



# SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA

APRIL 9-10, 2026 | PIERRE, SD  
MATTHEWS TRAINING CENTER

## MEETING INFO

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

**Date and Time:** April 9, 2026, from 1-5 pm CST and April 10, 2026, from 8 am-12 pm CST

**Meeting Location:** Matthews Training Center, 523 East Capitol Ave, Pierre, SD 57501

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

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

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

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

**Meeting ID:** 912 6417 6710

**Passcode:** 970458

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

## AGENDA

### Call Meeting to Order (1 pm CST / 12 pm MT)

#### Division of Administration

##### Action Items

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

##### Informational Items

5. Staff Introductions

#### Public Hearing

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

#### Open Forum (2 pm CST / 1 pm MT)

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

#### Petitions

6. Petition 251 Black Hills Elk Hunting
7. Petition 252 Walleye and Sauger Limit

#### Finalizations

8. Antelope and Turkey
  - a. Application for License

9. Deer
  - a. Application for Licenses
  - b. Deer Licenses
10. Elk Hunting Seasons
  - a. Application for License – Elk
  - b. Special Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Hunting Season
  - c. Prairie Elk Hunting Season
  - d. Black Hills and Custer State Park Elk Licenses
  - e. Prairie Elk Licenses
11. Waterfowl Hunting Seasons
  - a. August Management Take
  - b. Early Fall Canada Goose
12. Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season
  - a. Bighorn Sheep Hunting License Table

## **Division of Wildlife**

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### **Informational Items**

13. Lake Francis Case Update
14. Walleye Spawning 2026
15. Pete Lien and Sons Shooting Complex Update
16. License Sales Reports

## **Division of Parks and Recreation**

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### **Action Items**

17. Dock 44 Prospectus

### **Informational Items**

18. Custer State Park Wind and Fire Damage Update
19. Missouri River Outlook
20. Adventure 250 Program
21. Manager's Conference – Investing in our Employees
22. ARPA Summary
23. Tagged Fish Program
24. March and YTD Camping Unit and Revenue Reports

## **Solicitation of Agenda Items**

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

## **Adjourn**

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The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on May 7-8, 2026 starting at 1 pm MT at the Event Barn, Custer State Park, in Custer, SD.



# Commission Meeting Minutes

## South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

March 5-6, 2026 | State Library Commons, Pierre, SD

### REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING

#### Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the State Library Commons, in Pierre, SD on March 5, 2026. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Bruce Cull, Robert Whitmyre, Travis Theel, Dean Kirkeby, Chuck Spring, Kevin Nyberg, and Julie Bartling were present. With eight commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff could listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 103 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

#### 1. Conflict of Interest Disclosure [Action Item]

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

#### 2. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of the January 2026 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 2026 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 3. Additional Salary Days [Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. No additional days were submitted for approval.

#### 4. Election of Vice Chair [Action Item]

Chair Rissler opened the floor to nominations for the Commission Vice-chair Position due to vacancy of the position.

MOTIONED BY THEEL SECONDED BY BARTLING TO NOMINATE COMMISSIONER CULL FOR VICE-CHAIR. The motion carried unanimously.

#### 5. New Staff Introductions [Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation, introduced two new employees:

Dayton Gooder was hired as the new District Park Supervisor for the Oahe Downstream Park District. Dayton comes to GFP with a BS degree in Natural Resource & Rangeland Watershed Mgmt. from UW. He has extensive experience in the commercial outdoor recreation business.

Joe Gollither was hired as the new Park Technician for Angostura Recreation Area. Joe has an extensive background in mining and heavy equipment operation in the Wyoming and Rapid City areas. Joe and his family reside in Hot Springs.

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, introduced one new employee:

Brennen Hanes works out of the Mobridge office and is a habitat conservation technician.

#### 6. 2026 Legislative Update [Info Item]

Department Secretary Robling gave a brief update on the legislative items during the 2026 Legislative Session.



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### Public Hearing

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Deputy Secretary Scott Simpson opened the floor at 2:04 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance on matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda as “finalization.”

2:05 pm- 2:06 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society testified virtually in support of the finalization, Public Water Zoning and Iron Creek Lake Access Improvements.

Deputy Secretary Scott Simpson closed the public hearing closed at 2:07 pm.

### Open Forum

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Deputy Secretary Scott Simpson opened the floor at 2:07 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance on matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda, not as a finalization, or may not be on the agenda.

2:08 pm – 2:12 pm: Paul Lepisto of Pierre, SD, representing the Izaak Walton League, testified in person in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:12 pm – 2:13 pm: Hannah Welker of Pierre, SD, testified in person to make comments and suggestions on preference points.

2:14 pm – 2:17 pm: Nancy Hilding of Black Hawk, SD, representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program and Wildlife Damage Management Plan.

2:18 pm – 2:20 pm: Janet Moore of Rapid City, SD, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:21 pm – 2:24 pm: Susan Nolan of Rapid City, SD, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:24 pm – 2:26 pm: Dana Rogers of Hill City, SD, representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation and Jerauld Co Sportsmen, testified virtually in support of the Black Hills Elk Management Plan and also supporting jackrabbit hunting season.

2:26 pm – 2:29 pm: Alexey Egorov of Brookings, SD, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:30 pm – 2:32 pm: Jill Fritz representing Humane World for Animals, testified virtually on in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:32 pm – 2:35 pm: Julie Anderson of Rapid City, SD, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program and the Wildlife Damage Management Plan.

2:37 pm – 2:37 pm: Shawn Walters of Rapid City, SD, representing the Izaak Walton League, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:38 pm – 2:38 pm: Helen McGinnis, representing Prairie Hills Audubon Society, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

2:39 pm – 2:40 pm: Carol Merwin of Rapid City, SD, testified virtually in opposition of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

Deputy Secretary Scott Simpson closed the open forum at 2:40 pm CST.



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### **7. Public Water Zoning and Iron Creek Lake Access Improvements [Action Item: Finalization]**

Sam Schelhaas and Trenton Haffley presented the finalization to establish Iron Creek Lake in Lawrence County as a no-wake zone. There has been significant work done with the locals around the lake over the last year, which included a survey of the property. Additionally, there were many dilapidated docks and other structures in and around the lake that were removed. This lake is 24 acres in size and is used primarily by kayaks and paddle boards.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### **8. Lake Albert Waterfowl Refuge [Action Item: Finalization]**

Jacque Ermer, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, reported there were no recommended changes to the proposal nor were there any public comments regarding the removal of state waterfowl refuge status from Lake Albert Waterfowl Refuge in Grant County. Eight landowners whose property make up the refuge had formally requested the refuge status be removed.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE LAKE ALBERT WATERFOWL REFUGE STATUS. Motion carried unanimously.

### **9. Hunt for Habitat [Action Item: Finalization]**

Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, provided background on the codified law granting the Commission authority to promulgate rules for the Hunt for Habitat raffle. From 2019 through 2025, the Hunt for Habitat program generated more than \$2 million in revenue for habitat development and management on public lands. The Commission proposal included the removal of specific license packages from administrative rule and replacing them with a provision allowing “no more than ten big game licenses”. This change will now give the Commission the authority to modify and finalize future raffle packages through administrative action.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY NYBERG TO APPROVE THE HUNT FOR HABITAT FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

For 2026, the Hunt for Habitat raffle will include a total of ten licenses offered in the following packages: one Custer State Park Trophy Bison; one Custer State Park Trophy Bison and any white-tailed deer package; one any-deer license (statewide, excluding Custer State Park); and three any-deer (statewide, excluding Custer State Park) and elk packages.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE HUNT FOR HABITAT RAFFLE. Motion carried unanimously.

### **10. Application for Licenses [Action Item: Proposal]**

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented antelope and turkey draw information and the commission proposed to allow an individual to select a second choice within the first Antelope draw if they chose the Special Antelope hunting unit. This will result in a delay to the Special Antelope draw from mid-April to early July, and it will be included as a unit option in the firearm Antelope Hunting Season draw. The Nonresident Archery Antelope on public and private land draw will also be delayed to early-July. The commission also proposed a rule clean-up to the antelope and turkey draw structures and a change to remove the 3<sup>rd</sup> antelope draw, which has not been necessary because no licenses are available after the second draw.



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MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 11. Deer Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented recommendations to the commission for deer hunting seasons. The commission proposed changes to administrative rule to align the Landowner Free Antlerless Whitetail unit to match the Archery and Muzzleloader Antlerless Whitetail units. GFP staff also recommended a change to Archery and Muzzleloader licenses to restrict those to buck only and recommended a reduction in 700 East River Deer Hunting Season licenses that will occur across 12 hunting units in southeast South Dakota. The changes to deer license types and license numbers would occur via administrative action at the April meeting.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 12. Elk Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, and Andy Lindbloom, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented information to the commission regarding elk populations and management recommendations. The commission proposed changes to allow Landowner-Own-Land Antlerless Elk licenses to be available to qualifying resident landowners in any Prairie Elk Hunting unit. The commission also proposed creating an East River Elk Hunting unit, excluding Crow Creek Sioux Reservation, and standardizing all Prairie Elk Hunting Season dates to September 1 to December 31. In Custer State Park, the commission proposed to open the CSP Special Antlerless Elk Hunting Season. License number changes for all elk seasons were recommended, and the commission is scheduled to take administrative action on these license numbers at the April meeting.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE APPLICATION FOR ELK LICENSE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY NYBERG, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL CUSTER STATE PARK ANTLERLESS ELK PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY SPRING TO APPROVE THE PRAIRIE ELK PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

### 13. Waterfowl Hunting Seasons

[Action Item: Proposal]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented information to the commission regarding waterfowl populations and management recommendations. The commission proposed changes to reduce the daily bag limit from fifteen to eight for the August Management Take and Early Canada Goose Hunting Season. In addition, the commission proposed removing five counties from the August Management Take to reduce Canada goose harvest in those areas.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE AUGUST MANAGEMENT TAKE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY NYBERG, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE EARLY FALL CANADA GOOSE PROPOSAL FOR APRIL FINALIZATION. Motion carried unanimously.



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### 14. Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season

[Action Item: Proposal]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, and Chad Lehman, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented a recommendation to increase the number of bighorn sheep licenses from seven to eight. No action was needed on the proposal. The commission is scheduled to take administrative action on the final license numbers for the Bighorn Sheep Seasons in April.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN ON THE BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING SEASON PROPOSAL DUT TO NO CHANGE. THE FINALIZED VERSION WILL BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE COMMISSION IN APRIL 2026.

### 15. Canada Goose Action Plan

[Action Item: Wildlife]

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, presented information about the South Dakota Giant Canada Goose Action Plan Revision. The revised plan will span 2026-2030, at which time another revision will be completed. Minor changes to management options are meant to simplify and clarify options for field staff. The focus of the action plan is to provide objectives and strategies for hunting season recommendations based on biological survey information ,and to optimize hunter access and opportunities while mitigating agricultural damage.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

### 16. WDM Action Plan

[Action Item: Wildlife]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, provided a summary of the revision of the Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) Action Plan. The WDM program offers a variety of assistance tools and programs to help mitigate wildlife conflicts. The revised action plan includes the following four goals: 1) Support landowners in minimizing damage to livestock, crops, and property by delivering practical and responsive wildlife damage management services; 2) Promote strong landowner and stakeholder relations through effective communication; 3) Deliver excellent customer service and maintain program transparency; and 4) Strengthen and expand partnerships with landowners to promote habitat enhancement and increase public hunting access on private lands. Each goal has respective objectives, strategies, and action items. The planning team reviewed public comments and recommended the Commission adopt the plan as presented at the January meeting. Unanimous vote by the Commission to formally adopt the revised action plan.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADOPT THE ACTION PLAN. The motion carried unanimously.

### 17. Nest Predator Bounty Program

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife Division, provided background on the Nest Predator Bounty Program and went over recent discussions by the legislature wherein SB 148 was sent to the 41<sup>st</sup> Day. SB 148 was a bill introduced to cease the Nest Predator Bounty Program. The committee recommended to the Department and Commission to consider changes to that program such as for youth only, limit total expenditures to \$250,000, and limit the amount of bounty each youth could obtain.

Through discussions with legislators, Governor's Office, and the GFP Commission, it was determined to make some adjustments to the program. First, essentially the Nest Predator Bounty Program would be re-branded to the Youth Trapping Recruitment Program with a maximum of \$200,000 available for the program and only resident youth under the age of 18 can participate. Other aspects of the program remain the same as structured in the Nest Predator Bounty Program. Also, the other \$300,000 remaining from the funds used for the bounty program would be switched to create a coyote bounty program. Bounties would be \$30 per coyote, program would run from April 1 through July 1, and tails turned in under the same process as Youth



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Trapping Recruitment Program. The time period for coyote bounty coincides with peak calving and lambing as well as when deer and antelope are fawning.

### RESOLUTION 26-01

#### **Transition from Nest Predator Bounty Program to Youth Trapping Recruitment Program & Initiate Coyote Bounty Program**

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to SDCL 40-36-9, SDCL 41-2-16, and SDCL 41-2-34, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks may conduct programs to control wild animals. Furthermore, such programs have proven to expose people to South Dakota's outdoors and trapping tradition; and

**WHEREAS**, predator removal efforts on properties with habitat to increase nest success of pheasants and ducks has been used as a management technique in South Dakota for decades; and

**WHEREAS**, intensive predator removal efforts can enhance nest success of pheasants and ducks at localized levels when implemented at high intensities during the nesting season; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks has previously operated this program and paid all expenditures for this program from the fund established in SDCL 41-2-34 (license dollars); and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks recommends to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to transition the Nest Predator Bounty Program to the Youth Trapping Recruitment Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department also recommends to the Game, Fish and Parks Commission to initiate a Coyote Bounty Program; and

**WHEREAS**, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks will cover expenditures for the Coyote Bounty Program from the fund established in SDCL 41-2-34 (license dollars) and not Animal Damage Control funds as described in SDCL 40-36-15; and

**WHEREAS**, the additional removal of coyotes through a bounty program will assist with livestock depredation issues at a statewide level; and

**WHEREAS**, providing a bounty on coyotes during the time of year when the fur is not prime and that coincides with parturition season for deer and antelope will also enhance deer and antelope fawn survival by increasing coyote harvest participation during that time period.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission rescinds the resolution adopted in 2023 which provided the approval to the Department of Game, Fish and Parks to implement the Nest Predator Bounty Program through 2026.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission recognizes the Department of Game, Fish and Parks' desire to conduct the Youth Trapping Recruitment Program in 2026 and proposes the following: 1) an expenditure of ten dollars per tail for red fox, opossum, raccoon, striped skunk and badger, not to exceed \$200,000 for the Youth Trapping Recruitment Program; 2) participation is limited to South Dakota residents under the age of 18; 3) participants under the age of 18 harvesting eligible species are not required to have a license; and 4) the program will run from March 1 through July 1.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Youth Trapping Recruitment Program shall be operated from March 1 to July 1, 2026, to coincide with spring activity/movements of nest predators and the primary



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nesting season of pheasants, ducks, and other ground nesting birds. The method of take includes the trapping of eligible species in South Dakota.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Game, Fish and Parks Commission recognizes the Department of Game, Fish and Parks' desire to conduct a Coyote Bounty Program in 2026 and proposes the following: 1) an expenditure of thirty dollars per tail not to exceed \$300,000 for the Coyote Bounty program; 2) participation is limited to South Dakota residents; 3) participants under the age of 18 harvesting eligible species are not required to have a license; and 4) the program will run from April 1 through July 1.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Coyote Bounty Program shall be operated from April 1 to July 1, 2026, to coincide with the Department's focused time period where Wildlife Damage Specialists conduct coyote control measures to reduce impacts of livestock depredation and the primary fawning time for white-tailed deer, mule deer, and pronghorn. The method of take includes the shooting and trapping of coyotes in South Dakota.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY SPRING TO APPROVE THE RESOLUTION. The motion carried unanimously.

### 18. Elk Action Plan

[Info Item: Wildlife]

John Kanta, Terrestrial Section Chief, reviewed the draft elk action plan with the commission. Changes in the draft plan include removing the any elk license threshold and adjusting the any elk archery allocation from 25% to 30%. The commission asked the department to seek input on changing the current black hills elk population objective of 6,000 to 8,000 elk to an increased objective of 6,000 to 9,000 elk. As of the commission meeting, the department has received over 200 comments on the action plan and increased population objective. About 80% of the comments supported increasing the population objective. The commission directed the department to add the increased population objective to the draft action plan and put it out for another 60 days of public comment.

### 19. Lake Sharpe Fishery Update

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Bob Hanten, Wildlife Division Fishery Biologist, provided an update on the Lake Sharpe fishery. The 2025 Lake Sharpe walleye population is near the long-term average for abundance and suggests stable conditions in the coming years. Last fall, approximately 25% of sampled walleye exceeded the 15-inch minimum length limit, and growth rates approached 15 inches by age three, indicating moderate growth. Overall fish conditions remains stable, and fishing pressure and catch rates are consistent with historical averages. Strong incoming year classes are expected to support the fishery in 2026. In addition, paddlefish stocking efforts appear successful, with stocked fish exhibiting good condition; a new study is planned for 2026 to further evaluate the population. Zebra mussels are now present throughout Lake Sharpe, stressing the importance to clean, drain and dry watercraft to slow the spread.

### 20. Habitat Stamp Projects and 2025 Accomplishments

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, and Ryan Wendinger, Habitat Program Administrator, presented the project accomplishments for calendar year 2025 that were funded with Habitat Stamp funds. This included terrestrial, aquatic, and hunting and fishing access projects. Additionally, staff presented on the 2026-2028 Habitat Stamp Strategic Approach document that was developed to update the 2023-2025 document. The updated strategic approach document will guide efforts in the coming years using Habitat Stamp funds. The presentation identified the Habitat Stamp funding priorities, goals, and strategies for both aquatic and terrestrial projects.



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### 21. License Sales Reports

[Info Item: Wildlife]

Director Kirschenmann provided a brief overview of license sales from December 15 through February 28. Overall license sales going well, with small game ahead of last year, however fishing is slightly behind. Great weather and hunting conditions existed throughout January, but the ice fishing season was shortened due to the nice weather. Kirschenmann also reported that the Hunt for Habitat raffle is doing well, almost twice as much as last year when comparing same time period. Also, the Habitat Conservation license plate sales are doing better than expected with over \$158,000 coming in for decals.

### 22. Custer State Park Resort Lease RFP

[Action Item: Parks]

Sean Blanchette, Parks Division Business Administrator, was joined by consultant firm CHM Government Services to present the recommendations for prospectus and draft lease for the Custer State Parks concession business opportunity. Blanchette provided an overview of the history of the current lease, explained the expiration provisions that require the current process, and gave a brief update on the progress to this point. CHM provided a PowerPoint presentation to explain the prospectus underwriting process and background on valuation and assessment work completed as inputs to the draft contract structure. CHM provided a summary of the minimum lease term and fee structure recommended for advertisement and provided an overview of the principal selection factor themes on which proposals will be evaluated. CHM also provided information on a site visit for potential bidders, the planned messaging process for the prospectus, as well as a timeline for future process milestones of proposal receipt and evaluation, proposal selection, and contract award. Blanchette explained that the prospectus would be released by no later than March 10, 2026, with a target deadline to receive proposals of June 5, 2026. Blanchette requested authorization to advertise the prospectus with the recommended minimum lease terms, proposal selection criteria, and advertisement timeline as discussed.

MOTIONED BY NYBERG, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE CUSTER STATE PARK RESORT LEASE RFP. The motion carried unanimously.

### 23. 2026 Park Outreach Programs

[Info Item: Parks]

Rachel Comes, Parks Volunteer Coordinator, provided an update on South Dakota State Parks outreach efforts and programming. In 2025, parks hosted 2,236 programs and events with a total of 92,252 participants statewide. Outreach initiatives—including Library Checkout SD Parks, Go Fourth, and Park Rx—continue to introduce new audiences to state parks while promoting outdoor recreation and improved health. Comes also highlighted the 2026 park theme, Adventure 250: Make Your History in South Dakota State Parks, along with the upcoming Run for the Trees: Happy Little Virtual 5K new event planned for 2026.

### 24. DOT Collector Funds Program

[Info Item: Parks]

Adam Kulesa, Planning and Development Administrator, provided a brief overview of the DOT collector road program and asked for approval from the Commission on proposed FY27 collector road project list. Approval was affirmed and no formal action was taken/needed.

### 25. South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Fundraising Campaign

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation provided the Commission with an update on the SDPW Foundations campaign to raise \$10M to complete 30 projects across 19 state park and recreation areas. To date, over \$500K has been raised and the Parks Division received permission from the Foundation Board to complete 5 of the 30 projects by the end of this year with the hopes that these projects will encourage additional donations from the public. Planning and clearance work will also be completed this year on 4 additional projects in preparation when additional funding becomes available.



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### **26. YTD Camping Unit and Revenue Reports**

[Info Item: Parks]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Director of Parks & Recreation shared the YTD camping unit and revenue report information with the Commission. The Parks Division has seen a 34% increase in the YTD camping units for 2026 over 2025 with the nice weather SD has experienced this winter. Revenue YTD for 2026 is also up 4% over last year at this same time with annual park entrance license sales remaining strong for the year and camping units up 1%. Advance booking information for 2026 lodging was shared along with a comparative summary of 3-year averages for revenue and camping units.

### **24. Adjourn**

[Action Item]

A Regular Commission Meeting will be held on April 9-10 at the Matthews Training Center, Pierre, SD starting at 1 pm CST.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY WHITMYRE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 10:43 AM CST ON March 6, 2026. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Robling".

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary



**SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH & PARKS**

523 East Capital  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Chris.Petersen@state.sd.us  
(605)773-3396



**REQUEST FOR LISTS OF LICENSE HOLDERS**

Type of List Requested CURRENT ACTIVE FISHING AND HUNTING LICENSES WITH ADDRESSES.

Number of Licenses in list \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person, Entity, or Organization requesting list:

THOMAS DAVEE

Address of Person, Entity, or Organization:

3733 Southbank Cir.  
GREEN COVE SPRINGS, FL 32043

Purpose for which list will be used:

FOR A NATIONAL SPORTSMEN GROUP TO ADVOCATE AND  
PROMOTE PRO-HUNTING AND SPORTSMEN ACTIVITIES.  
THIS IS NOT FOR COMMERCIAL USE TO SELL ANY PRODUCTS  
OR MERCHANDISE.

The sale of lists by the Department of Game, Fish & Parks is authorized by SDCL 1-17-1 and ARSD 41:06:01:04, 05 and 06. A fee of \$100 per thousand names will be assessed for the sale of this list, or a minimum of \$100 whichever is greater.

Names will be provided on self-adhesive mailing labels unless otherwise specified. Unless requested and approved as part of this request, the license list will not include anyone under eighteen years of age. Names are for one-time use only and are to be used only by the person, entity or organization approved per this request.

Thomas Davee  
Authorized Signature of Purchaser

3.24.2026  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Commission Action



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

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

ID: 251

Petitioner  
Name: Klinton Rittberger

Address: 25110 RITTBERGER ROAD  
HERMOSA, SD 57744

Email: klrittberger@gmail.com

Phone: 605-431-6253

Rule  
Identification: 41:06:26:01 BLACK HILLS ELK HUNTING ESTABLISHED

Describe  
Change: The request is to include cow elk season with bull elk season at the beginning of October in unit H4.

Reason for  
Change: For the last several years, it seems the cow elk season being the last two weeks of October and the first two week of December have been insufficient of obtaining our goals of controlling the herd population. It is a fairly represented opinion to open the cow season at the beginning of October the as with the bull season. What we generally see for the cow season in December is that the elk herds have generally split into smaller herds and are harder to locate because of their erratic patterns of movement. This usually creates a burden on licensed hunters from east river to find time (due to either work, weather, or driving) to come back to a landowner's property which they have permission to hunt and find the elk have moved to another property where permission might not be granted. We need to take advantage of the beginning of the elk season in October when the herds are more consistent in pattern with the possibility of extending the cow elk season all through the month of December. The H4 unit is becoming more of a residential area which I believe is disrupting the pattern of elk habitat that we have seen for the past 20 years. With the increase in residential and investment property purchases, we are seeing properties that don't allow public hunting which makes it more of a challenge and burden for hunters. To achieve proper control of the elk population, it would be best to allow cow season to begin the first of October.



## South Dakota - Game, Fish, and Parks

**Petition for Rule Change**

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

ID: 252  
Petitioner Name: Wes Chmela  
Address: Box 182  
Oacoma , SD 57365  
Email: [Wes.chmela@gmail.com](mailto:Wes.chmela@gmail.com)  
Phone: 605-730-1021

Rule Identification: Walleye/sauger limit and season

Describe Change: Limit change from 4 to 2 in the months of Jan Feb and March. Or complete closure of the walleye take from 1/1 to 4/1 on lake Francis case from platte winner bridge to Ft Thompson for boat fishing.

Reason for Change: I would like to see change in the limit and or the season on upper lake Francis Case. I'm a resident and avid fisherman who has steadily seen it become increasingly harder to enjoy upper lake Francis Case. As the weather patterns seem to be more favorable for winter boating and early spring outings it seems as though the pressure is taking it toll. The lake is plenty capable of producing great numbers of walleyes but by mid May it's almost impossible to take a day trip out of chamberlain and have a decent chance to catch a limit of keeper fish. In my personal opinion the single biggest factor in this is the fact that there's been so many years of early warm weather the resident fish are all being picked apart before the late spring and early summer fishing ever gets started. Locals and guides alike are driving 60-80-100 miles in May to fish due to not being able to fish out of the immediate chamberlain area and have a real chance at a nice limit of fish. I've lived here all my life I've guided I've fished tournaments and I fish for fun as well and anyone that fished here can tell you this lake is getting picked over so early in the year that the legal fish are wiped out way before many guys get a chance to take their wives and children on the river. I rely just as much on the tourism economy as the next guy as

I sell products out of convenience stores I'm not wanting to see a loss in revenue in the towns that rely on it. What I would like to see is it be there for more people to enjoy later into the year. I know net surveys show plenty of legal fish but those are done in September after all the 14in fish have 3 months to grow to that legal size maybe do them same surveys in June I bet the results are staggering maybe not prove me wrong. I run a small walleye fishing night out of chamberlain and I tell you it's a struggle for a lot of guys to weigh just 4 fish on a league night in May and June them used to be the two best months to fish outta chamberlain. I not here to ruffle any feathers or hurt any feelings I am here to extend the season into the early summer for family's to enjoy not just your warriors from surrounding states to come and fill their freezers. Ideally I'd like to see it catch and release only 1/1 to 4/1 out of a boat. But I'd be ok with saying 2 fish none over 20in 1/1 to 4/1 as well to see if that would extend the season into the summer for more people and family's with kids to enjoy. Today is 3/20 there was 237 boats out of the ramps in chamberlain and idk how many out of platte and fr Thompson but I can tell you I seen zero boats with kids under 16 just a guess but very very few kids. 70% are out of state 2-3 guys filling their freezers. Thank you for your time I look forward to working on a solution to this matter. Sincerely, Wes Chmela

## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Application For Licenses – Antelope and Turkey Chapter 41:06:01 and 41:06:23

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b> <b>Public Hearing</b> <b>Finalization</b>	<b>March 5-6, 2026</b> <b>April 9, 2026</b> <b>April 9-10, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b> <b>Pierre</b> <b>Pierre</b>
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#### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** Beginning in 2026

**Changes from last year (no changes from proposal):**

- 1) Modify § 41:06:23:01 to allow an individual applying for the Special Antelope unit within the Antelope Season to select a 2<sup>nd</sup> choice in the 1<sup>st</sup> draw (Figure 1).
- 2) Modify § 41:06:01:09 to more accurately describe the antelope and turkey season draw structures (Figures 1 and 2).

#### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The Special Antelope Unit is described in administrative rule as a unit within the Antelope Hunting Season. As such, this unit should be treated as a unit choice within the Antelope Hunting Season. Previously the Special Antelope unit lottery draw was run in an earlier, separate draw. The department recommendation will align the draw structure with the unit definition in administrative rule and allow hunters to select the Special Antelope Unit during the Antelope Hunting Season application. The recommended changes to § 41:06:01:09 will describe the draw structures for antelope and spring turkey. Previously, the 2<sup>nd</sup> draw for those seasons was not described.

Figure 1. Recommended Prairie Antelope draw structure. Custer State Park Antelope is a separate season, but the same draw structure applies per § 41:06:01:09.

<b>Draw</b>	<b>Prairie and Custer State Park Antelope</b>
<b>Special Antelope</b>	<del>1 application. Applicant can't apply again until 2<sup>nd</sup> draw.</del> Removed.
<b>1 &amp; 2</b>	1 application per draw, each with two-unit choices. 1 license limit through 1 <sup>st</sup> two draws <u>Special antelope is a unit choice within each of these draws.</u>
<b>3</b>	<u>Unlimited applications. Resident and nonresident licenses pooled.</u>
<b>4</b>	Removed

Figure 2. Spring and Fall Turkey draw structure. No recommended change to draw structure, but recommendation to modify rule to specifically describe the second draw.

Draw	Spring and Fall Turkey
1 & 2	1 application per draw, each with two unit choices. Resident and nonresident licenses separate. 1 license limit through 1 <sup>st</sup> two draws
3	Resident and nonresident licenses pooled 1 application limit
4	Unlimited applications

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

41:06:01:09. Application for unsold big game licenses -- Future eligibility. In antelope and turkey season units, where resident and nonresident licenses are limited in number and licenses remain unsold after a ~~second~~ first lottery drawing, a person may apply for one leftover license in that season if the person does not possess a license for that season. After the ~~third~~ second lottery drawing, resident and nonresident licenses are pooled and a person may apply for an unlimited number of leftover licenses on a first-come, first-served basis. ~~Nonresidents are not eligible for East River spring turkey or East River fall turkey licenses except for licenses unsold after the second lottery drawing. The purchase of an antelope or turkey license under this section does not affect the eligibility of the applicant in future lottery drawings.~~

In turkey season units, where resident and nonresident licenses are limited in number and licenses remain unsold after a first lottery drawing, a person may apply for one leftover license in that season if the person does not possess a license for that season. After the second lottery drawing, resident and nonresident licenses are pooled and a person may apply for one leftover license in that season. After the third lottery drawing, a person may apply for an unlimited number of leftover licenses on a first-come, first-served basis. Nonresidents are not eligible for East River spring turkey or East River fall turkey licenses except for licenses unsold after the second lottery drawing.

A person who possesses two licenses for any of the Black Hills, East River, West River, refuge, Custer State Park, or muzzleloader deer hunting seasons may not apply for a license in the second combined lottery drawing for these seasons. A person who possesses one license may apply for one additional license for a different season if the person does not possess a license for that season. A resident may submit one application for each season in the third lottery drawing if the resident does not possess a license for that season. In the fourth lottery drawing, a resident may submit no more than five applications.

~~\_\_\_\_\_~~In the third and fourth lottery drawings, a nonresident who does not possess a license may submit two applications for a season and a nonresident who possesses one license may submit one application for a different season ~~if the nonresident does not possess a license for that season~~. After the fourth lottery drawing, a person may obtain an unlimited number of licenses from a pool of remaining resident and nonresident licenses.

If licenses remain unsold after the initial lottery drawing for the Black Hills elk hunting season, the prairie elk hunting season, and the archery elk hunting season, a person who does not already have an elk license may apply for a license in a second or subsequent lottery drawing if the person submits the nonrefundable application fee and the applicable license fee with the application. The purchase and receipt of a first-choice elk license during the first lottery drawing counts as a successful application and affects eligibility in future first lottery drawings for the same season as provided in subdivision 41:06:01:15(2).

The purchase and receipt of an elk license in the second lottery drawing by the use of preference points is a successful application and affects eligibility in future lottery drawings for ~~these seasons~~ the same season as provided in subdivision 41:06:01:15(2). The purchase and receipt of an elk license in the second lottery drawing without the use of preference points, or the purchase and

receipt of an elk license in subsequent drawings, does not affect eligibility or preference in future lottery drawings for ~~these seasons~~ the same season.

41:06:23:01. Antelope hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses. The antelope hunting season is open from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset, for sixteen consecutive days, beginning on the Saturday closest to October first, ~~unless prohibited in the unit descriptions in § 41:06:23:02~~. No more than eight thousand one-tag antelope licenses, no more than three thousand two-tag antelope licenses, and no more than fifty "special antelope" licenses may be issued to residents for the antelope hunting season. No more than fifty "special antelope" licenses may be issued to nonresidents for the antelope hunting season. ~~If a person applies for a "special antelope" license, the person may not apply for another antelope license until the second lottery drawing.~~ A successful "special antelope" applicant may not apply for a leftover "special antelope" license.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

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

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

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



## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Application For Licenses - Deer Chapter 41:06:01

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	Proposal	March 5-6, 2026	Pierre
	Public Hearing	April 9, 2026	Pierre
	Finalization	April 9-10, 2026	Pierre

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Duration:** Beginning in 2026

**Changes from last year (no changes from proposal):**

- 1) Modify § 41:06:01:07 to remove the license tag type specifications for antelope, deer, and elk landowner-own-land in rule and use administrative action to designate tag types for those seasons.
- 2) Modify § 41:06:01:13 to strike the word “multiple” to make landowner free antlerless whitetail licenses available in East River and West River Deer Season units that offer single antlerless deer licenses.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

The recommended change to § 41:06:01:07 will allow the GFP Commission to use administrative action to change license types for antelope, deer, and elk. This will provide more flexibility to change tag types and more effectively reduce female harvest, where desired, to increase abundance.

The recommended change to § 41:06:01:13 will follow the change made during the Deer Action Plan Revision in 2025 to more closely align antlerless harvest units open to archery, muzzleloader, and landowner-own-land free antlerless whitetail deer licenses.

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

41:06:01:07.03. Landowner own land license types. For the West River, East River, and Black Hills firearm deer hunting seasons, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one ~~“any deer”~~ single-tag deer license or one two-tag ~~“any deer” and “any antlerless deer”~~ deer license. For the antelope firearm hunting season, a qualifying landowner or owner-operator may purchase one ~~“buck antelope”~~ single-tag antelope license. For the prairie elk hunting season units as described in subdivision 41:06:01:15(4), a qualifying landowner or lessee may purchase one single-tag elk ~~“antlerless elk”~~ license.

41:06:01:13. Designation of areas where free antlerless deer licenses can be used by farmers and ranchers -- Requirements and restrictions. Antlerless licenses authorized by SDCL 41-6-19.8 may be issued to any qualifying farmer or rancher for use in the West River, East River, apprentice hunter, youth, archery, and muzzleloading deer hunting units. Antlerless whitetail deer licenses ~~will~~ must be available to qualifying applicants in hunting units that offer ~~a deer license with multiple tags for antlerless deer~~ an antlerless deer license in the lottery drawing for the East River and West River deer seasons.

           The requirements and equipment restrictions for each deer season apply to any ~~free antlerless~~ license issued under this section.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None.

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

None.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None.

APPROVE     MODIFY     REJECT     NO ACTION



## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

### Deer Hunting Season License Types

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

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	Public Hearing Finalization	April 9, 2026 April 9-10, 2026	Pierre Pierre
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#### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

With an objective to increase deer numbers, particularly in southeast South Dakota, the following recommendations would result in changing archery and muzzleloader deer licenses from “any deer” to “any buck deer” license types and reducing East River Deer licenses by 700 (4%) for “any deer”, “any buck deer”, and “any whitetail deer” in twelve hunting units.

#### COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

##### ARCHERY, LANDOWNER-OWN-LAND, AND MUZZLELOADING DEER LICENSE TYPES

Unit	Area	License Type
ARD-ST1	Statewide Archery	Any Buck Deer
ARD-ER1	East River Archery	Any Buck Deer
ARD-WR1	West River Archery	Any Buck Deer
ARD-LM1	Designated Archery Units	Antlerless Whitetail
ARD-MP1	Custer Archery	Antlerless Deer
ARD-MP2	Rapid City Archery	Antlerless Deer
ARD-MP3	Sioux Falls and surrounding area Archery	Antlerless Deer
ARD-MP4	Closed Archery	Closed
MZD-ST1	Statewide Muzzleloader	Any Buck Deer
MZD-LM1	Designated Muzzleloader Units	Antlerless Whitetail
LED-ER1	East River Landowner-Own-Land	Any Deer or Any Deer and Any Antlerless Deer
LWD-WR1	West River Landowner-Own-Land	Any Deer or Any Deer and Any Antlerless Deer
LBD-BH1	Black Hills Landowner-Own-Land	Any Deer or Any Deer and Any Antlerless Deer

**2026 EAST RIVER DEER**

Unit #	Unit Name	Resident Licenses				Totals
		Any Deer 01	Any Buck 02	Any Whitetail 11	Antlerless Whitetail 13	RES Tags
01A	Minnehaha	300				300
03A	Brown	600			300	900
04A	Beadle			450		450
05A	Codington	400			200	600
06A	Brookings	400			100	500
07A	Yankton		50			50
07B	Yankton					0
08A	Davison		50			50
10A	Aurora			200		200
12A	Bon Homme		50			50
12B	Bon Homme					0
13A	Brule	50		500		550
13L	Brule	20				20
14A	Buffalo	50		150		200
16A	Campbell	30		350		380
17A	Charles Mix			200		200
18A	Clark	600			200	800
19A	Clay		50			50
22A	Day	600			300	900
23A	Deuel	500			100	600
25A	Douglas			150		150
26A	Edmunds	500			200	700
28A	Faulk	600			400	1000
29A	Grant	400			100	500
32A	Hamlin	600			100	700
33A	Hand	10		300		310
34A	Hanson		100			100
36A	Hughes	150		250		400
37A	Hutchinson		50			50
38A	Hyde	10		300		310
40A	Jerauld			200		200
42A	Kingsbury	500			200	700
43A	Lake	300			100	400
44A	Lincoln		50			50
46A	McCook	200				200
47A	McPherson	500			400	900
48A	Marshall	500			50	550
51A	Miner	400			350	750
52A	Moody	300			100	400
54A	Potter	50		400		450
55A	Roberts	500			50	550
56A	Sanborn			150		150
57A	Spink	700			200	900
59A	Sully	100		75		175
59B	Sully	20		75		95
61A	Turner		50			50
62A	Union		50			50
63A	Walworth	50		400	100	550
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9,940</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>4,150</b>	<b>3,550</b>	<b>18,140</b>

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

Unit #	Unit Name	2025 Resident Tags	2026 Resident Tags	# Change	% Change
01A	Minnehaha	400	300	-100	-25%
03A	Brown	900	900	0	0%
04A	Beadle	450	450	0	0%
05A	Codington	600	600	0	0%
06A	Brookings	500	500	0	0%
07A	Yankton	100	50	-50	-50%
07B	Yankton	0	0	0	NA
08A	Davison	100	50	-50	-50%
10A	Aurora	200	200	0	0%
12A	Bon Homme	100	50	-50	-50%
12B	Bon Homme	0	0	0	NA
13A	Brule	550	550	0	0%
13L	Brule	20	20	0	0%
14A	Buffalo	200	200	0	0%
16A	Campbell	380	380	0	0%
17A	Charles Mix	200	200	0	0%
18A	Clark	800	800	0	0%
19A	Clay	100	50	-50	-50%
22A	Day	900	900	0	0%
23A	Deuel	600	600	0	0%
25A	Douglas	150	150	0	0%
26A	Edmunds	700	700	0	0%
28A	Faulk	1,000	1,000	0	0%
29A	Grant	500	500	0	0%
32A	Hamlin	700	700	0	0%
33A	Hand	310	310	0	0%
34A	Hanson	150	100	-50	-33%
36A	Hughes	400	400	0	0%
37A	Hutchinson	100	50	-50	-50%
38A	Hyde	310	310	0	0%
40A	Jerauld	200	200	0	0%
42A	Kingsbury	700	700	0	0%
43A	Lake	400	400	0	0%
44A	Lincoln	100	50	-50	-50%
46A	McCook	250	200	-50	-20%
47A	McPherson	900	900	0	0%
48A	Marshall	550	550	0	0%
51A	Miner	750	750	0	0%
52A	Moody	400	400	0	0%
54A	Potter	450	450	0	0%
55A	Roberts	550	550	0	0%
56A	Sanborn	250	150	-100	-40%
57A	Spink	900	900	0	0%
59A	Sully	175	175	0	0%
59B	Sully	95	95	0	0%
61A	Turner	100	50	-50	-50%
62A	Union	100	50	-50	-50%
63A	Walworth	550	550	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>18,840</b>	<b>18,140</b>	<b>-700</b>	<b>-4%</b>

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



## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Application For Licenses - Elk Chapter 41:06:01

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>March 5-6, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 9, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 9-10, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

#### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration:** Beginning in 2026

**Changes from last year (no changes from proposal):**

- 1) Modify § 41:06:01:15 to add all open Prairie Elk Season units to Landowner-Own-Land resident-only antlerless elk licenses. New units where this would be available are PRE-15A, PRE-49A, and PRE-ERA (new proposed unit).

#### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Landowner-own-land resident only antlerless elk licenses have been available in select Prairie Elk Hunting Season units the past two hunting seasons. They are used to expand hunting opportunity for landowners wanting to harvest antlerless elk on their property to address potential depredation concerns. To align with Elk Action plan strategies the recommendation is to make landowner-own-land resident only antlerless elk licenses available in all Prairie Elk Hunting Season units.

#### DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:01:15. Elk application requirements. The following requirements and restrictions apply to all license applications for elk seasons:

- (4) A person is eligible for a landowner-on-own-land license, pursuant to SDCL 41-6-19.9, by owning or leasing a minimum of two hundred forty acres of land within any of the following open prairie elk hunting season units ~~unit~~, as described in chapter 41:06:59: ~~PRE-09A, PRE-11D, PRE-11E, PRE-27A, PRE-35A, PRE-35B, and PRE-WRA~~. Any qualifying landowner's grandparent, parent, spouse, child, child's spouse, or grandchild who lives on the ranch unit or in the closest community and has an active role in the ranch operation also qualifies. Only one qualifying applicant per ranch unit per year may purchase the license. A qualifying applicant for a ranch unit may not purchase the license if any qualifying member of the ranch unit holds an elk license obtained using landowner-operator preference, as provided in subdivision (3), in the prairie elk hunting season. For purposes of this subdivision, a ranch unit means all private property owned or leased for agricultural purposes by written agreement by an individual qualifying landowner in the state. A ranch unit may not be subdivided for the purpose of qualifying for more than one landowner-on-own-land elk license. The elk may be harvested only on land that is owned or leased by the qualifying landowner within the designated open prairie elk hunting season unit.

#### RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

None.

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

None.

#### FISCAL IMPACT

None.

APPROVE     MODIFY     REJECT     NO ACTION



## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Special Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:47

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>March 5-6, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 9, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 9-10, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

#### **PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Duration of Proposal:** 2026 and 2027 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** Oct. 15 – 31 and Dec. 1 – 16, 2026  
Oct. 15 – 31 and Dec. 1 – 16, 2027

**Licenses:** Last year there were 0 “Antlerless Elk” licenses.

Unit license and tag type recommendations included in administrative action document.

#### **Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. The unit is open within the boundaries of Custer State Park.
2. No person may possess more than one (1) elk license of any type in a year.
3. No more than two persons may submit applications together.
4. There is no landowner preference for this season.
5. No person who receives a license in the first drawing for this season shall be eligible to apply for a Special Custer State Park antlerless elk license in first drawings for next nine years.
6. Any elk that is harvested must be inspected by a Department representative within 24 hours after kill.

#### **Changes from last year:**

1. Modify § 41:06:47 to specify unit boundary, season dates, application eligibility, and the option to provide up to one hundred “antlerless elk” licenses during the Special Custer State Park Antlerless Season. Actual license number recommendations for the next two years will be finalized in following administrative action sheets.

#### **Changes from proposal:**

1. Modify § 41:06:47 to include two season dates within the Special Custer State Park Antlerless Season. Unit CAE-CU1 will be open from October 15 through 31 and CAU-CU2 will be open from December 1 through 16.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

The elk population in Custer State Park was estimated at 765 during the 2025 winter helicopter survey which is above the population objective of 500-600 elk. Antlerless harvest is necessary in Custer State Park to move the population towards objective.

The proposed maximum number of elk licenses is established in administrative rule and the GFP Commission may propose and finalize the specific number of licenses and tag types and allocations amongst hunting units via administrative action.

The proposed change to create two season within the Special Custer State Park Antlerless Season will be used to disperse hunters more evenly during the season to maximize harvest opportunity and satisfaction.

License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years will be provided and finalized in subsequent action sheets.

Table 1. Hunters, applicants, and harvest by year during the Special CSP antlerless elk season.

Year	Hunters	Applicants	Harvest Success	Bull Harvest	Cow Harvest
2014-2015	Season Closed				
2016	20	3,138	90%	0	18
2017	29	3,436	86%	1	24
2018	23	3,175	19%	0	4
2019-2025	Season Closed				

## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:47:01. Special Custer State Park antlerless elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates. The special Custer State Park "antlerless elk" hunting season is open from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day of the season and is restricted by chapter 41:06:07. No more than twenty one hundred "antlerless elk" licenses may be issued for the special Custer State Park "antlerless elk" hunting season. The special Custer State Park "antlerless elk" hunting season for Unit CAE-CU1 is open from October fifteenth through October thirty-first. The special Custer State Park "antlerless elk" hunting season for Unit CAE-CU2 is open from December first through December sixteenth.

41:06:47:02. Open units. ~~Units CAE-CU1 and CAE-CU2 are established for the special Custer State Park antlerless elk hunting season. The areas open to elk hunting under this chapter are within the boundaries of Custer State Park.~~

~~Units CAE-CU1 and CAE-CU2 are open to that portion of Custer State Park south of the R&D Pasture fence line.~~

41:06:47:06. ~~Special antlerless elk population management licenses. The Game, Fish, and Parks Commission may, by resolution, authorize Unit 557-CUC and the number of "antlerless elk" licenses that may be issued. Unit 557-CUC licenses shall be valid for nine consecutive days beginning on the first Saturday following January 1. Repealed.~~

41:06:47:07. ~~Licensee selection process -- Payment of fee. The department may select an alternate pool of licensees for the special antlerless elk population management license by lottery during the drawing for licenses established in § 41:06:47:02. After determining the number of additional licenses required, the department shall call the hunters in their order on the list until the required number of hunters agree to participate in the hunt. The department shall provide the hunter with the license, tag, map, and elk check-in procedures. The license fee as provided in § 41:06:02:03 shall be paid to the department before the issuance of the license and tag. Repealed.~~

~~41:06:47:08. Eligibility of license holders for future elk seasons affected. Issuance to a person of an elk license under § 41:06:47:03 affects the person's future eligibility for other elk licenses available under this chapter. The licensee is considered to have received a first-choice unit antlerless elk license through the regular Custer State Park antlerless elk season for the year. Repealed.~~

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

None

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

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? More hunting opportunity
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes

#### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Additional revenue from Custer State Park special antlerless license sales at \$200 each.

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



## GAME, FISH, AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION FINALIZATION

### Prairie Elk Hunting Season Chapter 41:06:59

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b> <b>Public Hearing</b> <b>Finalization</b>	<b>March 5-6, 2026</b> <b>April 9, 2026</b> <b>April 9-10, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b> <b>Pierre</b> <b>Pierre</b>
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#### PROPOSED CHANGES

**Duration of Proposal:** 2026 and 2027 hunting seasons

**Season Dates:** See Figure 1 and 2 for maps.

Prairie Units (PRE)	License Types	Season Dates
09A, 11B*, 15A, 27A, 35A*, 35B*, 49A*, ERA*, WRA	Both	Sept 1 - Dec 31

\* See recommended changes.

**Licenses:** Last year there were 136 resident “Any Elk” licenses and 280 “Antlerless Elk” licenses.

Unit license and tag type recommendations included in administrative action document.

**Open Areas:** See Figure 1 and Figure 2.

**Requirements and Restrictions:**

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

**Changes from last year (no changes from proposal):**

1. Modify § 41:06:59:01 to expand season dates and license types for:
  - a. PRE-11B from Sep. 1 to Oct. 15 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31 and include antlerless elk licenses in this season (currently only includes any elk).
  - b. PRE-35A and PRE-35B from Sep. 15 to Dec. 31 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31.
  - c. PRE-49A from Sep. 15 to Oct. 31 and Dec. 1 to 31 to Sep. 1 to Dec. 31 (currently includes both any elk and antlerless elk license types)
2. Modify § 41:06:59:02 to create a new unit for elk hunting east of the Missouri River (PRE-ERA).
3. Modify § 41:06:59:01 to allow unlimited any elk licenses for unit PRE-ERA and specify season dates from Sep. 1 to Dec. 31 for this new unit.

## SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Through natural dispersal, elk occasionally are observed east of the Missouri River. Recommended changes to objectives in the Elk Action Plan Revision for 2026, are to manage for no established elk populations in this area. Because there is more privately owned land and more row crop agriculture, elk are likely to cause unacceptable levels of agricultural depredation east of the Missouri River. The department recommendation is to address potential elk depredation by providing an unlimited number of elk licenses east of the Missouri River.

To more effectively address potential agricultural depredation, the department recommends to expand season dates in PRE-15A and PRE-49A and to include those units in the landowner-own-land prairie elk hunting unit. A final recommendation to increase hunting opportunity is to expand the season dates in Harding County units PRE-35A and PRE-35B to include the first two weeks in September.

License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years will be shared on the following administrative action sheet.

Figure 1. Map of 2025 Prairie elk season hunting units.

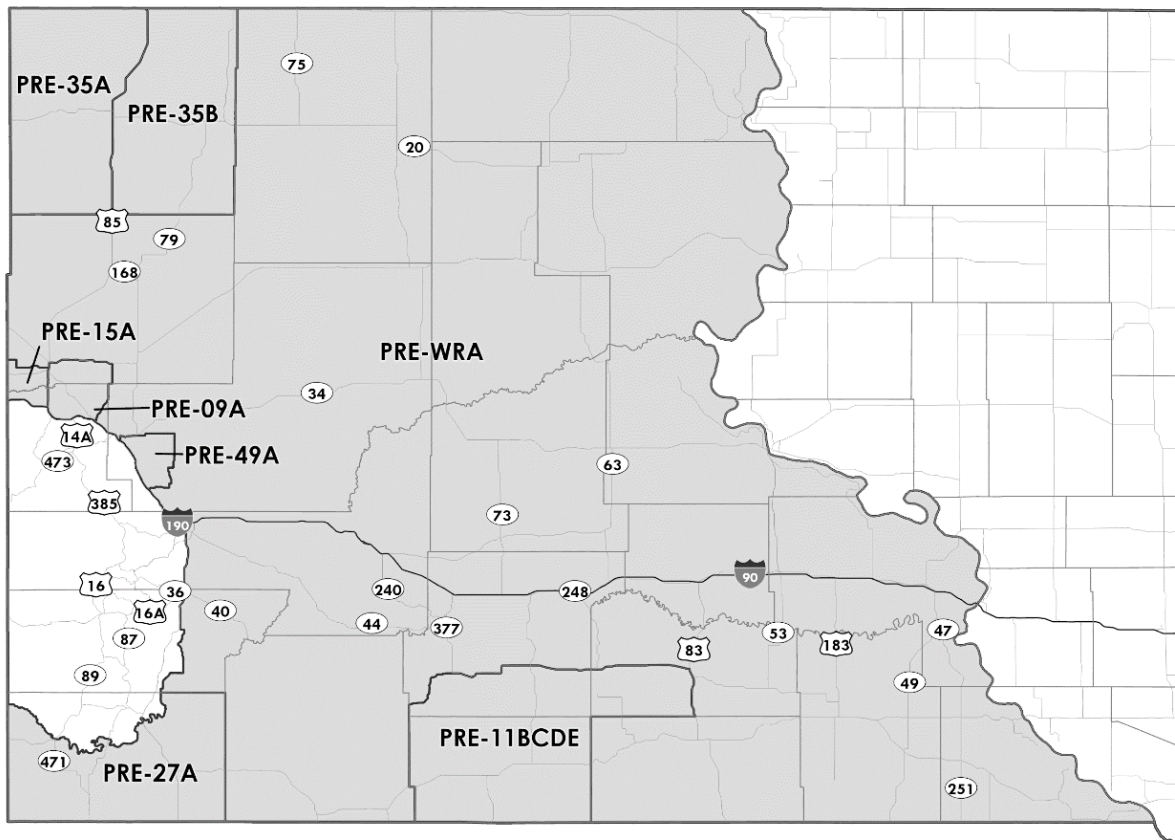


Figure 2. Map of recommendation for Prairie elk season hunting units.

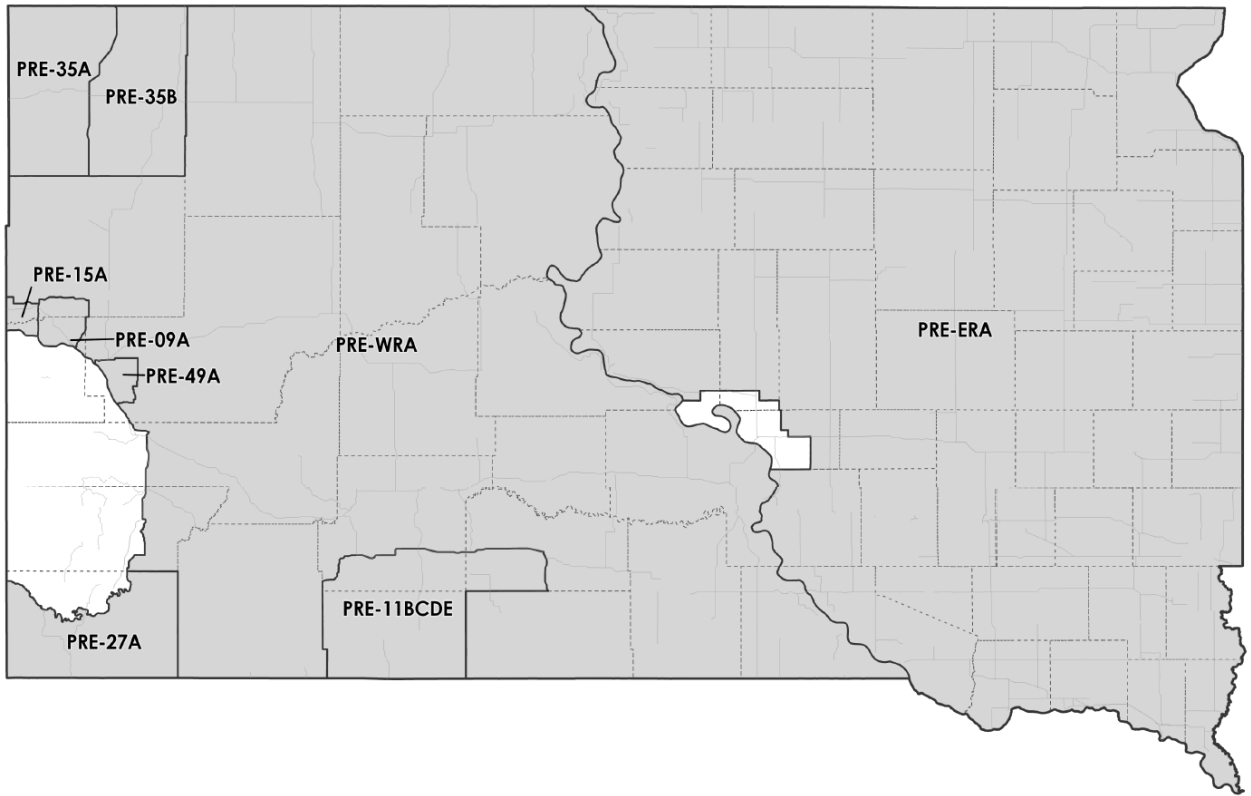


Table 1. Recommended changes to season dates and license types available.

Units	License Types	Season Dates
PRE-09A	Both	Sept 1 - Dec 31
PRE-11B	<del>Any Elk</del> <u>Both</u>	<del>Sept 1 - Oct 31</del> <u>Sept 1 - Dec 31</u>
<del>PRE-11D</del>	<del>Antlerless Elk</del>	<del>Sept 1 - Oct 31</del>
PRE-11E	Antlerless Elk	<del>Nov 1 - Dec 31</del>
PRE-15A	Both	Sept 1 - Dec 31
PRE-27A	Both	Sept 1 - Dec 31
PRE-35A	Both	<del>Sept 15 - Dec 31</del> <u>Sept 1 - Dec 31</u>
PRE-35B	Both	<del>Sept 15 - Dec 31</del> <u>Sept 1 - Dec 31</u>
PRE-49A	Both	<del>Sept 15 - Oct 31 AND Dec 1 - 31</del> <u>Sept 1 - Dec 31</u>
<u>PRE-ERA</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Sept 1 - Dec 31</u>
PRE-WRA	Both	Sept 1 - Dec 31

Table 2. Prairie elk hunters, applicants, harvest success, and harvest by year.

Year	Licensed Hunters	Applicants	Harvest Success Rate	Bulls Harvested	Cows Harvested
2014	92	1,725	64%	33	25
2015	98	2,119	55%	29	25
2016	148	2,272	40%	32	27
2017	149	2,249	50%	41	34
2018	139	3,080	79%	59	51
2019	140	3,831	65%	41	50
2020	251	4,532	57%	56	87
2021	257	4,912	50%	57	71
2022	270	5,037	48%	74	55
2023	258	5,438	51%	78	53
2024	334	6,212	49%	91	73
2025	405	6,437	45%	101	83

Table 3. Prairie landowner-own-land resident antlerless elk hunters, applicants, harvest success, and harvest by year.

Year	Licensed Hunters	Harvest Success Rate	Bulls Harvested	Cows Harvested
2024	114	32%	0	36
2025	187	37%	0	69

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

41:06:59:01. Prairie elk hunting season established -- Number and type of licenses available -- Season dates. The prairie elk hunting season is open from one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset each day of the season. ~~No~~ For the prairie season, no more than two hundred "any elk" licenses and no more than four hundred "antlerless elk" licenses may be issued for the prairie elk hunting season units west of the Missouri River, and the number of licenses for units east of the Missouri River is unlimited. The prairie elk hunting seasons are as follows:

- (3) Unit PRE-11B is open from September first through ~~October fifteenth~~ December thirty-first;
- (11) Unit PRE-35A is open from September ~~fifteenth~~ first through December thirty-first;
- (12) Unit PRE-35B is open from September ~~fifteenth~~ first through December thirty-first;
- (17) Unit PRE-49A is open from September ~~fifteenth~~ first through ~~October thirty-first~~ and from December first through December thirty-first; and
- (18) Unit PRE-WRA is open from September first through December thirty-first; and
- (19) Unit PRE-ERA is open from September first through December thirty-first.

41:06:59:02. Open units. The open units for the prairie elk hunting season are as follows:

- (1) Unit PRE-09A: those portions of Lawrence and Butte Counties within a line beginning at the intersection of U.S. Highways 85 and 212, then east on Highway 212 to Whitewood Valley Road, then south on Whitewood Valley Road to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to U.S. Highway 85, and then north on U.S. Highway 85 to the point of beginning;
- ~~(2) Unit Units PRE-11A, PRE-11B, PRE-11C, PRE-11D, PRE-11E, and PRE-11F: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;~~
- ~~(3) Unit PRE-11B: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;~~
- ~~(4) Unit PRE-11C: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;~~
- ~~(5) Unit PRE-11D: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;~~
- ~~(6) Unit PRE-11E: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;~~
- ~~(7) Unit PRE-11F: Bennett County, the portion of Jackson County south of State Highway 44 and Bureau of Indian Affairs Highway 2, and those portions of Mellette County south of State Highway 44 and west of U.S. Highway 83;~~
- ~~(8) Unit Units PRE-15A and PRE-15B: the portion of Butte County within a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border, east on Sourdough Road to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then north to the point of beginning;~~
- ~~(9) Unit PRE-15B: the portion of Butte County within a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Wyoming border, east on Sourdough Road to U.S. Highway 85, then south on U.S. Highway 85 to Interstate 90, then west on Interstate 90 to the South Dakota-Wyoming border, then north to the point of beginning;~~
- ~~(10)(4) Unit PRE-27A: the portion of Fall River County not included in BHE-H3 or BHE-H4 as described in 41:06:26:01;~~
- ~~(11)(5) Units PRE-35A, PRE-35C, and PRE-35D: the portion of Harding County west of U.S. Highway 85;~~
- ~~(12)(6) Units PRE-35B, PRE-35E, and PRE-35F: the portion of Harding County east of U.S. Highway 85;~~
- ~~(13)(7) Unit PRE-49A: the portion of Meade County within a line beginning at the junction of Interstate 90 and Elk Creek Road, then east on Elk Creek Road to Ricard Road, then north on Ricard Road to Tilford Road, then east on Tilford Road to Middle Alkalai Road, then north on Middle Alkalai Road to Alkalai Road, then west on Alkalai Road to SD Highway 34, then west on SD Highway 34 to Interstate 90, then south on Interstate 90 to the point of beginning;~~~~and~~
- ~~(14)(8) Unit PRE-WRA: the portion of the state west of the Missouri River not associated with another prairie elk unit, Custer State Park, or any Black Hills elk unit described in chapter 41:06:26; and~~
- (9) Unit PRE-ERA: the portion of the state east of the Missouri River, excluding the interior boundary of the Crow Creek Reservation.

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

None.

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

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? No.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? Yes, elk hunting opportunity will be expanded.

3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers, and outdoor recreationists? They will have additional hunting opportunity.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes by providing more opportunity.

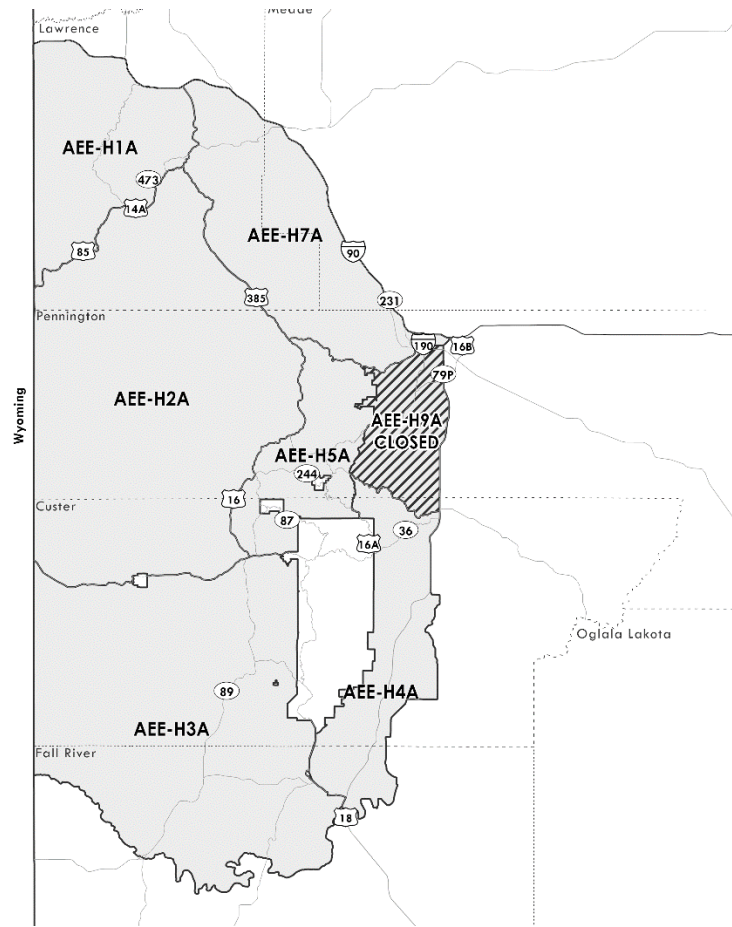
### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Additional elk licenses may be sold, but the financial impact is expected to be minimal based on the very low numbers of elk east of the Missouri River.

APPROVE _____	MODIFY _____	REJECT _____	NO ACTION _____
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Figure 2. Map of Archery Elk Season hunting units in the Black Hills.



**COMMISSION ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION**

**Duration of Proposal:** 2026 and 2027 hunting seasons

**Licenses:** Reduce licenses by 415 (19% decrease). Antlerless elk licenses would be decreased by 520 for all Black Hills seasons, and 50 antlerless elk licenses would be added in Custer State Park. Any elk licenses would be increased by 40 for all Black Hills seasons and 15 for all Custer State Park seasons.

**2025**

<b>Black Hills (Firearm) Elk</b>			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	80		
H1B		100	
H2A	350		
H2B		100	
H2C		100	
H2D		50	
H2E		125	
H2F		125	
H2G		125	
H2H		10	
H2I		10	
H2J		10	
H3A	120		
H3B		45	
H3C		45	
H3D		45	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	40		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	35		
H7B		50	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,845</b>

**2026 and 2027**

<b>Black Hills (Firearm) Elk</b>			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	80		
H1B		75	
H2A	400		
H2B		75	
H2C		75	
H2D			
H2E		25	
H2F		10	
H2G		10	
H2H		5	
H2I		5	
H2J		5	
H3A	120		
H3B		45	
H3C		45	
H3D		45	
H3E		60	
H3F		60	
H3G		60	
H4A	40		
H4B		40	
H5A	5		
H7A	20		
H7B		50	
H9A	15		
H9B		40	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>680</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>1,410</b>

**2025**

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

**2026 and 2027**

<b>Archery (Black Hills) Elk</b>			
Unit	Resident Licenses		
	Any Elk 21	Atl Elk 23	
H1A	30	5	
H2A	130	30	
H3A	40	30	
H4A	10	10	
H5A	2		
H7A	10	10	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>307</b>

**2025**

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

**2026 and 2027**

<b>CSP Early (Archery) Elk</b>		
<b>Season</b>	<b>Resident Licenses</b>	
	<b>Any Elk</b>	<b>Atl Elk</b>
	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>
CEE-CU1	15	

**2025**

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

**2026 and 2027**

<b>CSP (Firearm) Elk</b>		
<b>Season</b>	<b>Resident Licenses</b>	
	<b>Any Elk</b>	<b>Atl Elk</b>
	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>
CUE-CU1	35	
RAFFLE	1	

**2025**

<b>CSP Special (Antlerless) Elk</b>		
<b>Season</b>	<b>Resident Licenses</b>	
		<b>Atl Elk</b>
		<b>23</b>
CAE-CU1		
CAU-CU2		
<b>TOTAL</b>		

**2026 and 2027**

<b>CSP Special (Antlerless) Elk</b>		
<b>Season</b>	<b>Resident Licenses</b>	
		<b>Atl Elk</b>
		<b>23</b>
CAE-CU1		25
CAE-CU2		25
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>50</b>

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

**August Management Take  
Chapters 41:06:16**

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>March 5-6, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 9, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 9-10, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Duration of Recommendation:** 2026 hunting season

**Season Dates:** August 15 - 31

**Open Area:** Meade County south of South Dakota Highway 34, Pennington County west of the Cheyenne River, and the counties of Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Hamlin, Grant, Marshall, and Roberts.\*  
*\* Recommendation to remove Brown, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, and Spink.*

**Daily Bag Limit:** 8\* Canada geese (no possession limit)  
*\* Recommendation to reduce the daily bag limit of 15 to 8.*

**Licenses:** Unlimited, resident only.

**Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Annual Small Game or Combination license, and
  - a. State Migratory Bird Certificate.
  - b. Federal Waterfowl Stamp is not required.
2. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.
3. All other restrictions are the same as during the Early Fall and Regular Canada Goose Season.

**Changes from last year (no changes from proposal):**

- 1) Modify § 41:06:16:07 to remove Brown, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, and Spink counties from the August Management Take unit.
- 2) Modify § 41:06:16:09 to reduce the August Management Take daily bag limit from fifteen to eight. There is no possession limit.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

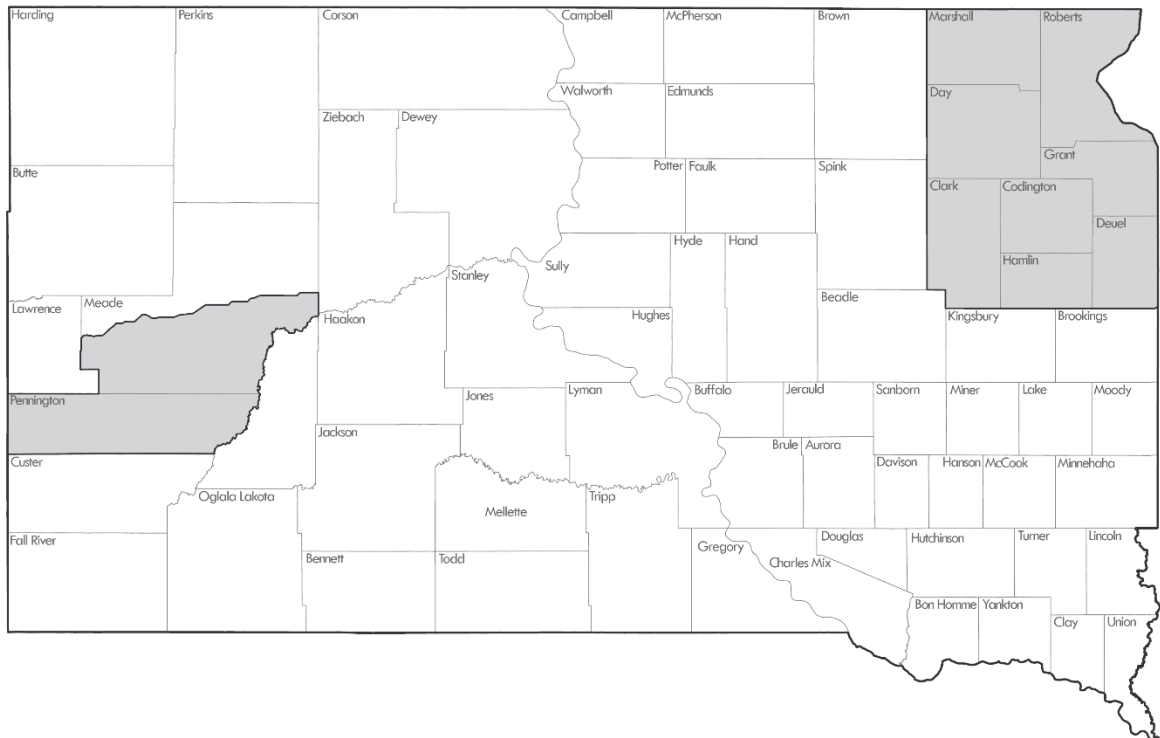
Based on the Giant Canada Goose Action Plan, the current 3-year average spring giant Canada goose population index in South Dakota of 155,594 is within the objective range of 115,000-165,000 (Figure 2). A daily bag of eight and possession limit of twenty-four geese is recommended in the Action Plan management decision table (Table 1). In addition, Canada goose depredation has been manageable in five counties in northeast South Dakota and no longer will need the added harvest pressure from the August Management Take. The Department recommendation is to remove McPherson, Edmunds, Faulk, Brown, and Spink counties from the August Management Take.

Table 1. Summary comparison of the 2012-25 August Management Take Canada goose seasons.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Hunters</b>	<b>Harvest</b>	<b>Average Days Hunted</b>	<b>Average Season Bag</b>
2012	3,581	36,757	3.08	10.26
2013	2,345	18,592	3.42	7.93
2014	2,302	20,671	3.24	8.98
2015	1,686	10,221	3.03	6.06
2016-20*	Unk	Unk	Unk	Unk
2021	2,463	24,942	2.33	10.13
2022	1,603	14,094	2.47	8.79
2023	1,263	11,035	2.50	8.74
2024	985	11,350	2.58	11.52
2025	774	7,356	2.55	9.50

\*The 2016-20 seasons were open only in Pennington County west of the Cheyenne River.

Figure 1. Recommended areas open to hunting (gray shaded areas) for the Canada Goose August Management Take. Brown, Edmunds, Faulk, McPherson, and Spink counties are recommended to be removed based on the 3-year spring Canada Goose population index.



## DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

41:06:16:07. Goose hunting season, conservation order, and August management take established -- Shooting hours -- Exceptions -- Open units -- Closed areas. The light goose hunting season is open statewide for one hundred and five consecutive days beginning on the last Saturday of September. A conservation order is open statewide from the day after Unit 2 dark goose season ends to May fifteenth. Only light geese, as defined in § 41:06:16:06.01, may be taken during a conservation order.

As used in this article, a conservation order is as described in 50 C.F.R. § 21.180 (February 7, 2022).

Additionally, an August Management Take for Canada geese is open to South Dakota residents beginning on the third Saturday of August through August thirty-first in Meade County south of South Dakota Highway 34, Pennington County west of the Cheyenne River, and the counties of ~~Brown, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Edmunds, Faulk, Hamlin, Grant, Marshall, McPherson, and Roberts, and Spink.~~

The white-fronted goose season is open statewide for seventy-four consecutive days beginning on the last Saturday of September.

The dark goose season is open statewide as provided for in this section:

(1) Unit 1: the counties of Aurora, Beadle, Brookings, Brown, Butte, Campbell, Clark, Codington, Corson, Davison, Day, Deuel, Douglas, Edmunds, Faulk, Grant, Haakon, Hamlin, Hand, Hanson, Harding, Hutchinson, Jackson, Jerauld, Jones, Kingsbury, Lake, McCook, McPherson, Marshall, Meade, Mellette, Moody, Miner, Oglala Lakota, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink, Todd, Turner, Walworth, and Ziebach; that portion of Dewey County north of Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 8, Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 9, and the section of U.S. Highway 212 east of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Road 8 junction; that portion of Potter County east of U.S. Highway 83; that portion of Sully County east of U.S. Highway 83; portions of Hyde, Buffalo, Brule, Charles Mix, and Bon Homme counties north and east of a line beginning at the Hughes-Hyde county line on State Highway 34, then running east to Lees Boulevard, then southeast to the State Highway 34, then east seven miles to 350th Avenue, south to Interstate 90 on 350th Avenue, then south and east on State Highway 50 to Geddes, east on 285th Street to U.S. Highway 281, and then north on U.S. Highway 281 to the Charles Mix-Douglas county boundary; the portion of Bon Homme County north of State Highway 50, the portions of Yankton and Clay counties north of a line beginning on County Highway 585 (306th Street), then running to U.S. Highway 81, then north on U.S. Highway 81 to 303rd Street, then east on 303rd Street to 444th Avenue, then south on 444th Avenue to 305th Street, then east on Bluff Road (305th Street) to County Highway 19, then south to State Highway 50, and then east to the Clay/Union County line; the portion of Perkins County west of State Highway 75 and south of State Highway 20; that portion of Lincoln County west of State Highway 17 and south of County Highway 116 (Klondike Road); and the portion of Minnehaha County north of a line beginning at the junction of the South Dakota-Minnesota state line and County Highway 122 (254th Street) then running west to its junction with County Highway 149 (464th Avenue), the portion west of County Highway 149 (464th Avenue) to Hartford, the portion west of County Highway 151 (463rd Avenue) to State Highway 42, the portion south of State Highway 42 to State Highway 17, and the portion west of State Highway 17 to the Minnehaha-Lincoln county boundary. The season is open for one hundred and seven consecutive days, less the number of days set aside for the early fall Canada goose season established in chapter 41:06:50; and

(2) Unit 2: those portions of the state not described in Unit 1. The season is open for one hundred and five consecutive days preceding and including the Sunday closest to February fifteenth.

Except for the light goose conservation order, shooting hours for geese are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset daily. The shooting hours for the light goose conservation order are one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset daily.

41:06:16:09. Bag and possession limits on geese. The daily bag limit in Unit 1, as described in subdivision 41:06:16:07(1), during the goose hunting season may include no more than fifty light geese, eight geese that may be a combination of Canada geese and black brant, and three white-fronted geese. The daily bag limit in Unit 2, as described in subdivision 41:06:16:07(2), during the goose hunting season may include no more than fifty light geese, four geese that may be a combination of Canada geese and black brant, and three white-fronted geese. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit, except there is no possession limit for light geese.

There is no daily bag or possession limit for light geese taken during a conservation order.

During the August Management Take, the daily bag limit is ~~five~~ eight Canada geese. There is no possession limit for Canada geese during the August Management Take.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None

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

None

**FISCAL IMPACT**

None

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

**GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION  
FINALIZATION**

**Early Fall Canada Goose  
Chapters 41:06:50**

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>March 5-6, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>April 9, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>April 9-10, 2026</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

**PROPOSED CHANGES**

**Duration:** 2026 hunting season

**Season Dates:** September 1 - 30                      **Open Area:** Unit 1 (see Figure 1)

**Daily Limit:** 8\* Canada Geese                      **Possession Limit:** 24\* Canada Geese

*\* Recommendation to reduce the daily bag limit of 15 to 8. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.*

**Licenses:** Unlimited resident, limited nonresident.

**Requirements and Restrictions:**

1. Residents: Annual Small Game or Combination license, and
  - a. State Migratory Bird Certificate and Federal Waterfowl Stamp.
2. Nonresidents: Nonresident Waterfowl license, and
  - a. State Migratory Bird Certificate and Federal Waterfowl Stamp.
3. Shooting hours are one-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

**Changes from last year (no changes from proposal):**

- 1) Modify § 41:06:50:03 to reduce the daily bag limit from fifteen to eight. The possession limit is three times the daily bag limit.

**SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION**

Based on the Giant Canada Goose Action Plan, the current 3-year average spring giant Canada Goose population index in South Dakota of 155,594 is within the objective range of 115,000-165,000 (Figure 2). A daily bag of eight and possession limit of twenty-four geese is recommended in the Action Plan management decision table (Table 1).

Figure 1. Goose Units.

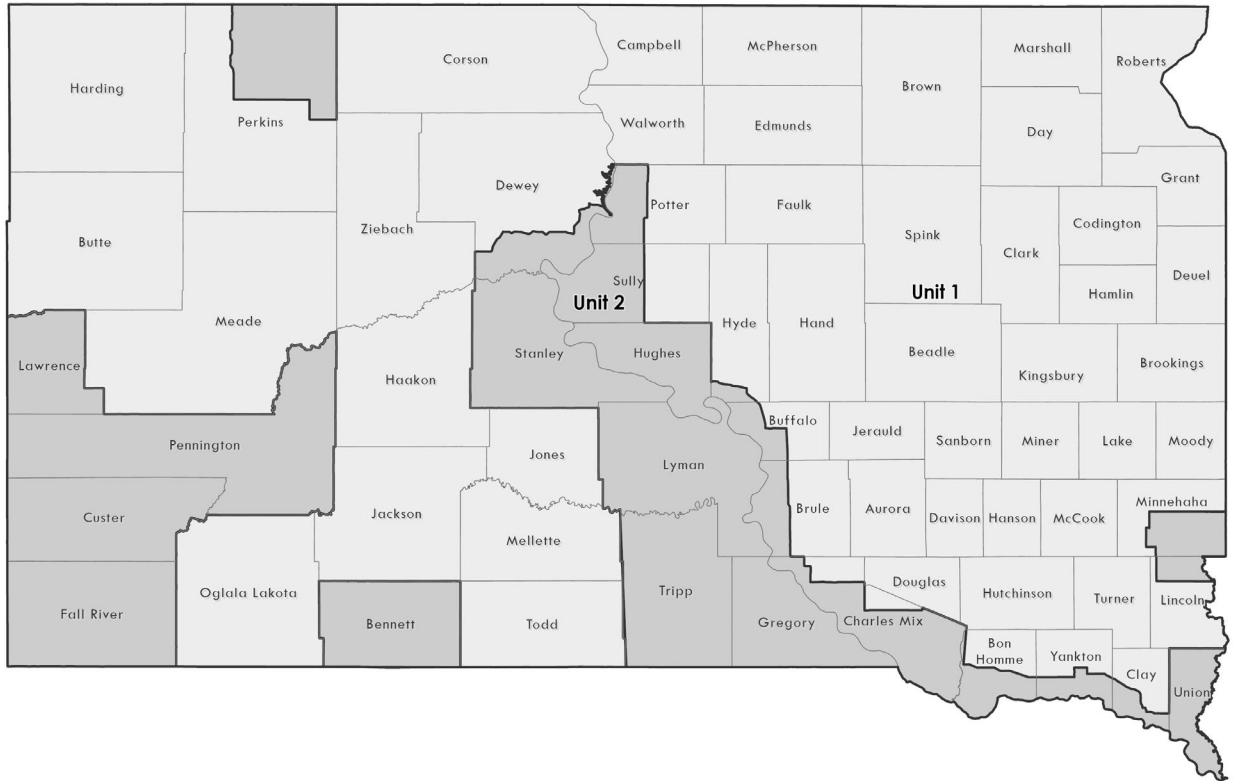


Figure 2. South Dakota Giant Canada Goose spring population index 3-year average from 1998 to 2025.

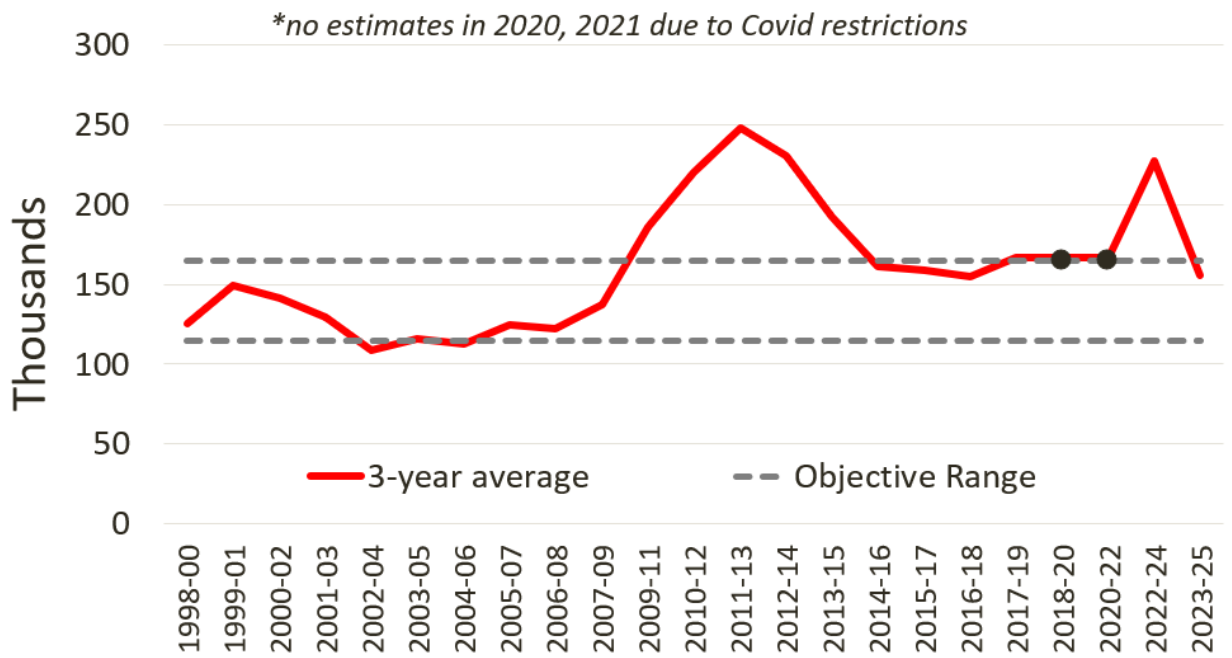


Table 1. Management decision table from the Giant Canada Goose Action Plan 2026-2030.

"MANAGEMENT TOOLS"	RESTRICTIVE MANAGEMENT	MODERATE MANAGEMENT	LIBERAL MANAGEMENT
	<i>Increase Population</i>	<i>Maintain Population</i>	<i>Decrease Population</i>
Justification	<p>Canada goose population below objective based on available biological data. Also consider hunter survey comments, landowner comments public comments, and field staff observations.</p> <p>Goose depredation on row crops is expected to be limited and should be adequately addressed through the wildlife damage management program.</p> <p>Non-lethal tools will primarily be used, including the promotion of alternative vegetation near wetlands; however, unique situations may be addressed using nest work or kill permits.</p>	<p>Canada goose population at objective based on available biological data. Also consider hunter survey comments, landowner comments, public comments, and field staff observations.</p> <p>Manageable Canada goose depredation on row crops is expected and should be adequately addressed through wildlife damage management program.</p> <p>Non-lethal tools will primarily be used, including the promotion of alternative vegetation near wetlands; but chronic depredation issues may be addressed using nest work or kill permits.</p>	<p>Canada goose population above objective based on available biological data. Also consider hunter survey comments, landowner comments, public comments, and field staff observations.</p> <p>Goose depredation on row crops is expected to be above desired levels. The wildlife damage management program has difficulty addressing requests in a timely manner. Non-lethal tools will be used, including the promotion of alternative vegetation near wetlands; but nest work and kill permits may be used more frequently to row crop damage.</p> <p>Indicators for this category would be moderate to overabundant populations causing moderate to major depredation issues.</p>
Spring Population Index (3-Year Average)	Below 115,000	115,000-165,000	Above 165,000
Regular Season Days	Full Framework	Full Framework	Full Framework
Regular Season Daily Bag	Daily Bag: Unit 1: 4 Units 2: 4	Daily Bag: Unit 1: 8 Units 2: 4	Daily Bag: Unit 1: 8 Units 2: 4
Early Fall Season (Unit 1)	Yes (Evaluate Season Length) Daily Bag: 4	Yes Daily Bag: 8	Yes Daily Bag: 15
August Management Take	Available only for human safety concerns.	Available in areas with unacceptable levels of crop depredation or human safety concerns.  Daily Bag: 8	Available in areas with unacceptable levels of crop depredation or human safety concerns.  Daily Bag: 15

Table 2. Comparison of the 2015 - 2024 Early Fall Canada goose harvest statistics

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number Hunters</i>	<i>Harvest</i>	<i>Average Season Bag</i>
2015	3,883	20,735	5.34
2016	3,366	27,660	8.22
2017	3,226	25,808	8.00
2018	2,716	17,904	6.59
2019	3,000	21,054	7.02
2020	3,857	33,769	8.76
2021	3,671	33,179	9.04
2022	3,034	28,547	9.41
2023	3,008	25,764	8.57
2024	2,664	22,025	8.27

**DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES**

41:06:50:03. Daily and possession limits. The daily limit is ~~15~~ eight Canada geese. A person may have in possession possess no more than ~~three times the daily limit of~~ twenty-four Canada geese taken according to the daily limit.

**RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA**

None

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

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user's ability to participate? Waterfowl hunters will have a lower bag and possession limit during this season.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users? No, but the recommendation is designed to conserve goose populations.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? The recommendation will allow sustainable goose hunting opportunity.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? NA.

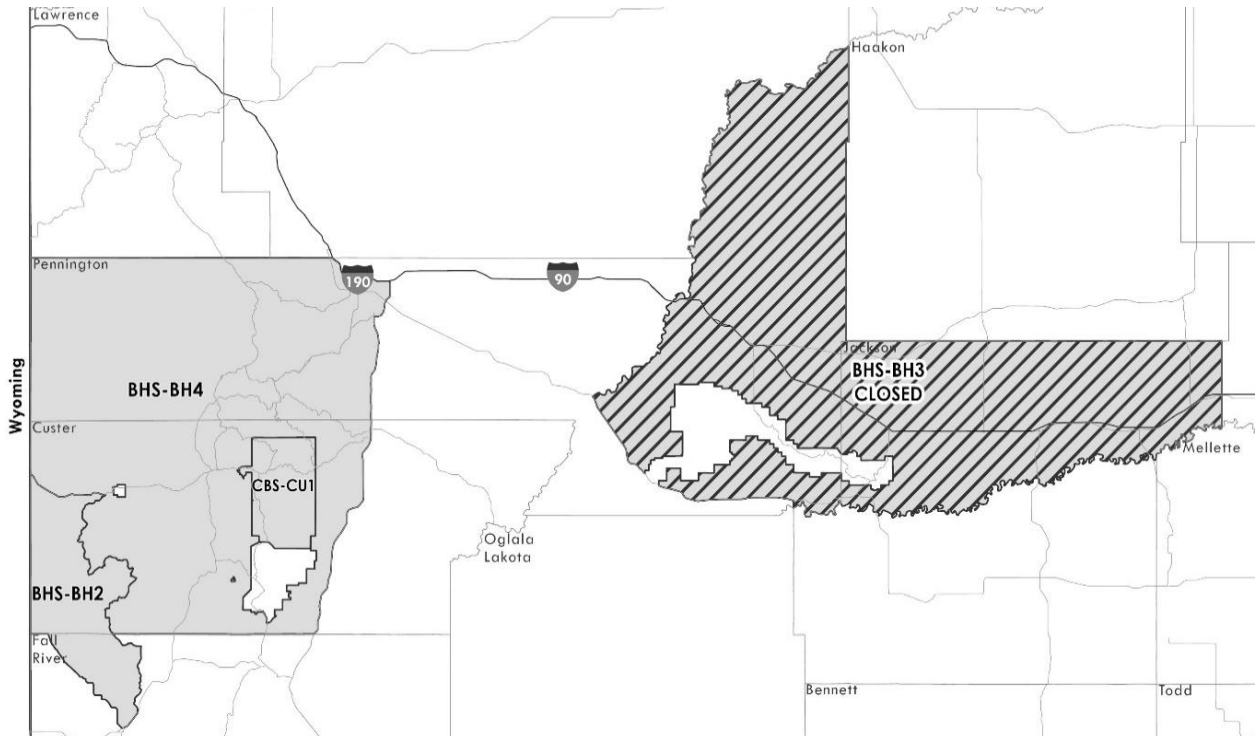
**FISCAL IMPACT**

None

APPROVE	_____	MODIFY	_____	REJECT	_____	NO ACTION	_____
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Figure 1. Custer State Park (CBS-CU1) and Black Hills bighorn sheep units (BHS-BH2, BHS-BH3, BHS-BH4).

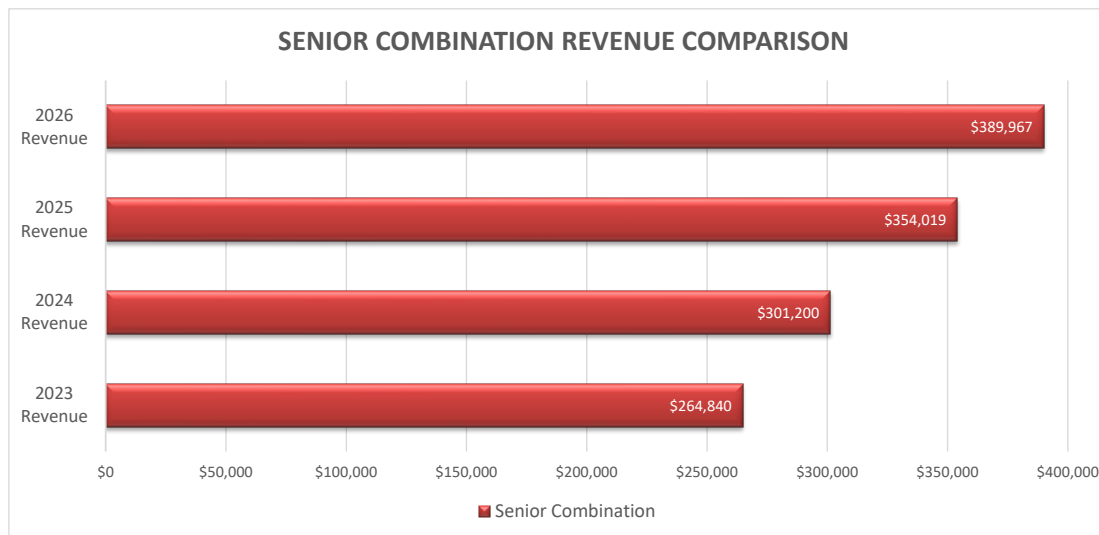
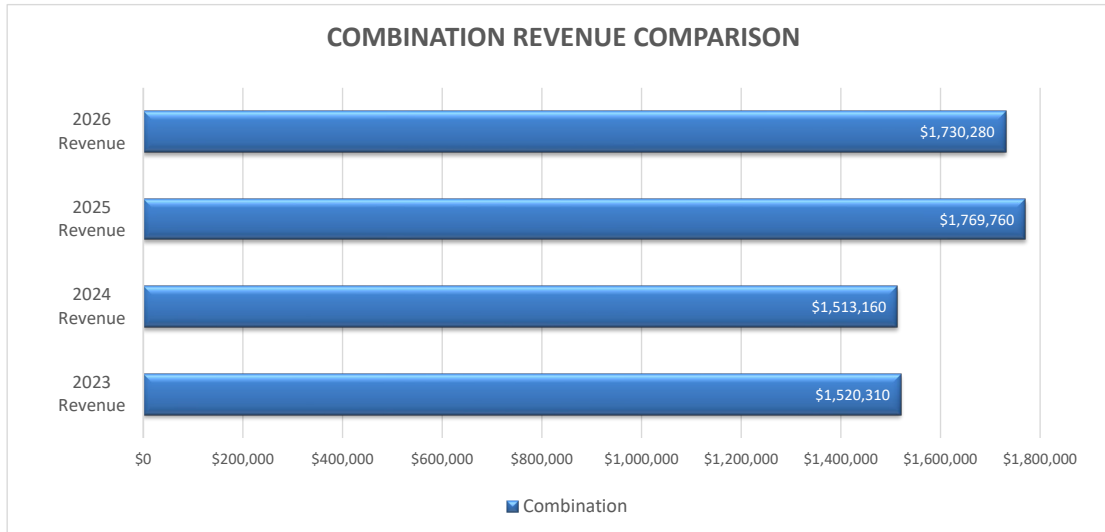


APPROVE  MODIFY  REJECT  NO ACTION

### COMBINATION LICENSES

December 15 - March 31

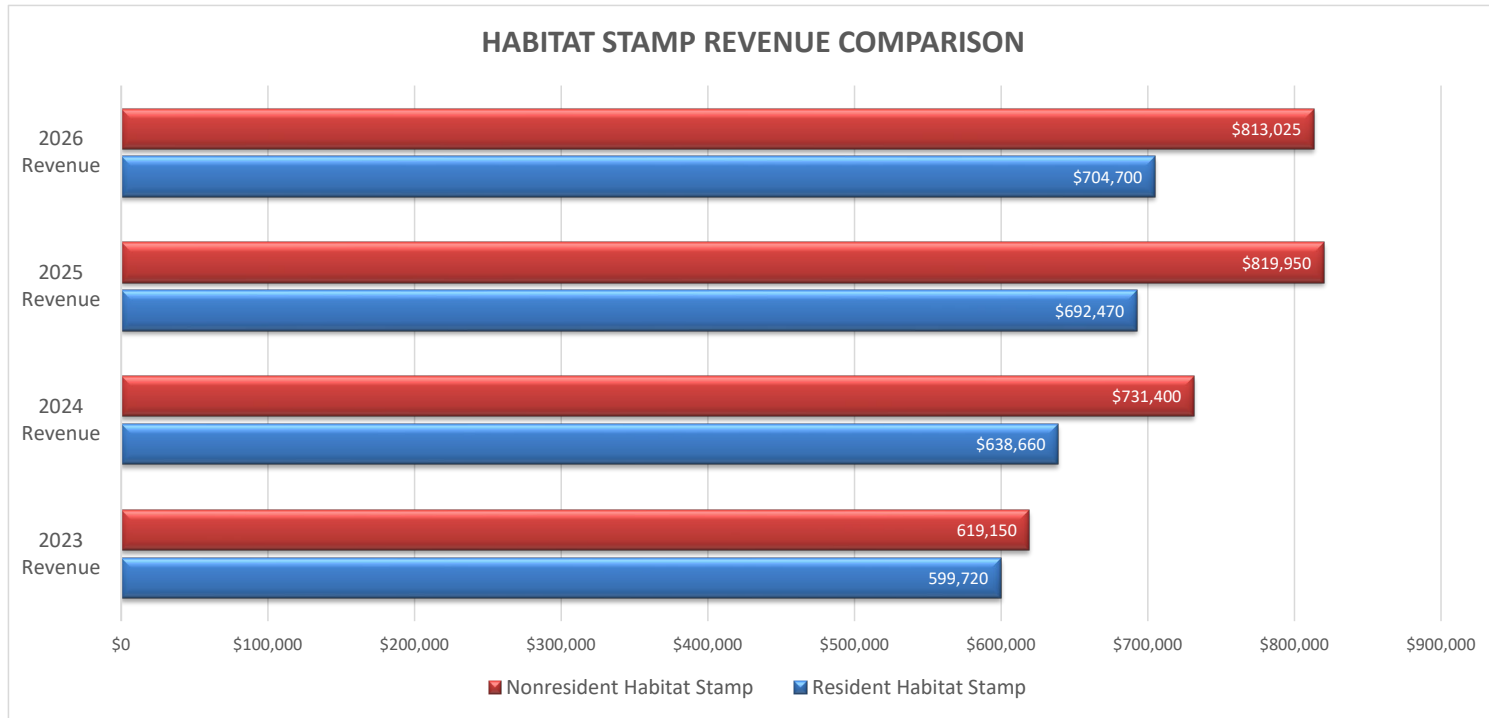
License Type						+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg	
	2023	2024	2025	3-yr Avg	2026	2026 Revenue	2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	2025 vs 2026		3 Yr. Avg vs 2026
Combination	27,642	27,512	29,496	28,217	28,838	\$1,730,280	(658)	621	(\$39,480)	\$129,203	2%
Senior Combination	6,621	7,530	8,233	7,461	9,069	\$389,967	836	1,608	\$35,948	\$83,281	22%
<b>Combination License Totals</b>	<b>34,263</b>	<b>35,042</b>	<b>37,729</b>	<b>35,678</b>	<b>37,907</b>	<b>\$2,120,247</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>2,229</b>	<b>(\$3,532)</b>	<b>\$212,484</b>	<b>24%</b>



## HABITAT STAMP

December 15 - March 31

License Type						+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg	
	2023	2024	2025	3-yr Avg	2026	2026 Revenue	2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	2025 vs 2026		3 Yr. Avg vs 2026
Resident Habitat Stamp	59,972	63,866	69,247	64,362	70,470	\$704,700	1,223	6,108	\$12,230	\$61,083	9%
Nonresident Habitat Stamp	24,766	29,256	32,798	28,940	32,521	\$813,025	(277)	3,581	(\$6,925)	\$89,525	12%
<b>Habitat Stamp Totals</b>	<b>84,738</b>	<b>93,122</b>	<b>102,045</b>	<b>93,302</b>	<b>102,991</b>	<b>\$1,517,725</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>9,689</b>	<b>\$5,305</b>	<b>\$150,608</b>	<b>10%</b>

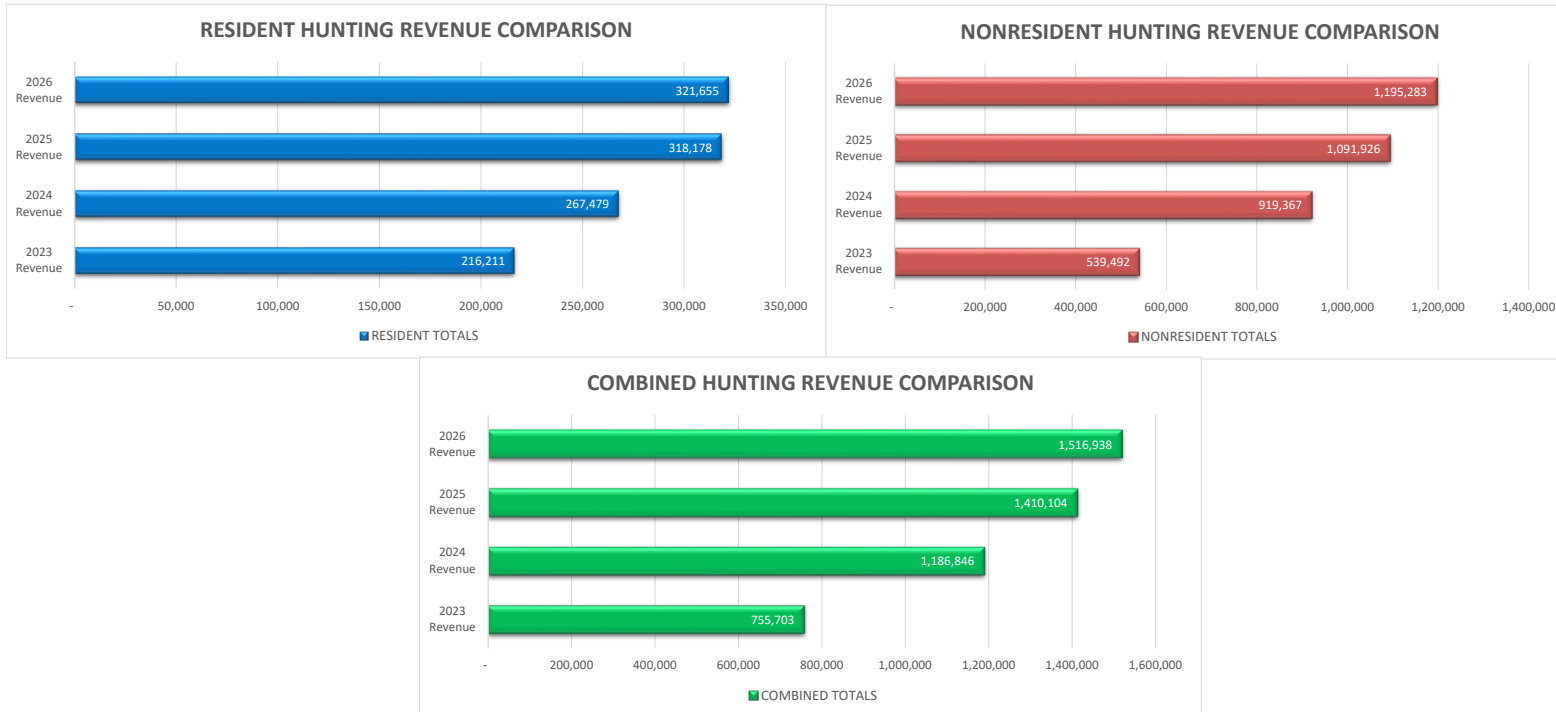


## SMALL GAME LICENSES

December 15 - March 31

License Type						+/- Licenses			+/- Revenue			% Change
	2023	2024	2025	3-yr Avg	2026	2026 Revenue	2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	from 3 Yr. Avg	
Small Game	3,730	4,975	5,745	4,817	5,762	\$207,432	17	945	\$612	\$42,737	20%	
1-Day Small Game	88	192	197	159	232	\$3,480	35	73	\$525	\$1,375	46%	
Youth Small Game	753	920	850	841	960	\$4,800	110	119	\$550	\$595	14%	
Mentor Small Game	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	144	\$720	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Furbearer	2,462	2,705	2,900	2,689	2,969	\$92,039	69	280	\$2,139	\$10,402	10%	
Predator/Varmint	1,126	925	668	906	724	\$4,344	56	(182)	\$336	(\$410)	-20%	
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	165	132	90	129	78	\$390	(12)	(51)	(\$60)	(\$255)	-40%	
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	1,597	1,993	1,959	1,850	1,690	\$8,450	(269)	(160)	(\$1,345)	(\$798)	-9%	
<b>RESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>9,921</b>	<b>11,842</b>	<b>12,409</b>	<b>11,391</b>	<b>12,559</b>	<b>\$321,655</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>1,075</b>	<b>\$2,757</b>	<b>\$53,646</b>	<b>9.44%</b>	
Small Game	2,420	4,710	5,125	4,085	5,406	\$767,652	281	1,321	\$39,902	\$273,367	32%	
Youth Small Game	154	314	323	264	294	\$2,940	(29)	30	(\$290)	\$303	12%	
Mentor Small Game	n/a	n/a	0	n/a	73	\$730	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Shooting Preserve 1-Day Nonresident	102	163	191	152	238	\$11,900	47	86	\$2,350	\$4,908	57%	
Shooting Preserve 5-Day Nonresident	793	982	1,195	990	1,340	\$128,640	145	350	\$13,920	\$53,400	35%	
Shooting Preserve Annual Nonresident	55	58	62	58	85	\$12,410	23	27	(\$3,066)	\$5,352	46%	
Furbearer	0	5	1	2	3	\$975	2	1	\$650	\$425	0%	
Predator/Varmint	776	878	959	871	976	\$44,896	17	105	\$782	\$10,056	12%	
Migratory Bird Certificate: 3-Duck	22	28	107	52	102	\$510	(5)	50	(\$25)	\$248	95%	
Migratory Bird Certificate: Traditional	2,181	4,014	3,596	3,264	3,500	\$17,500	(96)	236	(\$480)	\$1,182	7%	
Spring Light Goose	2,519	3,846	3,517	3,294	3,410	\$208,010	(107)	116	\$49,745	\$49,172	4%	
Youth Spring Light Goose	212	314	305	277	264	\$5,544	(41)	(13)	(\$861)	(\$273)	-5%	
<b>NONRESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>9,234</b>	<b>15,312</b>	<b>15,381</b>	<b>9,738</b>	<b>15,691</b>	<b>\$1,201,707</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>2,206</b>	<b>\$102,627</b>	<b>\$349,241</b>	<b>22.65%</b>	
<b>COMBINED TOTALS</b>	<b>19,155</b>	<b>27,154</b>	<b>27,790</b>	<b>21,129</b>	<b>28,250</b>	<b>\$1,523,362</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>7,121</b>	<b>\$105,384</b>	<b>\$402,887</b>	<b>33.70%</b>	

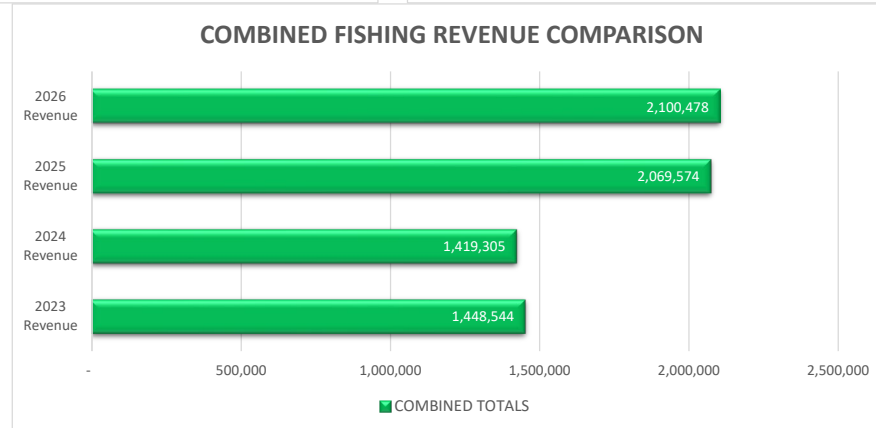
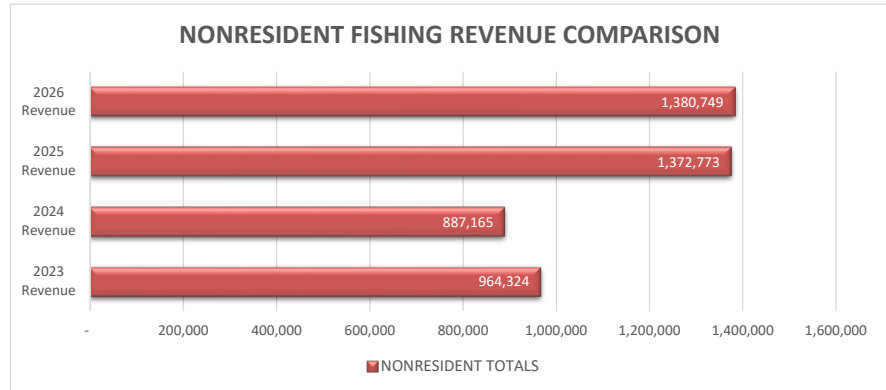
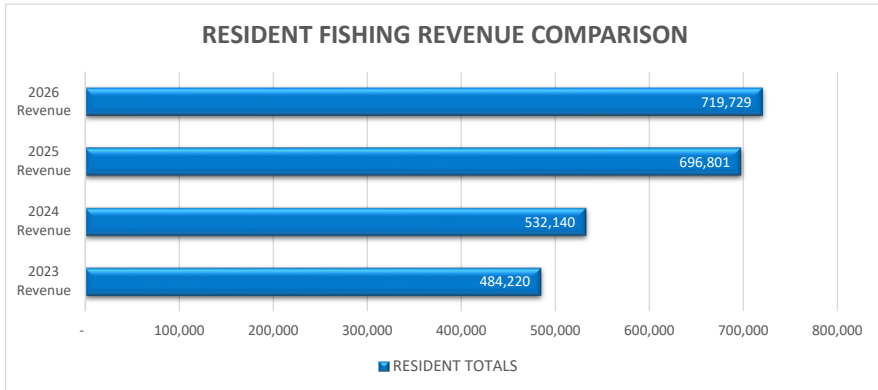
\*Spring Light Goose decreased by \$5 when the migratory bird certificate was no longer included.



## FISHING LICENSES

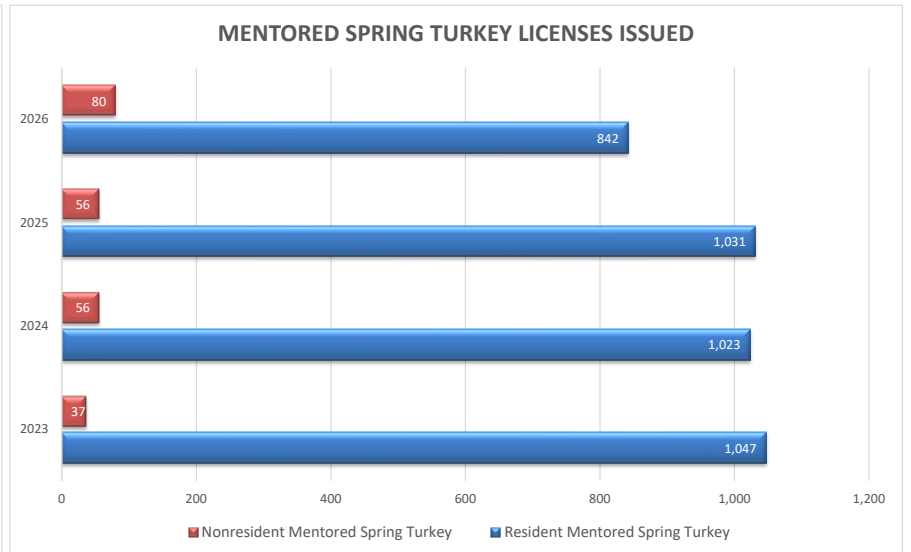
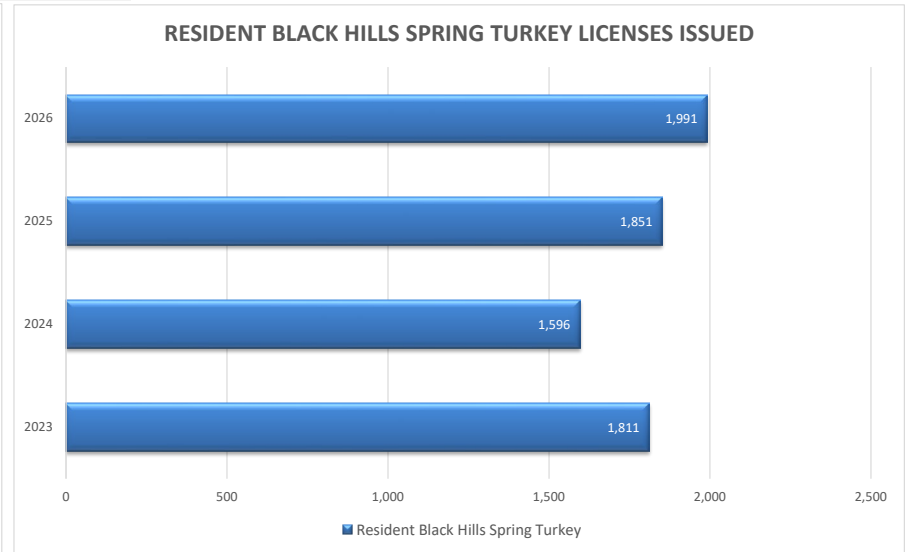
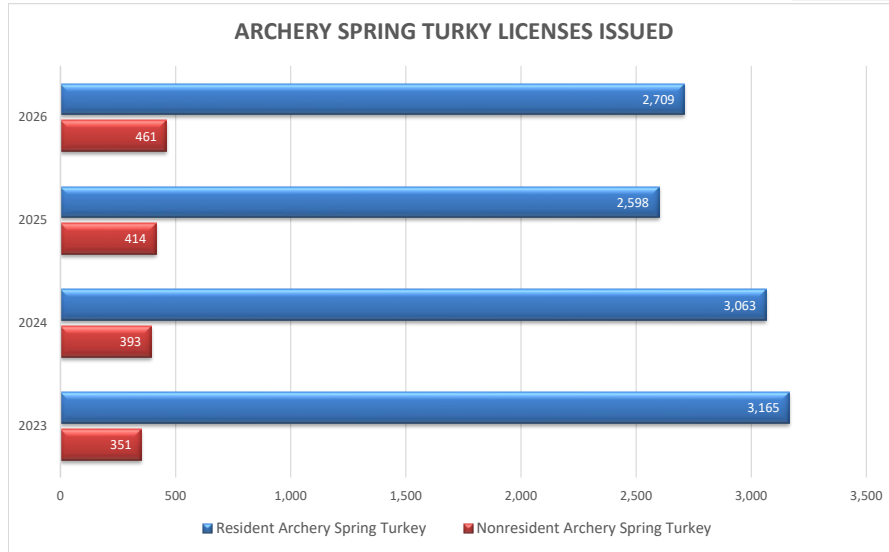
December 15 - March 31

License Type	2023	2024	2025	3-yr Avg	2026	2026 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	
1-Day Fishing	634	556	860	683	825	\$8,250	(35)	142	(\$350)	\$2,210	21%
Annual Fishing	15,519	16,729	19,202	17,150	20,005	\$620,155	803	2,855	\$24,893	\$120,753	17%
Senior Fishing	3,718	4,940	5,467	4,708	5,372	\$91,324	(95)	664	(\$1,615)	\$25,712	14%
<b>RESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>19,871</b>	<b>22,225</b>	<b>25,529</b>	<b>22,542</b>	<b>26,202</b>	<b>719,729</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>3,660</b>	<b>\$22,928</b>	<b>\$148,675</b>	<b>16.24%</b>
1-Day Fishing	3,961	3,232	3,143	3,445	2,964	\$77,064	(179)	(481)	(\$4,654)	\$11,462	-14%
3-Day Fishing	3,388	2,210	3,979	3,192	3,801	\$171,045	(178)	609	(\$8,010)	\$42,318	19%
Annual Fishing	11,576	11,249	13,900	12,242	14,158	\$1,132,640	258	1,916	\$20,640	\$252,215	16%
<b>NONRESIDENT TOTALS</b>	<b>18,925</b>	<b>16,691</b>	<b>21,022</b>	<b>18,879</b>	<b>20,923</b>	<b>\$1,380,749</b>	<b>(99)</b>	<b>2,044</b>	<b>\$7,976</b>	<b>\$305,995</b>	<b>10.82%</b>
<b>COMBINED TOTALS</b>	<b>38,796</b>	<b>38,916</b>	<b>46,551</b>	<b>41,421</b>	<b>47,125</b>	<b>\$2,100,478</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>5,704</b>	<b>\$30,904</b>	<b>\$454,670</b>	<b>13.77%</b>



## 2026 BIG GAME LICENSES

License Type	2023	2024	2025	3-yr Avg	2026	2026 Revenue	+/- Licenses		+/- Revenue		% Change from 3 Yr. Avg
							2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	2025 vs 2026	3 Yr. Avg vs 2026	
Mountain Lion	2,515	2,718	2,956	2,730	2,792	\$ 83,760	(164)	62	\$992	\$7,329	2%
Resident Archery Spring Turkey	3,165	3,063	2,598	2,942	2,709	\$ 75,852	111	(233)	\$10,902	\$2,302	-8%
Nonresident Archery Spring Turkey	351	393	414	386	461	\$ 55,781	47	75	\$14,381	\$17,181	19%
Resident Mentored Spring Turkey	1,047	1,023	1,031	1,034	842	\$ 4,210	(189)	(192)	(\$945)	(\$958)	-19%
Nonresident Mentored Spring Turkey	37	56	56	50	80	\$ 800	24	30	\$240	\$303	61%
Resident Black Hills Spring Turkey	1,811	1,596	1,851	1,753	1,991	\$ 55,748	140	238	\$9,473	\$11,931	14%





## 2026 State Park Manager's Conference

April 7-9

Aberdeen Best Western Ramkota Convention Center

### Tuesday April 7

#### **1:00 pm CT Welcome**

- Logistics/House Keeping – Willy
- New staff introductions - Regional Supervisors
- Director VanMeeteren
- Secretary Robling

#### **1:30 pm Session 1**

- Theme Roll-Out – Blanchette 45 mins

#### **2:15 pm Session 2**

- Outdoor Recreation Engagement in Parks – Hilary Morey 45 mins

**Break 15 mins**

#### **3:15 pm Session 3**

- Law Enforcement – Schelhaas 45 mins

**4:00 pm – Driving Tour through Mina and Richmond (carpool)**

**6:00 pm – 7pm**

- Social - Forest Drive – **Sponsored by the South Dakota Parks and Wildlife Foundation**

**7:30 pm – 9:30 pm \$10/person for 2 hours**

**Bowling – Village Bowl – We have lanes set aside for a group reservation**

### Wednesday April 8

Breakfast on your own

#### **8:00 am Load Busses**

- 9:15 am arrive at Pickerel Lake Recreation Area – Rebecca, John C, Willy
  - Shop, Drive through West Unit, Stop at Modern Cabin
  - Drive through East Unit

- 10:00 am Depart for Sica Hollow – Rebecca, Andrew, Willy, Becky
- 10:35 am Arrive at Sica Hollow
  - Hike - Trail of Spirits
  - Drive tour Horse Trails and Campground
- 11:35 am Depart for Fort Sisseton – Rebecca, Ali, Willy
- 12:15 pm Arrive at Fort
  - Lunch - South Barracks – **Sponsored by the Governor’s Commission on Fort Sisseton**
  - **Session 4** – Governor’s Commission on Fort Sisseton – Bruce Prins/Willy
  - Guided Tour – Ali, Rebecca
- 2:30 pm Depart for Roy Lake – Rebecca, Andrew, Willy, Becky
  - Drive through East Unit
  - Drive tour West Unit, Modern Cabins, Suites and Store
- 5:00 pm Depart for Aberdeen
- 6:00 pm Arrive in Aberdeen
  - Supper on Your Own

**8:00 pm – 11:00 pm Hospitality Room Sponsored by SDPRA, Josh Cleveland Host**

### **Thursday April 9**

Breakfast on your own

#### **8:00 am Session 5**

- Planning – Cartegraph, Looking Forward – Heather 45 mins

#### **8:45 am Session 6**

Round Table lead by Regional Supervisors 20-minute rotation.

- Al – Camper Recruitment/New User Groups
- Derek – Seasonal Training Program
- Pat – Weekday Camping Ideas
- Matt – Barriers to doing your job
- Willy – Mentoring/Trading Duty Stations

### **Break**

**10:45 am** Recap of the Discussions

#### **11:30 am Session 7**

- Departing Messages

**Noon Depart - Safe Travels Home**



# 2026 March Camping

Agenda Item #24

3/1/2025 - 3/31/2025	3/1/2026 - 3/31/2026
<b>Camping Units</b>	<b>Camping Units</b>
<b>930</b>	<b>1430</b>

District	Facility Name	Camping Units	Camping Units	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	4	0	-100%
	Pickereel Lake Recreation Area	8	3	-63%
	Twin Lake Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Roy Lake State Park	18	20	11%
	Sica Hollow State Park	2	2	0%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	1	1	0%
2	Fisher Grove State Park	0	1	NA
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	4	1	-75%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	18	24	33%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	9	43	378%
3	Hartford Beach State Park	5	1	-80%
	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	6	7	17%
4	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	4	2	-50%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	0	5	NA
5	Oakwood Lakes State Park	11	20	82%
	Lake Herman State Park	25	60	140%
	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	16	4	-75%
6	Walkers Point Recreation Area	30	3	-90%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Buryanek Recreation Area	4	13	225%
	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
7	Platte Creek Recreation Area	0	3	NA
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	10	27	170%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	72	94	31%
8	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	29	47	62%
	Palisades State Park	84	132	57%
	Newton Hills State Park	41	79	93%
9	Union Grove State Park	13	4	-69%
	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	16	4	-75%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	74	136	84%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	6	15	150%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Springfield Recreation Area	1	4	300%
10	North Point Recreation Area	12	8	-33%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	1	2	100%
	White Swan Lakeside use Area	0	0	NA
	Randall Creek Recreation Area	6	7	17%
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	0	0	NA
11	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	0	6	NA
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	1	1	0%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	13	23	77%
	West Bend Recreation Area	2	8	300%
12	Cow Creek Recreation Area	5	17	240%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	50	55	10%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	0	55	NA
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Little Bend Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	West Pollock Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	20	14	-30%
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	0	0	NA
13	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	1	0	-100%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	11	5	-55%
	14	Bear Butte State Park	4	8
Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area		0	8	NA
Llewelyn Johns Recreation Area		0	0	NA
Rocky Point Recreation Area		7	27	286%
15	Shadehill Recreation Area	8	11	38%
	16	Custer State Park	239	298
Angostura Recreation Area		33	109	230%
Sheps Canyon Recreation Area		6	12	100%
<b>Total:</b>		<b>930</b>	<b>1430</b>	<b>54%</b>



# 2026 March YTD Camping

1/1/2025 - 3/31/2025	1/1/2026 - 3/31/2026
<b>Nights</b>	<b>Nights</b>
<b>1688</b>	<b>2444</b>

District	Facility Name	Nights 1	Nights 2	%
1	Fort Sisseton State Park	8	7	-13%
	Pickrel Lake Recreation Area	25	20	-20%
	Twin Lake Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Roy Lake State Park	112	135	21%
	Sica Hollow State Park	2	2	0%
	Amsden Dam Lakeside Use Area	1	1	0%
	Fisher Grove State Park	0	5	NA
	Lake Louise Recreation Area	16	10	-38%
	Mina Lake Recreation Area	32	46	44%
	Richmond Lake Recreation Area	9	126	1300%
2	Hartford Beach State Park	19	7	-63%
	Lake Cochrane Recreation Area	1	2	100%
	Pelican Lake Recreation Area	17	18	6%
	Sandy Shore Recreation Area	5	2	-60%
	Lake Poinsett Recreation Area	11	9	-18%
4	Oakwood Lakes State Park	19	30	58%
	Lake Herman State Park	28	144	414%
5	Lake Carthage Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Lake Thompson Recreation Area	62	41	-34%
	Walkers Point Recreation Area	83	7	-92%
	Burke Lake Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Buryanek Recreation Area	5	24	380%
6	Dude Ranch Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Platte Creek Recreation Area	0	3	NA
	Snake Creek Recreation Area	19	30	58%
	Big Sioux State Recreation Area	90	126	40%
	Lake Vermillion Recreation Area	44	66	50%
7	Palisades State Park	145	203	40%
	Newton Hills State Park	84	148	76%
	Union Grove State Park	17	4	-76%
8	Chief White Crane Recreation Area	16	4	-75%
	Lewis and Clark Recreation Area	92	201	118%
	Pierson Ranch Recreation Area	6	15	150%
	Tabor Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Springfield Recreation Area	1	4	300%
	North Point Recreation Area	13	11	-15%
	South Shore Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	White Swan Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	North Wheeler Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Pease Creek Recreation Area	1	3	200%
9	Randall Creek Recreation Area	6	7	17%
	Star Valley Lakeside Use Area	0	6	NA
	Whetstone Bay Lakeside Use Area	3	1	-67%
	Farm Island Recreation Area	22	35	59%
	West Bend Recreation Area	9	24	167%
11	Cow Creek Recreation Area	5	17	240%
	Oahe Downstream Recreation Area	136	103	-24%
	Okobojo Point Recreation Area	0	0	NA
	Spring Creek Recreation Area	5	135	2600%
	East Whitlock Lakeside Use Area	0	1	NA
	Little Bend Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Walth Bay Lakeside Use Area	0	0	NA
	Indian Creek Recreation Area	30	26	-13%
	Lake Hiddenwood Recreation Area	4	0	-100%
	Swan Creek Recreation Area	2	2	0%
12	West Pollock Recreation Area	3	15	400%
	West Whitlock Recreation Area	11	11	0%
	Bear Butte State Park	14	15	7%
13	Hugh Glass Lakeside Use Area	0	8	NA
	Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area	2	0	-100%
	Rocky Point Recreation Area	29	32	10%
	Shadehill Recreation Area	17	32	88%
15	Custer State Park	350	381	9%
	Angostura Recreation Area	47	124	164%
16	Sheps Canyon Recreation Area	10	15	50%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>1688</b>	<b>2444</b>	<b>45%</b>

Division of Parks and Recreation					
March 2026 Revenue by Item					
	2025		2026		% Change
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	1,616	\$ 62,651	1,593	\$ 61,040	
Non-Resident Annual	471	\$ 28,080	643	\$ 36,900	
Resident Double	2,214	\$ 131,980	3,081	\$ 177,700	
Non-Resident Double	293	\$ 26,100	489	\$ 42,390	
Transferable	198	\$ 17,640	195	\$ 16,920	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	203	\$ 4,060	319	\$ 5,900	
<b>Annual Licenses</b>	<b>4,995</b>	<b>\$ 270,511</b>	<b>6,320</b>	<b>\$ 340,850</b>	<b>26%</b>
Resident Daily License	919	\$ 9,140	1,160	\$ 11,470	
Non-Resident Daily License	550	\$ 8,235	690	\$ 10,095	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	24	\$ 475	8	\$ 160	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	69	\$ 345	50	\$ 250	
Motorcoach Permit	3	\$ 12	-	\$ -	
CSP 7 Day Pass	2,535	\$ 63,255	1,940	\$ 47,900	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	6	\$ 120	14	\$ 280	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	3	\$ 300	4	\$ 375	
Festival Daily	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
<b>Daily Licenses</b>	<b>4,109</b>	<b>\$ 81,882</b>	<b>3,866</b>	<b>\$ 70,530</b>	<b>-14%</b>
<b>Licenses</b>	<b>9,104</b>	<b>\$ 352,393</b>	<b>10,186</b>	<b>\$ 411,380</b>	<b>17%</b>
Camping Services		\$ 1,872,595		\$ 1,707,973	-9%
Pet Fees	104	\$ 1,040	274	\$ 2,579	148%
<b>LODGING</b>		<b>\$ 1,873,635</b>		<b>\$ 1,710,552</b>	<b>-9%</b>
Picnic Shelters		\$ 2,060		\$ 1,210	-41%
Boat Rentals		\$ 144		\$ -	
Firewood	101	\$ 672	102	\$ 652	-3%
Gift Card	19	\$ 1,520	10	\$ 795	-48%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 43,600		\$ 138,890	219%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ -		\$ -	
Retail		\$ 1,424		\$ 930	-35%
Call Center Fee	1,230	\$ 7,352	1,033	\$ 5,898	-20%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 6,352		\$ 3,522	-45%
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>		<b>\$ 63,124</b>		<b>\$ 151,897</b>	<b>141%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 2,289,151</b>		<b>\$ 2,273,828</b>	<b>-1%</b>

Annual Licenses					
March YTD 2026 Revenue by Item					
	2025		2026		% Change
	Number	Dollar	Number	Dollar	
Resident Annual	3,461	\$ 134,811	3,444	\$ 131,780	
Non-Resident Annual	1,088	\$ 63,455	1,284	\$ 74,110	
Resident Double	5,268	\$ 313,970	6,671	\$ 386,050	
Non-Resident Double	662	\$ 59,040	927	\$ 80,908	
Transferable	453	\$ 40,410	486	\$ 42,620	
GSM Annual Trail Pass	515	\$ 10,105	692	\$ 13,120	
<b>Annual Licenses</b>	<b>11,447</b>	<b>\$ 621,791</b>	<b>13,504</b>	<b>\$ 728,588</b>	<b>17%</b>
Resident Daily License	1,600	\$ 15,942	2,055	\$ 20,340	
Non-Resident Daily License	1,100	\$ 16,470	1,249	\$ 18,090	
Unattended Vehicle Daily	59	\$ 1,145	21	\$ 420	
GSM Daily Trail Pass	329	\$ 1,508	225	\$ 1,125	
Motorcoach Permit	96	\$ 293	3	\$ 12	
CSP 7 Day Pass	3,758	\$ 93,360	3,090	\$ 76,250	
CSP 7 Day Bike Band	-	\$ -	33	\$ 660	
Rally Bike Band	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
One-Day Special Event	4	\$ 700	4	\$ 375	
Festival Daily	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	
<b>Daily Licenses</b>	<b>6,946</b>	<b>\$ 129,418</b>	<b>6,680</b>	<b>\$ 117,272</b>	<b>-9%</b>
<b>Licenses</b>	<b>18,393</b>	<b>\$ 751,209</b>	<b>20,184</b>	<b>\$ 845,860</b>	<b>13%</b>
Camping Services		\$ 3,057,963		\$ 2,906,832	-5%
Pet Fees	244	\$ 2,438	504	\$ 4,798	97%
<b>LODGING</b>		<b>\$ 3,060,402</b>		<b>\$ 2,911,630</b>	<b>-5%</b>
Picnic Shelter		\$ 2,710		\$ 2,725	1%
Boat Rentals		\$ 360		\$ -	-100%
Firewood	136	\$ 907	164	\$ 1,068	18%
Gift Card	52	\$ 5,009	34	\$ 2,995	-40%
Spring Creek Boat Slips		\$ 43,600		\$ 148,345	240%
Recreational Equipment Rentals		\$ 175		\$ -	
Retail		\$ 3,356		\$ 2,484	-26%
Call Center Fee	2,059	\$ 12,292	1,766	\$ 10,182	-17%
Cabin/Trailer Lease Permits		\$ 213,899		\$ 222,541	4%
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>		<b>\$ 282,308</b>		<b>\$ 390,341</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 4,093,919</b>		<b>\$ 4,147,830</b>	<b>1%</b>

### March 2026 YTD Revenue, Camping and Modern Lodging 3-year Summary

	2023		2024		2025*		3-Yr Avg		2026		% Change (3-Yr Avg)	
	\$	#	\$	#	\$	#	\$	#	\$	#	\$	#
Annual Licenses	\$ 440,656	9907	\$ 582,287	12944	\$ 621,791	11447	\$ 548,245	11433	\$ 728,588	13504	32.9%	18.1%
Daily Licenses	\$ 57,863	4028	\$ 91,169	6327	\$ 129,418	6946	\$ 92,817	5767	\$ 117,272	6680	26.3%	15.8%
Camping/Lodging	\$ 3,200,671		\$ 3,002,741		\$ 3,060,402		\$ 3,087,938		\$ 2,911,630		-5.7%	
Miscellaneous	\$ 31,504		\$ 296,534		\$ 282,308		\$ 203,449		\$ 390,341		91.9%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,730,695</b>	<b>13935</b>	<b>\$ 3,972,731</b>	<b>19271</b>	<b>\$ 4,093,919</b>	<b>18393</b>	<b>\$ 3,932,448</b>	<b>17200</b>	<b>\$ 4,147,830</b>	<b>20184</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>17.4%</b>

\* Fee increase in 2025

	2023*	2024	2025	3-Yr Avg	2026	% (3-yr Avg)
<b>Camping Units</b>	1096	1766	1688	1517	2444	61.1%
<b>Modern Lodging Nights Booked January 1 through December 31</b>						
Lake Thompson		96	92	94	94	0.0%
Mina Lake		71	102	87	101	16.8%
Newton Hills (3 units)		189	204	197	166	-15.5%
Oahe Downstream (5 units)		514	486	500	451	-9.8%
Palisades		110	88	99	86	-13.1%
Pickereel Lake		37	116	77	131	71.2%
Roy Lake (12 units)		950	1049	1000	1106	10.7%
Shadehill		122	155	139	125	-9.7%
Sheps Canyon		60	66	63	54	-14.3%
Spring Creek (16 units)		478	418	448	913	103.8%
<b>All Parks Total</b>		<b>2627</b>	<b>2776</b>	<b>2702</b>	<b>3227</b>	<b>19.5%</b>

\* Modern Lodging numbers for 2023 not available

# Public Comments

## Elk Management Action Plan

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**Leroy Madsen**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Im sure you get all kinds of suggestions...to be FAIR... for all maybe a plan like..... 1 to 5yr.....5 to 10yr.....10 to 15yr.....15 to 20.....20 to 25yr. I know hunters with over 20years applying for elk. It took me 18yrs. Things need to change!

---

**Bo Svard**

**Britton SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Need more hunting opportunities for SD residents.

---

**Tom Engebretson**

**Hayti SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Has it ever been discussed to weigh the age of the person applying along with years of preference to allow the older to draw prior to the younger people? I drew when I was in my 40's which is not fair to those older than me. I would suggest this as it would allow the older folks to draw and hunt when they are able and willing to go.

---

**Scott Redd**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I would like to propose a 20 year maximum limit to preference points. At 63 years old, I am getting to the end of my ability to hunt an elk in the BH. With 18 years preference, I figure I have maybe 5-6 years left and if I don't get a license, I am done applying and eating all those preference points because at close to 70, I am going to be too old for the riggers of elk hunting. I am proposing that 20 years of applying warrants a guaranteed tag. At least for maybe half the tags available to get people caught up in the process. It's frustrating when someone with a couple years preference gets a tag and someone with 20+ years keeps applying and keeps getting denied, while getting too old to even hunt any more. Something to think about. Thanks.

---

**Bret Brown**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I think that we should raise it even higher and offer more tags so it could be easier to get a tag.

---

**Richard Abelseth**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I would like to see an increase in the elk population

---

**Dale Singer**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I have read the action plan and I support the ideas included. I ask that the committee would strongly consider reducing the years that a successful draw must wait before applying again. This seems to put an unfair limit on hunting opportunities for those who are older. Having to wait 9 years to start applying again basically makes it a once in a lifetime tag. Please consider reducing the wait time to 5 years.

---

**Gary Shawd**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

As a hunter that has been trying to get an Any Elk tag for many years, I am curious what it takes to get one. Can you publish the Elk tags received by number of Preference Points? It would be interesting to see how many people with a high number of points do not receive their tags and how many with a low number of points are lucky enough to get a tag.  
Thanks.

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**Matthew Langenfeld**

**Littleton CO**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Please consider offering non-resident Elk Hunting licenses for all units.

---

**Dana Rogers**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

100% support the increase in elk management objective to 9,000. Would prefer the lower number also be pulled up from 6,000 to 8,000 and the upper end raised to 10,000. But this is a move in a positive direction.

---

**Thanks For Letting Me Know  
Jackson**

**Belle Fourche SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I have over 20 preference points built up and have never drawn an elk tag, yet I know of several from east river that have drawn every time they put in. Some have already drawn twice in my time frame, so I truly believe that the drawing is not for west river, but east river to draw more monetary interest, not random. Do I need to acquire a post office address from Sioux Falls in order to get drawn someday?

---

**Derrick Nelson**

**Hayti SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support letting the elk herds to grow. I feel like most of the elk units could handle more elk. I've hunted in the hills once and spend a lot of time in the elk units and shed hunting. From what I see there's room for growth. From what I see up in the nw corner of the state the top end of the bulls keeps getting smaller. Thanks for your work.

---

**Philip Neuharth**

**Menno SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support the increase of the elk population.

---

**Joe Barrett**

**Deadwood SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

The SDGFP is terrible at allocating licenses! You give out half the licenses to land owners. It takes me 15 years to draw a tag. In that 15 years a land owner has killed 15 bulls. 15! I get that you want to compensate for elk depredation but that is ridiculous. The elk are on their place because their cows are on Forrest Service land at \$1.69 AUM. How much compensation is needed? We definitely need fewer cowboy hats in Pierre! Joe Barrett, Deadwood 605-580-1125 Don't bitch about people not hunting anymore. We can't draw a tag!!

---

**Keith Miller**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

My family would like you to know that we appreciate the work that goes into proper elk management. In the past 5 years, my boys and I have harvested several elk and assisted others in their pursuit or packing out of elk. I have hunted elk in several states and our Black Hills offer premier elk hunting. Great job. Keep most things the same, continue to maintain flexibility for those years of reduced forage and carry on. And one more thing, at the beginning of the Introduction of the draft, our elk are 'cervus canadensis(nelsoni)' not cervus elaphus' (red deer). Thank you, we appreciate the GF&P!! --the Miller Family

---

**Tyrell Bradley**

**Hill City SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

My comments are based more so for the hunters that are trying to get tags for decades. I believe that there should be a remapping of units. If we have such a general population of cow elk that there can be so many units that are divided up into 2 or 3 different sub units. In my opinion that must mean that the herd populations in those sub units is large enough to be units that would be adequate for the general draw. License quantities for any elk tags would not need increased overall but just allocated appropriately for those units. I believe it would help the draw success possible for certain units and hopefully help the public view of the current system.

---

**Gunnar Ensz**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I think we should try and grow the prairie elk population instead of following "social acceptable levels". Also if landowners are charging people to shoot elk on their property I don't think the state should also pay them for crop or grazing damages.

---

**Jordan Johnson**

**Canton SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support increasing the elk herd. I do not support watering down the success rate by giving more tags, if the elk #'s are not increased.

---

**Matthew Bolie**

**Colome SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I support everything you do for managing the elk herds in South Dakota. I know there is a lot of chatter regarding the draw system, herd numbers, and management objectives, but I believe what you are doing is

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working. I wouldn't change anything. You cannot make everyone happy. Keep up the good work. Whenever I finally draw my tag, I hope it is the hunt of a lifetime.

---

**Curtis Nupen**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Would like to see more Custer State Park permits for those with over 25 preferences points receive permits before they are 95 years old . I am currently 87 and would like to get a hunt before I am 100

---

**Colton Nye**

**Onida SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I personally would like to propose splitting the elk archery and rifle season in half if more tags are being available. Yes, a hunter would have half as many days to hunt, but less hunter competition. Each hunter would just have to select what half of the month they want to apply for. I would rather hunt hard for 2 weeks and compete with fewer hunters than the whole month with even more hunters than we currently encounter with as tag numbers are now.

---

**Bill Hearne**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

---

**Brian Frybarger**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

The plan appears to be well-thought out and developed. While the plan's emphasis is on larger bulls (4+ years in age), I am perfectly happy hunting antlerless elk as long as plenty of licenses are issued based on science. The cows are just as hard to find and as savvy as an older bull and as exciting to hunt.

---

**Eric Grenz**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Please work to increase the elk populations in state.

---

**Greg Cole**

**Rapid City,S.D. SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I would hope with an increase of elk herd that we maintain the quality of elk herd . I have seen many areas have a large population of animals but the chance for a quality animal to hunt is gone . I feel if you draw an elk tag currently in the Black Hills you have a good opportunity to harvest a mature animal .

---

**Chris Simon**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Overall I feel the action plan addresses what is needed and serves to maintain and improve the experience of all interested parties in regards to elk in South Dakota. I do however feel it does not address how tags are allocated to hunters and I feel that this is an area that could be greatly improved to better serve the hunting population. I understand there are only so many tags to go around and it is not realistic to make every hunter happy, but there should be a solution to put more tags in the hands of people that have 20+ years of preference. Imagine serving in the military for 30 years and moving back to your home state in retirement to realize you may never get the opportunity to hunt elk in South Dakota because starting to build preference points at the age of 50+ means there is a good chance you don't draw a tag till you are well into your 70's.

---

**Kevin Kurtenbach**

**Mitchell SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

No comment text provided.

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**Daniel Hunnel**

**Summerset SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

50% of tags for all draws should be awarded to 20+ preference points 30% 15+, 15% 10+, 5% 0+. If The percentage quota is not filled by a preference point number those extra tags are moved to the next lower draw percentage. The Custer state Park Draw may have to start at 30+ preference point.

---

**Kerry Mertz**

**Arlington SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

The elk application process and tag distribution method needs to be revised and become a hybrid draw system. In a hybrid draw 25% of the Any Elk tags shall be distributed to the top preference point holders. The remaining 75% of the Any Elk tags will be distributed by the current tag allocation system. Those who have invested the most time and financial resources should be given the greatest opportunity to draw a tag. Those applicants that have invested the most will be guaranteed a tag from the 25% pool. All other applicants will still be given consideration and opportunity to draw a tag. Those with the highest point totals can actually plan for the hunt the year prior to being drawn based on what they see happen in the previous draw and seeing their point amount raise to the top of the point pool.

The draw also needs to be moved to January as the limited number of tags limits opportunity in the state and an early draw still affords the applicants that were not successful a chance to apply in other states. The current application deadlines are around February 1 for Wyoming and then Arizona around March 1. Idaho does draw in December. The unsuccessful applicants can still get in other state draws which would reduce some of the disappointment in the current South Dakota draw system and very low draw odds.

The current population should be increased to the upper end of the current objective.

---

**Robert Eddy**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

To SDGFP Commission,

I mostly support the initiatives of this Elk Management Plan but believe some alterations do need addressed.

- I disagree with raising the population maximum to 9,000, please maintain it at 8,000. This is due to many reasons including continued human developments fragmenting the range, increased abuse of off-road vehicles harassing elk populations and destroying the landscape. Also, competition with livestock, and an attempt to raise deer populations will tax the capabilities of the habitat. A majority of hunters and landowners do not support the rise as per your public survey and Stakeholder Group.

The concentration of elk in Unit 2 Jasper area will increase threatening CWD outbreaks and compete with efforts to increase a struggling mule deer and bighorn sheep populations.

- Evaluate the current and future process for tag dispersal. Many hunters may never draw a tag with current procedures. Unfortunately, an Any Elk tag should become a once-in-a-lifetime license due to expanding competition. Antlerless elk open to all without any wait period to apply. This gives the trophy opportunity for everyone once, and continued opportunity for all to harvest an elk.

Provide the Any Elk tags with no weapons restriction. If the tag winner wishes to also pursue with archery, they can apply for additional limited opportunity and longer season. This allows more opportunity for that once-in-a-lifetime tag. (Similar to WY)

A refinement of preference categories definitely needs altering. Example: 10%=<10yrs, 20%=10-20yrs., 30%=20-30yrs., 40%=30+yrs.

Eliminate 50% Landowners allotment. But, grant landowners a free Antlerless tag every year for those with 320+ acres or documented elk use days, for their own property and extended season. (Sept-Jan)

-Encourage the use of antlerless tag access when funds are given to landowners for depredation. One private land access per \$1,000 appropriated.

-CSP: Slightly reduce populations and increase trophy potential for exceptional opportunity.

-Prairie: Encourage a sustainable but limited population in Harding County and tribal lands but discourage management and growth to all west river area not within the BH Fire Protection District and eliminate any east river population. A free antlerless tag to all landowners on own property.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion.

Robert Eddy

Spearfish

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**Jeree Meyers**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I ask you to consider a different drawn system regarding preference points in the CSP any elk draw. Consider 50% of the tags to be allocated to hunters with 30 or more years preference.

In the past 3 years, of the 51 tags available, only 16 hunters with 30 or more years were successful. That pool has grown from 426 applicants in 2023 to 645 in 2025. Its obvious that the majority of these applicants will never live long enough to draw.

Thanks for your consideration.

Respectfully, Jeree Meyers

---

**Scott Guffey**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

If you want to increase hunter opportunities and drawing odds in the Black Hills, I would suggest looking at the following:

- Cut Unit 2 into two or three smaller units.

- Shorter seasons. Split the Archery season into two 2-week seasons. Split the rifle season into two seasons, with a start date no earlier than October 8th. Shorter season would allow for an increase of tags with probably the same harvest rate.

- Require full amount of license cost at application, to reduce the number of applicants that have no interest in hunting elk (ex-husband putting in for their wife that has never hunted before).

---

**Steve Petersen**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

I feel the east river elk season is a good proposal. Many times elk wander through Eastern South Dakota and end being road killed or poached and the habitat in eastern South Dakota is not conducive for them to establish themselves. So, I think this season is a good idea. I would ask that you add moose to that tag as well!! It could be a moose/elk tag because I see more moose in Northeast South Dakota than I do elk. And the same thing.— They're not going to establish themselves and they just end up causing a problem. Should be utilized by Hunters and would be excellent meat. We don't have moose in the state so why not let us have a chance to shoot one if they wander down. Add them to that tag with a registration/check-in required.

---

**Todd Craig**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Good day! I strongly agree with raising the elk objective level to 9,000. I would also like to see the lower level raised from 6,000, to 7,000. Thank you for all the great work you do!

---

**Matthew Neisen**

**Spearfish SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Raising the upper end of the elk management plan to 9,000 is a step in the right direction to recover the elk to what it was 10 years ago. Elk aren't deer!! Elk don't fully mature until 7-8 years old. Why would you manage for 4 year old elk? shooting a 4 yo elk is like shooting a 120" whitetail. Hunters wait years-many times 20 years or more to even draw a tag to have the hunt of a lifetime only to be rewarded with poor manage and immature animals to harvest. I have hunted elk in many states, grew up chasing elk in unit 1. The Black Hills was one of the best places anywhere to chase elk. Every herd had a 300+ herd bull with multiple satellite bulls with many of those herd bulls being 330". There was a 320" bull for every single person that drew a tag. Just phenomenal!

I spent 39 days chasing elk in unit 1 last year and saw 2 bulls that made 320", neither making 330". There was only 1 herd that had multiple bulls-a young 6 point and 2 five points. Herds of cows without bulls, five points with a dozen cows, absolutely no satellite bulls. 80 any elk rifle tags in unit 1 is insanity and greed to just sell more tags.

Restore the Black Hills elk herd back to the health and glory that it once was. Raise age structure to 6+ years. Waiting 20+ years to draw a tag should be rewarded with a hunt of a lifetime.

Also, age structure has nothing to do with opportunity when the herd is managed correctly. Over harvest has lead to this reduced age structure and overall lack of bulls. Any elk numbers need to now be reduced to increase the bull numbers.

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**Roger Dekok**

**Mount Vernon SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

Thank you to SDGFP for coming to the South Dakota Bowhunters annual meetings to provide information.

I hope you increase the opportunities for bowhunters. For example only 10% of antlerless for archery. I would like to see it a higher% of the total to provide more opportunities for bowhunters.

In CSP besides my regular firearm and archery preference points, I would love to be able to use my antlerless firearm preference points and late season archery preference points. If those options are not going to be available in the future let us do a one time conversion of those points to another tag.

We need to restrict off road use in the black hills at least during seasons. At least keep them off backroads during season. That's a cluster.

Thank you again for the elk opportunities in SD!

# Other

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**Janet Moore**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

I oppose the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

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**Jim Leenser**

**Aberdeen SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Commissioners, Please add a bighorn sheep license to the Hunt For Habitat drawing. Why not let everyone have the opportunity to draw this tag instead of just the person with the biggest wallet. If you put a sheep tag in this raffle you would raise a heck of a lot more money than the auction. Please help the sportsmen of south dakota have an equal chance at a sheep tag and put it in for hunt for habitat

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**Brandy Tabor**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Please STOP authorizing & funding the Nest Predator Bounty Program. This program is not based on the best available science (or ANY science), including population density - of waterfowl or any of the predator species involved. It is NOT an education program for youth. It is not an acceptable manner for supporting "South Dakota's heritage." It's a waste of money and the lives of native species that are important to our ecosystems. Vast numbers of South Dakota's human population are against this and their votes and voices are being completely disregarded along with the science. This is very clearly NOT proper "wildlife management" and doesn't even come close to meeting even a single criteria for such a program, as determined by true environmental science, natural resources and conservation efforts. This is NOT an example of ethical hunting (or trapping), respectful stewardship of our lands and the species that live here. This is the opposite of teaching children conservation and stewardship actions because it teaches speciesism and to villainize one species (or in this case five species) to protect a few others (that don't need the protection to begin with. And anybody that wants to argue that fact should provide EVIDENCE AND DATA to show it, not just an opinion or arguments based on personal preference). Everything about this program, including every comment that's been said to justify its continuance is utterly absurd and completely irrational because they represent behavior that ignores logic, evidence and sound judgment.

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**Adam Golay**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Pronghorn: They should consider drawing for prairie antelope first before Custer park antelope & only let a person have 1 or the other in the same year. There were 2046 apps for 5 tags in the park last year. That's 409 years to clear that out so it's the same as sheep & elk in there. You simply won't draw it in a man's lifetime. If they took the apps out that already had prairie tags first & then drew for Custer antelope after that then a guy might have a fighting chance assuming that some of those 2046 apps already had a prairie antelope tag in their

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pocket. Let them buy a pref point for it just like elk seasons where you get 1 tag per year & once you have it then you can't apply for the rest but can buy a preference point. The only thing I'll ever get to hunt in the park is turkeys & that takes 6-8 years to draw also. At least look at how many of the 2046 apps had prairie tags already & see if this would up the odds of drawing Custer antelope.

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**Jason Paulsen**

**Wall SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

In CSP if you're wanting to reduce the herd let the guys with all the preference points get a tag like me with 38 yrs of points get a tag

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**Paul Teel**

**Herrick SD**

**Position:** support

**Comment:**

My family and I had a tragic thing happen in the very early morning hours of saturday the 14 of march. My sons loyal companion, a dog named Sam was shot less than 300 yards from his farmhouse by thermal scoped so called hunters. They sat on the neighbors border fenceline and used a rabbit call to lure Sam up to them. Sam went under the fence about ten feet and they shot him about 4 or 5 times. My boy heard this rabbit call as it woke him up and the shots. He ran out of the house with his flashlight hollering for Sam. These dog killers left real soon, drove past my boy and never stopped. We called our local Game warden Cheyenne Colten later on. She never showed up. I called her again on monday march the 16 and she told me that the game fish and parks basically had no authority in this matter. As far as I know your department did nothing. This has made for a very bad relations with our neighbor. These so called hunters never stopped to even say they were sorry. This is one of the worst injustice for a pet owner I have ever seen. They got off scott free and we are left with a bullet ridden dead Sam our pet.

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**Dor Thorests**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Its March 17 and there is no GF&P Commission recording available to the public. Many people want to know what happened with the bounty program and if you missed the meeting you are completely in the dark. THE public deserves better, especially when it comes to how my increased hunting license fees are being spent. Step it up for once.

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**Timothy Klapperich**

**Rapid City SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

I would like to see you guys implement the apply for 2 seasons for elk like you do for deer. That would make some people's chances better for their specific season. Also allocating more tags for the upper class of those with 30-40+ preference points. We've been applying for many years and may never get the chance because of old age. Thank you.

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**Joe Larda**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Dear Commissioners, I'm asking for your help as GFP has ignored many hunters. I missed the 3rd draw for spring turkey! I never received any emails, never saw anything on facebook, or received any notifications. This is shameful. Hunters deserve to know when the deadlines for the draws are and there needs to be some type of change. Ask GFP staff and you will see, there was NO communication about the 3rd draw. I'm asking you to announce the 3rd draw deadline to the public so hunters are aware and then reopen the application period for a few days to give people a chance to apply. Darn hard to apply when GFP doesn't even announce the deadline. I religiously look at social media and all that is out there is come fish this place or stay at this park. I think GFP is forgeting who pays the bills. I beg the commission to investigate this lack of communication and make changes so that hunters are made aware. Its only fair to announce so everyone has a chance to apply. I appreciate the work you do and I hope you can get this issue resolved.

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**Justin Allen**

**Pierre SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Dear GFP,  
Please discuss archery antelope harvest in NW SD. Archery harvest of antelope is at a all time high while at the same time firearm antelope harvest is at its lowest since the 1980s. 222 projected buck antelope killed alone in the West Harding County unit in 2025 is an absolute GFP management catastrophe. It's sad. Management of Archery harvest and pressure for antelope and deer in SD needs to joint modern management. We need limited draw archery units for antelope and deer!! You can do better GFP and GFP commission.

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**Wayne Booze**

**Hartford SD**

**Position:** other

**Comment:**

Deerfield Reservoir shouldn't be stocked with walleye. It's one of two bodies of water where trout really thrive. There are so many other places to catch good walleye - we don't need them in good trout lakes.

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**Thad Bringham**

**Sioux Falls SD**

**Position:** oppose

**Comment:**

Not one single notification to the public about spring turkey tags being available for leftovers. A friend of mine that found out somehow got 4 tags and when I got on, could not even get one. Why has the gf&p stopped making hunters aware of leftover tags? Everyone should have a fair chance and everyone should be aware and its gf&p job to make the public aware. Hunters deserve better, please fix this.

George Bogenschutz  
46135 222<sup>nd</sup> St  
Nunda, SD 57050

March 18, 2026

Stephanie Rissler, Chair  
Game, Fish and Parks Commission  
523 East Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, S.D. 57501

Dear Commission Chair Rissler,

This is to ask that the GFP Commission consider changing our outdated pheasant hunting hours to something similar to our neighboring states;

North Dakota, Nebraska and Wyoming hours are 30 minutes before sunrise to sunset.

Iowa is 8 AM to 4:30 PM.

Minnesota is 9 AM until sunset.

Hunting hours of sunrise to sunset would fit in with the neighboring states' times and yet enable hunters to see rooster colors very well.

There is no biological reason for the late S.D. starting hour of 10:00 AM and one would think that an earlier start would attract more non-resident hunters and would also be welcomed by our tourism industry. A starting time in the cooler morning hours would also help reduce the incidence of our hunting dogs suffering from overheating - a sometimes deadly occurrence.

Thank you for your consideration.

George Bogenschutz

605-270-0725

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