

**GAME, FISH AND PARKS COMMISSION ACTION
PROPOSAL**

**Snagging of Paddlefish
41:07:05**

Commission Meeting Dates:	Public Hearing	March 1, 2012	Pierre
	Finalization	March 1-2, 2012	Pierre

COMMISSION PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS

1. **Modify 41:07:05:03** "Paddlefish snagging, processing, and transportation restrictions" as noted below.

Recommended changes:

1. **Modify 41:07:05:03** **Paddlefish snagging, processing, and transportation restrictions** so there is no restriction on the sizes of paddlefish that may be taken during the May snagging season on Lake Francis Case but size restrictions remain in effect for the October snagging season below Gavin's Point Dam.

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION

ARSD 41:07:05:02 was modified by the Commission at their November 2011 meeting, establishing a paddlefish snagging season on Lake Francis Case during the month of May. The intent of the rule change included having no length restrictions on paddlefish that could be harvested. Upon preparation of the rules sheet for the May 2012 Francis Case paddlefish snagging season, it was discovered that length restrictions on sizes of paddlefish that could be harvested during the October paddlefish snagging season below Gavin's Point Dam would also apply to the newly created May season for Lake Francis Case.

According to **ARSD 41:07:05:03**, all paddlefish between 35 inches and 45 inches, inclusive, from the eye to the notch in the fork of the tail must be immediately released to the water from which caught. An examination of paddlefish length distributions in the Francis Case population in 2008 and 2009 revealed that very few paddlefish would be available to harvest if the length restriction was in place.

While protecting paddlefish between 35 and 45 inches in length is to the benefit of the population below Gavin's Point Dam, the population in Lake Francis Case functions much differently. Natural production is lacking in Lake Francis Case, with the majority of the fish in the population resulting from annual stockings of juvenile paddlefish. This is considered a put-grow-and-take fishery, with the objective of stocking being maintenance of a fishable population and return of fish to anglers. The inclusion of length restrictions on paddlefish for this fishery would severely limit harvest potential.