

SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS

LAW ENFORCEMENT

ANNUAL REPORT



2025

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SCOTT SIMPSON, *Deputy Secretary* | Pierre

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JEFF VANMEETEREN, *Parks Division Director* | Pierre

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KEITH MUTSCHLER, *Law Enforcement Training Supervisor* | Lemmon

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CONSERVATION OFFICERS

DON ALLAWAY | Yankton

JACK BAUMERT | Britton

PATRICK BEFFA | Mobridge

ADAM BEHNKE | Clear Lake

ERIC BRUMBAUGH | Platte

JENNA CAPPER | Custer

CHEYANNE COLTON | Gregory

JON DUNLAP | Miller

JEFF EDWARDS | Hill City

KODY ELBERT | Vermillion

TAYLOR ETHERINGTON | Olivet

ROSS FEES | Rapid City

CRAIG FISHEL | Sioux Falls

ADAM FUEST | Custer

LYNN GEUKE | Plankinton

JEFF GRENDLER | Brookings

JASON HAMAR | Kadoka

LOGAN HAMMER | Hayti

JASON HAMIL | Pierre

JUSTIN HARMAN | Brandon

JAKOB HEYD | Aberdeen

JARED HILL | Sioux Falls

ANNA HILLS | Sisseton

KENNY JIMERSON | Webster

TREY KELDERMAN | Elk Point

TAYLOR KIRCHNER | Tyndall

JACKSON KNIGHT | Watertown

TYLER KREKELBERG | Onida

DIANA LANDEGENT | Chamberlain

KYLE LENZNER | Watertown

TRAVIS MARCH | Chamberlain

EDGAR MEZA | Lemmon

AUSTIN NORTON | Webster

ALEX OSBORNE | Salem

SHANE PEDERSEN | Redfield

DEREK PELTON | Rapid City

DYLAN PETERSON | Fort Pierre

TANNER PIETZ | Canton

CHRISTOPHER SCHIERA | Lake Preston

D.J. SCHROEDER | Hot Springs

JACOB SCHWINT | Belle Fourche

ANDREW STARK | Flandreau

BLAKE SWANSON | Milbank

CODY SYMENS | Madison

JOSH THOMPSON | Spearfish

ZACH THOMSEN | Clark

RON TIETSORT | Custer

DYLAN URBAN | Mitchell

ERIC VOIGT | Ipswich

WYATT WEBER | Presho

LAW ENFORCEMENT

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

4	Introduction
5	New Officers
6	Case Feature: Turkey Poachers
9	Case Feature: Black Hills Elk Camp
10	Case Feature: Thermal Night Hunting
12	Case Highlights: Region 2
14	Operation Dry Water
16	Turn In Poachers (TIPS) Program
18	Statewide Violation and Contact Statistics
22	Awards and Recognition

The mission of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is to serve and connect people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources.

2025 LAW ENFORCEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

I recently spent some time paging through past editions of our Law Enforcement Annual Report. I've saved every issue since I became a wildlife conservation officer in 2003, and flipping through them was an enjoyable trip down memory lane. As I moved through the years, I was struck by a simple truth: in this line of work, nothing has changed—and everything has changed.

It's a bit of a contradiction, but it fits. Take our patrol vehicles, for example. We still rely on half-ton pickups, but the technology inside them is worlds apart from what we had in 2003. Today's trucks come standard with conveniences like remote start—no more stepping outside on a bitter January night just to warm up a vehicle. They seamlessly connect to our iPhones, displaying maps, calls, and music on integrated screens. When I started, my “technology” was a Nokia phone and a stack of paper maps and plat books.

Boats, UTVs, and nearly every other tool we use have evolved just as dramatically. Like the rest of the world, the outdoor industry has become increasingly technology-driven, and our officers have adapted at every step. Much of what we rely on today didn't even exist in the early 2000s.

Yet with all this change, the core of who we are—and what we do—remains the same. Wildlife conservation officers with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks continue to serve and protect the people and natural resources of our great state. We still have dedicated, professional officers working day and night to safeguard what so many South Dakotans hold dear. We continue responding to emergencies, promoting outdoor recreation, and supporting our communities.

In short, we carry on the same mission our predecessors began many years ago—we just do it a little differently now.

Enjoy the statistics and highlights from 2025!

Sam Schelhaas
LAW ENFORCEMENT SECTION CHIEF

NEW CONSERVATION OFFICERS



KODY ELBERT joined the Conservation Officer Training Program in March 2025. Kody grew up in West Bend, Iowa. He graduated from South Dakota State University, where he studied Natural Resource Law Enforcement. Before becoming a Conservation Officer, Kody worked several summers with the Iowa Water Patrol. After completing the training program, Kody was stationed in the Clay County duty station.



KENNY JIMERSON joined the Conservation Officer Training Program in November 2024. Kenny grew up in Atlantic, Iowa. He graduated from South Dakota State University, where he studied Wildlife and Fisheries Science. Before becoming a Conservation Officer, Kenny held several seasonal jobs for various wildlife agencies and worked on his master's degree. After completing the training program, Kenny was assigned to the Webster duty station.



TREY KELDERMAN joined the Conservation Officer Training Program in March 2025. Trey grew up in Doon, Iowa. He graduated from South Dakota State University, where he studied Natural Resource Law Enforcement. Before becoming a Conservation Officer, Trey worked at the Brookings County Detention Center along with several seasonal GFP positions. After completing the training program, Trey was stationed in the Union County duty station.

CASE FEATURE

TURKEY POACHERS

The South District in Region 3 has experienced several difficult years for deer and other wildlife populations due to weather and disease, resulting in slower fall hunting seasons for Conservation Officers. While deer numbers have declined, the turkey population—particularly in Bon Homme County—has surged. This area now supports one of the strongest turkey populations in the state, often drawing significant hunting pressure. Additionally, as a border county adjacent to two Native American reservations and another state, opportunities for license violations are elevated.

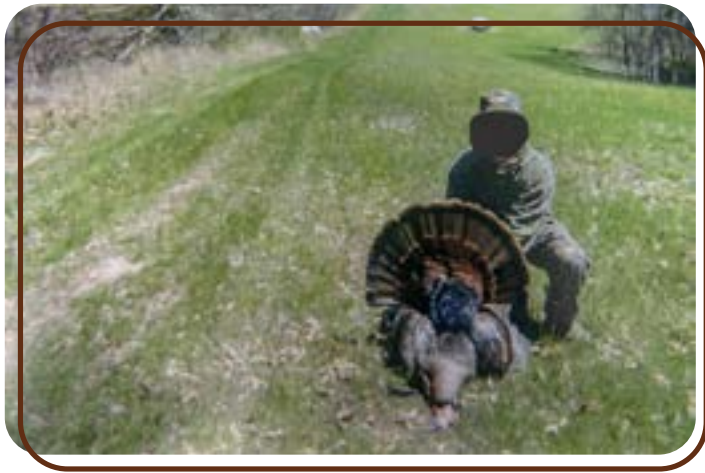
Wildlife Conservation Officer Taylor Kirchner recognized this shift and proactively focused his enforcement efforts on turkey populations. Well before the season began, he identified high-activity areas for turkeys, hunters, and potential violations. Understanding that “where the wildlife is, the problems will be,” he made a deliberate effort to build

relationships with local landowners. Through consistent contact and communication, he established trust—an essential component for effective conservation work in a close-knit community.

On the turkey season opener, Taylor developed a strong tag-lending case involving a guide who shot a client’s bird. This case resulted from targeted patrol efforts and a deep understanding of when and where violations were most likely to occur.

Prior to the season, Taylor and Wildlife Conservation Officer Don Allaway also successfully investigated a closed-season violation involving two individuals who illegally harvested multiple turkeys two days before the opener, demonstrating strong investigative coordination.





At approximately 7 p.m. on May 2, 2025, Taylor received a call from a landowner with whom he had built a working relationship. The property was located west of Springfield in a known problem area where high turkey populations intersect with heavy road traffic and hunting activity.

The landowner reported witnessing an individual shoot a turkey from a vehicle and leave the bird in the pasture. He had previously spoken with the individuals involved and provided detailed descriptions of both the suspects and their vehicle.

Taylor responded immediately and located the dead turkey approximately 20 yards onto private property. He chose to leave the bird in place in case the suspects returned. While continuing to gather information from the reporting party, Taylor observed the suspect vehicle return to the scene. The passenger exited, retrieved the turkey, and placed it in the truck bed before attempting to leave.

Taylor initiated a traffic stop and confirmed that both the vehicle and occupants matched the provided descriptions. He separated the two male subjects and conducted thorough interviews. Despite multiple, inconsistent statements and attempts to mislead, Taylor relied on the evidence he had gathered. Eventually, both individuals requested legal counsel

after making partially incriminating statements.

The suspects, a father and son from Mississippi, claimed they were scouting turkeys in South Dakota and intended to hunt legally at a later time. However, they possessed turkey tags from Mississippi, Kansas, and the Santee Reservation in Nebraska—none from South Dakota.

Further investigation revealed clear intent to unlawfully harvest turkeys in South Dakota and transport them back to Nebraska, where they were staying. Evidence indicated this was not an isolated incident.

A search of the vehicle uncovered:

- » The untagged turkey involved in the incident
- » Multiple additional turkey parts, including fans, feet, and meat
- » No documentation or tagging for any of the harvested birds

All items were seized as evidence of unlawful possession.

Continuing his thorough investigation, Taylor discovered a disposable camera inside the vehicle with visible blood and feathers. After obtaining a search warrant to process the film, the developed

photos showed the suspects posing with multiple illegally harvested turkeys from previous days—further confirming an ongoing poaching spree.

Additionally, handheld thermal devices were located in the suspects' gear. Coordination with Mississippi authorities revealed these devices are sometimes used to locate or harvest turkeys at night while they are roosting, suggesting further violations across jurisdictions. Taylor ensured all relevant agencies were notified for potential additional charges.

Due to Bon Homme County policies requiring non-residents be arrested for Class 1 misdemeanor wildlife violations, both individuals were taken into custody.

Taylor compiled a comprehensive case, including detailed reports and a well-documented evidence log for the State's Attorney.

CASE OUTCOME

TOTAL CHARGES: 20

RESOLUTION: Plea agreements reached

PENALTIES: Nearly \$1,200 in fines plus civil damages

FORFEITURES: All turkeys and the shotgun used in the violations



CASE FEATURE

BLACK HILLS ELK CAMP

Conservation Officers are assigned across four regions statewide and typically work the same hunting seasons in their respective areas each year. To support adequate enforcement and provide officers with varied field experience, officers volunteer to assist in other regions during hunting seasons.

In 2025, Region 1 hosted a week-long, Black Hills Conservation Officer elk camp, beginning at the end of the archery elk season in September and continuing through October 5, the opening weekend of rifle elk season. Officers established a camp using an outfitter tent and campers to accommodate officers from across the state.

For several officers, this was their first opportunity to patrol an elk season. They were able to engage with both archery and rifle hunters, gain experience in elk-specific enforcement, and become familiar with the Black Hills landscape.

Throughout the first week of rifle season, officers conducted seven elk decoy operations across multiple Black Hills hunting units. Morning and evening details focused on enforcing laws prohibiting the shooting of big game from a vehicle or roadway—practices that create safety risks and violate fair-chase principles.

These operations resulted in seven citations and one warning for violations including shooting from a road, shooting from a vehicle, and having a firearm protruding from a motor vehicle. The offense for shooting from a vehicle or road includes loss of hunting privileges for a period of one year upon conviction.



CASE FEATURE

THERMAL NIGHT HUNTING

On June 21, 2025, District Conservation Officer Supervisor Joe Galbraith received a TIP reporting individuals using thermal scopes to kill deer, waterfowl, and furbearing animals in Edmunds County. The caller stated that wildlife was being shot and left in the field, with none of the animals being retrieved or utilized. A second TIP arrived several days later, identifying the same primary suspect and indicating that multiple individuals were involved and that numerous waterfowl and other wildlife were being killed.

Two search warrants were obtained and served after Conservation Officers located the primary suspect. During an interview conducted by Officer Galbraith and Wildlife Conservation Officer Shane Pedersen, the suspect admitted to extensive night hunting activity. He stated that he and others began “thermal hunting” in mid-November 2024 and continued through mid-April 2025, going out approximately 28 to 31 nights—typically every Saturday night and additional weeknights. He admitted they killed four deer and shot at other deer without knowing whether the animals were hit. None of the deer were recovered or used.





The suspect further acknowledged killing more than 30 waterfowl, pheasants, and numerous furbearing animals during nighttime outings. He did not possess any type of hunting license in South Dakota during this period. Four additional individuals were identified, interviewed, and admitted to participating in shooting at deer, waterfowl, and furbearers.

The group used a vehicle mounted thermal unit connected to an iPad, allowing them to search for wildlife while driving—often without headlights. Most activity occurred between midnight and 4 a.m. Multiple landowners had reported vehicles driving without lights during December and January, as well as the discovery of dead wildlife on their properties. Several expressed concern for the safety of livestock and residents due to shots fired near homes.

Additional search warrants were issued for phones, thermal units, and an iPad. Conservation Officers spent several days reviewing digital evidence and identifying violations. The search resulted in the seizure of 13 firearms, an iPad, a vehicle mounted thermal unit, and several sets of deer antlers. Eleven firearms were equipped with suppressors; two rifles had thermal scopes.

In total, five individuals were charged with multiple hunting violations, including the use of artificial light/night vision, taking big game during a closed

season, and taking waterfowl during a closed season, among other offenses.

During sentencing, the presiding Judge asked one defendant how they knew what they were shooting at. The individual replied, “We didn’t.” When the Judge asked whether they could have shot a human, the defendant stated, “I guess we could have shot someone; it could have been a person when I shot.”

PENALTIES FOR THE GROUP INCLUDED:

- » **FINES** totaling \$5,658.50
- » **CIVIL DAMAGES** totaling \$11,200
- » **HUNTING REVOCATION** totaling 13 years
- » A combined **420 DAYS OF JAIL TIME** (30 days served)
- » **FORFEITURE** of 6 firearms, 5 silencers, 2 thermal scopes, 1 vehicle mounted thermal unit, and 1 iPad

The estimated value of the six forfeited firearms is approximately \$12,770–\$15,770, including two thermal units. Five suppressors, each valued at approximately \$800, were also forfeited. The vehicle mounted thermal unit is valued at approximately \$3,000. Two rifles were equipped with Vortex scopes valued at approximately \$1,850.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department extends its appreciation to the individuals who submitted TIPs and the landowners who reported suspicious activity. Their cooperation was essential in bringing this case to a successful conclusion.

CASE HIGHLIGHTS: REGION 2

In 2025, Region 2 continued to operate with multiple vacant duty stations and also experienced the departure of two additional Conservation Officers. In addition, three officers were out on paternity leave for portions of the year. Despite these staffing challenges, officers across the region remained highly productive and committed to fulfilling GFP's mission.

Throughout the year, Region 2 Conservation Officers completed several road checks, saturation details, and other special operations. Officers made 10,092 contacts with hunters, anglers, and other recreational users. Through these contacts, they issued 382 citations, 236 written warnings, 207 verbal warnings, and completed 9 Boating Under the Influence (BUI) arrests. Officers also contributed significantly to public outreach and education, participating in 32 HuntSafe classes and making 62 presentations to schools and community groups.

Conservation Officers conducted and advanced several significant investigations, many of which extended into multi-year efforts.



- » Former Officer **DILLON BATES** led an extensive investigation into an unlawful guiding operation involving dozens of suspects. This case required coordination with Officer Bates, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Due to its scale and complexity, GFP authorized travel to Michigan to interview suspects—an uncommon but necessary step, which resulted in the seizure of multiple illegally taken animals. Officer Bates dedicated hundreds of hours to this case and worked closely with his district to organize and review reports prior to his departure. The case is now being handled jointly by GFP investigators and the Fish and Wildlife Service.
- » Officer **TRAVIS MARCH** continued work on a complex, multi-year deer lending/no license case.
- » Officer **CHEYANNE COLTON** completed several strong cases, including one in which she observed three individuals cleaning pheasants and discarding carcasses from over a mile away. Her investigation resulted in admissions from all parties. She also worked cases involving littering, property damage, off road violations, and a TIPS report regarding poached deer. Although well investigated, these cases have not been prosecuted.
- » Officer **DYLAN PETERSON** investigated a baiting case that resulted in the seizure of several unlawfully taken deer and will lead to the corresponding revocations. This was one of several credible TIPS-based cases handled this year.
- » Officer **JON DUNLAP** investigated a trespass complaint in one of the region’s vacant patrol areas. His work included a search warrant with a camera company, a preservation warrant, obtaining images, securing a cell phone warrant, and conducting a cross state interview. His efforts resulted in a solid case that remains pending.



Region 2 officers collectively demonstrated strong investigative skills, perseverance, and professionalism. Despite vacancies and increased workloads, they delivered a wide range of meaningful enforcement actions, community engagement efforts, and high-quality investigations that continue to protect South Dakota’s natural resources.

OPERATION DRY WATER

Operation Dry Water (ODW) is a year-round campaign aimed at reducing alcohol- and drug-related boating accidents and fatalities by increasing boater awareness and enforcing regulations against those operating a boat under the influence (with a heightened enforcement period around the July Fourth weekend).

Since 2009, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Conservation Officers have participated in this nationwide effort to promote safer

waterways, focusing on deterring impaired boating, which remains the leading cause of recreational boater deaths.

During the enhanced enforcement weekend, 64 officers patrolled 34 waterbodies, checked 798 vessels with 2,988 boaters, issued 60 citations and 177 warnings for boating violations, addressed 81 non-boating-related violations, and arrested 11 individuals for operating vessels while intoxicated.



2025 OPERATION DRY WATER STATISTICS

Region	Officers	Vessels	Boaters	Citations	Warning	BUI	Non-Boat Violations	Lakes
Western	15	195	495	4	23	2	5	Angostura, Orman, Pactola, Shadehill, Sheridan
Central	16	188	724	6	31	2	25	Lake Oahe, Lake Sharpe, Lake Francis Case
Southeast	18	208	719	31	56	5	20	Brandt Lake, Lake Byron, Lake Madison, Lake Mitchell, Lake Thompson, Lake Vermillion, Missouri River, Wall Lake
Northeast	16	293	1,240	20	71	2	31	Amsden Dam, Big Stone, Blue Dog, Buffalo, Clear, Cochrane, Cottonwood, Elm, Enemy Swim, Kampeska, Mina, Pickerel, Poinsett, Richmond, Roy, Traverse, Waubay
Total	65	884	3178	61	181	11	81	34 Operations/Patrols in 2025



LOGAN HAMMER **2025 OPERATION DRY WATER** **OFFICER OF THE YEAR**

Officer Logan Hammer was selected as South Dakota's recipient of the 2025 Operation Dry Water Officer of the Year Award.

Logan is stationed in Hamlin County which is home to Lake Poinsett. Lake Poinsett is located on the border of Hamlin County and Brookings County and is a favorite destination for recreational boaters. Logan's district also includes other popular bodies of water including Lake Kampeska, Big Stone Lake, Lake Cochrane, and others that literally see thousands of hours of boating activity every season. On many summer weekends, Logan can be found patrolling the waters in his district. Logan consistently logs numerous hours of recreational safety time, investigates boating-related accidents, assists in search and rescue operations, participates in aquatic invasive species details, assists in boating under the influence saturations, attends boating safety enforcement trainings, and participates in Operation Dry Water.

Logan's ability to connect with boaters and obtain compliance has garnered respect from those who work with him and the customers he serves.

During the 2025 Operation Dry Water weekend, Logan actively patrolled Lake Poinsett, Lake Kampeska, and Lake Cochrane, spending hours during daylight and after dark on the water and checking ramps. During this timeframe, Logan handled various boating safety violations as well as two minor in possession of alcohol violations. Most notably, Logan arrested two operators for boating under the influence and assisted with a zero tolerance DUI of an individual who was operating a vehicle pulling a boat at a public access area.

Logan documented 84 hours of recreational boating safety time. It is evident that Logan takes his responsibilities as a conservation officer seriously and understands the importance of training and volunteers when the opportunity to train arises. Logan was recently trained in the use of side scan sonar equipment.

Logan Hammer is deserving of the Operation Dry Water Officer of the Year award for 2025 because of the commitment he shows towards boating safety, his enforcement efforts that he has shown, and the respect he has earned during his career as a conservation officer.

TURN IN POACHERS (TIPS) PROGRAM



Since its establishment in 1984, the TIPS program has paid out over \$218,000 in rewards to those who have observed and reported violations. The funding for this program comes from various sources, including contributions from sportsmen themselves, making it a popular initiative among the community.

During the 2024 TIPS year, which spanned from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, the program played a significant role in 247 investigations and 223 arrests. As a result of these investigations, violators faced fines amounting to \$35,967 and were required to pay \$32,100 in civil damages. Furthermore, judges sentenced offenders to a total of 3,385 days in jail, with 2,745 days being suspended. As a token of appreciation for their involvement, TIPS rewarded individuals with a total payout of \$7,575.

For over three decades, the South Dakota Turn In Poachers program has served as a shining example of how collaborative efforts between government, private industry, sportsmen, and the general public can effectively address a common problem and protect a public trust resource. This program showcases the immense impact that can be achieved when diverse stakeholders unite in the pursuit of wildlife conservation.

TIPS YEAR 2024

247 INVESTIGATIONS

223 ARRESTS

\$35,967 FINES

\$32,100 LIQUIDATED CIVIL DAMAGES

3,385 DAYS OF JAIL
(2,745 days suspended)

\$7,575 REWARDS PAID

TIPS PROGRAM TOTALS

1984 to June 30, 2025

14,143 INVESTIGATIONS

5,722 ARRESTS

\$1,033,449 FINES

\$1,003,875 LIQUIDATED CIVIL DAMAGES

53,364 DAYS OF JAIL
(48,339 days suspended)

\$218,079 REWARDS PAID



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PROTECT YOUR RESOURCES. REMAIN ANONYMOUS. REWARDS AVAILABLE.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE. MAKE THE CALL



LYNN GEUKE

2025 TURN IN POACHERS OFFICER OF THE YEAR

Officer Lynn Geuke led one of the most complex wildlife investigations in Beadle County, targeting a large-scale poaching ring operating out of the Huron Colony. The case began when Geuke received a photo of a decapitated 5x6 whitetail buck, prompting an inquiry into illegal hunting activities.

Through persistent efforts, Geuke uncovered a network of individuals engaged in systematic poaching, using advanced equipment such as suppressors (including homemade and 3D-printed), night vision optics, thermal range finding scopes and rifles—all without proper licenses.

Geuke coordinated multiple search warrants on Google accounts, cell phones, and physical premises at the Huron Colony. These warrants led to the recovery of critical evidence, including suppressors, firearms, illegally taken deer heads, and digital data proving years of violations. He conducted

forensic data extractions from seized devices, analyzed thousands of text messages, and reconstructed timelines of illegal hunts.

Interviews with confidential informants and suspects revealed detailed accounts of spotlighting, night hunting, migratory bird killing, and trophy buck killings. Geuke's investigation also exposed the use of advanced technology to evade detection, such as thermal optics and silenced weapons. He meticulously documented each violation, linking suspects to specific incidents through GPS data and photo metadata which corroborated witness statements.

The operation resulted in 56 arrests/tickets, seizure of multiple deer carcasses, and significant fines and civil penalties. Geuke's work not only dismantled a major poaching network, but also set a precedent for handling complex wildlife crimes involving digital evidence and organized groups.

INDIVIDUALS: 5

ARRESTS/TICKETS: 56

JAIL TIME: 2,340 days (2,250 suspended)

FINES: \$10,626

CIVIL PENALTIES: \$20,500

INFORMANT REWARD: \$2,000

COUNTY: Beadle County

2025 STATEWIDE VIOLATION STATISTICS

HUNTING VIOLATIONS = 762

- 59 | Big Game - Unlawful Possession
- 50 | Protected Bird - Hunt or Possess
- 45 | License - No Migratory Bird Certification
- 39 | Nontoxic Shot Areas for Small Game
- 30 | Hunt within 660 Feet of Dwelling/Livestock
- 28 | Big Game - Closed Season
- 27 | Big Game - No License
- 26 | Big Game - Wrong Unit
- 25 | Small Game - Right of Way Restriction
- 22 | Small Game - Wrong Unit
- 21 | Waterfowl - No Federal Stamp
- 20 | Small Game - Shooting from a Motor Vehicle
- 19 | Artificial Light/Night Vision
- 19 | Big Game - Failure to Tag
- 19 | Game Bird Transportation/Packaging Requirements
- 19 | Waterfowl - Unplugged Shotgun
- 18 | License - Apply/Purchase Big Game When Ineligible
- 18 | Small Game - No License
- 17 | Big Game - Hunting on Highway
- 17 | Small Game - Unlawful Possession
- 15 | Small Game - Hunt Before/After Legal Hours
- 14 | Big Game - Bait Station/Electronic Call Prohibited
- 14 | Big Game - Violate Conditions of License
- 13 | Shooting Preserve - Records Violation
- 13 | Waterfowl - No License
- 12 | Gun Protruding from Vehicle
- 12 | Waterfowl - Closed Season
- 11 | Interference with Lawful Hunting
- 9 | Hunting Doves from Road Right-of-Way Prohibited
- 8 | License - Lending
- 8 | Small Game - Over Limit
- 8 | Turkey - No License
- 7 | Big Game - Transport Without Sex/Species ID
- 6 | Big Game - Use of Salt Lick to Attract
- 6 | Illegal Hunting Method
- 6 | Small Game - Closed Season
- 5 | Big Game - Improper Tagging
- 5 | Big Game - No Fluorescent Orange
- 5 | Shooting from a Motor Vehicle (Turkey)
- 5 | Waterfowl - Overlimit
- 5 | Waterfowl - Unlawful Possession
- 4 | Disturbing Wildlife Prohibited
- 3 | Hunting Guide Activities Barred From Certain State Lands
- 3 | Shooting From a Motor Vehicle (Deer)
- 3 | Small Game - Violate Conditions of License
- 2 | Artificial Light Prohibited After 10 p.m.
- 2 | Hunt Within 660 Feet of Dwelling/Livestock - Posted
- 2 | Shooting From a Motor Vehicle (Elk)
- 2 | Shooting Preserve - Failure to Tag Birds
- 2 | Shooting Preserve - Insufficient Release
- 2 | Waterfowl - Hunt Before/After Legal Hours

- 2 | Waterfowl - Lead Shot
- 1 | Big Game - Exceed Max Number Cartridges
- 1 | Big Game - Use of Trap, Dogs, or Bait (Lion)
- 1 | Hunting or Trapping within a State Game Refuge
- 1 | License - Hunt Under Revocation
- 1 | License - Purchase/Apply Under Revocation - Hunting
- 1 | Shooting from a Motor Vehicle (Waterfowl)
- 1 | Unprotected Game - No License
- 1 | Use of Vehicle/Boat to Disturb or Chase
- 1 | Waterfowl - Improper Tagging
- 1 | Waterfowl - Transportation/Packaging Requirements

MISC VIOLATIONS = 938

- 152 | Drugs - Use or Possession of Paraphernalia
- 137 | Alcohol - Possession by Minor
- 116 | Trespass - Hunting (Unknowing)
- 70 | Driving Under the Influence - Misdemeanor
- 67 | License - Fraud to Obtain
- 66 | Alcohol - Open Container
- 52 | Drugs - Possession of Controlled Substance
- 36 | Drugs - Possession of Marijuana - 2 Ounces or Less
- 35 | Trespass - Hunting (Knowing)
- 22 | License - Minimum Residency Required
- 15 | Wanton Waste of Game
- 13 | Trespass - Criminal
- 10 | Habitual Offender - Prior Felony
- 9 | Obstructing Law Enforcement Officer
- 8 | Traffic - Reckless Driving
- 7 | Drugs - Ingest Intoxicant Other Than Alcohol
- 7 | License - Not in Possession
- 7 | Motor Vehicle - Driver Use of Marijuana
- 6 | Drugs - Ingestion of a Controlled Substance
- 6 | Resisting Arrest
- 5 | Aiding and Abetting
- 5 | Misprison of a Felony
- 4 | Disorderly Conduct
- 4 | Driving Under Influence - Under Age 21
- 4 | Drugs - Possession of Marijuana - More than 2 ounces
- 4 | IWVC Fail to Comply Revocation
- 4 | Petty Theft Second Degree - \$400 or Less
- 4 | Trespass - Trapping (Knowing)
- 3 | Aggravated Assault Against Law Enforcement
- 3 | Driving Under Influence - Felony
- 3 | Enter Boundary Water without SD License
- 3 | Impersonation to Deceive Officer
- 3 | Possess Loaded Firearm While Intoxicated
- 3 | Trespass - Fishing (Unknowing)
- 2 | Aggravated Eluding
- 2 | Alcohol - Furnishing to a Minor
- 2 | Alcohol - Possession Prohibited in Certain Areas
- 2 | Burglary - Third Degree
- 2 | Drugs - Possession with Intent to Distribute Marijuana
- 2 | Eluding
- 2 | Intentional Damage to Property - \$400 or Less

- 2 | Motor Vehicle - Passenger Use of Marijuana
- 2 | Possession of a Firearm - Convicted Violent Felon
- 2 | Reckless Discharge of a Firearm/Bow
- 2 | Simple Assault
- 2 | Tampering with a Witness
- 1 | Alteration/Forgery of a Registration Card - Felony
- 1 | Commit Felony Carrying Firearm - First Conviction
- 1 | Driving Under Revocation
- 1 | Driving with Suspended Driver's License
- 1 | Drugs - Possession, Sale, or Distribution for Intoxication
- 1 | Escape - First Degree
- 1 | Failure to Stop/Report - Accident Causing Property Damage
- 1 | Failure to Appear
- 1 | Grand Theft
- 1 | Indecent Exposure - Misdemeanor
- 1 | Intentional Damage to Property - \$2500 to \$1001 - Felony 6
- 1 | Intentional Damage to Property - \$1000 to \$401 - Misdemeanor
- 1 | Manufacture, Distribute, or Possess Controlled Substance
- 1 | No Valid Drivers License
- 1 | Possession of a Firearm - Altered Serial Number
- 1 | Probation Violation
- 1 | Providing Firearm to Known Violent Offender
- 1 | Public Indecency
- 1 | Simple Assault Against Law Enforcement
- 1 | Threatening Law Enforcement Officer or Family
- 1 | Throw Match or Burning Object from Vehicle

FISHING VIOLATIONS = 393

- 258 | Fishing without License
- 44 | Over Limit of Fish
- 33 | Too Many Lines
- 12 | Length Limit Violation
- 12 | Unlawful Possession - Fish
- 10 | Unattended Lines
- 6 | Aquatic Invasive Species - Fish and Bait Transportation Restrictions
- 4 | Emptying Bait Container into Public Waters
- 4 | License - Fish Under Revocation
- 3 | Illegal Fishing Method
- 2 | Illegal Transport and Storage of Fish
- 1 | Aquatic Invasive Species - Conveyance Placement Restrictions
- 1 | Aquatic Invasive Species - Illegal Possession/Transport
- 1 | Fishing in Restricted Area/Closed Season
- 1 | Prohibited Bait
- 1 | Violations of Paddlefish Snagging Season

PARK AND PUBLIC LAND VIOLATIONS = 216

- 54 | Driving Off Roads Prohibited
- 33 | Littering Prohibited
- 20 | Failure to Have Park Entrance License
- 16 | Traffic - Speeding in Park/Recreation Area

- 12 | Unauthorized Land Use on Posted GFP Property
- 11 | Pet Prohibitions
- 10 | Limitation on Tree Stands/Platforms/Blinds
- 10 | Traffic - Operate/Park Vehicle in Violation of Posted Sign
- 7 | Unauthorized Land Use/Entry on Posted Park Land
- 5 | Glass Containers Prohibited
- 5 | Limitation on Trail Cameras
- 5 | Traffic - Exhibition Driving in Park/Recreation Area
- 3 | Destruction or Removal of Natural Features
- 3 | Littering from Vehicle
- 3 | Snowmobile - No Valid License
- 3 | Unauthorized Fire/Public Land
- 2 | Fireworks - Sell/Discharge
- 2 | Leaving Property on Department Land
- 2 | Operating Vehicles on School and Public Land
- 2 | Prohibited Use of a WIA
- 2 | Use of Snowmobile Trail Restricted
- 1 | Bait Station Prohibited on Department Land
- 1 | Failure to Obey Traffic Signs in Park/Recreation Area
- 1 | Jumping/Diving Prohibited
- 1 | Loud Speakers Prohibited - Disturbance Prohibited
- 1 | Unauthorized Land Use/Entry on Posted Land
- 1 | Unauthorized Use of State Land

FURBEARER VIOLATIONS = 5

- 2 | Possession of Unchecked Raw Fur
- 1 | Exposed Bait Prohibited
- 1 | Furbearer - Hunt During Closed Season
- 1 | Prohibited Method of Hunting Furbearer

WATERCRAFT VIOLATIONS = 305

- 86 | PFD - Insufficient Number
- 49 | Operate Vessel Under Influence
- 45 | Aquatic Invasive Species - Conveyance Removal Restrictions
- 24 | Operate Vessel Without License/Number
- 23 | Careless Operation
- 12 | Operate Vessel Without Lights
- 11 | Operate Vessel in Violation of Posted Waters
- 11 | PFD - No Throwable
- 8 | PFD - Not Wearing on Personal Watercraft
- 7 | Reckless/Negligent Operation of Vessel
- 6 | PFD - Use Required (Child Under 7)
- 5 | Improper Display of Boat Numbers
- 4 | PWC - Greater Than No Wake Within 150 Feet
- 3 | Aquatic Invasive Species - Failure to Comply with Inspection
- 2 | Overloading Boat
- 2 | Water Skiing - After Hours
- 2 | Water Skiing - No Observer or Mirror
- 1 | No Diver Down Flag
- 1 | Person in Water Within 50 Feet of Ramp
- 1 | PWC - Operate in Unreasonable Manner
- 1 | PWC - Operate Without Lights
- 1 | PWC - Underage Operation

IWVC = Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact
 PFD = Personal Floatation Device
 PWC = Personal Watercraft

2025 STATEWIDE VIOLATION STATISTICS

VIOLATION TOTALS BY ACTIVITY

Miscellaneous	938
Hunting	762
Fishing	393
Watercraft	302
Parks and Public Land	216
Furbearer	5
TOTAL	2,619

WRITTEN WARNINGS BY ACTIVITY

Watercraft	590
Hunting	403
Fishing	294
Miscellaneous	243
Parks	230
Trapping - Furbearer	7
Taxidermist	2
Shooting Preserve	2
TOTAL	1,635

SUSPENSIONS

Fishing	259
Hunting	245
Trapping	10
TOTAL	514

FINES AND COSTS

Fines assessed	\$145,815
Fines suspended	\$108
Actual fines assessed	\$145,707
Costs assessed	\$129,331
Costs suspended	\$0
Actual costs assessed	\$129,330
ACTUAL FINES & COSTS ASSESSED	\$275,038

JAIL TIME - DAYS

Jail time assessed	5,935
Jail time suspended	5,495
ACTUAL JAIL TIME SERVED	440

PROBATION - MONTHS

Probation	723
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CIVIL DAMAGES ASSESSED

Big Game	\$23,300
Small Game/Waterfowl	\$9,500
Fish	\$6,500
TOTAL	\$39,300



2025 STATEWIDE CONTACT STATISTICS

FIELD CONTACT TOTALS

Anglers – resident	14,105
Anglers – nonresident	6,688
Hunters – resident	7,464
Hunters – nonresident	4,566
Parks	10,573
Miscellaneous	1,653
Trappers – resident	178
Trappers – nonresident	1
TOTAL	45,228

LAW ENFORCEMENT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

Radio	259
School programs	148
HuntSAFE classes	143
Presentations to groups	137
Newspaper articles	23
TV	4
TOTAL	714

LANDOWNER ENFORCEMENT ASSISTANCE

Trespass	220
Shooting too close to dwellings/ livestock (660 feet)	103
Spotlighting	58
Miscellaneous	149
TOTAL	530

INSPECTION TOTALS

Watercraft	6,021
Snowmobile	1,348
Private Shooting Preserve	226
Taxidermist	122
Bait Dealers	35
Public Storage	3
Captive Game Bird	3
Fur Dealers	2
Private Fish Hatchery	2
TOTAL	7,762

RETIRED OFFICERS



Top Row: Ken Wallin, Dan Plut, Bob Brown, Dan Limmer, Owen Meadows, Dave Duncan, Ron Catlin, Emmett Keyser, Bob Hauk, Mark Smedsrud, Jack Freidel. Bottom Row: Ron Meester, John Kirk, Jack Kuhl, Larry Stomprud, Darell Tilberg, Ron Shauer, Brent Nye, Lee Leuning, Doug Jones, Dale Gates, Mary Clawson

CONSERVATION OFFICER AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Every year GFP conservation officers, supervisors, and administrative staff receive awards in recognition of their efforts toward wildlife law enforcement and management.

2025 SOUTH DAKOTA CONSERVATION OFFICER OF THE YEAR



Each year, Shikar-Safari Club International selects an outstanding Conservation Officer in each of the 50 states based on their exemplary performance in the areas of wildlife protection, wildlife law enforcement, and implementation of important wildlife conservation programs.

South Dakota's 2025 Recipient is District Conservation Officer Supervisor in Hermosa, **CHRIS DEKKER**.

Chris was recognized for his outstanding community involvement, his dedication to the protection of South Dakota's natural resources and his commitment to carrying out the mission of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks.



SHANE PEDERSON Conservation Officer in Redfield, received the Officer of the Year Award from the Midwest Association of Fish and Game Law Enforcement Officers for his outstanding efforts in law enforcement. Pederson also received the 2025 Officer of the Year Award from the South Dakota Conservation Officers Association.



TIM MCCURDY District Conservation Officer Supervisor in Aberdeen, received the Officer of the Year Award from the National Wild Turkey Federation for his efforts in connecting youth with the outdoors and support of conservation efforts.



TAYLOR KIRCHNER Conservation Officer in Tyndall, received the Brook Brown Boating Safety Officer of the Year Award from the National Association of Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) for his efforts with boating safety.

