

Public Comments

Bobcat Hunting and Trapping Season

Barbara Papik

Mission Hill SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am very much opposed to this.

Colleen Muller

Hill City SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

It's cruel please don't

Vince Logue

Oelrichs SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I object to the expansion of the area to include more of eastern SD and to extend folks can trap/hunt east river by I think about 3 weeks.

There does not seem to be very much habitat east river and fewer bobcats. We should be able to have bobcats as part of the ecosystem across the state. They will help keep populations of rodents in check. Wildlife watchers and photographers should be able to see them and/or their tracks across the state. You should address the conflict between wildlife watchers/photographers and hunter/trappers when the supply of animals is low.

Trapping is allowed for 3 and a partial days West River and 2 and a partial days East River. When we petitioned for a 24 hour trap check times, bobcat trappers objected as if they checked traps that frequently the bobcats would detect humans and avoid traps. This means bobcats are left to suffer in traps likely longer than most animals. Bobcats can be hunted by dogs which I believe to be cruelty to dogs and bobcats, especially if the area does not have tall trees for bobcats to climb up.

I object to the changes entirely and ask you not to implement. Please also consider possible mitigations to your season that would reduce it, such as more limits on take per hunter west river, smaller expansion of the area, smaller time extension. Please consider outlawing trapping and/or hound hunting as a method of harvest. Please also consider asking them to report how the bobcat was killed - via a boothunt, hounds or traps. As they are bringing them in to be inspected, they should be required to report on the method.

Fall Turkey

Wolfgang & Kathleen Schmidt

Nemo SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Turkey populations are down in the Northern Hills and there should be no Fall or Spring 2021 season to hunt turkeys--it doesn't make any sense. Living here since the 1970s, for the past two years we have seen NO turkeys in Vanocker Canyon. This is a bad sign that shows they are not reproducing. We always saw hens and their young, but this year and last year, we've seen NONE. Hunting licenses should not be issued for Fall 2020 PERIOD until the turkey population comes back to a sustainable number. Not only that, with all the timber cutting, the turkey habitat has been greatly reduced. A suggestion would be to work with the Forest Service and figure out now to bring back these birds and create new habitat for them. Until that is done, no new licenses should be issued.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

The title on this is Fall Turkey and I think you mean Spring Turkey. If it is fall turkey please grant amendment to limit fall hunting to only bearded turkeys, as we need to keep all female turkeys due to low population numbers.

As for spring turkey, I think that you will say hunting only bearded turkeys, not male turkeys. 10% of bearded turkeys are females. Your turkey populations are not doing well due to adverse weather for several years in spring and fall.

I object to the changes in the season. It should be reduced or mitigated or changes not made.

You can be creative with changes and investigate ways to reduce the number of turkeys killed, such as shorter season, restricted number of hunters, harvest limits, smaller bag limits etc.

Thanks,

Other

Rodney Sather

Vivian SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose the 4 bird limit after December 1.

Jeffrey Johnson

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

4 bird limit is crazy. hunters can rarely get the 3 bird limit. this puts big pressure and expense on all preserves!!

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society,

To Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

I have e-mailed our petition for rule-making to Jon Kotilnek, asking the Commission to list the Lake Chub as a SD endangered species but I am also posting it to this web page. It has an attachment. As you just accept one attachment per posting, I must submit that attachment in the next posting.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society,

To Game, Fish and Parks Commission.

In the last posting I attached our petition to list the Lake Chub as a SD endangered species. It has an attachment. As you just accept one attachment per posting, I must submit that attachment via this -my next posting.

Nancy Hilding

Rapid City SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilding@rapidnet.com,

Dear Commission

On your finalization sheets you always ask these questions.

3. How does the regulation impact the next generation of hunters, anglers, trappers and outdoor recreationists?
4. Does the regulation enhance the quality of life for current and future generations by getting families outdoors?

The answers seem to always be about how it will effect the hunting, fishing and trapping public and not about other "outdoor recreationists". Proposals that increase hunting and trapping may provide increased opportunity for hunter/trappers, but do so by reducing the population of a species on the land which may adversely effect wildlife watchers who are wildlife watching or taking photographs.

The answers seem to always be about how it will effect the hunting, fishing and trapping public and not about other "outdoor recreationists". These uses can be diametrically opposed and you just seem to perpetually forget this.

For example if turkey hunting reduces further the number of turkeys on the land (the population is already very low), it reduces the ability of home owners or renters to watch turkeys in their yards or people who travel to watch birds seeing them on the land while hiking/driving.

The recreation for hunters can come at the expense of others, especially when species population numbers are low, uncertain or depressed. Are hunters/trappers more important to you than wildlife watchers or photographers? It would seem so, as staff perpetually does this even when we complain, and even though Sec Hepler promised he would speak to staff and tell them to consider other recreators as well. They didn't seem to be obeying him.

In my reading thus far, this comment applies to all the September finalizations I have read. - Why does requiring electric motors on Canyon Lake, have no impact on recreators. What about the tons of people who recreate at Canyon lake (without hunting/fishing) won't the quiet or lack of oil spills - enhance their experience? Why are we invisible?

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk SD

Position: other

Comment:

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
6300 West Elm,
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilshat@rapidnet.com

Dear Game, Fish and Parks Commission,

For the last Commission meeting Prairie Hills Audubon Society submitted 2 comment letters on the river otter trapping season proposal and one letter had 5 attachments. Both comment letters were received on-time as the on-line transmittal cover letter for them were included in the public comments. The first letter and all attachments were eventually included in a revised public comment file (thanks). But you forgot however to include the second attached letter.

PHAS generally submits letters in a formal way, as an PDF attached file. We noticed one other person (James Elsing) did not have his attached letter about turkeys included.

We hope that staff will now attach our missing July letter to the September public comments. (we include it again). We hope they attach Elsing's letter. We hope staff will do a search of the 3 public comment files from July to see if they missed any other attached documents and if any more exist, please include those in the September public comments.

We appreciate very much all the work staff does and we appreciate all the help they give us. We imagine it is chaotic getting ready for a Commission meeting. We will however start sending any attached letters also directly to the Commissioners at their e-mails, as the attaching function may not be working correctly. It takes time to write these letters and effort to get them in by the deadline.

Our letter would not have been read before the Commission made its decision. "After the written comment period", SD Game, Fish and Parks is required by SDCL 1-26-4 (7), to "fully consider all amendments, data, opinions, or arguments regarding the proposed rule". Thus you all did not comply with the law, due to this process problem.

Thanks,
Nancy Hilding

Other Upland Bird Hunting Seasons

Jeff Paulus

Superior WI

Position: other

Comment:

1 Please place link on License page to Application Availability and Season Dates
2 Please label NR Waterfowl Maps "3 day" and "10 Day" thanks 3) perhaps a word of explanation why for survey page is first.

Nancy Hilding

Black Hawk, SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I object to increasing the amount of time to hunt grouse...just to make it match the pheasant season time frame. I worry about populations of greater prairie chicken, sharp tailed grouse and ruffed grouse. I want them protected and if anything the hunting season reduced. I worry about pheasants adverse impact to greater prairie chicken as pheasant males drive off the prairie chicken males and females pariticize the nests. I think pheasant hunting should be increased in greater prairie chicken areas to reduce their population and protect the greater prairie chicken.

Pheasant Hunting Season

Gordon Heber

Sioux Falls SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am encouraged by the recent recommendations by the Commission to extend the pheasant season to January 31st, the earlier 10 AM start at the beginning of the season and the added bird limit after Dec 1st. I feel these are very good proposals and am hopeful that they will be approved at your next meeting.

Tom Howatt

Wausau WI

Position: oppose

Comment:

Let's see...pheasant numbers have declined for years to near historic lows. So, let's stop brood surveys so no one will know the actual bird population. And let's spend far more funds on marketing—that should go over well with out if state hunters deciding whether to come to South Dakota. And let's increase hunting hours and late season bag limits—that should help the population. I've come to South Dakota to hunt wild pheasants, not planted birds, for 35 years. Based on the decisions you've made I won't be back. Perhaps you should spend your resources expanding habitat and demonstrating increased natural bird counts through science rather than slick marketing. Count me as one out of state hunter disgusted with current administration.

Kyle Sipma

Sioux Falls SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

A larger bag limit and extended season is not a good selling point and in my opinion will degrade the resource as this will only attract those who already push the limits. Also all species of wintering wildlife has enough to handle without the added disruption. This seems like putting a few extra hunters in the field to boost department numbers will do more harm than good. If we want more hunters, How about reduced fees for first time Non resident hunters. Maybe they will come back in future years if they just get that first taste.

Eric Paulson

Cold Spring MN

Position: other

Comment:

As a non resident hunter I support lengthening the season to January 31. However I DO NOT support raising the limit to a 4 rooster and 20 rooster possession. I also travel to Kansas to pheasant hunt. Kansas has a 4 bird limit and by the end of the season on public assessable land it is very hard to find roosters.

Charles Wiesner

East Bethel MN

Position: support

Comment:

i am in support for a longer pheasant hunting season that ends 1/31. also a bigger bag limit after 12/1 . I am also in support of a 15 day hunting season for nonresident per licence. I am also in support of a full season licence for nonresident pheasant hunting

Paul Reynolds

Keystone SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Changing the start time to 10:00 am is reasonable. Increasing the bag limit would be detrimental to the pheasant population. Likewise extending the season to the end of January, bad idea.

Thomas Laycock

Indianapolis IN

Position: oppose

Comment:

I wanted to add my voice to the objection for SDGFP to abandon science and stewardship of the state's natural resources in favor of marketing to out of state hunters.

My small group of 6-12 hunters who trek to SD annually are public land hunters. We rely heavily on the science based pheasant data to make our decisions about where and when we will hunt.

We have spent literally thousands of dollars on local hotels, restaurants and services over the years that we have been coming to SD. Not some \$1000 as day fancy hunting lodge outfitter, this is real money into the local businesses.

When marketing trumps science and habitat you have lost sight of the purpose of SDGFP. It is game and fish NOT selling licenses.

Not one hunter coming to SD is wanting more hunters. We are wanting more birds and better habitat. It is the "if you build it, they will come" syndrome. Kansas has already gone down this path with dismal results.

I would challenge you to reconsider this position. If you are spending more money on marketing than you are on science and habitat and making game and fish biology decision based on marketing, you have totally lost sight of your purpose and mission.

Brad Swofford

Reeds Spring MO

Position: support

Comment:

I want to thank you for considering the 10 am start for the first week of season. I, with several other avid bird hunters from Missouri, have been coming to South Dakota for several years. We have always wanted to stay an additional day but the noon start always puts us getting back so late that we never stay. With a 10 am start we will definitely stay that additional day and hunt and enjoy South Dakota. We consider it a privilege to get to hunt and just thank you for the opportunity and the changes you are considering.

Renee Allen

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As a avid upland hunter I'm opposed to extending the season for pheasants. The season is plenty long. Wildlife in has to already endure hard enough winters. By New Years many years the wintering cover is already blown in. I understand killing a few extra roosters would help the remaining birds but I see more birds dying from predators and stress after hunters continually push birds from the cover if the season as proposed is extended. Wildlife needs a break. It is the same reason we don't hunt deer, antelope, elk, turkey all winter. I see no season why we need to hunt pheasants thru Jan. Leave the season ended the first Sunday in Jan. and leave the 3 birds daily the same as well.

Thanks

Renee Allen

Pierre, SD

William Sipovic

Norton Shores SD

Position: support

Comment:

I support a 10AM start time so that the entire season has the same time. This allows for more time in the field and potentially cooler mornings if we can start hunting earlier in the day.

Terry Murray

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

James Zirbel

Aberdeen, Sd SD

Position: other

Comment:

I can support the earlier start time. More time in the field is always a good thing.
I can support the increased limit . But I do not support any additional hunting days by extending the season into the end of January. Disturbing the birds during typically extreme cold weather can and will cause increased losses to both hens and roosters. If it was up to me the pheasant season would always end around Christmas time. This still allows for family hunts around the holidays.

Curtis Bossert

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Until pheasant numbers significantly increase in the state, I CANNOT support extending the pheasant season beyond the current end date of first Sunday in January
Additionally, and for the same reason as indicated above, I a CANNOT support a higher bag limit at this at this time.

Brian Havlik

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am concerned about raising the bag limits when we as a state are struggling to get our wild bird population back to the numbers that made our state the pheasant hunting capital of the world. Raising preserves limits is something that only benefits a very few number of preserves. I don't believe that should be done also because it could put pressure on the availability to purchase pheasants and may raise the price of buying them under certain circumstances.

Don Forrest

Norwood SD

Position: support

Comment:

I am in support of changing the hunting time at the start of the season to 10:00 a.m. I come each year usually twice from Missouri. This will allow me to hunt another day and return for work. I hope you will consider the time change.

David Olson

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Against raising season numbers. Against lengthening season.

Jace Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Against the raising of bird limits and extended season dates. Not ideal for the commercial pheasant hunting operator. More released birds and more chicken shoots. Breaking away from South Dakota tradition.

Lee Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose changing the season length to the end of January. The season is long enough as it stands. I strongly oppose raising the bag limits to 4. We need to keep our limit at 3 it has been a tradition for years no need to change. Thank you

Scott Handel

Chamberlain SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose changing the limit from 3 to 4 cocks. I oppose extending the season to the end of January. I oppose the preserves to shoot unlimited birds. We need to keep South Dakota's tradition alive and not become a border state.

William Zirbel

Aberdeen SD

Position: other

Comment:

agree with early start

agree with increase bag limit

disagree with hunting in JANUARY! Also feel it would put unnecessary stress on all wildlife

Michael Kroupa

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I'm writing to voice my concerns and disappointment towards the proposed changes to the pheasant hunting season.

I'm located in Brule Co which used to be one of the best pheasant hunting areas of South Dakota. It's no secret that the pheasant numbers and habitat have declined substantially over the last 10 years. The roosters that are around and that you can get close enough to shoot on Dec 1 are predominately pen raised, most of those don't make the winter due to predators and lack of survival skills. If the season is extended to Jan 31, the birds will move into shelter belts and where feed is more easily accessible. This is usually around people's farmsteads, I for one don't like the thought of road hunters shooting around my place considering that's where birds congregate and children and livestock are always close. We all know what SD weather can be in January. I feel it would be terribly irresponsible to extend the season and put the birds at risk of being shot as well as being chased out of their habitat during times of poorer weather. If you chase the hens out into the elements, they will perish as well.

In conclusion, please don't extend the season or raise the limit. I think it is irresponsible and short sided for the long term health and well-being of the South Dakota pheasant population. I really feel we can get it back to what it used to be, maybe we could lower the limit and shorten the season a few years to see if that would help.

Ed Hiller

Arlington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Tad Jacobs

Flandreau SD

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

John Knoblauch

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

One of our highlights of the year is our annual pheasant hunting trip to Pierre with my 10 life long friends. This is our 21st year. We spend money at hotels, we eat out every meal...we buy supplies, and we pay landowners to hunt. Most of the issue on why we do not make a second trip to your state is the mobilization and cost for the opportunity to shoot only 3 roosters a day...Some of us have sons and daughters, and we have talked about adding a trip in mid January to bring them out as a young persons hunt if you make these changes.. Bottom line. We would greatly support these changes... and you would be fools not to support these changes to allow more opportunities to pheasant hunt . We need young people to get involved in the outdoors and this can only help....

Bill Muenzberg

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

The increased bag limit after December 1st will provide a material inducement to travel to SD and conduct late season hunts. The increased out-of-state travel will assist motels and restaurants after the initial opening season rush.

Daniel Ryan

Aitkin MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steve Prosser

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

I support legislation to increase pheasant harvest to 4 roosters after December 1st. I have bought a non resident license the last 20 years

Mark Bielski

Chanhassen MN

Position: support

Comment:

Please extend pheasant hunting season until end of January.

William Bernstein

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

I support extending the pheasant season to the end of January. I also support increasing the pheasant bag limit to 4.

Joe Morton

Edina MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Steve Bielski

Chanhassen MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

William Delay

Long Lake MN

Position: support

Comment:

Bag limits starting December 1st should be 4 roosters/day.
This increases SD tourism numbers for the late season which is where you want the increase.

Chris Hughes

Aberdeen SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I do not support extending the pheasant season or raising the limit at any point during the season. Wildlife needs a break. In Brown Co. The amount of snow in Jan makes hunting basically impossible and most of the good cover is covered in snow. No reason to be hunting birds and pushing them out of cover when surviving winter is hard enough. I do support 10am start time season long though.

Chris

Robert Underkofler

Excelsior MN

Position: support

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Robert Foote

Whittier CA

Position: oppose

Comment:

I have been hunting in SoDak my entire life and the last 4 years have been poor pheasant hunting in NE SoDak. Last year was about my worst season ever! The state discontinued the mail pheasant count and all of a sudden now you think there are so many pheasants that you need to extend the season and increase the limit. This sounds like a stupid plan! There can be only one reason for these two decisions and that has to be MONEY. Please do not proceed with these two propositions and make the pheasants suffer for such unrealistic decisions and the hunters in future years to come!

Todd Terveen

Emery SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Please leave things the way they are. The bird populations anywhere in SD are not sufficient enough to sustain a longer season or or increased bag limit. One thing that has never really been clear is where did these proposed changes originate from????? I operate a hunting lodge and have preserve land. We have been in business for 16 years and I have never had a client complain about the length of the season or the 3 bird limit. Their option to be able to shoot extra birds is where the preserve comes in to play if they so chose to participate. Obviously my opinion and motives may be somewhat different than that of a resident hunter, but even as a SD hunter my opinion is to leave thing the way they are until we can get the bird populations back to the way they were in the early to mid 90's. We are far from that and it is going to be a big uphill battle to get anywhere close to that point. Thanks for the chance to give you my opinion.

Marvin Kroupa

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

No comment text provided.

Ronald Brodrecht

Presho SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I own/operate a hunting business. Unless you release birds, they're unable to limit out at the current limit of 3 birds in 3-5 days. Increasing the limit of birds per day will further hinder their ability to limit out. Each hunter who comes to hunt has the idea of being able to limit out. Passing this new proposal of 4 birds is a poor choice that will have detrimental and economical downfalls for the state of South Dakots. I encourage you to not pass this new law.

Jeff Young

Onalaska WI

Position: support

Comment:

love the 10Am Start time. Benfits the hunters and the birds. Late season opportunities is nice also. Many hunters I talked to love this idea. Sad to see SD going to more preserve hunting. Personally I never would do that. Love the public opportunities about the hunt not numbers.

Neal Konda

Pierre SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am an avid upland game hunter and spend every day I can pursuing pheasants and grouse however, I am opposed to extending the season through January and opposed to increasing the bag limit during the late season. Modifications to the start time of 10:00 vs noon really makes no difference to me as the time change only includes a week of the main season and the resident public land season.

My opposition to extending the season is due too the weather conditions in South Dakota in January. South Dakota weather is much different than that of Nebraska or Kansas. I have hunted pheasants in Kansas in late January and can attest conditions are much different. It is a much milder climate than South Dakota. I do not see the need to be forcing animals, not just pheasants, out of cover when the available cover is condensed down due to snow, wind, and cold temperatures. I invite you to look at the 1981-2010 NOAA data for weather in say Aberdeen vs Phillipsburg, Kansas.

Increasing the bag limit to 4 in the late season also ties back to forcing animas out of cover. I hunt every opportunity I get for pheasants and toward the end of the season public ground is pretty well beat down with a single man limit of 3 very difficult to find, even on a full day hunt with multiple dogs running. A 3 or 4 man limit is nearly unheard of. There simply are not the numbers there to support it in much of the state.

I urge you to deny this proposal and maintain the season dates and bag limits as they have been in the recent past.

Frank Stukel

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I oppose changing the daily limit to 4 roosters at beginning of December. Farming practices with today's large equipment to not favor pheasant production at all. We also see a very serious loss basic habitat for various other reasons. Bald Eagles have moved in to good winter cover areas and are just one more predator the birds have never had to deal with. Honestly, in my opinion, it does not look good that we will ever have a great rebound in our native bird numbers - just too many things added to the equation that do not favor them. Most hunters unfortunately measure their success by killing their sought after game or in the case of birds by getting their daily limit. It is very difficult to get hunters a 3 bird (natives) limit after the fist week of the season so trying to get 4 native birds in a late season day is almost out of the question. Especially when there are fewer available, they are very spooky and they fly much faster. So in some ways you are just building a situation in which hunters will feel dissatisfied with their South Dakota hunting experience. Not great publicity for future license sales! I am just not aware that there has been this great pressure from hunters to increase the daily limit!

Kevin Teveldal

Wessington SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Changing the start time to 10 am the first week of the season is a good idea.

I'm not sure that the extended season or the 4 bird limit is going to bring in any extra hunters. I fact I think it makes us look a little Stupid to be blunt. WE have heard from many hunters and the comments are all similar.

" our group did not even get one bird/hunter a day opening weekend, do they think we are that dumb to come out there in January and thinking we will harvest 4 birds. I don't think so"

"January is for ice fishing you can't get close to the birds then anyway"

"We can't get any hunters at our lodge in December because of unpredictable weather so why would any groups come in January"

In my opinion most of those roosters you are seeing in the winter bird counts are released. Most all land owners in the state that have hunters or family comming opening weekend to hunt have been buying birds the last few years. The roosters that make it through to winter are no match for a native hen when it comes time to compete for food. They do help feed the raptors and varmints leaving more hens for the spring.

At the end of the day it is the perception of it.

the hunters that are going to come here and spend money know the facts and they are not going to travel any distance to hunt a couple hours in bone chilling cold weather.

Locals will jump in the car drive around and shoot those birds you are seeing in the counts in the ditches under a tree on a sunny sub-zero afternoon. I don't fault them for this I'm just saying it is not a revenue generator for SD.

I say it was a good discussion point but I do not see the 4 bird limit or the extended season as adding any value to our state.

Kevin Teveldal

Private Shooting Preserve Bag Limits

Charles Johnson

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

As to my knowledge only about two businesses want to change this.

A 3 bird limit is plenty for 99% of the hunters/groups I have guided over the last 30 years especially in this current era of low wild birds.

Bruce Haines

Mitchell SD

Position: support

Comment:

This has been needed for a long time.
If people want to pay then let them play.

Jace Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

Opposing unlimited bag limit. Develop more ways to introduce birds to SD habitat.

Lee Pulse

Kimball SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I strongly oppose an unrestricted limit on private shooting preserves. I believe there should be a maximum number of birds to be harvested. There must be a limit enforced. Thank you.

Tad Jacobs

Flandreau SD

Position: support

Comment:

I suspect that this will not impact the majority of PSP but support it for the few that have requested it.

David Olsen

Huron SD

Position: support

Comment:

On proposal for unlimited harvest

Not sure why we need the special license. The lodge will charge more for this service and the state will receive more tax money from the sale. Some preserves will not be affected and others will take advantage. I feel the preserves have the privilege under our current system to set our own limits and if this proposal passes I would like discussion of amendment to not implement extra fees on the license. We as smaller preserves may make use of this one day a group or one group a year as an add on to the hunt. The extra fee is not needed. And my feeling is to make this option as easy as possible to sell to our guests. Perhaps spur of the moment while having a great day shooting.

My comment on shooting hours as I approve of that change.

To comment on the length of season I understand the marketing concept I'm not sure about the science behind the non-effect of the bird population. I'm afraid in the month of January Birds that are flushed out of cover during subzero temperatures may be negatively impacted.

As for the limit change as long as it does not negatively affect our wild population in anyway I am in favor.

Respectfully

Dave Olsen

Marshall Springer

Gregory SD

Position: oppose

Comment:

I am strongly opposed to both the shooting preserve unlimited bag limit and the changing the non-preserve limit from 3 to 4. I would like to know how many individuals asked for the change to get the gfp to act on it?



August 20, 2020

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission
523 E. Capitol Ave
Pierre, SD 57501

RE: Proposed change to 2020 pheasant hunting season

Dear Game, Fish and Parks Commission members,

South Dakota Farm Bureau (SDFB) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission's proposed change to change to lengthen the 2020 pheasant hunting season and requests that the Commission not move forward with the proposal.

SDFB policy, written and passed by our statewide grassroots members, states, "We oppose extending the pheasant hunting season beyond December 1."

While we certainly commend the Commission and the Department for their dedication to improving communication and relationships between hunters and landowners, there are still too many incidents of hunters trespassing on private property, leaving gates open so livestock are able to get out, or other harmful activities. Expanding the hunting season into the beginning of calving season could be especially detrimental should a gate be left open or a fence knocked down.

Rather than expand the current pheasant season, we would request that the Commission and the Department continue to focus on work, like the "Recreation and Respect" campaign, to ensure positive experiences for both hunters and landowners.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Scott VanderWal'.

Scott VanderWal, President
South Dakota Farm Bureau

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Krystil Smit'.

Krystil Smit, Executive Director
South Dakota Farm Bureau

Opposition to proposed improvements to pheasant seasons

I oppose changing the daily bag limit from three roosters to four roosters because hunting, in my opinion, it is about the experience not about the number of birds a hunter bags. Also, commercial hunting operations already allow for this.

Something serious has changed in pheasant country. Farming practices have changed – there are less small grain and winter wheat acres, more row crops, and the spraying of herbicides and insecticides more frequently. There are less CRP acres which provide an excellent habitat. Older grass stands are not conducive to increasing pheasant numbers because they have less weeds and insects for the pheasants.

I oppose lengthening the season as well. I believe it is a mistake to drive birds out of their winter habitat at that time of the year. When they are hunted and driven out of their habitat their exposure to the elements increases. I do believe that one probably cannot overhunt roosters, however, one can cause the hens to leave their natural winter habitat and cause a higher mortality rate. Without the survival of the wild hens we will have no pheasants. Again, commercial hunting operations can hunt at that time of the year.

Please leave the hunting hours the same as it is a tradition. I understand that license sales are down, however, we had 20 – 30 years of exceptional hunting. But in the past 8 – 10 years we have seen a decrease in wild bird numbers. People were used to coming to South Dakota and having much success and that is no longer the case. We own a family farm for over 100 years and there are weeks in between seeing a brood of pheasants. Seeing a dead pheasant on the roadside is rare while seeing a dead coon or skunk is common.

I wonder if we want to bring more people to SD to hunt, why do we not allow more waterfowl hunters to our state? Waterfowl is a migratory bird, they are here and then leave. Why don't we take advantage of this opportunity?

Sincerely,

Marvin Kroupa

Kimball, SD

January is typically the coldest month of the year. Pheasants, big game and non game species congregate in diminishing habitat. There can also be substantial snow cover. Some hunters will drive as close as possible to the few pockets that hold birds before walking out the cover. The people and dogs open the cover up leaving easy trails for the predators to use. Snow will then fill in, leaving some of it unsuitable for the rest of the winter. Non target birds and animals will also be pushed out making them vulnerable to the weather and predators.

If somebody really wants to hunt pheasants there are preserves open thru March.

Ed Hiller

8-23-2020

To: SDGFP Commission

Re: Comments on Proposals made during
July meeting

The first proposal for a 10:00 AM start time for the resident only and the traditional pheasant seasons in 2020 would be an acceptable change since there is adequate time for the pheasants to feed before a 10:00 AM start time.

However the proposal to extend the pheasant season to January 31 should be rejected. Hunting during a season extension will subject the pheasants to detrimental stress during a period of typically extreme weather conditions. Historically the most severe cold is the first couple weeks in January. The birds are in need of good safe cover and additional food to keep warm. Hunting would drive them from limited cover and increase the losses of both hens and roosters due to this unnecessary exposure.

A better strategy as proposed is to reduce the excess rooster population by increasing the daily bag limit to 4 roosters per day for the month of December. Serious sportsmen should find this as a benefit for their efforts in late season hunts.

Sincerely,

Charles Boulais
37124 130th ST
Mina, SD 57451

RECEIVED
AUG 26 2020
Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

Tom K
Aug 17, 2020

RECEIVED
AUG 25 2020
Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

Pheasant Hunters Deserve Better (and so do the Pheasants)

I was born and raised in South Dakota, and am a SD pheasant hunter to this day. One of our family friends was Pete. Pete's family still has his land in Faulk/Spink counties. Pete was very protective of his wildlife, he always left the low ground alone for all wildlife. Pete is no longer with us, but his common sense is still here **"if you don't see large brood counts and at harvest you don't see the pheasants then it's time to back off, limit your take."**

The last two years there have been very few birds, and last year the low ground had standing water up to 3 feet deep. There went the winter habitat and nesting grounds.

I'm lucky Pete's family still lets me hunt some of their acres, but it's mostly to watch my son and dog hunt. We don't need 4 roosters (x2) to make it a good hunting day. As far as changing the start and end times, leave it alone - if it's not broke don't fix it! We should not be pushing the pheasants, or any wildlife, out of their home habitat in January! In many areas all they have is plowed fields!

Bring back the brood count for hunters, land owners, Game Wardens, biologists, etc. The brood count provides data on how pheasants are responding to weather trends, habitat changes, gives critical reproductive data, and wildlife management needs. I hate to see any wildlife born with a dollar sign on them. This is common sense, just what Pete had when it came to giving wildlife a helping hand. So, try using some common sense, or a little heart, instead of dollars and politics.



Colin Hogue

Life long SD hunter and SD land owner

16151 Olivine St., NW
Ramsey, MN 55303



James Larsen
300 W. 40th St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

I've been hunting Pheasants for 50 yrs. in S.D. I think extending The season AND INCREASE pheasant bag limit to 4 is CRAZY.

Pheasants plus other wild life need A break After 3 months of hunting. JANUARY is the coldest month of the year AND sloughs ARE their PRIMARY cover. So this makes for limited cover.

When you ARE hunting Roosters in JANUARY you ARE ALSO chasing hens out of their protective cover. In turn This will hamper hens survival.

The best way to get more hunters ARE

- ① get more public hunting land with good cover for Pheasants AND other wild life,
- ② get more programs like CREP, CRP, walk-in with good cover.

8-12-20

To: Director - Game, Fish & Parks

I have pheasant hunted in S.D. every year since the late 1960's. I remember the 5 day & 25 in possession days. It was great fun hunting the shelter belts, sloughs and corn fields with my best friends. As the years passed so did my best friends and my ability to hunt the fields.

The disability permitted me to be in S.D., but really wasn't very productive (one bird in 3 years).

I now am able to be with my son and his friends, which is great, but I can't hunt with them. The shotgun has become too heavy for me to handle, and is unsafe in the car.

Here's my request. Could you allow me to use a 22 caliber pistol. I have never owned a pistol but I think I could handle it weight wise.

(2)

I am able to drive my car with no problem and what I do is drive the roads, by myself, and look for pheasants in the ditches. Not productive but allows me to think I am hunting.

I do this while the young guys are in the field.

Being I will be 92 in October 2020, I don't think I will be visiting S.D. too many more years. Let me know your thoughts.

Jack Lundeto
3380 Westlawn
Jackson, MI 49203

Sirs

✓
My name is Richard Mathey. I live in Eastern S.D. Aurora County which used to be in one part of pheasant County. We have your production acres around us and I have C.R.P. I plant winter food for wildlife because I also hunt. For the last ten or twelve years we are running out of pheasants. Right now we have no pheasants. They are being farmed out and varmints are taking their toll on them. eating all the eggs and killing the raised ones. Chickens hawks are a good example. Like I said I hunt and hold pheasant hunts but I have to buy and release pheasants in order to have a hunt. All my neighbors that hunt release birds so they have some to shoot.

You folks tell the papers and hunters there are plenty of birds well that is not true. When you send out mail surveys to ask hunters how their hunt went most say good. but they are shooting released birds more than likely.

I am very much opposed to your extended Dec and Jan. season. Hunting that late will drive the hens out to the open and they can freeze. All the extended season is for the people that sell pheasants.

Another issue is your habit ~~to~~ fee. your habit areas are a mess weeds thistles no food. we furnish the habitat for pheasants pay us.

I know you will properly throw this letter away. but you should at least read it to the Committee
Thank you. Richard.
White Lake, SD White Lake

Tom K

RECEIVED
AUG 25 2020

Dept. of Game, Fish & Parks
Pierre, SD 57501

Bob Pollack
W 4555 27th ST
Necedah WI 54646

I have a comment on the proposed changes. I didn't see any change in the season for non resident why can't we hunt the season not just two six day periods.

Should change for N/R to hunt every day of season.

Bob Pollack

There are other States to hunt with out picking set dates.

August 26, 2020

David Sigdestad
42449 133rd St.
Pierpont, SD 57468

RE: Sec. Hepler & SD Dept. Game Fish & Parks & Commission Members

I am writing this letter because of one of your proposals for the pheasant season. I'm totally against extending the season further into January. I have visited with at least 20 people who share my view. Our weather here in NE South Dakota can be horrible in January. Last year we were consistently 10-15 degrees colder than Sioux Falls. You kick out the pheasants from the cat tail weeds and trees where are they to go to roost? If you vote to open the season at 10:00AM instead of noon and can bag 4 roosters instead of three, that's a big change for now. In the future, if you extend the season please consider the opening date and leave the closing date where it is. Thanks for your consideration.

David Sigdestad
Former Dist. #1 Legislator and farmer

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society
P. O. Box 788
Black Hawk, SD 57718

Nancy Hilding
6300 West Elm
Black Hawk, SD 57718
nhilding@rapidnet.com
July 12, 2020

SD GFP Commission
523 East Capitol Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Commissioners

We write in opposition to the river otter trapping season, we don't think you should have one in 2020. However in case you disagree with us and want a season, we also suggest some mitigations to make such a season less harmful.

CART BEFORE THE HORSE - Unseemly Rush

You went forward with the delisting proposal before folks could see the revised otter management plan, that was releasing on May 8th after you decided to delist (May 7th). Now your deadline on public commenting on the proposed trapping season, happens before we can see the final draft of the revised River Otter Management Plan. Its' final version has not yet been posted on the Commission web page nor to GFP's management plan web page. Maybe it will be in the Commission Book, so maybe those folks who can testify orally can read it a few days before the Commission meeting (or not)

The May 2020 draft Revision was very inadequate, providing very poor information on otters West River and along the main stem of the Missouri River. It is 12 pages long before the appendix and 44 pages with appendix and bibliographies). It did not plan for re-introduction West River & just gave West River short shrift. You should not be approving a trapping season until we have an opportunity to read the July draft of the River Otter Management Plan and see answers to our many questions (if they are provided). Perhaps you are rushing this through to get an otter season approved before the Interim Rules Review Committees Sept meeting, so you can start a season on Nov. 1st, even if that means lack of transparency and poor planning. Why the rush, why the delisting and season before the Management Plan?

ILLEGAL DELISTING

We have written in our first letter about the trapping season, explaining that the de-listing of the river otter in May 2020 was done illegally, as you did not provide the public notice required by law. We are not sure if you did the required consultation with tribes, federal agencies and neighboring governors.

Thus this trapping season is dependent on an illegal rule, thus resting on a very insecure foundation. We object to this process and suggest you go back and reconsider the delisting of the otter, using proper procedure.

TOO FEW OTTERS

The highest level of verified otter sighting in any year was 42 verified sightings of otter (2016). Over the last 5 years you had an average of 35 verified otter sightings. We believe you haven't yet figured out a monitoring plan. You have not proved you have enough otters to support a trapping season anywhere in the state. You haven't identified a reliable otter monitoring plan yet and we think you should delay any trapping.

TOO LARGE AN AREA - PROTECT WEST RIVER

It is totally unclear from the information provided in the May 2020 draft River Otter Management Plan, if you have any recent verified sightings of otters West River or in the Missouri River main stem above Lewis & Clark Lake. You may have no otters currently West River or maybe a few at or near La Creek National Wildlife Refuge, as we are aware of a verified sighting at La Creek National Wildlife Refuge in 2018 and an unverified sighting in 2019. (This understanding is not from the Management Plan, but other sources).

It makes absolutely no logical sense to have a trapping season in an area where there are no otters. It makes absolutely no logical sense to have a trapping season in an area, with just a few otters, who are maybe barely hanging on and barely surviving. If you are to have natural recovery West River, you need the Missouri River main stem left un-trapped so you can have connectivity with the East River's otter producing habitat. If you are to reintroduce West River, we need no trapping at least in the recovery area(s). SDGFP is not the only entity that could have re-introductions, there are 4 reservations West River and 2 along the east side of the main stem Missouri River.

We have no clue why staff proposed a statewide otter season except for sloppy and cavalier planning or an extreme bias towards trapping industry. Please don't allow trapping West River and leave the entire Missouri River, even down stream of Lewis and Clark trapping free.

BEAVER TRAPPING REFORM

Otters are killed accidentally in beaver, raccoon and mink traps. More are killed in beaver traps. The current West River beaver trapping season - except for the Black Hills - is 365 days. The East River season is 6 months. The Black Hills Season is 3 months, at the request of the Black Hills National Forest (BHNF). The beaver is a management indicator species on the BHNF.

The reason for this longer West River season is alleged to be, that West River ranchers complain more about "conflict" beavers than East River folk. Why not require them to apply for permit to take a "conflict" beaver, as provided in SDCL [41-8-23](#), rather than have yearlong trapping? Why not make both East and West River have a six-month season? Beaver's provide habitat to many other species. Why not make all trapping on public lands (who have at least a partial wildlife management objective) just three months, like the BHNF has asked for?

Why not provide that all beaver traps, that are not set during an otter season, have the trip wire off to

the side, as thus beaver trappers will be less likely to incidentally take otter. You could make this a requirement in a beaver season rule, not a matter for "trapper education". Why not get this change done, before having an otter trapping season?

VALUE WILDLIFE WATCHING AND SPECIES VIABILITY, NOT JUST TRAPPING INDUSTRY

We ask that the needs of wildlife watchers, photographers & hikers, are given adequate respect by SD GFP and that enough otters be kept to expand to West River. West River citizens should be able to view otters, without driving to far eastern SD. Let South Dakotans enjoy watching otters across all suitable habitat in SD. We don't have enough otters yet. Please recognize that viewing otters provides the benefits to quality of life for residents and reasons to visit for tourists. The trapping industry should not be more important to SDGFP than wildlife watchers or securing wide spread viable populations of otters.

OTTER MONITORING PLAN

We want an actual otter monitoring plan in place before they start otter trapping, not guidance for how to develop a monitoring plan. We want the monitoring plan to be peer reviewed. We want SD GFP to spend some money on monitoring costs, not just rely on incidental reports submitted by public or trapping reports. We wonder if the de-listing, will cause people to not value the otter as much and if de-listing will reduce the input you receive from the public. If otter is no longer listed, will people report the road kill or the incidental take in a trap?

CONSULTATION WITH TRIBES AND USFWS

Before approving the trapping season, the GFP should prove to the public that it has consulted with all SD tribes about the otter recovery, the trapping season and the otter de-listing and also with the USFWS and neighboring governors about the delisting.

AGRICULTURAL POLLUTION AND DRAINAGE TILLING IMPACTS

Please discuss and consider water quality problems in eastern SD -- that arise due to agricultural run-off and drainage tiling before setting a season. Please discuss water quantity problems due to drainage tiling and climate change. In the 2018 Status Review, GFP fudged on the issue of water pollution, saying it did not know about threat level from water pollution in eastern SD.

CUMULATIVE TAKE HARVEST LIMITS

All human caused otter "take" should be counted against the next years harvest limit. So all motor vehicle (road kill) and all incidental take of otters via other species trapping (after the otter season is closed) should count against next year's harvest limit.

SMALLER HARVEST LIMIT NEEDED

If GFP insists on a season in 2020, we ask for a smaller "harvest" cap.

A commissioner, I think at the May meeting, said trappers told him the proposed 15 otter "harvest cap" would be trapped out in the 1st week of the season. Staff testified that about 15 otter per year were incidentally/accidentally trapped in recent years. Most were taken in beaver traps.

We could see 15 otters taken in the first week of season and then another 15 otters incidentally taken during the rest of the year - thus giving a total otter trapping kill in 2020-2021 of 30 otter. Remember we just have 42 verified sightings of otter (2016) as highest level verified in any year and a 35 verified otter sighting as the average over last 5 years. Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe reintroduced 35 to start recovery.

Quote from draft 2020-2029 River Otter Management Plan at page 3 follows:

" incidental trap reports (n = 216) over the last 41 years (Figure 4).....Incidentally caught river otter were reported in all months of the year but were most frequent in March (n = 27), April (n = 43), and November (n = 86)".

If we assume 15 otters incidentally trapped per year, this would mean that 6 otter are normally taken in the entire month of November and 9 in other months. The GFP could be permitting a not sustainable take from the existing population.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nancy Hilding", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nancy Hilding
President
Prairie Hills Audubon Society

Submitted on behalf of the Society and myself as an individual,