

# GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION PROPOSAL

## River Otter Trapping Season Chapters 41:08:01

<b>Commission Meeting Dates:</b>	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>May 7, 2020</b>	<b>Teleconference</b>
	<b>Public Hearing</b>	<b>July 16, 2020</b>	<b>Pierre</b>
	<b>Finalization</b>	<b>July 16-17, 2020</b>	<b>Pierre</b>

### COMMISSION PROPOSAL

**Duration of Proposal:** 2020 trapping season

**Proposed changes from last year:** To establish a conservative river otter trapping season.

1. Establish a trapping season that is open from sunrise on November 1 to sunset on December 31 in all counties of the state.
2. Limit of one river otter per trapper per season.
3. Statewide harvest limit of 15 river otters. Season will end prior to December 31 if the harvest limit is reached.
4. Trapping season open to residents only with a furbearer license.
5. A river otter shall be reported to the Department within 24 hours of harvest. At time of reporting, arrangements will be made to check-in carcass and detached pelt at a GFP office or designated location for registration and tagging of the pelt within 5 days of harvest. Additionally, once the season has closed (last day of season or harvest limit reached), a person has 24 hours to notify the Department of a harvested river otter.
6. The pelt shall be removed from the carcass and the carcass shall be surrendered to the Department. After the pelt has been tagged, it shall be returned to the trapper. Upon request, the carcass may be returned to the trapper after the carcass has been inspected and biological data collected.
7. Any river otter harvested after the 24-hour period following the close of the season, will be considered incidental take and shall be surrendered to the Department.
8. A person may only possess, purchase or sell raw river otter pelts that are tagged through the eyeholes with the tag provided by the Department or if the river otter was harvested on tribal or trust land of an Indian reservation or another state and is properly and securely tagged with a tag supplied by the governmental entity issuing the license.

### DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

Recommended changes to proposal: None.

### SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

River otter populations in South Dakota continue to grow and expand into available habitat. A statewide season will provide harvest information from across the state. It also provides the greatest opportunity to pursue trapping of river otter. Over the last five years (2015-2019) the Department has received an average of 16.6 incidentally trapped river otter/year. River otter are most frequently incidentally taken during the beaver trapping season given similarity of habitat and trapping methods. The majority (72%) of the 83 incidentally trapped river otter reported over the last five years were taken in November. Updates on river otter harvest will be available on the Department website and by calling a designated phone number. A press release and other information tools will be used when the harvest limit has been met, similar to the mountain lion harvest notification process.

<b>APPROVE</b> _____	<b>MODIFY</b> _____	<b>REJECT</b> _____	<b>NO ACTION</b> _____
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## 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. River otter populations in South Dakota continue to grow and expand into available habitat. In reviewing the number of river otters incidentally trapped, the population can sustain a conservative harvest by trappers. Public input will be solicited during the Commission process. If implemented, Department staff will collect biological data, evaluate season structure and bring any recommended changes to the Commission for consideration for future seasons.
2. Historical Considerations – River otters were classified as a furbearer by the South Dakota Legislature in 2019 and were removed from the state’s list of threatened species by the Commission in 2020 after meeting delisting criteria.
3. Biological Considerations
  - What is the current and projected status of the population and habitat conditions for these populations?
    - i. As already indicated, river otter populations in South Dakota continue to grow and expand into available habitat.
4. Social Considerations
  - The allowance of a restrictive trapping season will provide additional opportunities for resident trappers. It is recommended to limit this season to residents only, given the limited opportunity and expected high interest from resident trappers.
5. Financial considerations – Not Applicable.

## RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, REACTIVATION (R3) CRITERIA

1. Does the regulation or fee inhibit a user’s ability to participate? Not applicable.
2. Does the regulation increase the opportunity for new and existing users?
  - Yes, the inclusion of a conservative trapping season for river otters will provide additional opportunities for existing trappers and likely spark interest from new trappers.
3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists? Provides additional trapping opportunity.
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors? Yes.

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