized the sage grouse management plan and state wildlife action plan. We also amended the management plan for antelope.
- 7 Drafted the elk management plan (finalization in early 2015) with input from sportsmen and women, landowners, Forest Service grazing permittees, federal and state agencies and nongovernmental organizations.
- 8 Transplanted 40 bighorn sheep from Montana to augment South Dakota populations on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and Hell Canyon near Jewel Cave National Park.
- 9 Finalized a strategic planning system for fisheries management in South Dakota.
- 10 Adapted aquatic invasive species (AIS) plans in response to mussel discoveries in Lewis and Clark and Angostura reservoirs.
- 11 Collected 153 million fish eggs, doubling the total from 2013.
- 12 Stocked 75 million fish in 284 waters throughout the state.
- 13 Realized an increase of 5 percent in the sale of nonresident small game licenses from 76,300 in 2013 to 80,560 in 2014.
- 14 Hosted over 200,000 visitors to our Outdoor Campus locations in Rapid City and Sioux Falls.
- 15 Certified 4,900 individuals through HuntSAFE and Bowhunter Education courses.
- 16 Recruited and continue to retain over 2,000 quality followers on Twitter since its launch in March. This continues to be an effective platform to communicate news, changes and other initiatives within the agency.
- 17 Launched #SDintheField to digitally engage with hunters, anglers, trappers and other outdoor enthusiasts and encourage them to share their outdoor memories with us on social media. Ninety percent, or more than 300 original Twitter posts (does not include the number of retweets or favorites), used #SDintheField and were shared through that platform. All other posts, 10 percent, were shared on Facebook and Instagram.
- 18 Distributed 146 email messages to approximately 227,000 individual email addresses which resulted in 2.28 million attempts to communicate with our customers in 2014. On average, the open rate of emails was 33 percent.

WHO WE ARE

SECRETARY: JEFF VONK
2015 INCOMING SECRETARY: KELLY HEPLER



2014 COMMISSION MEMBERS

JOHN COOPER - CHAIR

CATHY PETERSON - VICE CHAIR

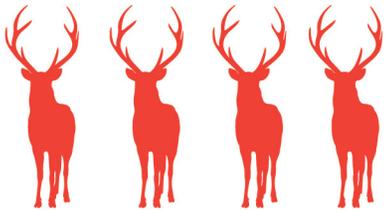
PAUL DENNERT
BARRY JENSEN
GARY JENSEN
SCOTT PHILLIPS
DUANE SATHER
JIM SPIES



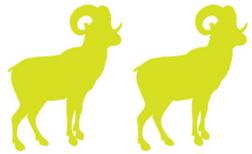
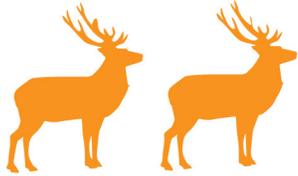
Photo © Sam Stukel

The background features a stylized, light green plant with several pointed leaves and a central stem, set against a solid lime green background. The plant is positioned behind the text, with its leaves extending upwards and outwards.

TERRESTRIAL RESOURCES



STUDYING WILDLIFE TO GUIDE MANAGEMENT



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**RESEARCH PROJECTS
FUNDED BY PITTMAN-ROBERTSON**

In an effort to fill information gaps and needs, GFP continues to engage in numerous research projects that provide management information that refine or improve our approach to managing wildlife and their associated habitats. The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program (Pittman-Robertson funds) and State Wildlife Grants (SWG) continue to serve as the funding foundation for these efforts. Due to limited staff and current workloads, much of the research conducted is contracted to outside sources, with close coordination amongst GFP staff.

Currently, GFP is administrating 14 research projects funded by PR grants. Of these projects, four are associated with deer, two elk, two bighorn sheep, one pheasant, one Canada goose, one bobcat, one pronghorn, one upland habitat and one water bird and wetlands project.

SWG funds have been a valuable source to carry out non-game and species of conservation need related research. GFP is currently administrating 13 SWG research/management projects. Some examples of projects include the 2nd edition of the South Dakota Breeding Bird Atlas, revision of the South Dakota Wildlife Conservation Plan, James River CREP evaluation, native grassland inventory of the Prairie Coteau, and Dakota skipper conservation and management, status and distribution of Franklin's ground squirrels and Richardson's ground squirrels, river otter distribution and evaluation of potential sites for population expansion, development of a long-term grassland songbird monitoring program, breeding ecology of ferruginous hawks and golden eagles, and a greater sage grouse ecology study.

PHEASANT POPULATION IMPROVES

GFP conducts pheasant brood surveys each summer to evaluate the status of pheasant populations and predict pheasant population levels relative to previous years.

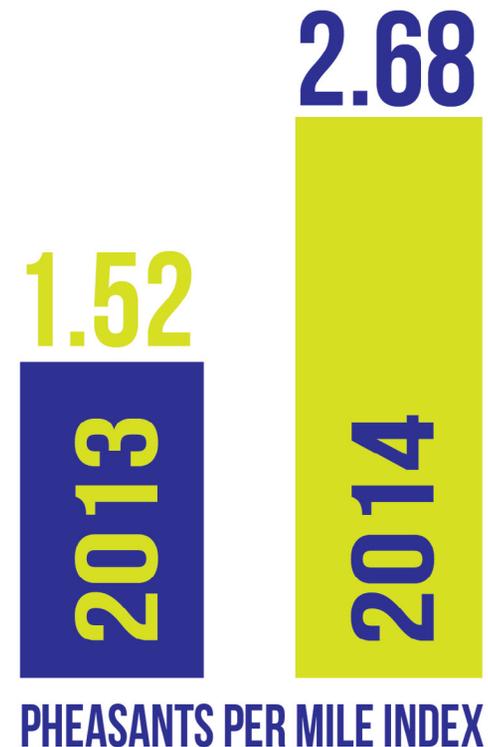
In 2014, survey indices were derived from 109 thirty-mile pheasant brood routes distributed across South Dakota where pheasants are found in sufficient number for surveying. Routes are surveyed from 25 July through 15 August each year using standardized methods on mornings when weather conditions are optimal for observing pheasants. Also, pheasant brood members are opportunistically counted throughout the survey period to estimate an average number of young per brood. Pheasants per mile (PPM) estimates are calculated by summing the product of mean brood sizes and broods observed with numbers of cocks and hens observed on each route. PPM estimates for 2013 and the average of the previous 10 years are compared with the 2014 survey results.

Pheasant abundance has steeply declined since 2008 in response to recently accelerating habitat loss, particularly CRP grasslands, in combination with a series of very unfavorable weather events. However, the 2014 Pheasants Per Mile (PPM) index of 2.68 was 76 percent higher than last year

but was 53 percent lower than the 10-year average. Below average winter snowfall likely resulted in good over-winter survival of hen pheasants. Near normal precipitation and temperatures were recorded during the nesting and brood-rearing season which likely contributed to strong reproductive success where adequate habitat remains.

The most substantial increase in pheasant abundance occurred in central SD where the PPM index in the Pierre and Chamberlain analysis regions more than doubled from 2013. The most dramatic increase in pheasant abundance occurred in the portion of the state where the most nesting cover still remains. The increase from 2013 was smallest in far eastern SD where nesting habitat is more limited and environmental conditions were less favorable. Portions of eastern SD received freezing temperatures in mid-May and flooding conditions in June which could have hampered nesting and brood-rearing success. Even with challenging environmental conditions occurring in localized spots, the PPM index still increased 18 – 50 percent in far eastern SD. In general, the PPM index increased 40 – 60 percent within the James River Valley.

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PHEASANTS PER MILE INDEX

2014 PHEASANTS



GOVERNOR'S PHEASANT HABITAT SUMMIT

AND WORKING GROUP ADVANCE HABITAT EFFORTS



Declining pheasant numbers over the past few years has elevated awareness and concern from sportsmen and women, businesses, and communities across the state. With a 64 percent reduction in the statewide pheasant per mile index in 2013, heightened discussions were occurring with a focus on landscape changes which include the loss of important wildlife habitat like Conservation Reserve Program acres, wetlands, native prairie, and woody habitat.

In response, Governor Dugaard hosted a Pheasant Habitat Summit on December 6, 2013 in Huron with over 400 people in attendance. The summit provided a forum for landowners, sportsmen, members of the tourism industry and other interested individuals to learn about the current state of pheasant habitat in South Dakota and an opportunity to provide potential solutions to resolve habitat needs.

As a result of the habitat summit, Governor Dugaard established a Pheasant Habitat Work Group to evaluate all the suggestions provided by the public and generate a final report to guide the state moving forward to address habitat issues. The make-up of this group represented a cross-section of interests and background from across the state associated with pheasants and pheasant habitat.

PHEASANT HABITAT WORK GROUP MEMBERS

PAM ROBERTS, PIERRE (CHAIR) - RETIRED SECRETARY OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND REGULATION

BARRY DUNN, BROOKINGS - DEAN, COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES, SDSU

TIM KESSLER, ABERDEEN — PHEASANTS FOREVER NATIONAL BOARD VICE CHAIR

MARY DUVALL, PIERRE - DISTRICT 24 STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JASON FRERICHS, WILMOT - FARMER, SENATE MINORITY LEADER, DISTRICT 1 STATE SENATOR

JOHN COOPER, PIERRE - GFP COMMISSION CHAIR, FORMER GFP SECRETARY

STEVE HALVERSON, KENNEBEC - FARMER, OWNER OF HALVERSON HUNTS

JAN NICOLAY, CHESTER - FORMER STATE REPRESENTATIVE, CONSERVATION ADVOCATE

JEFF ZIMPRICH, HURON - USDA-NRCS STATE CONSERVATIONIST

DOUG DEITER, FAULKTON - FARMER

JEFF VONK, PIERRE - GFP SECRETARY

LUCAS LENTSCH, PIERRE - AGRICULTURE SECRETARY

NATHAN SANDERSON, PIERRE - GOVERNOR'S DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND OPERATIONS

PHEASANT HABITAT WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

A combination of eight meetings and conference calls throughout 2014 culminated with a final report and its recommendations. Content of the report was released on September 9 at the GFP Regional Office and Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls where the Governor discussed the work of the group and immediate and ongoing actions for the state.

1 Facilitate greater collaboration among conservation partners to better utilize available resources for improving habitat management.

2 Establish a long-term, dedicated conservation fund and appropriate \$1 million in one-time funds to bolster private fundraising efforts.

3 Develop and implement the South Dakota Conservation Certification Program.

4 Create a multi-part “Habitat Pays” education and promotion series for inclusion in a variety of existing publications.

5 Revisit the current practices pertaining to mowing public rights-of-way.

6 Petition the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Risk Management Agency (USDA-RMA) to include all South Dakota counties as eligible for crop insurance coverage on winter wheat.

7 Encourage the South Dakota Office of School and Public Lands to include a land management plan as a condition for securing a lease.

8 Support Congressional efforts to raise the federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25.



Since the release of the Pheasant Habitat Work Group report, several actions have occurred. To address the first recommendation, the department hosted a meeting on December 10 with conservation partners to discuss the most efficient means of sharing information between partners and landowners, and began discussions of developing a Habitat Central website where landowners interested in developing habitat can go to one location to learn more on program and cost-share availability. The second recommendation suggested a dedicated funding source and in response a Conservation Fund has been established within the SD Community Foundation where individuals and entities can donate funds for future habitat programs and opportunities. To date over \$220,000 has been

committed to the fund. Governor Daugaard has also proposed an appropriation of \$1.5 million in his FY16 budget that will be discussed during the 2015 Legislative Session. Discussions continue between SD Department of Agriculture, SDSU Extension, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service in the development of a certification program identified in the third recommendation. A common critique from the public was concerns over roadside mowing issues and is represented in the fifth recommendation. The Department of Transportation Commission held a public input session on November 20 to discuss current roadside mowing regulations. Landowners and agencies provided information, including GFP, which described previous roadside pheasant nesting research

and results. The DOT Commission will continue their deliberations on presented information and determine whether new administrative rules will be brought forward for public testimony. GFP has begun discussions of management plans with the Office of School and Public Lands as suggested in the seventh recommendation and to show support of the eighth recommendation, Governor Daugaard sent South Dakota's congressional delegation a letter of support to increase the federal Duck Stamp fee. Support Congressional efforts to raise the federal Duck Stamp from \$15 to \$25. This legislation was passed by Congress and signed by the President.

BUILDING HABITAT WITH LANDOWNER COOPERATORS

More than 80 percent of South Dakota is privately owned, and as such private landowners have the most influence over wildlife habitat in South Dakota. Beginning in the 1970s and continuing today, GFP offers voluntary private land habitat programs to interested landowners. GFP works with numerous private landowners to cost-share projects every year, such as providing winter cover and food, developing nesting habitats, or protecting vital areas for wildlife benefit.

The most utilized wildlife habitat program on private land is the food plot program. This program provides supplemental food sources for wildlife during difficult winter conditions. In 2014, 9,314 acres of winter food plots are enrolled for cost-share. Payments to the 802 landowner partners will total \$193,277.

South Dakota's winter weather can be taxing on wildlife survival rates, and ground-level cover can often help increase wildlife survival

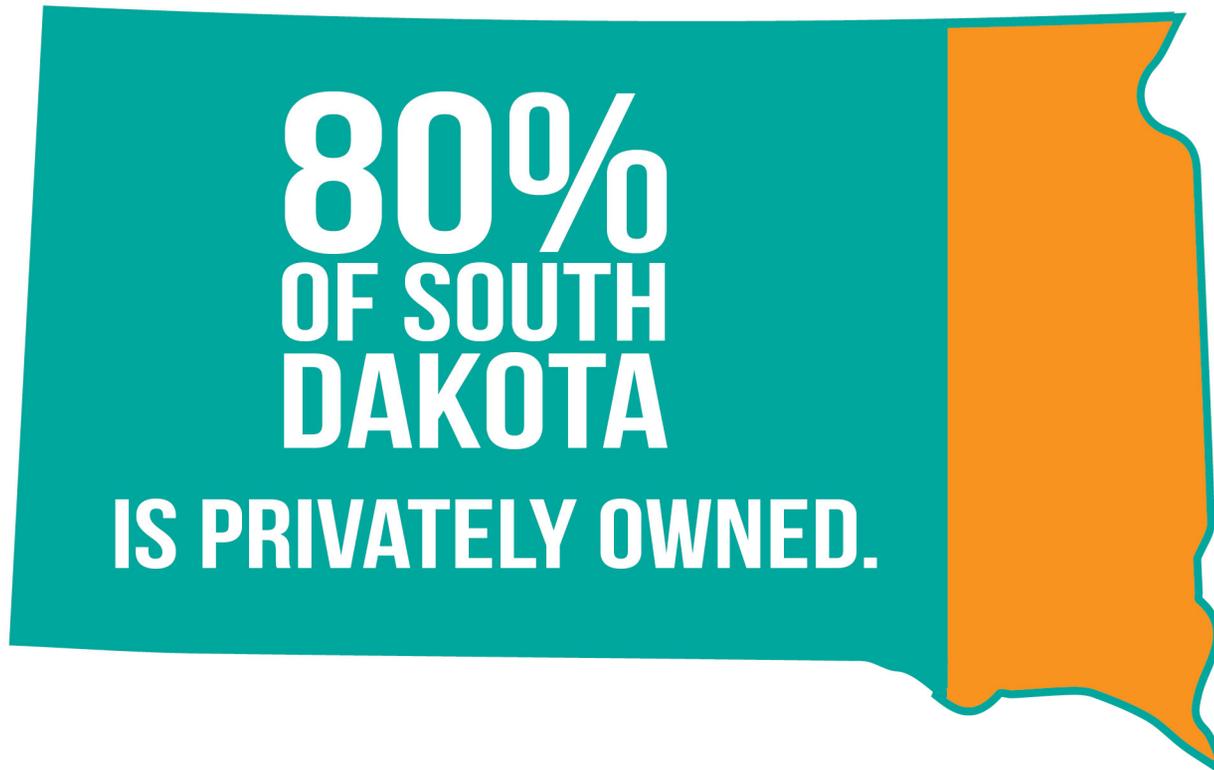
during winter storms. GFP private lands biologists established partnerships with 31 private landowners to create more than 118 new acres of woody habitat at a cost-share level of \$213,308 in 2014.

Undisturbed nesting cover is a critical habitat for wildlife, in particular for ground nesting species such as pheasants, grouse, waterfowl, and other grassland birds. Throughout 2014, GFP has worked with 6 landowner partners to establish over 103 acres of new nesting cover at a cost-share level of \$13,111.

Protecting existing habitat is just as important as establishing new habitat. Through the Wildlife Partners Program, GFP funded seven habitat fencing agreements with private landowners to protect more than 22 acres of land, at a cost of \$5,892.

The Wetland & Grassland Program specializes in working with landowners interested in developing or restoring wetland and associated uplands for waterfowl, upland game birds, and a host of other wildlife, while in most cases, enhancing livestock and grazing land management. In 2014, 97 projects were completed with 77 cooperating landowners through this program affecting a total of 14,097 acres.

A total of 18 wetland projects restored, enhanced or created 154 acres of wetland habitat; and 79 upland projects restored or enhanced 13,943 acres of grassland and riparian areas. Total cost of all projects was \$733,364 with cost-share of \$381,800 provided to landowners by GFP. Landowner partners contributed \$289,118 and other conservation partners provided \$62,446 toward the projects.



**“PROTECTING EXISTING HABITAT
IS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS
ESTABLISHING NEW HABITAT.”**



WORKING WITH LANDOWNERS TO ALLEVIATE DAMAGE



GFP recognizes private landowners and producers as essential partners in wildlife management and could not successfully manage the wildlife resources that occur throughout South Dakota without this partnership. The majority of wildlife produced in South Dakota comes from privately-owned property and sportsmen and women rely heavily on private lands for hunting opportunities as well. It is because of these important considerations that GFP operates a comprehensive Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) program. The WDM program is designed to work directly with landowners and producers to reduce wildlife damage to crops, stored-feed supplies, livestock loss, and other types of wildlife damage. GFP annually spends between \$2.2 million to \$3 million to operate the WDM program. In 2014, wildlife damage specialists and assisting staff responded to more than 2,500 requests for service or assistance which directly impacted nearly 2,000 landowners/producers.

High coyote populations and favorable livestock prices produced a significant demand for predator control services and resulted in a high workload to address these requests. Wildlife damage specialists responded to 1,204 requests for assistance regarding livestock loss from coyotes and fox. More than \$739,000 was expended responding to these requests for service which included staff time, mileage, and supplies.

Sylvatic plague throughout most of western South Dakota, excellent range conditions, and previous control efforts has significantly reduced the number of prairie dog complaints compared to five years ago. GFP treated nearly 1,500 acres of prairie dog colonies on private land in western South Dakota. GFP also responded to 290 requests for assistance regarding beaver damage and 94 nuisance animal complaints. Wildlife damage staff drove a total of 415,000 miles and worked more than 26,000 hours to assist livestock

producers and other citizens with livestock loss and other wildlife damage concerns. Total expenditures to address these requests for service regarding these species (i.e. coyote, fox, beaver, and nuisance animals) exceeded \$1.1 million.

The abundant Canada goose population and high commodity prices created a demand for resources to address crop damage. GFP staff worked with 493 landowners to address more than 600 requests for service regarding Canada goose damage to growing crops in eastern South Dakota. To respond to these requests, staff drove 95,000 miles and worked more than 16,000 hours. GFP also provided more than \$62,000 in cost-share assistance to landowners who installed permanent fence or temporary and permanent buffer strips on their property to reduce crop damage caused by Canada geese. Total expenditures to address Canada goose depredation was \$432,000.

South Dakota deer and elk populations continue to be at or below management objectives in many areas. Due to these low numbers and little snow accumulation in most areas the demand for deer and elk depredation assistance was minimal compared to several years ago. GFP worked with 108 landowners to address big game depredation concerns. This work included providing cost-share assistance for the construction of stackyards and protective fencing, installation of livestock panels to protect stored hay and feed-supplies, supplemental food sources and utilization of diversionary food-plots. GFP staff drove more than 35,000 miles and worked more than 3,200 hours to provide assistance to landowners experiencing big game species (i.e. deer, elk, antelope, and turkey) depredation. Overall, GFP spent more than \$357,000 assisting landowners with big game depredation issues. Expenditures in this area of the program haven't been this low since the start of the program (i.e. 1999). Statewide, expenditures exceeded \$1.1 million for game species (i.e. deer, elk, Canada goose, turkey, etc.) depredation assistance in 2014.

WILDLIFE DAMAGE SPECIALISTS RESPONDED TO 1,204 REQUESTS THAT CONCERNED LIVESTOCK LOSS FROM COYOTES AND FOX



PUBLIC HUNTING ACCESS PROGRAMS PROVIDE HUNTER OPPORTUNITIES

Providing public access to private land continues to be a high priority for GFP. The department leased 1.25 million acres of private land under The Walk-In Area at a program expenditure amount just over \$2 million in 2014. GFP maintained 45,384 acres in Day, Marshall, and Roberts County in the Special Access Areas (SAA) component of the Walk-In Area program. These are working farmlands that are enrolled for public hunting of all wildlife species, with emphasis on waterfowl field hunting opportunities. SAA are typically a mixture of farm fields, wetlands, occasional tree belts, and CRP.

Twelve cooperators enrolled 21,211 acres in the Controlled Hunting Access Program (CHAP). These acres are private land leased for public hunting opportunity, primarily big game, where landowners are paid based on the number of hunters who use their land. Hunters are required to complete a check-in form.

The Lower Oahe Waterfowl Access Hunting Program included approximately 36,000 acres from eight cooperating landowners in the central part of the state near the Missouri River. These lands are leased primarily to provide waterfowl hunting opportunities, however upland and big game hunters also have access to much of the land. There are 43 decoy-only registration fields and numerous pits available for pass-shooting hunting opportunities.

12 COOPERATORS ENROLLED

21,211

ACRES IN THE
CONTROLLED
HUNTING
ACCESS PROGRAM





GFP LEASED **1.25 MILLION ACRES** **OF PRIVATE LAND UNDER THE** **WALK-IN AREA PROGRAM**

Photo © Casey Archibald

BIG GAME

ACTION PLAN PROGRESSES

In response to public concerns over big game management, Governor Dugaard ordered an independent review of the department's big game management program in 2013. The objective of the review was to examine the big game program and identify strengths and weaknesses, and provide recommendations to improve various aspects of the big game management program.

The review process included public meetings, public comments received via electronic media, one-on-one interviews with representatives from identified interest groups or individuals of the public, interviews with commissioners (present and past), and interviews with GFP staff which included administrators, biologists, and conservation officers.

Although the focus was big game management, several of the recommended improvements are relevant across the department. Such items were improved internal communications, use of human dimensions in resource management and planning, management plans that include public input early in the process and commission approval,

leadership and career development, and social media enhancements. From the final report, a 43-point action plan was generated by the department and presented to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission in November of 2013. The action plan was divided into four categories: population monitoring, management plans, communication, and the commission recommendation development process. Action item implementation began in January and over the past year 37 action items have either been completed or a process has begun to address sub-points under the specific action item. The Game, Fish and Parks Commission is provided status reports at their regularly scheduled meetings and a year-end review was given at their December meeting.

The Request for Proposal, consulting contract with Wildlife Management Institute, Big Game Review Final Report, and Big Game Review Action Plan, and 2014 Year End Review are posted on the GFP website at gfp.sd.gov/agency/information/independent-review-biggame-management.aspx.

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POINT
ACTION
PLAN



POPULATION MONITORING



MANAGEMENT PLANS



COMMUNICATION



**COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION
PROCESS**

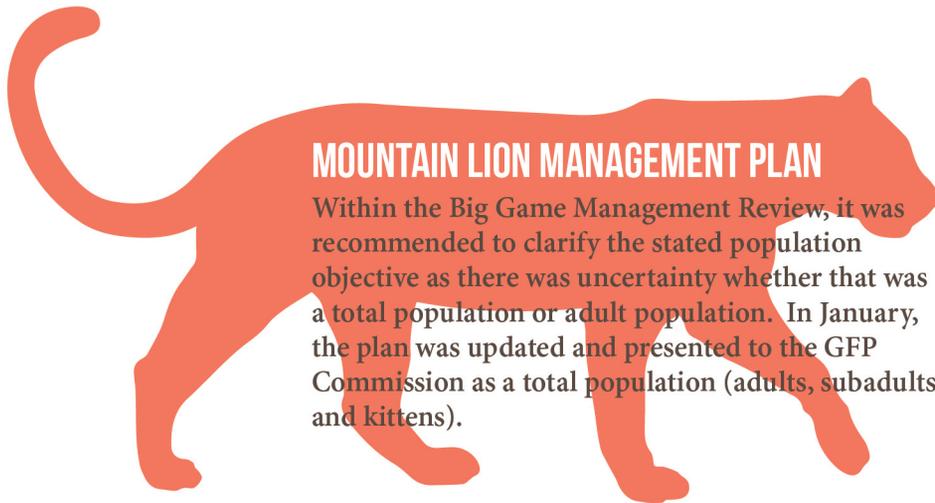


37 OF THE 43 ACTION ITEMS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR WERE IN PROGRESS IN 2014.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

GUIDE APPROACH AND DECISIONS

One of the significant recommendations from the Big Game Independent Review was the importance of drafting management plans that guide management direction and include public involvement early in the process. Just as important is to culminate each management plan with a formal adoption from the GFP Commission. Through this process, questions around a management approach will have a guiding document outlining the specifics for that species and assures the public, department, and commission clearly understand the objectives and how to accomplish set objectives. At the center of all management plans is the GFP's over-arching guiding document titled "Perpetuating the Outdoor Heritage of South Dakota".



MOUNTAIN LION MANAGEMENT PLAN

Within the Big Game Management Review, it was recommended to clarify the stated population objective as there was uncertainty whether that was a total population or adult population. In January, the plan was updated and presented to the GFP Commission as a total population (adults, subadults, and kittens).



PRONGHORN MANAGEMENT PLAN

Also recommended in the Big Game Management Review was the necessity to establish unit specific objectives to illustrate the management direction at a local level. Harvest and survey data will assist all staff involved with establishing license allocations in order to obtain defined unit objectives. Unit specific objectives and an adjusted overall population objective was presented to the GFP Commission and adopted in October.





GREATER SAGE GROUSE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Across the range of the Greater Sage grouse, unprecedented efforts are in progress to prevent this game bird from being listed under the Endangered Species Act. In this collection of efforts, many states have written or revised existing management plans as in the case of South Dakota. The plan focuses on monitoring, enhancing the knowledge base of sage grouse in South Dakota, and voluntary, incentive based conservation programs implementing on-the-ground management practices. These practices involve working with landowners, federal agencies, state agencies, and non-government organizations. The GFP Commission adopted the sage grouse plan in November 2014.

TO VIEW ACTION PLANS VISIT
GFP.SD.GOV/WILDLIFE/MANAGEMENT/PLANS/DEFAULT.ASPX



ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN

As one of South Dakota's most iconic and sought after big game species, an elk management plan was quickly identified as the highest priority within the big game program. Understanding the underlying issues associated with managing elk, the GFP first completed a public opinion survey and then formed a stakeholder group to help formulate recommendations and to provide guidance in drafting the management plan. The stakeholder group consisted of sportsmen, landowners, Forest Service grazing permittees, federal and state agencies, and non-government organizations. Some of the primary components within the plan include population objectives based on forage allocations and availability, depredation program components, harvest strategies including responses to extreme environmental conditions such as drought and license allocations. Over the past year, a draft plan was reviewed internally department wide, reviewed and discussed with the stakeholder group, and under-went a public comment period. The plan is scheduled to be considered for adoption by the GFP Commission in March 2015.

STATEWIDE COLLARING EFFORTS EXPAND KNOWLEDGE TO MANAGE DEER

Understanding population dynamics of white-tailed deer and mule deer and determining annual rates of change requires knowledge of both fawn and adult survival rates and cause-specific mortality factors. Annual rates of change within a deer population are influenced primarily by adult female survival and the number of fawns that reach one year of age. Thus, the primary objective of these efforts is to estimate annual survival rates of whitetail and mule deer adults and fawns occupying agricultural and prairie landscapes throughout South Dakota. These data will provide critical information in determining if a deer population is increasing, decreasing or remaining constant, which directly influences deer license numbers and harvest strategies.

In 2013, monitoring continued on 53 adult female white-tailed deer in northeastern (Clark County) South Dakota. Annual survival rates for 2013 were 81 percent, which was the highest recorded survival rate in this study area between 2009-2013. Monitoring continued on 72 adult female mule deer in west-central (Meade County) and central (Lyman and

Stanley Counties) South Dakota in 2013. Annual survival rates for 2013 were 86 percent (West-central) and 59 percent (Central). From February 23-26, 2014, 100 adult female whitetail deer were captured and collared via helicopter net gun in southeastern (Lake and McCook Counties) and northwestern (Perkins County) South Dakota. Ongoing mortality monitoring via ground telemetry has been occurring on a weekly basis and annual survival rates will be quantified June 2015. Deer captured in Perkins County are part of a collaborative effort with the North Dakota Department of Game and Fish, being led by South Dakota State University, to evaluate the impacts of energy development on the ecology of white-tailed deer.

From May 20 through June 30, 2013, and from May 20 through June 19, 2014, 267 whitetail and 172 mule deer fawns were captured and collared in five study areas across South Dakota through daytime ground searches and opportunistic visual observations. In 2013, annual survival rates ranged from 33-54 percent for both whitetail and mule deer fawns. Ongoing mortality monitoring via ground and

aerial telemetry has been occurring on a weekly basis and annual survival rates will be quantified June 2015.

These data were used to model deer populations and rates of change, and ultimately assisted GFP staff and the Commission in developing the 2014 deer hunting season structure.

Mule deer research plans for 2015 include capture and collaring 150 adult does and 150 fawns in three study areas – Missouri River Breaks, Badlands, and Black Hills. Whitetail deer research plans include capturing approximately 135 adult does, 80 adult bucks, and 240 fawns in 5 study areas across the State of South Dakota – Lake/McCook Counties, Brown County, Bad River, Perkins County, and Black Hills. These deer will be monitored weekly to obtain survival rates. In addition, collared deer still alive from previous captures and study areas will also be monitored where sample sizes are sufficient.

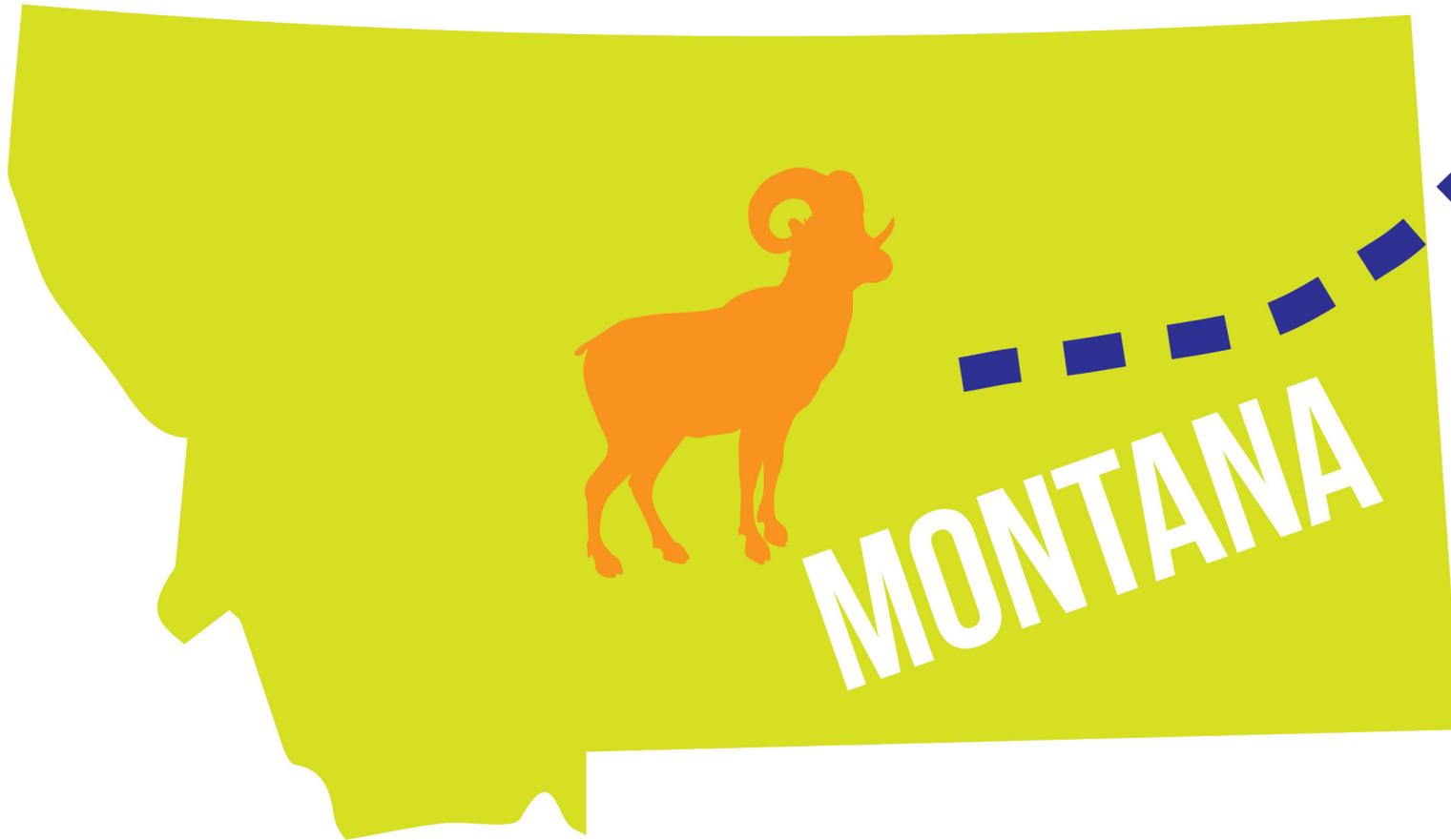
DEER HUNTERS SURVEYED

TO LEARN DESIRED LICENSE DRAWING STRUCTURE

Severe weather, habitat loss, and disease have had a significant impact to the state's deer population. As a result, the demand for deer licenses far exceeds the supply. Under the current license allocation system, some hunters draw multiple licenses while other hunters receive none. In response to this and several requests from individuals and organizations, the department is looking into alternate ways for allocating deer licenses aimed at providing more hunters with the opportunity to draw their preferred license. To gauge deer hunters' opinions on the current deer license allocation process and potential alternatives for the future, a survey was sent to a random sample of 6,000 hunters made up of both non-landowner specific license applicants and landowner specific license applicants. The survey was administered during the Fall of 2014 using both online and mail surveys. Total response rate received was 71 percent. Final report of survey results will be available in January on the GFP website.

BIGHORN SHEEP

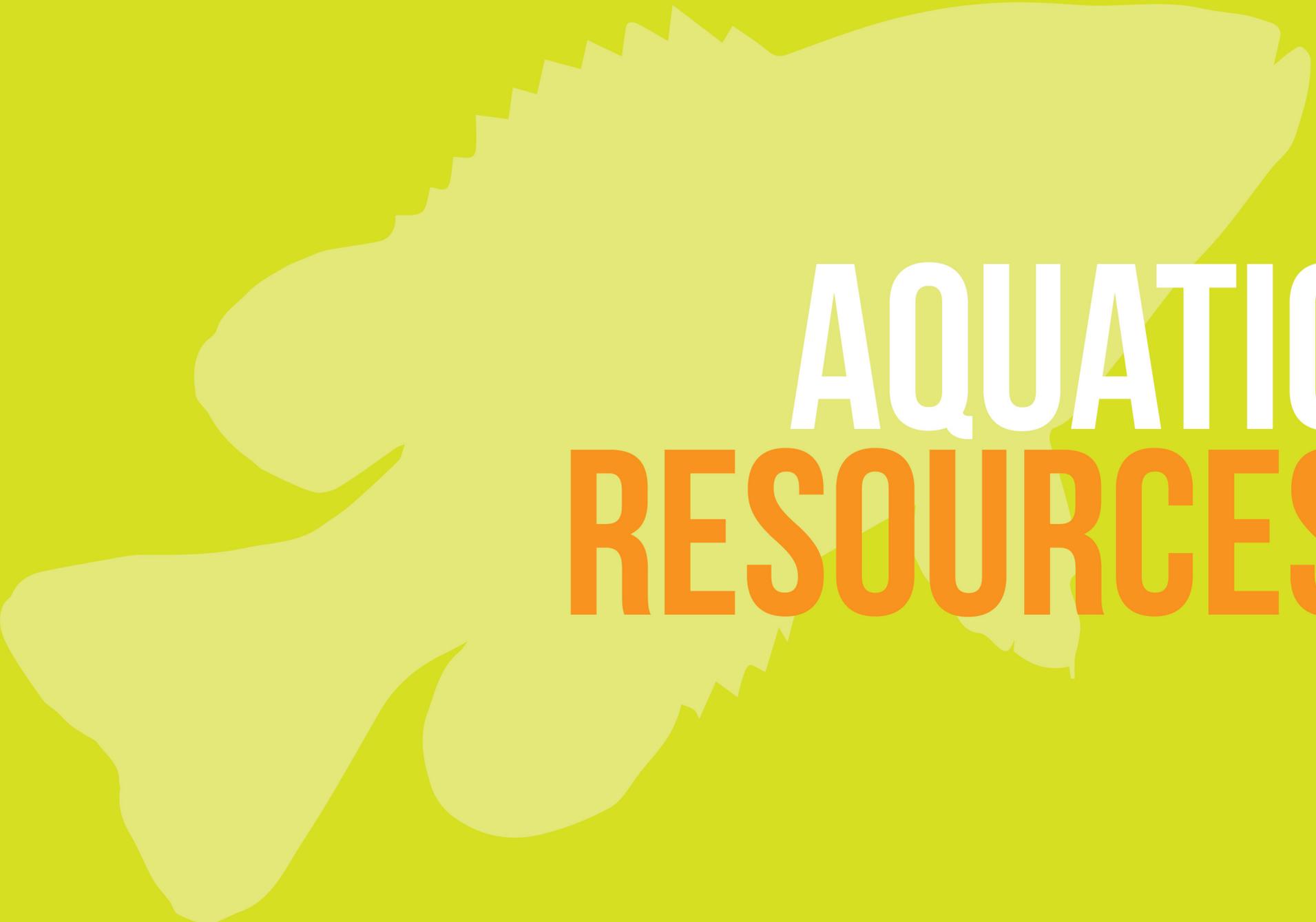
BROUGHT TO SOUTH DAKOTA FROM MONTANA



40 TOTAL SHEEP WERE CAPTURED.



South Dakota completed a bighorn sheep transplant project with Pine Ridge (SD) and Rocky Boy (MT) Reservations and Montana Game & Fish to augment populations on the Badlands National Park of Pine Ridge and Hell Canyon area near Jewel Cave National Park in the southern Black Hills. This collaborative effort included Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Rocky Boy Indian Reservation, Montana Game and Fish and GFP. Bighorns were captured on January 6, 2014, with helicopter netguns and released on January 7. Forty total sheep were captured, with half going to Pine Ridge and the other half going to Hell Canyon. Pine Ridge obtained and released four males and 16 females, which included four lambs, eight yearlings and eight adults; they radio-marked 10 individuals. In Hell Canyon, GFP initially released three males (two lambs and one yearling ram), and 17 females (total included four lambs, one yearling, and 15 adults). GFP radio-marked 18 sheep and as of November 15, 2014, there were 13 collars still active. Two ewes were killed by puma predation, two lamb collars expanded and released, and one ewe was euthanized.

A large, light green silhouette of a fish, possibly a bass, is positioned on the left side of the image. The fish is facing right and has a jagged, saw-tooth edge along its dorsal fin and tail. The background is a solid, vibrant yellow-green color.

AQUATIC RESOURCES

NORTHEASTERN FISHERIES SHINE

While fishing is usually good throughout most of South Dakota, fishing in northeastern South Dakota was exceptional during 2014. Established lakes like Waubay and Bitter provided excellent fisheries for yellow perch during both the ice and open water seasons.

Recently-developed fisheries like Indian Springs, Dry Lake #1, and Dry Lake #2 in Clark County, Payas Lake in Marshall County, and Dry Lake near Florence in Codington County, provided high quality walleye and yellow perch fisheries and attracted many nonresident and resident anglers.

Water level increases in the late 2,000's resulted in a number of waters reaching a size and depth where they could maintain game fish populations. Some of the fisheries that developed were the result of stocking fish from Blue Dog hatchery in

Waubay while other fisheries developed by the movement of fish among connected waters.

Though a statewide angler survey will not be conducted for 2014, the 2013 survey estimated 46 percent of the days spent fishing in South Dakota in 2013 occurred in eastern South Dakota, compared to 35 percent of the days being spent on the Missouri River and 13 percent of days spent in the Black Hills. This trend certainly continued in 2014 and strong fishing license sales in 2014 were partly a result of the excellent fisheries in northeast South Dakota.

The high amount of angler use on recently-developed fisheries, like Dry Lake #2, has made it a challenge to provide sufficient fishing access. Fisheries can quickly develop and become popular with anglers before opportunities to develop sufficient boat access and parking can be developed.

Angler use of Missouri River reservoirs for 2014 was near average for Lake Oahe and above average for Lakes Sharpe and Francis Case. For the May-July 2014 period, approximately 1.6 million hours were spent fishing and 640,000 walleye were harvested from Lakes Oahe, Sharpe, and Francis Case combined.

While the rainbow smelt population in Lake Oahe is still recovering from the flood of 2011, young lake herring, yellow perch, white bass, and crappies have provided walleye with an ample food supply.

Other notable fisheries in 2014 included Twin Lakes on highway 81 in Kingsbury and Brookings County, Spring Lake in Walworth County, and Shadehill Reservoir in Perkins County.

FISH STOCKING & SURVEYS BENEFIT FISHERIES

Major fisheries management efforts include surveying fish populations, stocking fish to enhance populations, and conducting angler (creel) surveys. Angler surveys are an evaluation tool used to help determine if management activities are meeting the needs of the public and if current harvest regulations are appropriate for a fishery.

Approximately 153 million eggs were collected and 75 million fish stocked in 284 waters in 2014, to enhance fish populations. A total of 202 fish population surveys and 9 angler (creel) surveys were conducted to determine fish population status and appropriateness of management activities.



153 MILLION
EGGS WERE COLLECTED
IN 2014

Photo © Sam Stukel

FISHERIES RESEARCH HELPS MANAGEMENT EFFORTS



Photo © Sam Stukel

Research projects with South Dakota State University were again a major part of the aquatics research program in 2014. The funded projects will positively impact management for many species, both game and nongame.

Aquatics projects funded through the State Wildlife Grant included a James River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) analysis, Black Hills mountain sucker status update, blue sucker distributions, and a statewide mussel survey.

Freshwater mussels are considered to be one of the most threatened animal groups in North America. A comprehensive mussel survey has not been done in South Dakota. The main objective of the current mussel study will be to assess the presence of mussel populations, distribution, abundance, and habitat similarities in streams across the state.

New projects funded using Sportfish Restoration dollars (Dingell-Johnson funds) in 2014 included studies of the contribution of Missouri River

embayments to associated fisheries, Deerfield Reservoir trout distributions, and yellow perch genetics. Eight other projects continued in 2014, aimed at addressing fisheries management questions.

The walleye tagging study began in 2013 on Lake Oahe continued in 2014 with 16,892 walleyes tagged during the first two years of the project, with 818 tags being \$100 reward tags. The reward tags help determine reporting rates for tagged fish which is an integral part of building a population estimate. Information collected from tag returns indicated walleyes showed a pattern of moving more in the upstream areas of the reservoir than in downstream areas. During 2013, walleyes tagged in North Dakota were recaptured an average of greater than 40 river miles from their original tagging location, whereas walleye tagged in the lower end of Lake Oahe were recaptured an average of 4.5 river miles from their original tagging location. A similar pattern was observed during 2014.

An in-house research project begun in 2014 is looking at gizzard shad movements in Lake Sharpe. This project takes an innovative, technology-based look at gizzard shad, which have gone largely unstudied over time, by using acoustic transmitters to look at habitat preferences and movements. Biologists are trying to gauge the importance of backwaters behind Farm Island on Lake Sharpe to see if disconnections from the main river channel due to sedimentation will impact gizzard shad populations.

Biologists and graduate students working on fisheries research in South Dakota produced 17 peer reviewed journal articles in 2014. Current projects will lead to a host of other articles in the near future.



16,892
WALLEYES
WERE TAGGED
IN THE PAST 2 YEARS

FISHING ACCESS AND AQUATIC HABITAT PROJECTS

Nearly 30 access projects were either completed in 2014 or are nearing completion. As fishing piers remain a popular means to provide access to anglers, GFP completed its own roll-in fishing pier design. Fishing piers were installed at Lake Alexander (Pennington County), Lake Faulkton (Faulk County), Lake Oliver (Deuel County), Elm Lake (Brown County), and the 3rd Avenue Pond in Watertown. As fishing pressure increases, access structures, parking lots and boat ramps require maintenance and upgrades. New Underwood Dam (Pennington County) and North and South Island Lakes (Minnehaha and McCook Counties) received boat dock upgrades, while boat ramps were upgraded or constructed at Hazeldon and

Reetz Lakes (Day County), Dry Lake (Hamlin County), and at sites on the James River. Parking was expanded or repaired at North Island Lake, Dry Lake #2 and Antelope Lake (Clark County), and Bitter Lake (Day County). Walking trails for shore anglers were constructed at Lake Henry (Kingsbury County) and the City of Ft. Pierre upgraded their fish cleaning station.

GFP continues to partner with civic organizations, fishing clubs, municipalities and federal agencies to bring additional access and recreational opportunities to anglers. The City of Winner completed a



community fishing project, which incorporated fishing pods, a boat ramp, and a fishing pier into a small impoundment within city limits. The City of Wagner constructed a fishing pier on the city pond and incorporated a trail system into the design. Both sites are providing quality community fisheries to people of all ages.

Quality habitat makes an access site irresistible to fish and anglers. One method to keep fish attracted to access sites is the placement of artificial reefs. Tree habitat structures were placed in Cottonwood Lake (Sully County), Curlew Lake (Meade

County), Belle Fourche Reservoir, and at Farm Island. Sediment removal was completed at the Gimlet Creek crossing, and was initiated at Canyon, Lakota, Horsethief, and Bismarck Lakes in the Black Hills. Trout Dam, located on the Ft. Pierre National Grasslands, was rebuilt in cooperation with the grazing association. Shoreline restoration projects, which involve establishing native plant communities along the lakeshore to prevent erosion and trap nutrients, are becoming more popular with lakeshore residents. Restorations were completed on Lake Poinsett and at the Brook Brown Memorial site on Richmond Lake (Brown County).

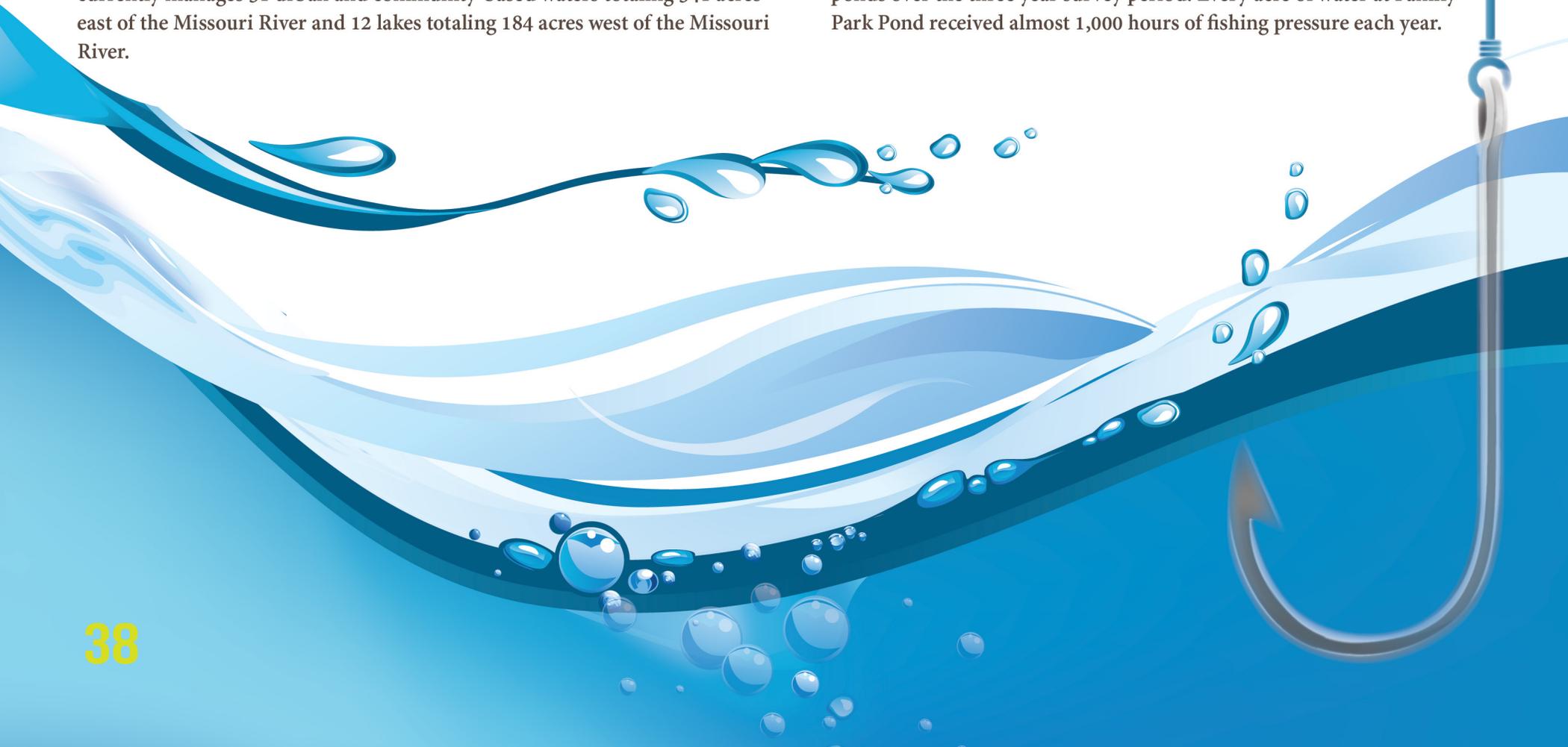


URBAN FISHERIES

HOOK AND KEEP ANGLERS

Today, nearly 43 percent of South Dakotans reside in the eight largest cities in South Dakota but most of the state's fishing opportunities are located in rural areas. One strategy used by GFP to increase fishing participation by urban residents has been to provide fishing opportunities close to urban areas. GFP currently manages 31 urban and community-based waters totaling 341 acres east of the Missouri River and 12 lakes totaling 184 acres west of the Missouri River.

To evaluate the success of this urban fishery strategy, a three-year creel survey was conducted at Family Park Pond in Sioux Falls and five small waters in and around the city of Brookings. Anglers spent nearly 80,000 hours fishing Family Park Pond and 34,000 hours on the Brookings ponds over the three year survey period. Every acre of water at Family Park Pond received almost 1,000 hours of fishing pressure each year.



In comparison, an acre of water at Lake Madison or Lake Poinsett only receives about eight to 10 hours of fishing pressure annually. Thus, the fishing pressure at the 28-acre Family Park Pond is similar to the fishing pressure on popular 1,000-acre lakes.

Urban lakes are very popular with young anglers. Nearly a third of all anglers interviewed were less than 18 years old and 60 percent were under the age of 35.

The creel survey demonstrated the importance of enhanced fishing access areas to urban anglers. About half of the open-water fishing at Family Park Pond was done from the handicapped-accessible fishing piers. The boat dock and 14 fishing hard points (large flat rocks) were also popular. More anglers fished on these structures than on the remaining undeveloped shoreline. Rainbow trout, northern pike and white bass were popular with urban anglers. Stocking trout into a small pond produced better fishing, a higher return of fish to the angler, and greater satisfaction than stocking trout into larger waters.

Aggressive stocking of urban fisheries continued in 2014 with the release of over 30,000 rainbow trout, 3,000 northern pike, 500 largemouth bass and 1,000 white bass into urban and community-based waters across South Dakota. Additionally, 3,000 black bullheads were placed into ponds around the southeastern part of the state and ponds in central South Dakota were stocked with largemouth bass and bluegill.

The creel surveys highlighted the importance of urban fisheries in providing fishing opportunity and as a potential tool for getting young anglers to take up the sport. Providing good fishing, stocking trout, and supporting events that teach youth fishing skills and introduce novice anglers to local urban and community fisheries will increase the odds of producing a satisfied angler and promote continued participation in the sport of fishing.



**GFP MANAGES
31 URBAN
AND COMMUNITY-BASED
WATERS**

FISHERIES PLANNING EFFORTS FOCUS ON THE BLACK HILLS IN 2014



Photo © Sam Stukel

The GFP Commission formally adopted strategic plans for the entire state and four defined management areas at their April 2014 meeting. Planning efforts since then have shifted to the development of management plans for Black Hills streams and Black Hills reservoirs. Anglers fishing the Black Hills were contacted between September 2013 and August 2014 to gather address information for a survey of Black Hills angler attitudes, level of satisfaction, and management preferences. In addition, small groups of Black Hills stream anglers and reservoir anglers were assembled to help identify current management issues for Black Hills fisheries. Preliminary results of the angler survey were available by mid-December, and in association with small group input and fish population and habitat information, will be used to generate draft management plans. GFP Commission and public input on draft management plans will be used to refine the plans with adoption expected in April 2015.



AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT



For the first time since their introduction to the United States in the 1980's, evidence of zebra and quagga mussels was found in South Dakota waters in 2014. GFP and cooperating federal agencies annually monitor high-risk waters in the state for invasive mussels. In late September, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation notified GFP that a veliger (larval stage) sample they had obtained from Angostura Reservoir (western South Dakota) was positive for quagga mussel veligers. By mid-October, GFP biologists and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service agents had performed additional veliger sampling, shoreline surveys and SCUBA surveys to verify initial findings. No evidence of quagga mussels was found.

In mid-November, a single adult zebra mussel was discovered on a courtesy dock at Lewis & Clark Lake's (southeastern South Dakota) Midway boat ramp. Biologists immediately surveyed eleven additional boat ramps and adjacent shorelines as well as inspected boats at local marinas. No additional adults were discovered.

IN 2014
EVIDENCE OF
ZEBRA AND QUAGGA MUSSELS WERE FOUND
IN SOUTH DAKOTA
FOR THE FIRST TIME.



WE'RE ON IT.

Since the presence of neither species could be verified in subsequent sampling events, both Angostura Reservoir and Lewis & Clark Lake were listed as “suspect waters.” Intensive sampling and monitoring efforts are planned for the next three years. If no additional evidence of these mussels is found, the waters will be listed as “negative” for quagga and zebra mussels. Aquatic invasive species management efforts will be modified for 2015 in response to the detection of quagga and zebra mussels in 2014.

On September 10, 2014, GFP, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), and the Army Corps of Engineers collaborated to perform a renovation of the Lake Yankton Fishery.

Fish surveys performed by the NGPC showed a very high abundance of non-game fish, including invasive Asian Carp. These species were negatively impacting the habitat of the lake as well as affecting populations of game fish. The agencies agreed that the best course of action was to eliminate the fishery through the use of the piscicide Rotenone, followed by new stockings of game fish. The Army Corps of Engineers decreased discharges from Gavins Point Dam to reduce the amount of water in the lake, which reduced the amount of rotenone needed for the renovation. After the rotenone was applied, large numbers of silver carp, grass carp, common carp, buffalo, and other nongame species began to wash onto the shores of the lake. Very few game fish were found. Game fish stocking has already resumed in Lake Yankton to aid in the development of the fishery.



**ADMINISTRATIVE
SERVICES**

COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

According to recent metrics, more than 40 percent of our customers continue to expect online services and information to be available from a handheld or tablet device. Social media serves as an online communications toolbox to convey GFP messages through a variety of different platforms so that our customers can receive their information through those devices. Email communications as well as

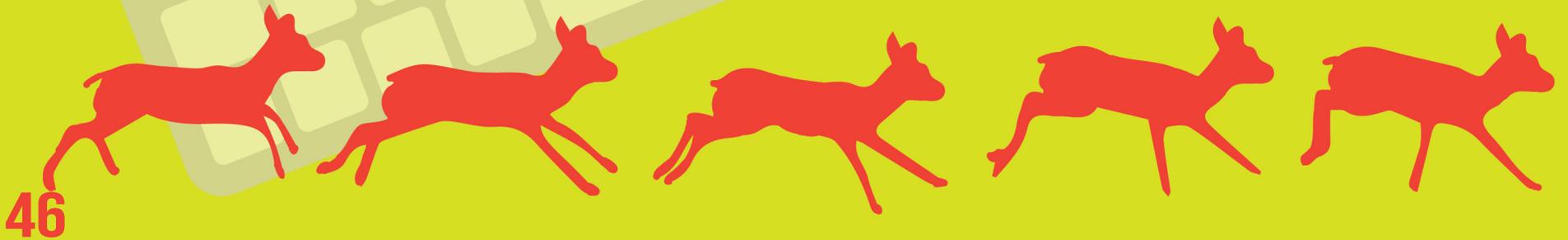
our responsive website (launched in July) are central to that as well. Especially when email continues to be a primary mode of contact with our customers and our website remains the front door to our agency. By evaluating where our customers are at, we are able to ensure we reach them across multiple platforms and provide them with the information and education they need to be successful in the field.



FACEBOOK = 17,000 FOLLOWERS

Of all social networks, Facebook is best equipped to linearly share responses to a post asking a question or sparking conversation. With 17,000 quality and committed followers, Facebook is the lead social networking platform for the Department and continues to be a trusted voice of conversation on all things GFP.

[FACEBOOK.COM/SDGFP](https://www.facebook.com/SDGFP)





TWITTER = 2,000 FOLLOWERS

Twitter is the dominant democracy of the social-sharing economy. It is the primary source for daily news updates for many. It is the king of micro-blogging. Relevancy, personality and brevity are the keys to making our voice and our brand heard. Quality outweighs quantity on this platform – it is best to follow and be followed by interesting, influential, and useful people and organizations who can help spread our message. Examples: Media outlets, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, State and Federal Agencies and other avid users of the platform who continuously advocate on our behalf and help spread our message.

@SDGAMEFISHPARKS

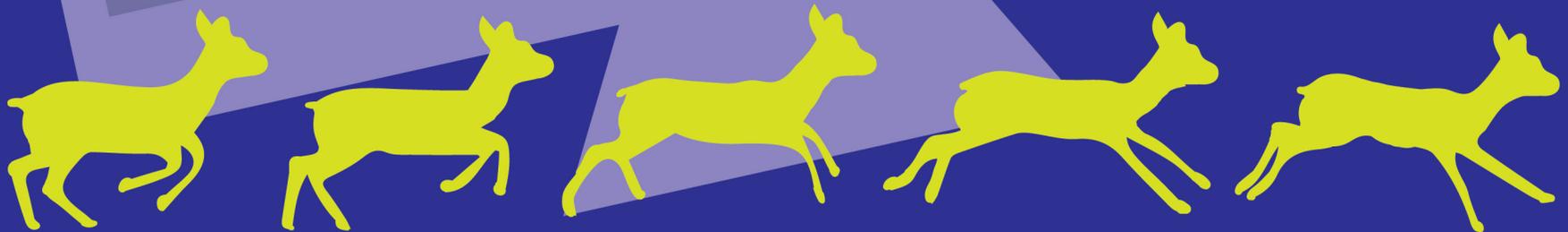




YOUTUBE

YouTube allows the GFP to showcase our messages through videos. It provides a visually appealing opportunity to influence hunters and anglers who might be looking for more insight and explanation on why we do what we do and may drive them to take action; depending on the topic.

[YOUTUBE.COM/USER/SOUTHDAKOTAGFP](https://www.youtube.com/user/SOUTHDAKOTAGFP)





BLOG

Bloggging breaks down barriers, fosters communication, encourages transparency and accountability, forces greater responsiveness and puts a face to the organization. Both divisions of Parks and Wildlife are working together to expand on this platform to tell the story of what our staff do and how that work contributes to our mission of conserving, managing, protecting and enhancing South Dakota's wildlife resources, parks and outdoor recreational opportunities. Staff help drive content through this platform to bring a social component to GFP as a means of open communication and dialogue that can strongly enhance our agency image and customer relations.

BLOG.GFP.SD.GOV



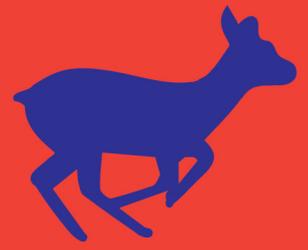
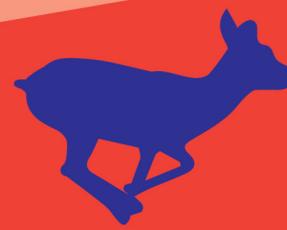
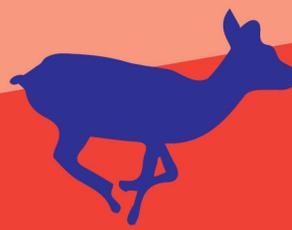


#SDINTHEFIELD

In August, GFP launched a new digital push using #SDintheField encouraging hunters, anglers, trappers and other outdoor enthusiasts to share their outdoor memories with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or all three. #SDintheField was always intended to be more than a bragging board. It has served as a primary way to converse with digital citizens and to gain valuable insight as to what is the central focus of getting them involved in the outdoors.

#SDintheField showcases that GFP is an online and on the ground community. Through this customer engagement strategy we were successful in providing that sense of togetherness that the outdoors brings to us all. It allowed our customers an inside look into GFP as well and that we, as a government agency, are just people who are working hard to improve communications and interactions with our customers. Keeping our customers engaged and involved is a key aspect to our online and on the ground customer service successes.

GFP.SD.GOV/AGENCY/SDINTHEFIELD.ASPX



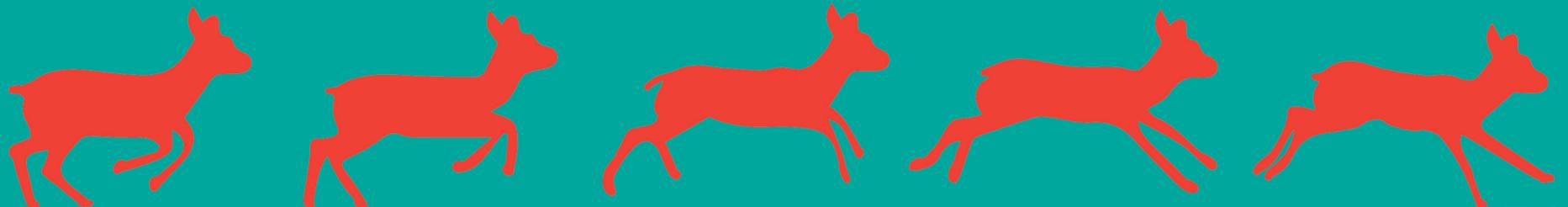


HUNTING AND FISHING MOBILE APP

This app allows users to view hunting and fishing regulations, view maps of public hunting and fishing opportunities, access the sunrise/sunset table and more. The maps use GPS to show the user where they are on public land. The regulations are divided into sections to make it easier to access the specific information being searched. As of late, there have been over 9,000 iOS downloads and over 13,000 Android downloads.



GFP.SD.GOV/AGENCY/SOCIAL-MEDIA.ASPX



EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

THE OUTDOOR CAMPUSES

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks has sister facilities in Sioux Falls and Rapid City dedicated to providing outreach and education when it comes to hunting, fishing, camping and other outdoor recreational activities. The Outdoor Campus facilities feature education programs for all ages and center their programs on four core topics: hunting, fishing, outdoor skills and outdoor education. Each of the campuses hosts approximately 100,000 visitors over the course of the year.

The free educational programs increase awareness and knowledge of South Dakota's outdoors with the overall goal of the education programs being to encourage participation in outdoor activities. Naturalists run education programs throughout the year with the assistance of college-aged interns and a strong corps of community volunteers.

In addition to scheduled education programs, both facilities feature unique and diverse outdoor settings for hiking trails, wildlife watching and outdoor recreation activities including kayaking and cross-country skiing. Besides regular programming and education, special events are also held throughout the year, including Halloween Hikes, Women Try It days, International Mud Day and Outdoor University.

SIoux FALLS

The Outdoor Campus-East in Sioux Falls held 181 fishing classes with approximately 3,564 participants. There were also 126 hunting and shooting classes held with approximately 2,342 participants. The special events, as mentioned above, had over 4,000 participants involved in activities related to fishing and shooting.

RAPID CITY

The Outdoor Campus-West in Rapid City saw walk-in visitation of approximately 100,000 visitors; including program and special event participation of over 15,000 people. Partner organizations, like the National Park Service and local conservation groups, used the classrooms 215 times throughout the year. The volunteer program also continued with its success with over 500 volunteers completing over 6,150 hours of service in 2014.

EACH CAMPUS HOSTS
100,000
VISITORS PER YEAR



HUNTING 101

The Hunting 101 program has been very successful and focuses on the hunting experience from start to finish. In 2014, there were eight new students where they learned about hunting safety and wildlife management, spent time at local shooting ranges and then wrapped up their experience with a culminating hunt. Four students are currently attending South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, three recently moved to South Dakota to pursue careers and one is a current employee of the agency interested in learning how to hunt. Species hunted this year included mourning dove, pheasant, waterfowl, wild turkey and deer. Four students from the 2013 class expanded their hunting knowledge by participating in hunts for new species in 2014. When possible, the students from 2013 were partnered with 2014 students to assist in mentoring them and to further solidify their desire to hunt.

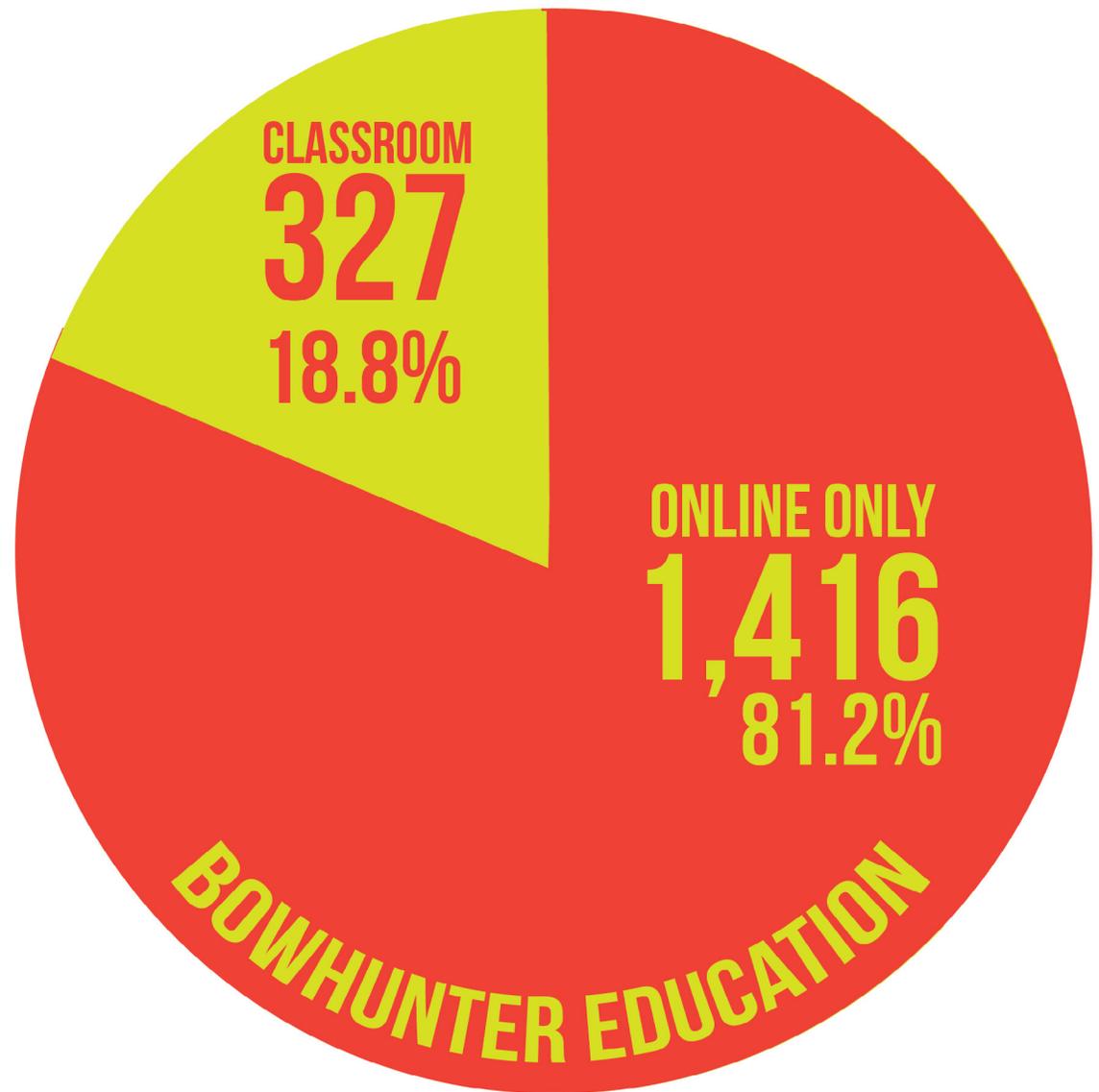


HUNTER EDUCATION

Each year, through a cadre of volunteer instructors, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) provides hunter and bowhunter safety training for youth and adults. Approximately 3,200 students received certification through the Hunter Safety and Firearms Education (HuntSAFE) Program and another 1,700 received certification through the South Dakota Bowhunter Education Program. Over 81 percent of the bowhunter education students took their bowhunter education course entirely online.

GFP continues to make strides in getting hunter and bowhunter education into the school systems. Four schools offered HuntSAFE as a part of their curriculum and ten pilot schools received bowhunter education in the schools training. This new pilot program was paired existing NASP schools and 3-D archery training so that schools can provide something new while providing the information and skills necessary to complete bowhunter education certification in school.

Additionally, through equipment supplied to the school by GFP, the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) continued to be an active program with over 247 school districts throughout South Dakota participating. To date, GFP has spent over \$800,000 getting free archery equipment into schools since the program began in 2007.



FISHING CLINICS

Eighty fishing clinics were conducted statewide with just over 1,777 individuals participating. Fishing clinics continue to be popular and well attended. Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Custer State park held weekly fishing clinics. These clinics included both shore fishing and ice fishing classes and some classes also include lessons in cleaning and cooking the catch. The loaner fishing equipment program was expanded to supply kits to several new locations. The loaner fishing equipment was used 45 times by staff and the general public with 2,080 participants using the equipment to fish with or to teach people to fish with. Educational fishing equipment was also purchased and distributed to several schools. This included 12 rod/reel combos that were given to the children's ward at Stanford Hospital which were used to teach kids staying there how to operate fishing equipment. The remaining were given to Keystone Treatment Center in Canton.



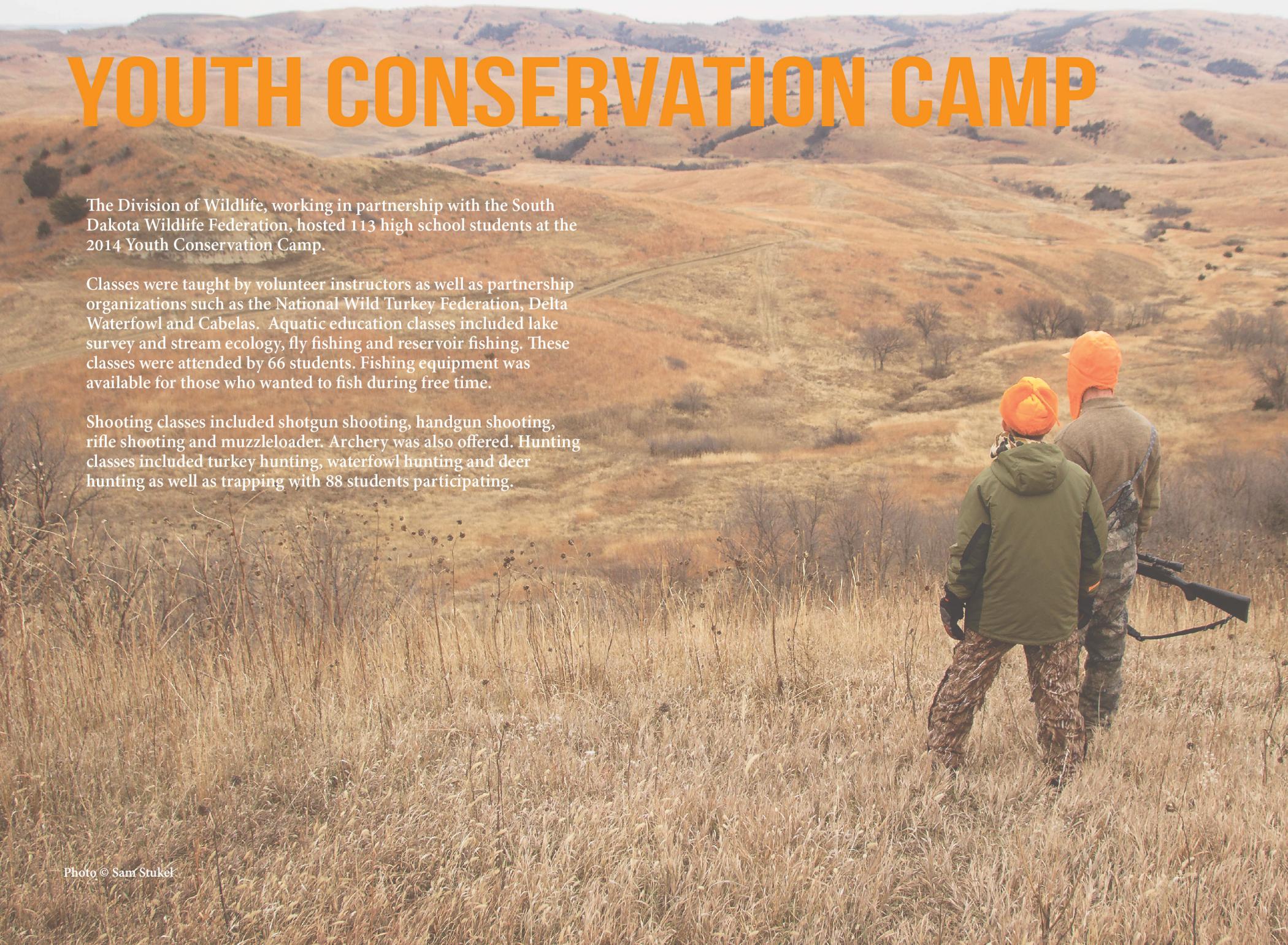
BECOMING AN OUTDOOR WOMAN



The 2014 Becoming an Outdoor Woman event was held in September with seven fishing-oriented classes and 48 women participating. Classes included fly fishing, shore fishing and canoe fishing.

Shooting classes included shotgun, handgun and rifle shooting. Archery was also offered. Thirty-eight women participated in the shooting/archery classes. Hunting related classes included turkey hunting and deer hunting with 24 women participating.

YOUTH CONSERVATION CAMP



The Division of Wildlife, working in partnership with the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, hosted 113 high school students at the 2014 Youth Conservation Camp.

Classes were taught by volunteer instructors as well as partnership organizations such as the National Wild Turkey Federation, Delta Waterfowl and Cabelas. Aquatic education classes included lake survey and stream ecology, fly fishing and reservoir fishing. These classes were attended by 66 students. Fishing equipment was available for those who wanted to fish during free time.

Shooting classes included shotgun shooting, handgun shooting, rifle shooting and muzzleloader. Archery was also offered. Hunting classes included turkey hunting, waterfowl hunting and deer hunting as well as trapping with 88 students participating.

2014 LICENSE SALES

While showing signs of improvement in 2014, reduced populations of some species limited hunting opportunities in areas of the state. The continued effort to increase deer and antelope over a majority of the state required a reduction in licenses for both species. These reductions were focused mainly on the antlerless populations.

2014 saw a reduction of over 42,000 antlerless deer tags compared to the previous year. Antlerless antelope tags were reduced with only 20 antlerless antelope tags being offered in the entire state. Demand remained high for the licenses that were offered, and for the first time in decades, all limited issue licenses were purchased.

The sale of nonresident small game licenses are a major source of department funding each year. While the statewide Pheasants Per Mile (PPM) index for the 2014 pheasant brood survey increased 76 percent compared to the 2013, the index is still 53 percent lower in comparison to the 10-year average. This upturn in PPM helped encourage 80,500 nonresidents to purchase small game licenses in 2014, an increase of 5 percent over 2013. This equates to a reduction in revenue of over \$2,000,000 when compared to 2005-2012, when nonresident small game sales averaged 98,600.

Both resident and nonresident fishing license sales were strong again in 2014. Nearly 140,000 residents and 35,500 nonresidents purchased an annual fishing license. In addition, 6,500 residents and 45,500 nonresidents purchased some type of temporary (1-3 days) fishing license. These levels represent a steady trend for residents and a slight increase for nonresidents.

Actions taken in Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014) to reduce spending and take advantage of increased federal funding helped prepare the GFP for the current reductions in license sales, as did an increase in license fees authorized by the GFP Commission in November of 2013.

The GFP will continue to align revenue with expenditures in 2015. If necessary, this will be accomplished primarily through expenditure reductions in equipment, supplies and travel costs.

Responsible revenue revisions and prudent spending will allow GFP to maintain the current level of programs and services that the citizens of South Dakota and our state's visitors have come to expect.

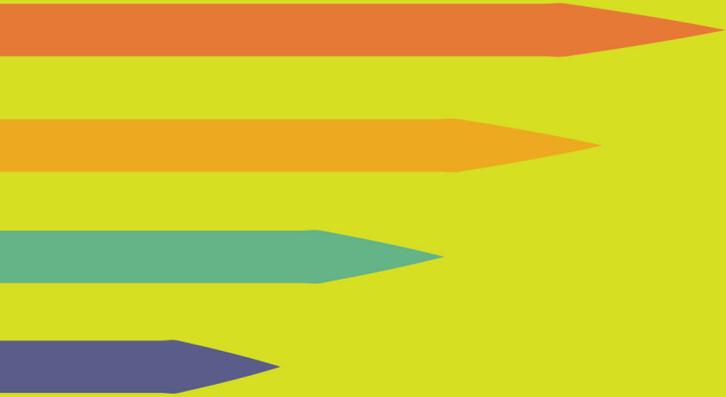
ANNUAL LICENSE SALES COMPARISON

THE SALE OF NONRESIDENT SMALL GAME LICENSES IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF DEPARTMENT FUNDING

These tables outline resident and nonresident license sales for 2013 and 2014. In big game seasons, licenses sold do not directly equal number of tags issued, as some licenses contain two or more tags.

RESIDENT	2013	2014
Combination	45,788	45,055
Junior Combination	8,111	8,242
Senior Combination	6,458	6,785
Small Game	21,015	24,075
Youth Small Game	4,949	5,204
1-Day Small Game	925	1,157
Predator/Varmint	1,576	1,565
Furbearer	3,971	3,565
Migratory Bird Certificate	31,150	31,844
Annual Fishing	65,634	65,261
Senior Fishing	12,538	12,887
1-Day Fishing	6,654	6,743
Gamefish Spearing/Archery	2,578	2,788
East River Deer (ER)	31,624	25,171
Landowner Own Land ER Deer	4,827	5,210
West River Deer (WR)	20,120	17,794
Landowner Own Land WR Deer	1,805	1,944
Black Hills Deer	3,329	3,242
Archery Deer	24,315	21,643
Muzzleloader Deer	4,350	3,063
Youth Deer	4,759	4,409
Custer State Park Deer	29	29
Mentored Deer	2,939	3,089
Archery Antelope	1,164	1,165
Prairie Antelope	3,232	2,723
Mentored Antelope	350	361
Black Hills Elk	620	662
Archery Elk	107	106
Prairie Elk	96	92
Custer State Park Elk	7	8
Black Hills Turkey	2,855	2,641
Prairie Turkey	6,489	5,888
Archery Turkey	2,390	2,335
Fall Turkey	6,240	2,486
Custer State Park Turkey	135	135
Mentored Turkey (Fall and Spring)	1,162	1,063
Archery Paddlefish	255	254
Snagging Paddlefish	1,898	1,899
Mountain Lion	4,912	3,849

NONRESIDENT	2013	2014
Small Game	76,301	80,560
Youth Small Game	2,401	2,432
1-day Shooting Preserve	1,113	1,199
5-day Shooting Preserve	9,687	10,051
Annual Shooting Preserve	321	298
Spring Light Goose	4,215	4,572
Youth Spring Light Goose	131	165
Predator/Varmint	5,012	4,040
Furbearer	15	12
Migratory Bird Certificate	1,230	1,444
Annual Fishing	22,343	25,098
Family Fishing	8,486	9,021
Youth Annual Fishing	1,264	1,501
1-Day Fishing	21,585	22,564
3-Day Fishing	24,042	23,789
Gamefish Spearing/Archery	601	743
East River Deer (ER)	1,366	912
West River Deer (WR)	2,719	2,035
Black Hills Deer	261	252
Archery Deer	3,036	2,840
Muzzleloader Deer	286	139
Youth Deer	789	560
Archery Antelope	280	354
Prairie Antelope	0	61
Black Hills Turkey	1,657	1,302
Prairie Turkey	1,385	1,301
Archery Turkey	440	387
Fall Turkey	452	199
Archery Paddlefish	20	20
Snagging Paddlefish	50	50
Waterfowl (all types)	9,734	9,843



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