

COTTONTAIL & SQUIRREL

The 2022 cottontail rabbit and tree squirrel seasons covered 1 September 2022 - 28 February 2023. Harvest surveys were sent to resident and nonresident hunters after the close of the pheasant season on 31 January 2023. It is assumed that this captured the majority of cottontail and squirrel hunting and harvest.

For cottontail, the daily limit was 10, possession 30, and the season was open statewide. For squirrel, the daily limit was 5, possession 15, and the season was open statewide. Residents holding small game, 1-day small game, adult or senior combination, or youth small game licenses were eligible to participate in the season. Nonresidents were required to obtain either a small game or a youth small game license to hunt upland game.

In 2022, there were 83,430 resident and 78,987 nonresident licenses issued that allowed holders to hunt small game. Approximately 15,000 residents and 15,000 nonresidents were surveyed for the small game seasons. Survey response rates were 28% for residents and 32% for nonresidents.

Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting cottontails, there were a projected 5,333 resident and 796 nonresident cottontail hunters. Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting squirrels, there were a projected 2,466 resident and 80 nonresident hunters. An estimated 35,853 cottontails and 9,997 squirrels were harvested during the 2022 small game seasons.

When asked their satisfaction on the season, (1 being least satisfied, 7 being most satisfied), resident hunters reported an average satisfaction level of 5.25, while nonresidents reported a rating of 6.19.

Comparison of the 2013 - 2022 cottontail and squirrel harvests

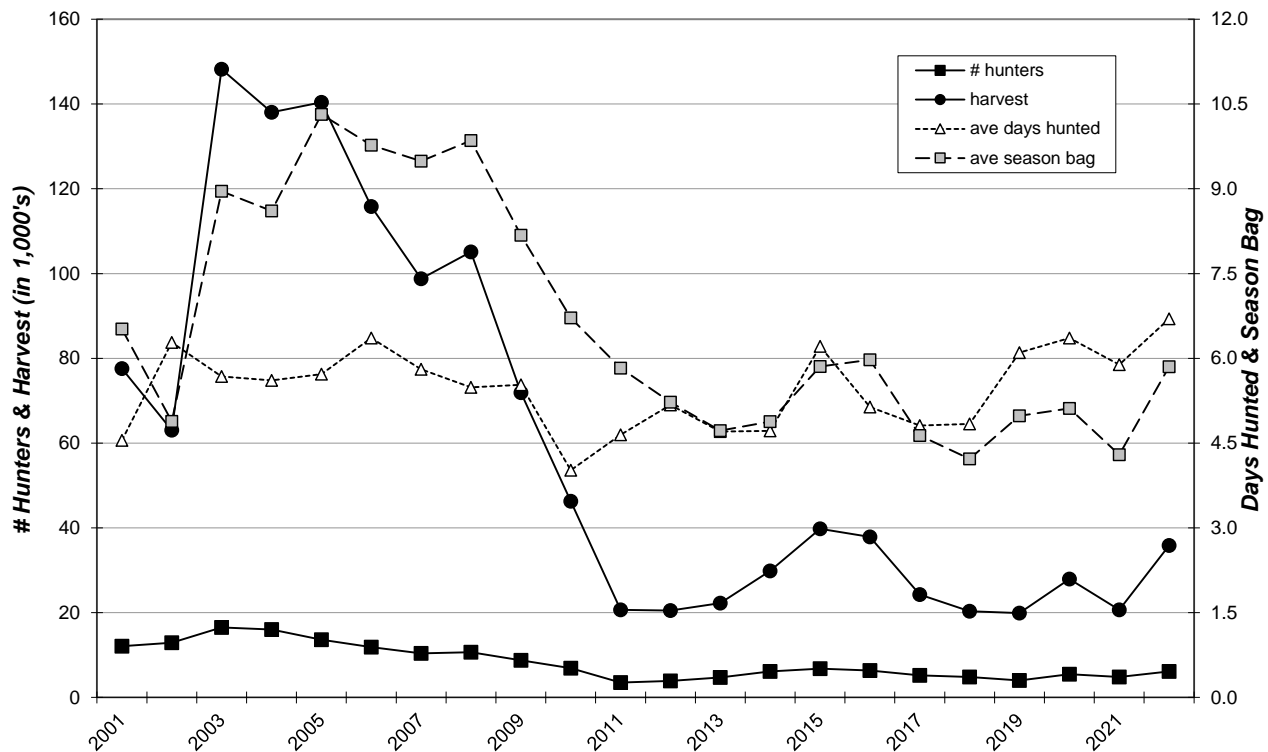
Year	Cottontails				Squirrels			
	Hunters		Harvest		Hunters		Harvest	
	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres
2013	4,199	516	21,682	846	2,911	116	10,962	61
2014	5,366	754	28,276	1,591	2,552	150	9,587	241
2015	5,779	1,020	37,407	2,397	2,870	171	13,311	180
2016	5,584	754	35,649	2,224	2,786	181	11,614	262
2017	4,628	607	22,711	1,561	2,571	87	9,850	260
2018	4,341	475	19,386	937	2,302	141	8,241	293
2019	3,563	437	19,329	604	2,542	87	12,077	116
2020	4,871	597	27,026	928	3,174	119	12,757	239
2021	4,063	754	19,385	754	2,248	74	8,014	59
2022	5,333	796	33,910	1,943	2,466	80	9,949	48

Survey design changed in 2010 and 2014 so results may not be directly comparable to previous years.

UPLAND GAME HARVEST PROJECTIONS FOR 2022								
Last Revised: 4 Aug 2023	RESIDENT TOTALS BY LICENSE TYPE					NONRESIDENT TOTALS		
	Comb-ination	Senior Combo	Small Game	Youth SmGm	Sum Estimates	Nonres Sm Game	Youth Sm Gm	Sum Estimates
Licenses Sold	47,570	11,366	18,492	6,002	83,430	76,073	2,914	78,987
Projected ACTIVE UPLAND GAME HUNTERS	3,504	654	1,231	556	5,945	828	0	828
Number Sampled by Survey	8,810	1,837	3,118	1,092	14,857	14,380	515	14,895
Number Responded to Survey	2,457	799	631	216	4,103	4,663	65	4,728
% Responded and Participated in Season	7%	6%	7%	9%	7%	1%	0%	1%
Responded and Participated in Season	181	46	42	20	289	52	0	52
Responded but DID NOT HUNT	2,276	753	589	196	3,814	4,611	65	4,676
Survey Response Rate	27.9%	43.5%	20.2%	19.8%	27.6%	32.4%	12.6%	31.7%
No. Hunters Reporting Cottontail Days	165	41	36	18	260	50	0	50
Sum Cottontail Hunted Days	1,078	284	332	105	1,799	222	0	222
Average Days Hunted Cottontails	6.53	6.93	9.22	5.83	6.92	4.44	0.00	4.44
Sum Cottontails Bagged	984	234	237	165	1,620	122	0	122
Average Cottontail Bag for Season	5.96	5.71	6.58	9.17	6.23	2.44	0.00	2.44
Projected Days Cottontail Hunting	20,871	4,040	9,730	2,918	37,558	3,535	0	3,535
Projected No. Cottontail Hunters	3,195	583	1,055	500	5,333	796	0	796
Projected Cottontail Bag	19,051	3,329	6,945	4,585	33,910	1,943	0	1,943
TOTAL COTTONTAIL HARVEST =						35,853		
No. Hunters Reporting Squirrel Days	74	20	17	9	120	5	0	5
Sum Squirrel Hunted Days	404	131	141	36	712	25	0	25
Average Days Hunted Squirrels	5.46	6.55	8.29	4.00	5.93	5.00	0.00	5.00
Sum Squirrels Bagged	238	91	85	56	470	3	0	3
Average Squirrel Bag for Season	3.22	4.55	5.00	6.22	3.92	0.60	0.00	0.60
Projected Days Squirrel Hunting	7,822	1,864	4,132	1,000	14,818	398	0	398
Projected No. Squirrel Hunters	1,433	285	498	250	2,466	80	0	80
Projected Squirrel Bag	4,608	1,295	2,491	1,556	9,949	48	0	48
TOTAL SQUIRREL HARVEST =						9,997		
Mean Satisfaction Score *	5.24	4.89	5.55	5.45	5.25	6.19		6.19

* Based on scale of 1-7 with 1="very dissatisfied" and 7="very satisfied"

SOUTH DAKOTA COTTONTAIL HARVEST, 2001-2022



SOUTH DAKOTA SQUIRREL HARVEST, 2001-2022

