



2025 Nest Predator Bounty Program

Frequently Asked Questions

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is focused on increasing participation in trapping from all ages while at the same time, reducing localized populations of nest predators as one way to enhance pheasant and duck nest success.

While the nest predator bounty program is a relatively new incentive-based program, the activity of trapping nest predators during the nesting season has been a management technique used for decades. Trapping is central to wildlife management, conservation and sustaining our state's outdoor traditions for the next generation.

All animals submitted for this program must have been harvested (i.e., trapped or shot) in South Dakota during allotted time period found below.

1.) What are the primary goals for the nest predator bounty program?

- Enhance duck and pheasant nest success.
- Increase trapping participation, awareness and education.
- Ensure South Dakota's hunting and trapping heritage remains strong for the next 100 years.
- Get the next generation involved and interested in outdoor recreation, conservation and wildlife management while also increasing awareness of the importance of good habitat for nesting pheasants and waterfowl.

2.) What species are eligible?

Raccoon, striped skunk, badger, opossum, and red fox are the eligible species for this program. Road-kill animals are not eligible.

3.) Are coyotes included in the nest predator bounty program?

No, coyotes are not a primary nest predator. Coyotes eat small mammals like rabbits and mice.

4.) Who can participate?

Participation is for South Dakota residents.

5.) What is the time period for the program?

- March 1-July 1 for SD resident youth under age 18 only.
- April 1-July 1 for SD residents of all ages.

Note: The program will conclude July 1 or sooner if the \$500,000 maximum is reached.

**Research has shown that efforts to lower nest predator populations to enhance nest success of pheasants and ducks are most beneficial when implemented during the primary nesting season.*



6.) Is a license required?

Participants under the age of 18 and landowners harvesting nest predators from their own land are not required to have a license. All other participants must have a valid and current hunting, fishing or furbearer license.

7.) Are there specific trapping and hunting regulations to follow?

Participants must comply with South Dakota trapping and hunting rules and regulations. Rules and regulations can be found in the current hunting and trapping handbook or online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/pages/regulations/>.

8.) What is the bounty amount for each species?

Participants will receive \$10 per tail for the following species: raccoon, striped skunk, badger, opossum, and red fox. Participants must submit the tail bone and entire tail of these species to receive payment.

9.) Do the tails have to be a certain length?

No; however, tails must have the bone left in the tail. Tails without the bone will not be eligible for payment.

Burnt or charred tails will not be accepted.

10.) How and when will I receive payment?

Payment will not be received upon submission of the tail(s). GFP will process payments and send a check in the mail approximately every 30 days.

11.) I have heard that I will have to sign a legal affidavit. What does this mean?

Upon tail submission, participants are required to sign a legal affidavit indicating the tails were obtained during the time period outlined above and that they came from an animal they harvested. Participants under the age of 18 will need their parent/legal guardian to sign a legal affidavit on their behalf.

12.) How many tails can I turn in?

Participants are allowed to submit up to \$590 worth of tails per household.

Participants can receive an email confirmation of the transaction if they choose.

13.) Are young-of-the year animals eligible for the bounty?

Yes, free-ranging young (i.e., those capable of living away from their mother) are eligible. However, small opossum young living attached to their mother or still living in the pouch are not eligible.



14.) Where can I turn in my tails for the nest predator bounty program?

Find bounty collection times and locations online at: <https://gfp.sd.gov/bounty-program/>

*For bounty submissions outside of these office locations and times, please contact your local wildlife conservation officer or wildlife damage specialist. This contact information can be found online at <https://gfp.sd.gov/contactus/>. Local wildlife conservation officer and wildlife damage specialists' numbers are also listed in the current version of the hunting and trapping handbook.

15.) How is the program funded?

License revenue will be used to pay for the nest predator bounty program not to exceed \$500,000.

16.) Will trapping/hunting be allowed on public lands and improved road rights-of-ways during March 1 – July 1?

Snares are prohibited May 1-November 13 on improved road rights-of-ways and on all public lands statewide. Live traps may be used on improved road rights-of-ways and public lands until August 31.

17.) How long will this program be available?

On January 12, 2023, the GFP Commission passed a resolution to conduct the Nest Predator Bounty Program through 2026.

https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/RES_23-01_-_2023_to_2026_Nest_Predator_Bounty_Program_Resolution.pdf

18.) Why is the department implementing this program when the 2014 Governor's Habitat Work Group Report states the contrary when it comes to using bounties?

The nest predator bounty program is intended to engage South Dakotans in outdoor recreation like trapping and increase the awareness and support of trapping as an important wildlife management tool. These efforts can also increase duck and pheasant nest success at localized levels when focused on quality nesting habitat. *Ring-necked pheasant thriving in South Dakota pages 165-168*, identifies studies where predator removal did have a positive influence on nest success at the localized level.



19.) What was the public's response to the 2019 Nest Predator Bounty Program?

An independent survey conducted by Responsive Management in fall of 2019 found 83% of South Dakota residents approved of the Nest Predator Bounty Program. A link to the full report can be found [here](#) and the presentation from the January Commission meeting can be found [here](#).

The presentation given by department staff following the Responsive Management presentation can be found [here](#).

All of these documents can be found in the "Related Documents" section of <https://gfp.sd.gov/bounty-program/>.

20.) How many youth (under the age of 18) participated each year of the program?

2019 = 412 youth; 2020 = 177 youth; 2021 = 813 youth; 2022 = 736 youth; 2023 = 1,134 youth;
2024 = 1,021 youth

21.) How many participants (all age classes) were there each year of the program?

2019 = 3,145; 2020 = 1,125; 2021 = 2,772; 2022 = 2,322; 2023 = 2,482; 2024 = 2,237

22.) How many total nest predators were removed each year of the program?

2019 = 54,471; 2020 = 26,390; 2021 = 53,741; 2022 = 55,220; 2023 = 50,797; 2024 = 50,141

23.) A brief biology of the five nest predator species is listed below.

- a. Raccoon (approximately lives 2-3 years)
 - i. Breeds December through June (peaks in March)
 - ii. Females birth 1-7 young (May – September)
 - iii. Young weaned 2-3 months later
- b. Striped skunks (approximately lives less than 3 years)
 - i. Breeds usually in February or March
 - ii. Female births 2-10 kits (peaks mid-May)
 - iii. Young weaned 6-8 weeks later
- c. Badger (approximately lives 4 – 5 years)
 - i. Breeds in late summer or early fall (delayed implantation)
 - ii. Female births 1-5 young – March or April
 - iii. Young weaned 8 weeks later
- d. Opossum (approximately lives 2 years)
 - i. Breeds January and again in May or June
 - ii. Female births 3-17 young (keeps in pouch)
 - iii. Young are independent at 100 days of age
- e. Red fox (approximately lives 6-10 years)
 - i. Breeds December through March
 - ii. Females birth 1-7 pups (7.5 weeks later)
 - iii. Young weaned 6 weeks later



24.) What should participants do with the carcasses of animals?

Whole carcasses cannot be submitted to GFP offices for payment. Participants must properly dispose of carcasses on their own. Burying is most appropriate and easy to do.

25.) What happens to orphaned young?

When implementing wildlife management techniques such as predator removal, young animals that are entirely dependent of the lactating female will die.

26.) How is GFP dealing with potential fraud?

Participants will have to sign a legal affidavit which they attest to how, when and where the animals were harvested.

27.) Does GFP currently remove nest predators during the nesting season on state Game Production Areas (GPA)?

Yes, GFP does implement predator removal on a limited number of GPAs to enhance duck and pheasant nest success.

28.) Will license dollars used on the Nest Predator Bounty Program reduce funds available for a federal match with Pittman/Robertson (PR) funds?

No, license dollars used for the nest predator bounty program will have no effect on how much the Department receives in Pittman/Robertson excise tax funds.

29.) Will free live traps be available to participants in 2025?

No. This year each participant under the age of 18 will be offered a free copy of the National Trappers Association (NTA) Trapping Handbook.