

GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

Custer State Park Spring Wild Turkey Hunting Season

Chapter 41:06:15

Commission Meeting Dates:	Proposal	July 7-8, 2022	Spearfish
	Public Hearing	September 1, 2022	Sioux Falls
	Finalization	September 1-2, 2022	Sioux Falls

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Duration of Recommendation: 2023 and 2024 seasons

Season Dates: April 15 – May 21, 2023
April 20 – May 19, 2024

Licenses: 100 resident one-tag "male turkey" licenses

Requirements and Restrictions:

1. South Dakota residents only.
2. Season opens the 3rd Saturday in April and runs through the eighth day prior to Memorial Day.
3. License valid for only one male turkey.
4. No person may shoot a turkey in a tree or roost.
5. Restricted to shotguns using shotshells, muzzleloading shotguns and archery equipment only.

Recommended changes from last year:

1. Change the season start date from the 2nd Saturday in April to the 3rd Saturday in April.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

Results from recent research indicates poor reproduction, primarily within the Black Hills (central and northern Hills) but is difficult to ascertain the direct cause/s due to numerous variables involved, such as predation, nutrition, weather, grouse dominance/behavior. Based on nesting chronology and gobbling activity, the recommendation to start seasons later is to increase population performance. In addition, negative feedback from hunters regarding their hunting experience (i.e., lack of gobbling activity, difficult time finding turkeys) is a justification for this recommendation. See below for other supportive information to justify recommendation:

- Post-breeding management is the primary strategy that should be imposed for wild turkey management (i.e., start spring hunting seasons at median incubation dates).
- Median incubation dates range from May 10-16 in the Black Hills. Many hens start incubation around May 1-3rd in the southern Black Hills.
- Modeling suggests that harvesting $\leq 30\%$ of the male population allows for continued population growth and higher quality hunting.
- Research in the Black Hills indicates that annual survival of radio-collared adult males was 42% and spring harvest was the primary mortality factor in the Black Hills.
- Intensive hunting in southern Alabama caused a shortage of males and lowered female turkey productivity through infertile clutches.
- Current unpublished research in Georgia indicates dominance hierarchies in adult gobblers may be important in maintaining for turkey productivity. Disruptions in these dominance hierarchies can delay nesting and reduce nest survival in the southeast.
- Harvest management should try to not disrupt breeding of older males until they have a chance to breed which should be around median incubation dates.
- Less than 5% of younger male turkeys will breed under normal dominance hierarchies.

APPROVE _____ **MODIFY** _____ **REJECT** _____ **NO ACTION** _____

The proposed maximum number of turkey licenses will be established in administrative rule and the GFP Commission via administrative action will determine specific number of licenses by tag types and allocation amongst hunting units.

Year	Licenses	Applications	Harvest	Success	Ave. Days Hunted
2012	135	540	64	47%	2.2
2013	135	574	57	43%	2.2
2014	135	540	78	58%	2.7
2015	135	574	50	37%	2.6
2016	100	564	49	49%	2.1
2017	100	563	58	58%	1.9
2018	100	563	43	43%	2.2
2019	100	594	48	48%	2.2
2020	98	597	55	57%	2.2
2021	100	705	47	47%	2.8

DRAFT ADMINISTRATIVE RULE CHANGES

The following are proposed draft changes that are intended to incorporate the recommended changes adopted by the Commission.

41:06:15:01. Spring wild turkey hunting Sseason established – Number and type of licenses available. The spring wild turkey hunting season in Custer State Park is open from one-half hour before sunrise to sunset each day from the ~~second~~ third Saturday of April through eight days prior to Memorial Day. No more than 200 one-tag male turkey licenses may be issued to residents.

41:06:15:02. Open unit. The following is a description of the open spring turkey hunting unit:

(1) Unit CST-CU1: Custer State Park

~~— (1) Unit CST-CU1-32: A maximum of 100 "male turkey" licenses may be issued for the season;~~

~~— (2) Unit CST-ZZ-99L: No turkey licenses may be issued. However, an applicant for this unit shall accrue a preference point as provided in § 41:06:01:09.~~

RESIDENT/NONRESIDENT CRITERIA

1. The Issue
 - Why make the change, what are the change alternatives, how will public/stakeholder input be solicited, and how will the change be evaluated if implemented?
 - i. While the effect of the change is unknown, the objectives are to increase turkey population performance and to increase hunter satisfaction.
 - ii. Input will be solicited during the public comment period and GFP Commission public hearing.
2. Historical Considerations – Licenses are only available to South Dakota residents.
3. Biological Considerations
 - What is the current and projected status of the population and habitat conditions for these populations?
 - i. Turkey populations are thriving across most of South Dakota, but not observing the reproduction level desired in the central and northern Black Hills and a few prairie units. Recommendation is to have consistency amongst season dates as much as possible.
4. Social Considerations
 - Shortened season.
5. Financial considerations – Not Applicable

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____

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?
 - The recommended changes would shorten length of seasons, with objectives to increase turkey population performance and to increase hunter satisfaction.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists?
 - a. Not applicable.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Not applicable.

FISCAL IMPACT

No fiscal impact is expected to the Department.

APPROVE _____ MODIFY _____ REJECT _____ NO ACTION _____