

SOUTH DAKOTA WILD TURKEY ACTION PLAN 2021–2026



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

WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2021–02

MARCH 2021

This action plan will be used by SDGFP 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.

A supportive document to this action plan, the “Management of Wild Turkeys in South Dakota”, provides a historical background, research, management surveys and monitoring, challenges and opportunities, and citizen involvement related to wild turkeys and can be found at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/>.

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The SDGFP Wild Turkey Management Team that assisted with plan writing, data review and analyses, critical reviews and/or edits to the Management of Wild Turkeys in South Dakota document include Nathan Baker, Paul Coughlin, Josh Delger, Shelly Deisch, Jacquie Ermer, Keith Fisk, Trenton Haffley, Faren Wolter, Corey Huxoll, Mark Norton, Tim Olson, Alex Solem, and Chad Switzer.

All text and data contained within this document are subject to revision for corrections, updates, and data analyses.

Those who served on the South Dakota Wild Turkey Stakeholder Group during this planning process included: Russel Olson (SDGFP Commissioner); Chris Hesla (South Dakota Wildlife Federation); Brenda Forman (Ag Unity); Mike McKernan (National Wild Turkey Federation Representative); Ron Schauer (National Wild Turkey Federation Representative); Jim Pitman (National Wild Turkey Federation Biologist); Calvin Finnesand (Landowner), Tom Heylens (Landowner); Doug Feltman (Landowner); Ned Westphal (Landowner); and Paul Vinatieri (Black Hills Sportsmen Club).

Cover photo was provided by Chad Lehman (SDGFP).

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INTRODUCTION

The wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*) is the largest native gamebird in North America. The 5 subspecies of wild turkeys occurring in the wild are the eastern (*M. g. silvestris*), Florida (*M. g. osceola*), Merriam's (*M. g. merriami*), Rio Grande (*M. g. intermedia*), and the Gould's (*M. g. mexicana*). Eastern wild turkeys historically inhabited woodlands of southeastern South Dakota with their range stretching northwest to the mouth of the Cheyenne River. Wild turkeys were likely extirpated from the state by 1920 when market hunting and woodland destruction resulted in drastic declines in nation-wide wild turkey populations. Consequently, all populations of wild turkeys in South Dakota are the result of introductions or reintroductions. National wild turkey populations hit their low point in the 1930s which initiated modern day conservation and wildlife management efforts for population recovery.

HARVEST STRATEGIES

The goal for wild turkey management in South Dakota is to maximize user opportunity while maintaining populations consistent with ecological, social, aesthetic, and economic values of the people of South Dakota and our visitors. One direct way to maximize opportunity and manage wild turkey populations is by implementing a harvest strategy that provides the population the potential to reach the objective. Unit-level wild turkey populations will be managed with an emphasis on providing spring hunting opportunity. Fall hunting seasons will be used for additional hunting opportunity and population control. Input from SDGFP staff, the wild turkey management stakeholder group, and the public have been incorporated into harvest management strategies for the Black Hills and prairie units. The intent is to develop a harvest strategy with a consistent management philosophy across units, but allow for flexibility in unit-level recommendations based on local data and field staff input. This plan does not recommend any changes to the mentored season structure. The Custer State Park season will be evaluated periodically in cooperation with the Division of Parks and Recreation.

Prairie Harvest Strategy— Wild turkey units will be assigned a population objective of *increase, maintain, or decrease* on a biannual basis in alignment with the season setting schedule. A unique harvest strategy will be utilized for each population objective (Figure 1). The unit objective will be based on available biological data, hunter survey comments, landowner comments, public comments, and field staff observations. Hunter success and harvest success can be used interchangeably when we discuss success rates for management. A minimum threshold based on spring hunter success and licenses issued will need to be met for a unit to be considered at or above population objective (maintain or decrease population objective). The minimum threshold is based on the upper 95% confidence interval (UCI) of hunter success. If the UCI is $\geq 40\%$ and licenses issued is \geq minimum license target for the previous 2 years, the population will be considered at or above population objective. Wildlife managers will collaborate with field staff to initially develop the minimum spring license targets based on field staff experience and past harvest data. If the UCI falls below 40% spring hunter success or tags fall below the minimum license target for 2 consecutive years, the fall season will be closed. If spring license allocation is ≤ 80 licenses caution should be used in opening a fall season (even if in the maintain or decrease population objective) as there could be concerns with potential

additive mortality from any fall hen harvest. The *Unit Objectives* table (Table 1) will be used to: 1) view past spring hunting season statistics; 2) define minimum license target; and 3) track hunting statistics through the life of the management plan.

This framework is flexible in that even if a threshold to close the fall season is not met, the fall season could still be closed. Similarly, if a unit is below objective, but a fall closure threshold is not met, a fall season could still be utilized with a conservative number of tags to address depredation. Also, the population objective could still be *increase* even if the minimum threshold is met based on other factors (e.g. field staff input).

Black Hills Harvest Strategy—Unlike the limited spring tag allocation of the prairie units, the Black Hills unit is unique in that it provides an unlimited tag allocation for spring wild turkey hunting. This primary difference provides us with an opportunity to obtain a surrogate abundance estimate based on a 2-year mean of previous spring harvest which categorizes population status by levels of *low*, *moderate*, or *high* (Table 2, Figure 2). Once population status is estimated and our objective is obtained, we have several categories where specific harvest strategies are designated for each objective. Within each objective of *increase*, *maintain*, or *decrease*, we have “A”, “B”, and “C” harvest strategy categories that can be implemented.

Hunter success and harvest success can be used interchangeably when we discuss success rates for management. The “A” category is triggered for each population status level when spring harvest is at or below 30% (including 95% confidence intervals) for 2 consecutive years. The “B” category is triggered for each population status level when spring harvest is at or below 30% (including 95% confidence intervals) for 1 year, and is above for 1 year. The “C” category is triggered for each population status level when spring harvest is above 30% (including 95% confidence intervals) for 2 consecutive years. This adaptive process of utilizing a 2-year mean for obtaining population status, as well as limiting fall harvest by categories A-C, should limit potentially large population swings related to fall harvest and will ensure more stability as it relates to harvest management. This strategy outlines a range of potential fall tag allocations and tag types which can be implemented by category (Figure 2). Spring tag allocation is assumed to be unlimited each year as this provides a basis for obtaining our population status. It should be noted that both fall and spring seasons can be closed when major disease or weather events cause severe population declines regardless of current population status, through the emergency rule-making authority of the SDGFP Commission. A map of unit objectives for prairie, Black Hills, and Custer State Park seasons is available in Figure 3.

Population Objective	Increase	Maintain	Decrease
Justification	<p>Turkey population below objective based on available biological data, hunter survey comments, public comments, and field staff observations.</p> <p>Turkey depredation on stored livestock forage is expected to be nonexistent or limited to isolated cases and should be adequately addressed through the wildlife damage management program. After all other tools have been exhausted, unique situations may be addressed using depredation pool hunts, kill permits, or trap and transfer to areas with low turkey abundance when fall season is closed.</p>	<p>Turkey population at objective based on available biological data, hunter survey comments, public comments, and field staff observations.</p> <p>Manageable turkey depredation on stored livestock forage is expected, but should be adequately addressed through wildlife damage management program, fall hunting (if open), trap and transfer, or depredation pool hunts. After all other tools have been exhausted, unique situations may be addressed using kill permits when fall season is open or closed.</p>	<p>Turkey population above objective based on available biological data, hunter survey comments, public comments, and field staff observations.</p> <p>Turkey depredation on stored livestock forage is expected to be above desired levels, but can usually be addressed through wildlife damage management program, fall hunting, trap and transfer, or depredation pool hunts. After all other tools have been exhausted, unique situations may be addressed using kill permits when fall season is open. Indicators for this category would be moderate to overabundant populations causing moderate to major depredation among landowners in the unit.</p>
Hunting Season Structure Options	<p>Spring: single bearded turkey licenses or close spring season</p> <p>Fall: Limited number of single or double any turkey licenses which allows for population growth and/or reduce size of unit to limit harvest to specific area, or close fall season.</p>	<p>Spring: Single or double bearded turkey licenses with option of split spring seasons</p> <p>Fall: Single or double any turkey licenses issued at a level expected to keep population within population objective</p> <p>Close fall season in units where population is expected to decline with fall harvest. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.</p>	<p>Spring: Single or double bearded turkey licenses with option of split spring seasons</p> <p>Fall: Single or double any turkey licenses issued at a level expected to decrease population</p>
Minimum Categorical Thresholds to Meet Objective or Close Fall Season	<p>The 95% Upper Confidence Interval (UCI) of spring hunter success falls below the 40% threshold in one of two consecutive seasons; or spring license allocation is below minimum target for one of two consecutive seasons (See unit objectives table). Under this scenario, fall turkey season could be closed.</p> <hr/> <p>Threshold to close fall season</p> <p>The 95% Upper Confidence Interval (UCI) of spring hunter success falls below the 40% threshold for 2 consecutive seasons; or license allocation is below minimum target for 2 consecutive seasons (See unit objectives table).</p>	<p>The 95% Upper Confidence Interval (UCI) of spring hunter success is $\geq 40\%$ and minimum spring license target is met for 2 consecutive seasons (See unit objectives table).</p> <p><i>Note: If this threshold is met, population objective could be shifted to increase based on other justifications.</i></p>	<p>The 95% Upper Confidence Interval (UCI) of spring hunter success is $\geq 40\%$ and minimum spring license target is met for 2 consecutive seasons (See unit objectives table).</p> <p><i>Note: If this threshold is met, population objective could be shifted to maintain based on other justifications.</i></p>

Figure 1. Prairie units harvest strategies, 2021–2026.

Table 1. Prairie wild turkey unit objectives and hunting statistics, 2014–2020. For a unit to be in the maintain or decrease unit objective category, the upper 95% confidence interval (UCI) of hunter success must be $\geq 40\%$ and licenses issued is \geq minimum license target for the previous 2 years (2nd column). Cells shaded red indicate the UCI for spring hunter success is below 40%.

Unit	Minimum License Target	Current Population Objective	Threshold met to close fall season	2003 - 2015 Average			2014			2015			2016			2017			2018			2019			2020		
				Hunter Success %	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Tags sold
Bennett	50 Increase	No		71	62	112	45 (37-52)	76	152	51 (43-59)	76	76	44 (38-51)	54	54	45 (39-52)	33	33	58 (49-67)	33	33	35 (27-44)	33	33	43 (29-56)	33	33
Bon Homme	250 Increase	No		52	252	252	34 (29-39)	300	300	48 (43-54)	250	250	37 (32-43)	300	300	43 (38-48)	251	251	46 (41-51)	250	250	55 (50-60)	250	250	55 (50-60)	250	250
Brookings	10 Increase	No		39	32	32	33 (30-40)	20	20	24 (20-32)	20	20	10 (10-10)	20	20	44 (40-50)	20	20	39 (35-45)	20	20	28 (25-35)	20	20	43 (30-58)	20	20
Brule	100 Increase	No		53	82	82	44 (38-51)	108*	108	46 (40-52)	123*	123	33 (27-40)	129*	129	45 (39-51)	150	150	41 (35-47)	150	150	39 (33-45)	150	150	58 (52-64)	150	150
Butte/Lawrence	400 Increase	No		57	415	830	44 (40-49)	387*	774	36 (32-41)	368*	736	45 (40-50)	375	375	48 (43-53)	379	379	44 (38-49)	379	379	48 (43-54)	378	378	45 (40-51)	376	376
Campbell/Walworth	10 Maintain	No		NA	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	40(40-40)	10	10	56 (50-60)	10	10	25 (20-40)	10	10	50 (40-60)	10	10	71 (50-80)	10	10
Charles Mix/Douglas	300 Increase	No		51	318	445	32 (27-36)	400	400	38 (34-43)	400	400	28 (23-32)	400	400	41 (36-46)	350	350	32 (27-36)	350	350	43 (38-47)	350	350	47 (42-52)	351	351
Clay	75 Increase	No		48	119	119	32 (28-36)	160	160	27 (23-30)	120	120	32 (28-36)	120	120	52 (47-58)	120	120	32 (28-36)	120	120	32 (26-38)	120	120	41 (35-46)	120	120
Corson	100 Increase	No		53	126	232	51 (44-58)	92*	92	45 (39-51)	109	109	25 (18-31)	108*	108	58 (52-65)	108	108	34 (27-41)	108	108	33 (25-41)	54	54	37 (31-44)	54	54
Custer/ Penn-Mid	125 Increase	No		54	146	293	46 (40-52)	148*	296	47 (42-51)	159*	318	27 (22-32)	150*	300	52 (45-58)	162	162	42 (36-49)	162	162	37 (30-43)	162	162	40 (34-46)	162	162
Davison/Hanson	150 Increase	No		50	108	108	31 (27-36)	160	160	42 (37-46)	156*	156	26 (21-31)	161	161	32 (27-37)	158	158	24 (20-28)	158	158	32 (28-37)	160	160	35 (30-40)	159	159
Day/Codington	50 Increase	No		40	60	60	44 (37-51)	60	60	54 (48-60)	60	60	29 (25-35)	61	61	55 (49-60)	80	80	36 (29-43)	80	80	39 (35-43)	80	80	53 (48-58)	80	80
Deuel	75 Maintain	No		56	60	60	54 (50-57)	90	90	52 (48-56)	90	90	45 (40-51)	90	90	56 (50-61)	90	90	47 (43-52)	90	90	34 (29-39)	100	100	53 (48-58)	100	100
Dewey/Ziebach	100 Increase	Yes		56	199	359	48 (42-54)	138*	138	55 (48-61)	131*	131	34 (28-40)	160	160	48 (42-53)	160	160	45 (40-50)	160	160	34 (28-40)	158	158	39 (34-44)	123	123
Fall River	150 Maintain	No		56	209	418	48 (44-53)	149*	298	52 (47-57)	133*	266	39 (35-44)	161	322	48 (44-53)	162	324	42 (38-47)	162	324	32 (27-37)	81	81	51 (44-58)	81	81
Grant	185 Increase	No		57	176	176	54 (51-58)	220	220	56 (52-60)	220	220	36 (32-41)	220	220	50 (46-54)	220	220	46 (41-52)	220	220	46 (41-52)	220	220	61 (56-66)	217	217
Gregory	700 Increase	No		57	898	1351	41 (36-46)	1027	1027	47 (42-51)	919	919	28 (23-32)	865	865	45 (40-50)	756	756	41 (36-46)	756	756	36 (31-41)	755	755	41 (36-46)	747	747
Haakon	200 Maintain	No		63	226	403	55 (51-60)	222*	444	58 (53-63)	248*	496	43 (38-47)	214*	428	51 (46-55)	216	432	40 (35-45)	216	432	43 (38-49)	216	432	46 (40-52)	217	434
Hamlin	10 Increase	No		46	20	20	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	NA	0	0	56 (50-60)	10	10	0 (0-0)	10	10	44 (40-50)	10	10	25 (20-40)	10	10
Harding	150 Increase	Yes		46	190	306	25 (20-30)	116*	116	41 (35-48)	98*	98	30 (25-35)	153*	153	44 (38-51)	108	108	42 (37-47)	108	108	20 (15-26)	108	108	27 (22-32)	108	108
Hughes	30 Increase	No		50	36	55	22 (17-29)	40	40	34 (28-42)	40	40	26 (23-31)	40	40	54 (47-60)	30	30	43 (40-47)	30	30	50 (43-57)	30	30	54 (50-57)	30	30
Hutchinson	60 Increase	No		41	64	64	46 (41-51)	80	80	40 (34-46)	80	80	21 (18-24)	80	80	40 (34-46)	60	60	25 (20-32)	60	60	42 (37-47)	60	60	38 (32-44)	60	60
Jackson	150 Maintain	No		64	173	308	57 (53-62)	216	432	61 (56-66)	217	217	34 (29-40)	214	214	70 (65-75)	162	162	47 (42-53)	162	162	47 (40-54)	162	162	34 (28-40)	143	143
Jerauld	10 Increase	No		24	10	10	0	10	10	25 (20-40)	10	10	13 (10-25)	10	10	22 (20-30)	10	10	67 (60-70)	10	10	33 (30-40)	10	10	43 (30-60)	10	10
Jones	75 Increase	No		60	62	69	48 (38-59)	81*	81	43 (32-53)	75*	75	37 (26-48)	71*	71	43 (33-53)	77	77	27 (19-36)	77	77	30 (20-39)	81	81	56 (45-68)	80	80
Lincoln	80 Increase	No		40	98	98	35 (30-40)	100	100	34 (30-39)	99*	99	19 (15-22)	100	100	27 (24-31)	100	100	32 (27-36)	100	100	29 (24-34)	100	100	39 (34-44)	99	99
Lyman	100 Increase	No		57	129	206	40 (35-44)	162	162	50 (45-55)	162	162	28 (23-32)	162	162	36 (31-41)	108	108	35 (30-41)	108	108	27 (23-32)	108	108	43 (39-48)	107	107
Marshall/Roberts	330 Increase	No		50	404	508	43 (38-48)	500	500	45 (40-49)	500	500	40 (35-44)	400	400	47 (43-52)	400	400	43 (38-47)	400	400	46 (41-51)	400	400	54 (49-60)	400	400
Meade/Penngtn	300 Increase	No		66	352	704	45 (40-50)	349*	698	54 (49-59)	374*	748	38 (33-43)	306*	612	52 (47-57)	322	644	45 (40-50)	322	644	51 (46-57)	316	632	50 (45-56)	323	646
Mellette	350 Increase	No		63	527	1001	36 (31-41)	350*	350	47 (41-52)	332*	332	34 (29-39)	363*	363	46 (41-52)	376	376	29 (24-34)	376	376	41 (36-47)	349	349	46 (40-52)	378	378
Minnehaha	60 Increase	No		36	92	92	24 (21-27)	100	100	38 (34-43)	80	80	18 (15-22)	79	79	64 (57-71)	80	80	34 (28-40)	80	80	34 (28-40)	80	80	38 (32-44)	80	80
Moody	30 Increase	No		50	31	31	62 (57-65)	40	40	35 (29-41)	60	60	36 (30-43)	60	60	44 (38-50)	60	60	39 (32-46)	60	60	30 (24-36)	60	60	63 (57-69)	60	60
Oahe Downstream	0 Maintain	No		100	1	1	NA	5	5	100	1*	1	50 (50-50)	2*	2	100 (100-100)	2	2	0 (0-0)	2	2	NA	2	2	NA	1	1
Pennington-East	150 Increase	No		65	179	358	57 (52-62)	132*	264	51 (47-56)	165*	330	40 (35-45)	145*	290	51 (46-57)	166	166	48 (41-55)	166	166	55 (49-61)	146	146	55 (48-62)	216	216
Perkins	75 Increase	Yes		58	108	212	44 (36-53)	52*	104	60 (52-68)	62*	124	29 (23-35)	81*	162	44 (37-52)	94	188	39 (30-48)	94	188	35 (28-42)	70	140	33 (27-39)	108	216
Sanborn	20 Increase	No		41	43	47	25 (20-33)	40	40	8 (5-19)	20	20	15 (15-15)	20	20	50 (40-60)	20	20	12 (10-18)	20	20	17 (10-39)	10	10	75 (60-80)	10	10
Oglala Lakota	50 Increase	Yes		74	42	73	76 (64-85)	42*	84	49 (38-59)	61*	61	50 (40-60)	43*	43	70 (60-80)	44	44	32 (23-42)	44	44	27 (18-37)	38	38	39 (31-29)	30	30
Stanley	40 Increase	No		42	53	53	36 (31-41)	54	54	37 (31-43)	54	54	32 (27-39)	55	55	34 (27-42)	44	44	28 (25-33)	44	44	33 (30-39)	44	44	59 (51-67)	44	44
Todd	75 Increase	No		63	68	68	44 (34-53)	71*	71	43 (33-53)	69*	69	35 (25-46)	66*	66	49 (41-57)	78	78	29 (18-40)	78	78	40 (29-51)	62	62	43 (30-55)	80	80
Tripp	350 Increase	No		63	434	500	61 (56-66)	432	432	57 (52-62)	451	451	34 (30-39)	432	432	57 (52-62)	432	432	42 (37-47)	432	432	40 (34-45)	432	432	47 (41-53)	428	428
Turner	20 Increase	No		38	44	44	50 (40-60)	20	20	28 (25-30)	20	20	33 (25-46)	20	20	62 (45-75)	20	20	26 (25-30)	20	20	35 (30-45)	20	20	80 (61-90)	20	20
Union	120 Increase	No		47	123	123	38 (34-43)	160	160	47 (43-51)	119*	119	27 (23-31)	120	120	37 (32-42)	120	120	40 (36-44)	120	120	31 (28-35)	120	120	47 (43-51)	120	120
Yankton	200 Increase	No		49	217	217	36 (32-41)	280	280	46 (42-51)	230	230	33 (29-37)	230	230	47 (42-52)	229	229	51 (46-56)	229	229	45 (40-50)	260	260	53 (48-58)	260	260

Population Status or Surrogate Abundance	Low ≤1400 mean harvest from previous 2 spring hunting seasons	Moderate 1401-1899 mean harvest from previous 2 spring hunting seasons	High ≥1900 mean harvest from previous 2 spring hunting seasons
Population Objective	Increase	Maintain	Decrease
Justification	Turkey population objective based on surrogate abundance estimate given above. Turkey depredation on stored livestock forage is expected to be nonexistent or limited to isolated cases and should be adequately addressed through the wildlife damage management program. After all other tools have been exhausted, unique situations may be addressed using pool hunts, kill permits, or trap and transfer to areas with low turkey abundance when fall season is closed.	Turkey population objective based on surrogate abundance estimate given above. Manageable turkey depredation on stored livestock forage is expected, but should be adequately addressed through wildlife damage management program, fall hunting (if open), trap and transfer, or depredation pool hunts. After all other tools have been exhausted, unique situations may be addressed using kill permits when fall season is open or closed.	Turkey population objective based on surrogate abundance estimate given above. Turkey depredation on stored livestock forage is expected to be above desired levels, but can usually be addressed through wildlife damage management program, fall hunting, trap and transfer, or depredation pool hunts. After all other tools have been exhausted, unique situations may be addressed using kill permits when fall season is open. Indicators for this category would be moderate to overabundant populations causing moderate to major depredation among landowners in the unit.
A: Spring success 95% CI below or overlapping 30% previous 2 seasons	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and 1 license per person. Fall: Single any turkey licenses but limit to 200 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single any turkey licenses but limit to 400 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single or double any turkey licenses but limit to 1500 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.
B: Spring success 95% CI below or overlapping 30% 1 of previous 2 seasons	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single any turkey licenses but limit to 300 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single any turkey licenses but limit to 500 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single or double any turkey licenses but limit to 2000 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.
C: Spring success 95% CI above 30% previous 2 seasons	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single any turkey licenses but limit to 400 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single any turkey licenses but limit to 600 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.	Spring: Single bearded turkey licenses and up to 1 license for non-residents and 2 licenses for residents. Fall: Single or double any turkey licenses but limit to 2500 or less. Fall unit boundaries may be reduced in size.

Figure 2. Black Hills unit harvest strategy, 2021–2026.

Table 2. Black Hills wild turkey unit objectives and hunting statistics, 2014–2020. First, a surrogate abundance estimate is obtained using a 2-year mean of previous spring harvest which categorizes population status by levels of low (≤ 1400), moderate (1401-1899), or high (≥ 1900). Population objectives are based on the surrogate abundance estimates and include increase, maintain, or decrease.

Year	Hunter Success (95% C.I.)	Licenses sold	Spring Tags sold	Spring Harvest	Surrogate Abundance	Objective	Strategy ^a	Fall Tags Sold	Fall Harvest
2014	32 (29-35)		3944	3944	1258 1601 (Moderate)	Maintain	NA	810	100 males, 114 hens
2015	32 (28-36)		3877	3877	1258 1388 (Low)	Increase	NA	433	66 males, 62 hens
2016	39 (37-44)		4056	4056	1575 1258 (Low)	Increase	B	434	91 males, 55 hens
2017	39 (36-43)		4401	4401	1701 1417 (Moderate)	Maintain	C	433	87 males, 52 hens
2018	34 (29-36)		4567	4567	1441 1638 (Moderate)	Maintain	B	220	27 males, 26 hens
2019	32 (29-35)		4545	4545	1365 1403 (Moderate)	Maintain	A	216	34 males, 18 hens
2020	27 (23-30)		4733	4733	1287 1326 (Low)	Increase	A		

^aImplementation of harvest strategies did not occur until 2016. The harvest strategy is determined using the previous 2 years of harvest success. The “A” category is triggered for each population status level when spring harvest is at or below 30% (including 95% confidence intervals) for 2 consecutive years. The “B” category is triggered for each population status level when spring harvest is at or below 30% (including 95% confidence intervals) for 1 year, and is above for 1 year. The “C” category is triggered for each population status level when spring harvest is above 30% (including 95% confidence intervals) for 2 consecutive years.

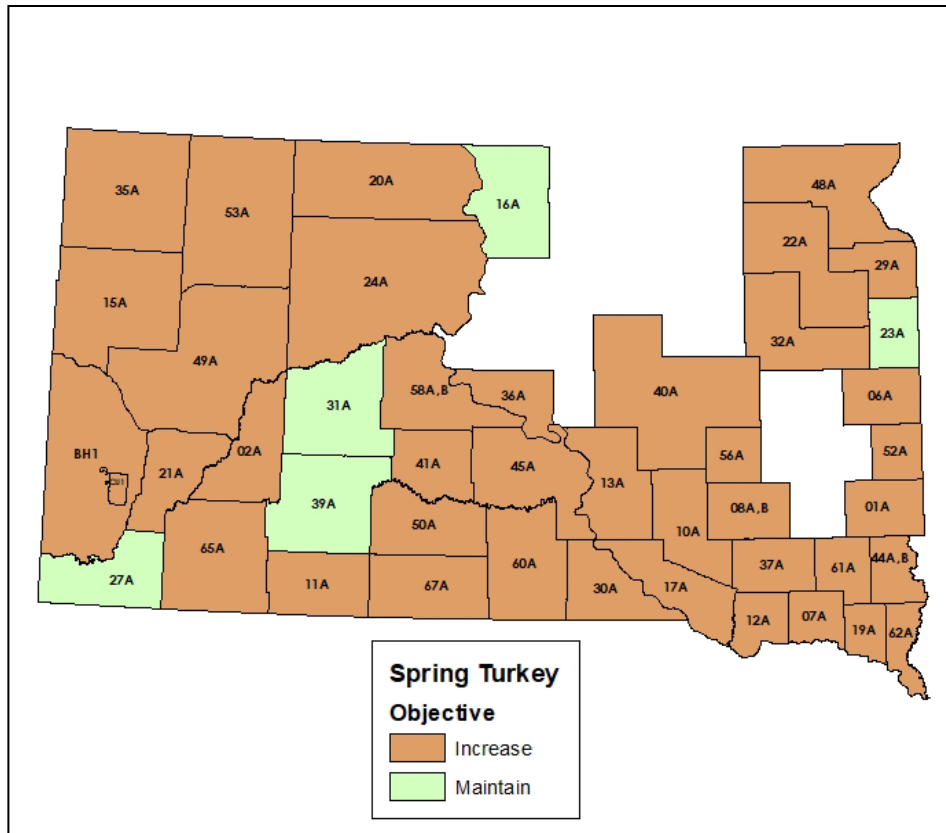


Figure 3. Unit-level population objectives for prairie, Black Hills, and Custer State Park spring hunting units, 2021.

MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

1. Annually determine status of wild turkey populations.
 - A: Where feasible, implement surveys including brood, winter flock composition, hunter harvest, and harvest composition.
 - B: Supplement survey data with research findings when available.
 - C: For units where adequate data exists, use population reconstruction and matrix projection models to predict population growth based on environmental factors.
2. Biannually review and set wild turkey management unit population objectives; use harvest strategies to manage population within identified population objectives.
 - A: Biannually review and set wild turkey management unit population objectives (*increase, maintain, decrease*) for Black Hills and prairie units and use season specific harvest strategies to develop a 2-year hunting season structure recommendation for the SDGFP Commission. Annually update unit objectives table which includes hunting statistics for each prairie hunting unit.
 - B: Biannually review wild turkey hunting units and develop 2-year recommendations to modify, remove, or add units based on available biological data, public input, and staff recommendations.
 - C: Use other tools such as trap and transfer operations within the state to meet unit-level population objectives.

Please refer to the Management of Wild Turkeys in South Dakota (found at <https://gfp.sd.gov/management-plans/>) for additional information related to achieving the management priorities.