July/ August 2013

South Dakota Conservation Digest

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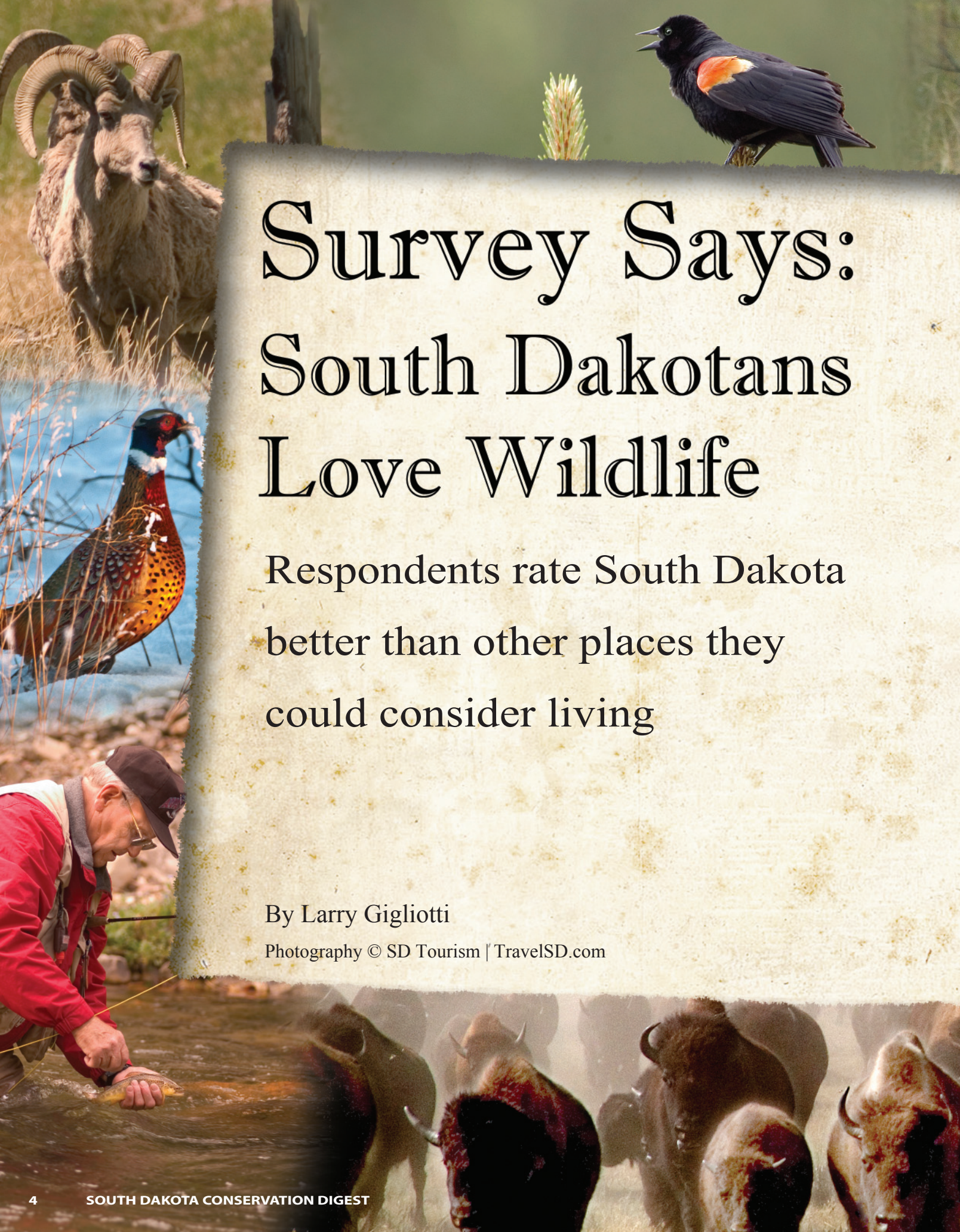
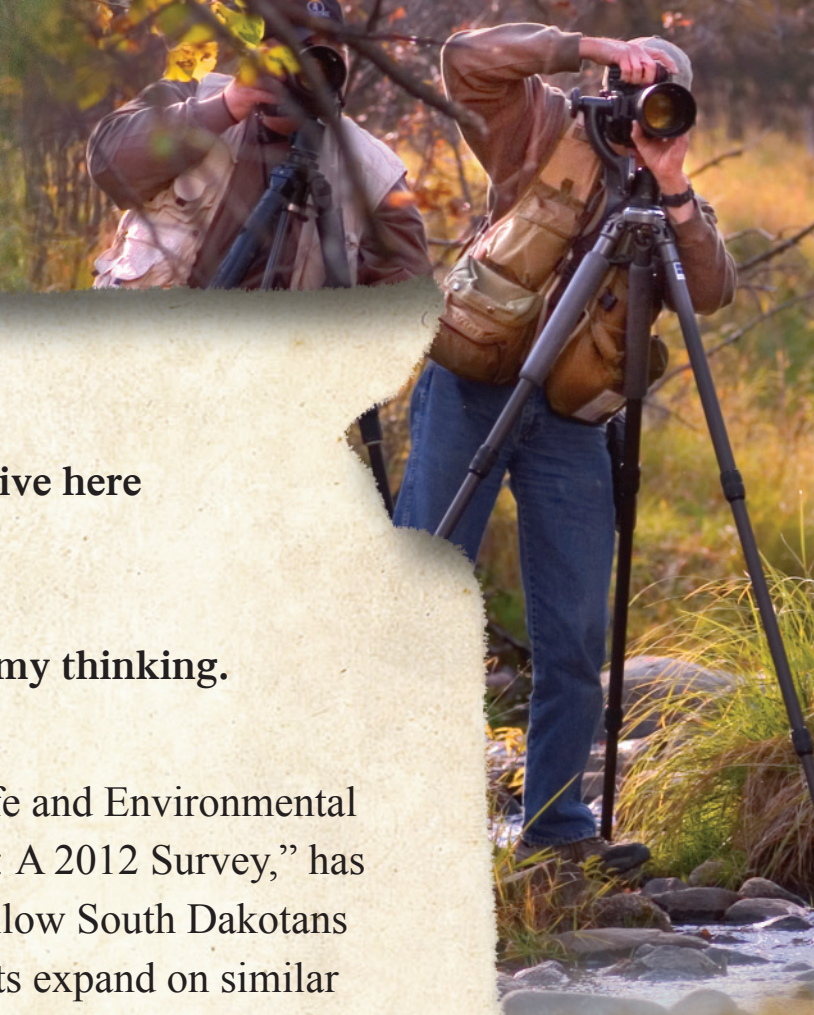


Survey Says: South Dakotans Love Wildlife

Respondents rate South Dakota better than other places they could consider living

By Larry Gigliotti

Photography © SD Tourism | TravelSD.com



South Dakota is my chosen home.
I could live elsewhere, but I choose to live here because I feel there is no better place.

I find I have overwhelming support in my thinking.

A comprehensive survey, "Wildlife and Environmental Attitudes of South Dakota Citizens: A 2012 Survey," has added to our knowledge of what fellow South Dakotans feel about living in our state. Results expand on similar data from past surveys on attitudes and are a vital part of information that will go into the next revision of the South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan, being prepared by the Game, Fish and Parks Department.

Survey respondents have provided information that gives insight into the passion with which South Dakotans embrace the natural world that surrounds them. Eighty percent said life in South Dakota is better than other places they could consider living. That figure is only slightly lower than a similar question in a 2007 survey.

A major reason that we hold our state in such high regard is the diversity and abundance of wildlife, as well as the recreational opportunities tied to our fish and wildlife.

Again, 80 percent of South Dakota citizens who responded said that fish and wildlife contribute to a high quality of life in our state. The survey results further reveal that the greater the importance of fish and wildlife to an individual, the higher that individual rated the quality of life in South Dakota compared to other places they could be living.

At the center of our enjoyment of fish and wildlife, is our devotion to fishing and hunting.

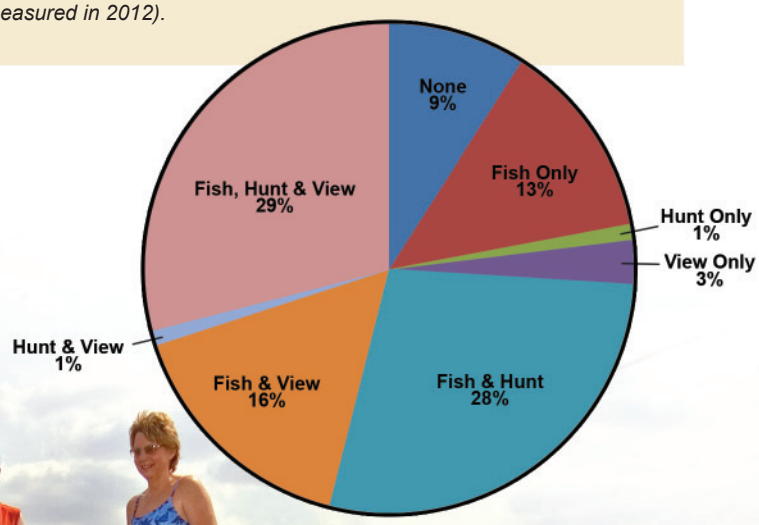
The survey found that nearly 9 out of 10 South Dakotans had fished at some time in their life, and 52 percent of those had fished within the past two years. Approximately 60 percent said they had hunted at some time in their life, and 61 percent of those had within the past two years. In fact, 18 percent of those who had hunted said it was their most important form of outdoor recreation.

Nearly half of the respondents said they have taken a trip where wildlife viewing was the main purpose, and two-thirds of those had done so within the past two years. Feeding birds was an active pursuit of nearly half the respondents, and 79 percent said viewing wildlife at home was important to them.

More than 90% of South Dakotans have fished, hunted and/or taken wildlife viewing trips and two-thirds have done so recently (Figure 1)

The great diversity of fish and wildlife is

Figure 1. *Participation in fishing, hunting and/or wildlife viewing trips by South Dakotans sometime during their lifetime. (measured in 2012).*



very important to me, and it turns out the same holds true for a majority of South Dakotans.

Nearly 9 out of 10 reported that it was important to them that South Dakota conserves and protects as much fish and wildlife as possible where appropriate, and the same amount said that fish and wildlife were important to the economic well-being of our state.

That is an incredible endorsement for fish and wildlife and the recreational opportunities to enjoy them, but it did not occur by luck.

South Dakota's fish and wildlife resources are due to a combination of a supportive citizenry and a responsible agency of professionals working together to manage these resources. Nearly 70 percent rated Game, Fish and Parks efforts to protect the diversity of fish and wildlife in our state as "just about right."

Our fish and wildlife resources have overcome many threats in the past, and today's challenges are bigger and more complex than ever: loss of biodiversity, climate change, invasive species, and altered landscapes.

One purpose of this survey was to measure opinions of South Dakota citizens regarding some of the challenges to maintaining abundant fish and wildlife populations in South Dakota. Some of the findings were:

- 81 percent feel maintaining a healthy prairie ecosystem is important
- South Dakotans feel wetlands are important for clear water, habitat, flood events, economic opportunities, and recreation
- 56 percent said maintaining healthy populations and diversity of bat species in South Dakota is important; only 14 percent disagreed
- 54 percent favor a balanced approach on wildlife management decisions between game animals and nongame animals
- 50 percent would support releasing river otters into suitable habitats in South Dakota; only 11 percent disagreed

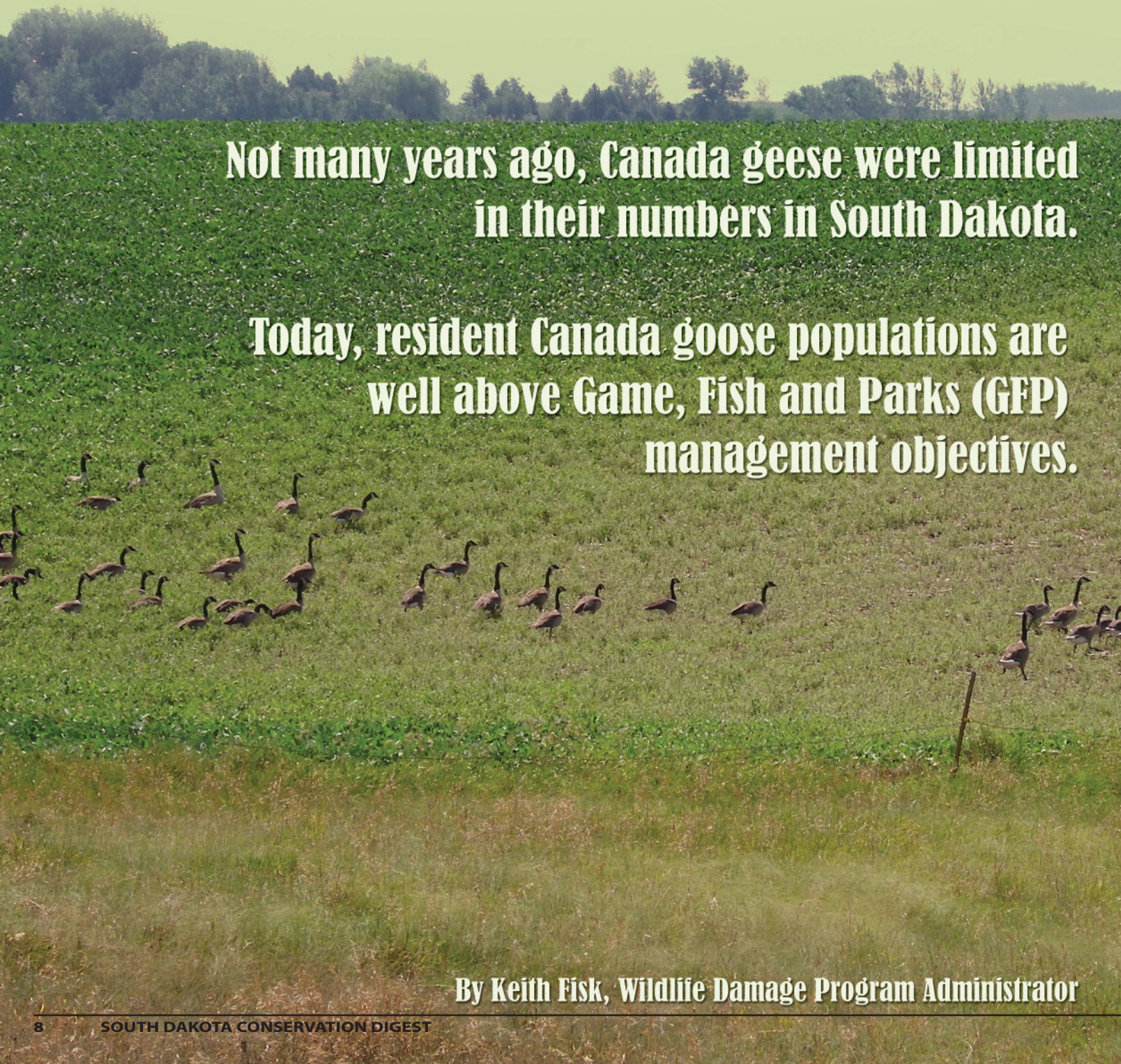
In addition to these, survey questions also explored topics such as energy development, climate change, mountain lions, bats, snakes, and prairie dogs. For example, the mountain lion season in South Dakota has been controversial; however the percent favorable towards a regulated mountain lion hunting season has changed little since first measured in 2002 (72% favorable and 14% opposed in 2002 compared to 71% favorable and 9% opposed in 2012). On the other hand, beliefs about climate change have shifted; a survey of Black Hills residents conducted in 2008 found that 46 percent agreed with the statement that climate change is currently affecting South Dakota and by 2012 the percent has risen to 63 percent.

Survey information will be considered as one part of the revision of the South Dakota Wildlife Action Plan, which provides a voluntary framework for conservation and management of all fish and wildlife species known in the state. In addition, public attitudes on this vast array of environmental issues can help guide fish and wildlife policy and management decisions.

Information about the plan and results from the 2012 survey can be found on the Game, Fish and Parks website at *gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/wildlife-action-plan.aspx*.

Larry Gigliotti is an Assistant Unit Leader and Assistant Professor for the South Dakota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at South Dakota State University

CANADA GOOSE DAMAGE AND A Challenging



Not many years ago, Canada geese were limited in their numbers in South Dakota.

Today, resident Canada goose populations are well above Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) management objectives.

By Keith Fisk, Wildlife Damage Program Administrator

DEPREDATION IN SOUTH DAKOTA

Future

Resident Canada geese migrate to South Dakota during the spring, nest and raise their young here, and then fly south before the winter months. During the spring and summer months when the birds reside in South Dakota, they can cause significant damage to growing crops such as soybeans and to a lesser extent corn and wheat.

Not many years ago, Canada geese were limited in their numbers in South Dakota. Today, resident Canada goose populations are well above Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) management objectives.

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The restoration of Canada geese is a true wildlife management success, but the over-abundant populations have caused significant concern for South Dakota's agricultural producers and GFP, especially in the eastern part of the state.

After a series of public meetings in several locations of eastern South Dakota, which incorporated both sportsmen and landowner comments and a citizen's advisory panel conducted in 2009 and 2010, GFP established a management objective of a spring population index of 80,000 to 90,000 resident Canada geese. During the spring of 2012, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimated a spring population index of nearly 270,000 birds in South Dakota.

As this population has continued to increase, GFP has expended more than $4.3 million since the year 2000, on Canada goose damage abatement programs and services in order meet agricultural producer demand.

Crop damage caused by Canada geese occurs mostly during the molting period when adult geese are flightless and newly hatched geese have yet to grow flight feathers. The flightless Canada geese simply walk into crop fields from adjacent wetlands or water bodies. Once into the crop field, the Canada geese begin to feast on the lush soybean leaves.

During a recent cooperative research project with South Dakota State University (SDSU), researchers utilized time-lapse photography and documented substantial damage to soybean plants from 20-30 Canada geese in a single day!

In addition, previous research in eastern South Dakota has indicated that soybean fields near wetlands or water bodies, if left unprotected, experienced approximately three acres of damage throughout the summer.

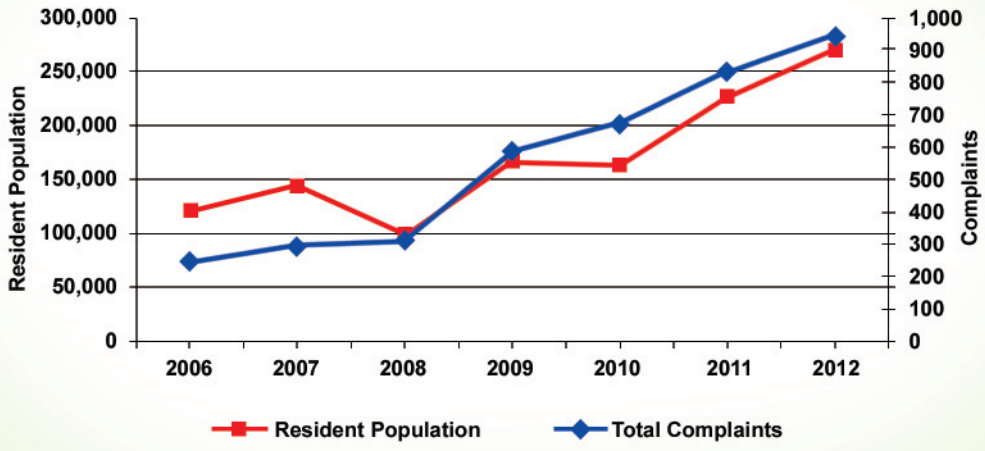
This crop damage is serious and dependent upon the growth stages of the crops, the plants can be eaten completely to the ground. Other times, if geese move into an area that is not protected and those plants are further along in development, the geese will only eat the soybean leaves as the stalks are too hard. Nonetheless, the soybean plants are still damaged and not likely recover. This damage can be substantial for many producers due to the high commodity prices.

GFP operates a multi-faceted wildlife damage program and employs many techniques to minimize or reduce damage to growing crops from Canada geese.

Each summer, GFP hires 15-25 temporary positions in addition to the existing full-time staff, to work with producers to implement both non-lethal and lethal methods to successfully address producer requests for assistance. The primary non-lethal techniques used to alleviate crop damage include: the construction of temporary electric fences and permanent mesh fences, implementation of temporary and permanent vegetative barriers (i.e. buffer strips), food plots, supplemental feeding sites, and hazing techniques (i.e. propane cannons, cracker-shells, and harassment).

In addition, GFP has been utilizing several lethal techniques such as utilizing a federal permit issued to GFP which allows GFP as well as permitted producers to kill Canada geese on areas where crop damage is being experienced.

COMPLAINTS vs. RESIDENT POPULATION



GFP permitted 140 volunteer hunters during the month of April in several counties in eastern South Dakota to harvest up to 7,000 Canada geese. The objectives of harvesting Canada geese in April were to: haze geese away and reduce damage at historic problem areas and lower the population at a very local level. Due to an extremely late spring and harsh weather conditions (i.e. snow and ice) participation from volunteers was low as the weather produced very challenging conditions. Nonetheless, volunteer hunters harvested 820 Canada geese which were donated to the Sportsmen Against Hunger (SAH) program. SAH then delivered the processed meat to food pantries and other non-charitable organizations.

During the growing season of 2012, GFP responded to more than 1,200 requests for assistance regarding crop damage caused by Canada geese and spent nearly $720,000 on damage abatement services to address these issues. These services saved South Dakota agricultural producers more than $2.4 million in crop loss based upon current commodity prices and previous research that quantified the average amount of crop damage.

There are several considerations why these services are essential for GFP to provide.

First, wildlife is a public-trust resource in South Dakota, however, over 80% of the land in South Dakota is privately owned. These private lands raise the majority of wildlife in South Dakota and sportsmen and women rely heavily on private land for hunting access. Take a few moments and think about the areas you pursue for hunting access. Personally, I rely on private land for nearly all of my outdoor pursuits and adventures. Looking at a survey that GFP conducted in 2009, 62% of waterfowl hunters hunted private land, 73% of pheasant hunting took place on private land, and 86% of deer hunters in eastern South Dakota relied on private land.

Private land partnerships are essential to South Dakota wildlife and a primary reason why it is important that GFP operate such a comprehensive and active wildlife damage management program.

GFP has also initiated a cooperative research project with SDSU, USDA-APHIS National Wildlife Research Center and Arkion Life Sciences (a chemical company from Delaware) which is currently in progress in eastern South Dakota. This research focuses on a chemical deterrent that when applied to soybean foliage will make the plants unpalatable to Canada geese. Previous research indicated that the chemical does deter Canada geese from causing crop damage, but this research will focus on application rates and frequencies which are vital

for real-world applications. If the outcome of this two-year research project is positive, this chemical could be a significant step at reducing Canada goose damage to soybeans.

Hunting seasons are the most effective management technique when it comes to managing wildlife populations. However, traditional hunting season regulations have not been sufficient to reduce South Dakota's resident Canada goose numbers.

GFP has utilized increased bag limits during the early fall Canada goose season during September as well as implemented a special "managed take" (i.e. the August Management Take). The August Management Take (AMT) allows GFP to utilize hunters during the month of August to harvest Canada geese. By harvesting geese during this month, there is a high likelihood that the birds being harvested are local birds. Canada geese are not aware of state borders or other political boundaries and because several surrounding states have also implemented an AMT, Canada geese from other states with similar issues can be harvested during this time-frame as well.

As you can see, GFP has implemented many techniques over the years to address Canada goose damage and lower the resident goose population and is also evaluating new innovative techniques for possible use in the future. By continuing to work cooperatively with landowners and sportsmen, GFP is hopeful that the population can be successfully managed.

Soybeans with depredation early in the growing season can be eaten to the ground (above), whereas, soybeans that experience depredation later in the growing season may only have stalks remaining (below).

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

You as sportsmen and women can be a big help in curbing depredation caused by resident canada geese. How? It's easy, just hunt!

SD GF&P has implemented several opportunities for you to enjoy the outdoors. The August Management Take and Early Fall Canada Goose season are prime examples of hunters being able to manage the goose populations.

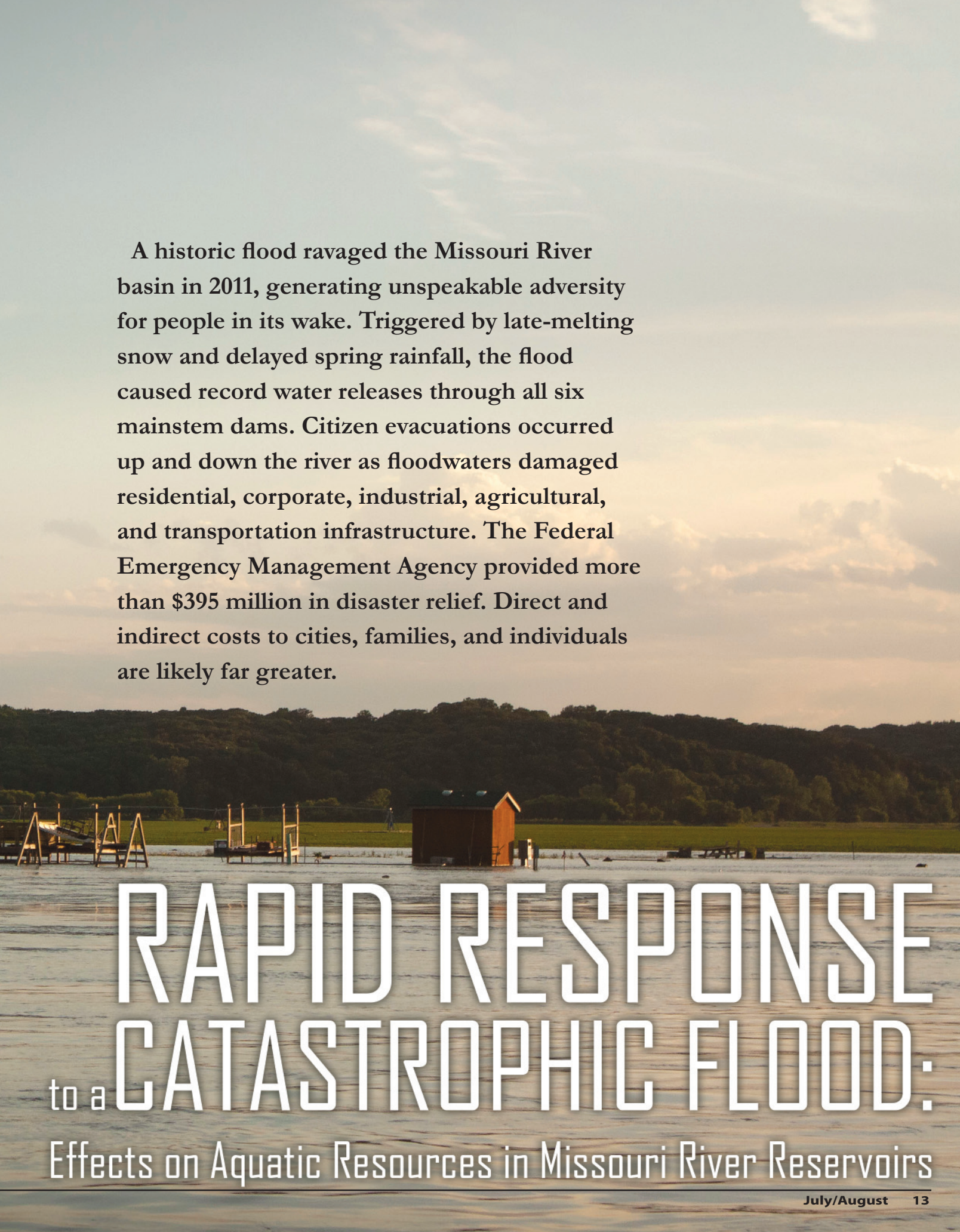
These seasons occur before the annual fall migration, thus increasing the likelihood that "resident geese" will be harvested.

2013 SOUTH DAKOTA EARLY GOOSE HUNTING SEASONS

	AUGUST MANAGEMENT TAKE	EARLY FALL SEASON
Dates:	August 3-31	September 1-30
Open Area:	Brookings, Brown, Clark, Codington, Day, Deuel, Hamlin, Hanson, Hutchinson, Grant, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, Marshall, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Roberts, Spink, Turner, Union and Pennington west of the Cheyenne River	Unit 1 *(visit gfp.sd.gov for boundaries)*
Residents:	Annual small game or combination license	Annual small game or combination license
Nonresidents:	Not allowed	Yes (with lottery license)
State Migratory Bird Certification Required:	Yes	Yes
Federal Waterfowl Stamp Required:	No	Yes
Daily Bag Limit:	15	15
Shooting Hours:	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset	1/2 hour before sunrise to sunset
Donations Sponsored by Sportsmen Against Hunger at Participating Processors	Yes	Yes, from Sept. 1-20. No donations after those dates.

Photo © Sam Stukel

By Andrew K Carlson - Graduate Research Assistant, South Dakota State University



A historic flood ravaged the Missouri River basin in 2011, generating unspeakable adversity for people in its wake. Triggered by late-melting snow and delayed spring rainfall, the flood caused record water releases through all six mainstem dams. Citizen evacuations occurred up and down the river as floodwaters damaged residential, corporate, industrial, agricultural, and transportation infrastructure. The Federal Emergency Management Agency provided more than $395 million in disaster relief. Direct and indirect costs to cities, families, and individuals are likely far greater.

RAPID RESPONSE to a CATASTROPHIC FLOOD:

Effects on Aquatic Resources in Missouri River Reservoirs

Social and economic effects of the flood are painfully familiar, but impacts on fish and wildlife are largely unknown. As a graduate student at South Dakota State University, the goal of my research is to discover how the flood affected aquatic resources in the Missouri River. When I moved to South Dakota in June 2012, I sensed the importance of healthy natural resources to South Dakotans. We care deeply about land, air, water, fish, wildlife, plants, and all things natural. With our commitment to conservation, it is important to understand how the flood affected fish and wildlife and develop strategies to minimize impacts of future disturbances.

Photo © Mark Fincel

The 2011 flood had major social and economic consequences, but ongoing research is still measuring effects on aquatic resources.

Near Springfield, South Dakota, I am investigating how fish communities and aquatic habitats in the Niobrara Delta were impacted by the flood. Formed by sediments from the Niobrara River entering Lewis and Clark Lake, the Delta has historically provided critical spawning and refuge habitat for sportfish, forage fish, and species of concern. Despite its benefits for fish and wildlife, the Delta reduces waterfront access, diminishes reservoir storage capacity, and intensifies floods at enormous cost to society. The United States Army Corp of Engineers and interest groups are considering sediment management strategies such as channelization, dredging, tributary diversion, sediment piping, and sediment flushing with high discharges from Fort Randall Dam. Although effects of these management options on fish and wildlife are unknown, the flood represents a natural experiment to evaluate them. High discharges simulated a sediment flushing event and can be used to predict effects on aquatic resources. In the short term, fish species richness (number of species) and diversity remained stable after the flood, suggesting Delta fish communities were largely unaffected. As my research continues, I will use digital maps to compare aquatic habitat before and after the flood and potentially explain Delta fish community trends. Although I will identify immediate effects of the flood, long-term consequences are especially interesting and should be studied as time progresses. In the future, managers may combine short- and long-term information to help manage and conserve aquatic resources in the Delta.

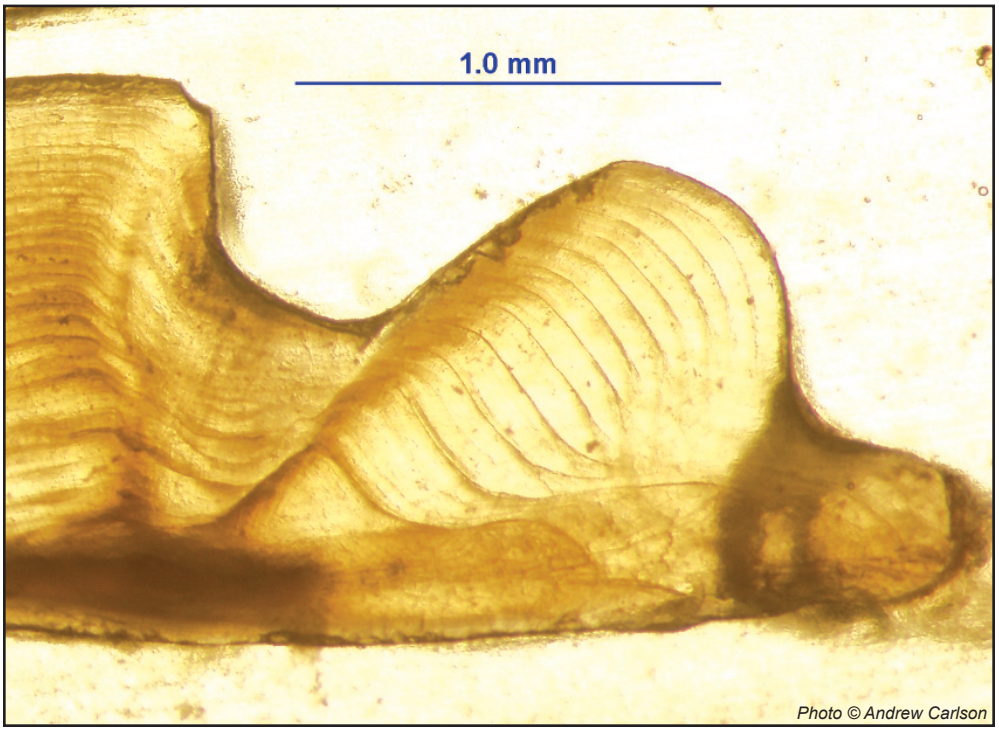


Photo © Andrew Carlson

Fish ear bones (called otoliths) contain growth rings and deposit chemical elements from surrounding water. Combining these two features, scientists can determine when and where fish move. The author will use this technique to study fish entrainment through Missouri River dams during the 2011 flood.

Surging through South Dakota, the 2011 flood likely impacted fish and wildlife at a statewide scale. Another phase of my research addresses this question. Floodwaters in 2011 washed millions of walleyes, gizzard shad, rainbow smelt, and other fishes

through hydroelectric dams in a phenomenon called entrainment. Given the value of these species to Missouri River fisheries, it is important to understand entrainment in preparation for future floods. Traditionally, fish movement has been studied using techniques such as telemetry, tagging, and hydroacoustics. But after a flood, researchers would ideally study fish dispersal using "natural tags," permanent body features that are consistent and reliable across studies.

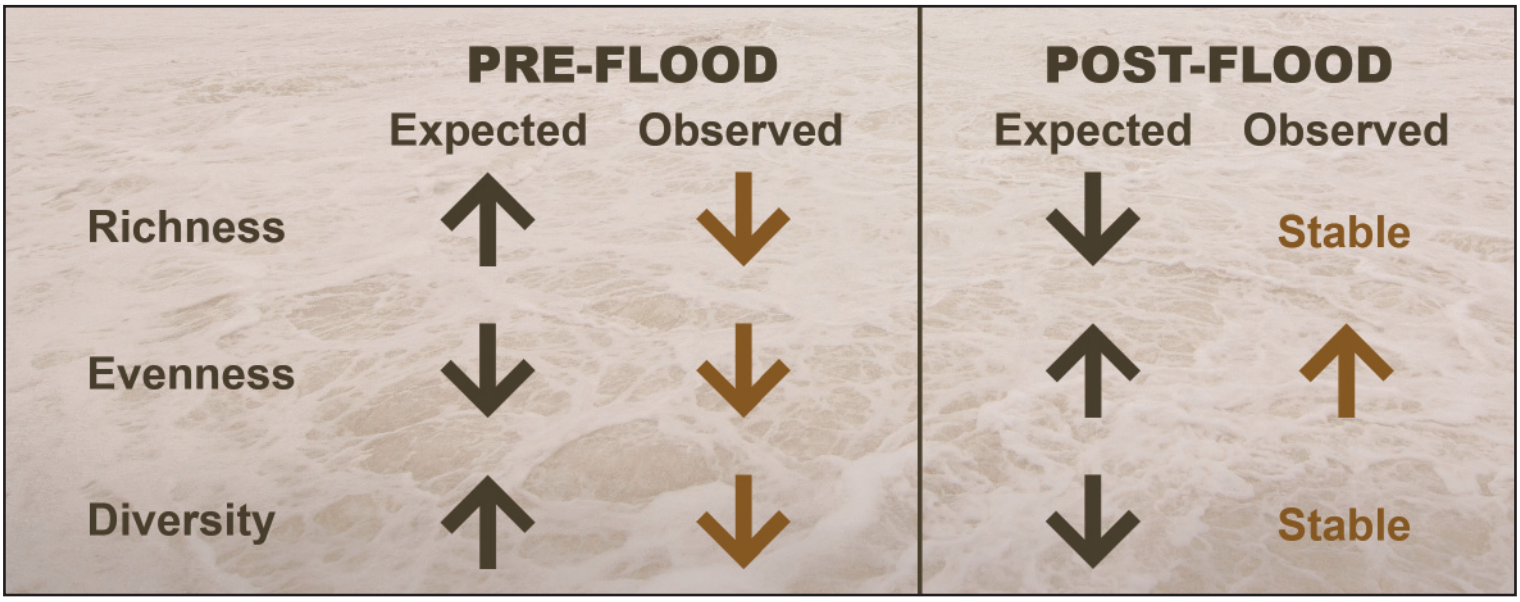
Fish ear stones (called otoliths) may represent natural tags. In addition to hydrogen and oxygen, Missouri River water contains chemical elements in low concentration. Strontium, barium, magnesium, sodium, and other trace elements in the water accumulate naturally in otoliths. Because concentrations likely vary within and among Missouri River reservoirs, fish from different locations should have unique otolith "signatures." Otoliths also contain growth rings (called annuli) that look similar to those on trees. Researchers may study chemical signatures and annuli to determine when and where fish hatch, grow, and move. Using this technique, I will study walleye and gizzard shad entrainment resulting from the flood and identify important spawning and nursery areas. This information will guide management decisions and ensure that South Dakota fisheries remain healthy in the future.

Photo © Andrew Carlson

The author's microchemistry lab equipment.

In a world where natural disasters greatly impact people, infrastructure, and economies, it is important not to forget effects on the environment. Natural resources are important to South Dakota culture and connect us as human beings. As committed conservationists, it is vital for South Dakotans to understand how the 2011 flood affected the Missouri River and its wild residents. My project will provide clues for solving this mystery and promote future studies on long-term effects of the flood. As research continues, I look forward to communicating my results with you. Feel free to contact me at andrew.carlson@sdstate.edu if you are interested in learning more about this project. I look forward to hearing from you!

Andrew K. Carlson is a Graduate Research Assistant at South Dakota State University.



Preliminary results from the author's study indicate fish species richness and diversity remained stable in the Niobrara Delta after the 2011 flood.

Hitting the Links at the New Pierson Ranch Disc Golf Course

By Shane Bertsch
District Supervisor
for the Yankton-area parks

You might think that disc golf is a game that was developed pretty recently, but the first known instance of playing golf with a flying disc occurred nearly 90 years ago in Vancouver, BC, in 1926.

Back then, it was just a group of school kids tossing tin lids. They referred to it as tin lid golf. Other similar accounts before and after the invention of the flying discs occurred in the 1930s to the 1960s.

In 1965, George Sappenfeld, a recreation counselor, thought that kids on a playground could play a game similar to golf using Frisbee discs. Sappenfeld contacted the Wham-O toy company about his idea and asked if they could help out with his plan to hold a Frisbee golf contest using hula hoops as targets.

The president of Wham-O agreed to hold a contest at Pasadena's Rose Bowl fields, but disc golf still didn't catch on nation-wide. One small group of people in Rochester, NY, continued to play the game constantly and even started an annual City of Rochester Disc Golf Championship that eventually became a national tournament.

But the sport really took off in 1974, when Ed Headrick of Wham-O took another look at disc golf. The following year, Headrick included disc golf as an event in his upcoming 1975 World Frisbee Championships. Since then, disc golf has grown rapidly throughout the country, including here in South Dakota. In the last twelve years, 13 disc golf courses have been installed in South Dakota state parks.

The newest of these was completed just this spring at Pierson Ranch Recreation Area, located west of Yankton. Pierson Ranch features a large day use area, making it a great fit for the newest course. Disc golf was already popular in the area, with the course at nearby Lewis and Clark Recreation Area getting an increasing amount of play each year.

At the same time the State Parks were looking to add a new course, Yankton Boy Scout Austin Hill was looking for an Eagle Scout project. An aspiring Eagle Scout must plan, gather materials, and supervise a work crew to complete their chosen project. The new disc golf course seemed to serve the needs of both Pierson Ranch Recreation Area and Austin.

Austin received some assistance with the course layout from local disc golf enthusiast Brent Roberts. He then went around to Yankton-area businesses to raise money for the disc

golf baskets. Ten local businesses helped sponsor the disc golf baskets, including Kopetsky's Ace Hardware, Hansen Locksmithing, JoDean's, Hy-Vee, JC Penney, First National Bank South Dakota, Wells Fargo Bank, Marquardt Transportation, Pump N' Stuff and First Dakota National Bank.

Once the funds were raised, he assembled his work crew and installed the baskets and signage. The total project time was 71.5 hours, with 21 scouts assisting in the installation. Since its completion, many park visitors have been taking advantage of the new disc golf course at Pierson Ranch. State park personnel even installed cement tree pads to prevent erosion from the high-use.

Disc golf is a growing sport enjoyed by all ages and abilities. Even if you're new to the sport, it's easy to get started. The cost is low – unlike regular golf, there are no memberships or green fees required. The park even has discs that are available to check out for free from the entrance booth or the Lewis and Clark Recreation Area Welcome Center. Or, you can use any old disc you happen to have lying around.

Next time you're in the area, come out and hit the links at the new Pierson Ranch Disc Golf Course.

DISC GOLF COURSES:

Angostura Recreation Area
Big Sioux Recreation Area
Hartford Beach State Park
Lake Herman State Park
Lake Louise Recreation Area
Lake Poinsett Recreation Area
Lewis and Clark Recreation Area
Oahe Downstream Recreation Area
Oakwood Lakes State Park
Pierson Ranch Recreation Area
Randall Creek Recreation Area
Richmond Lake Recreation Area
Roy Lake State Park

HOW TO PLAY DISC GOLF:

Disc golf is basically played like ball golf using a flying disc.

Tee off: Tee throws must be released from within the designated tee area.

Throwing order: After teeing off, the player whose disc is farthest from the hole always throws first. The player with the lowest score from the previous hole is the first to tee off on the next hole.

Lie: The spot where the disc lands.

Fairway throws: Must be made from the lie.

Score: One point is counted each time the disc is thrown.

Putt: Within 10 yards of the target, a player may not step past the lie when attempting a putt throw.

Completion of hole: The hole is complete when the disc is in the basket or supported by the chains.

Out of bounds: A throw that lands out of bounds must be played from the point where the disc went out. Add one point to your score.

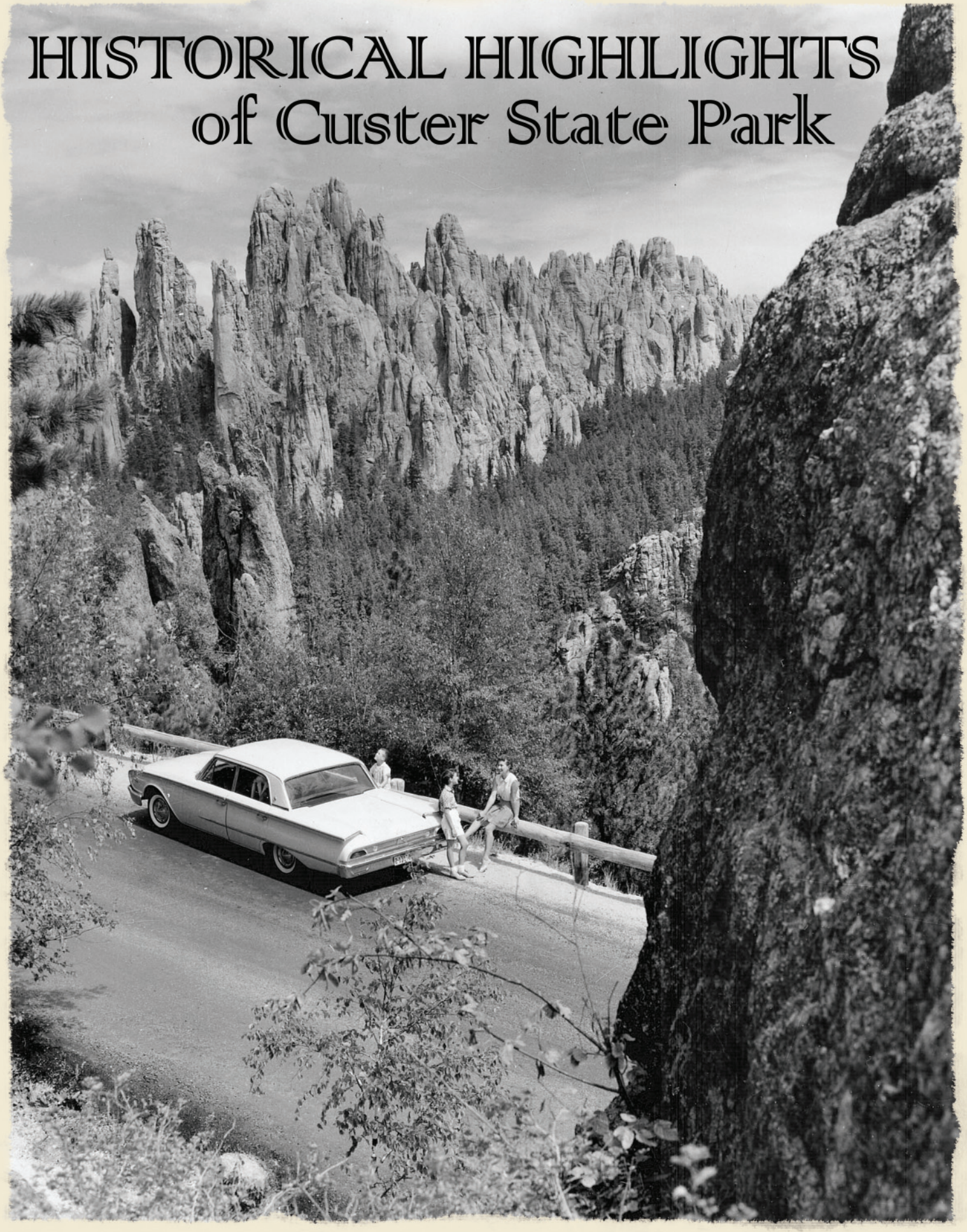
Winning: The winner is the person with the lowest score after completing the course.

Courtesy: Wait to throw until other players or park users are out of range. Help protect natural areas by picking up litter.

The only equipment you really need in order to play disc golf is a flying disc. While any disc can be used to play, some are designed specifically for the sport. Some curve to the left or right to combat wind, while others are designed for long drives or short, accurate throws.

No disc? No problem. Parks with courses have discs available to check out free of charge on a first-come basis.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS of Custer State Park



While the following information comes from an unknown former Custer State Park employee, the historical perspectives they provide are part of the foundation of the park that we continually build upon today. We should all be appreciative of the foresight of those before us who had the vision to preserve such an amazing landscape and allow their vision to continually guide us as we strive to maintain Custer State Park.

South Dakota became a state in 1889 when the vast acreage of the Black Hills was still public land. With statehood, Congress granted two sections of each township to the state for the benefit of school children. It was to be managed by the Commissioner of School and Public Lands, but there was little, if any, organized federal effort to administer or manage it, so the Black Hills became unmanageable at the state level.

The state then transferred most of the Black Hills school lands back to the federal government in exchange for solid blocks of land. Some 48,000 acres in Custer County were allocated to South Dakota in 1912, which became Custer State Forest. In 1913, the South Dakota legislature established a state game preserve and funded a 700-acre wildlife enclosure within the boundaries of the Custer State Forest.

Conservationists of this period were pursuing a dream that would ultimately place 73,000 acres of Black Hills land under one agency for the express purpose of preserving the scenic beauty and restoring wildlife populations which had been exploited by subsistence and market hunting. Governor Peter Norbeck was instrumental in this cause and was personally active in the planning of roads and tunnels.

Early evidence that the Custer State Forest was destined for park status is found in a Dec. 12, 1914 issue of the Pierre Capital Journal, where they referred to the land as a park rather than a forest. The name change became official by legislative action in 1919. Norbeck also created the Custer State Park Board, which became the State Park Board, no doubt in response to visions of a statewide park system.

The state began selling timber from the Custer State Forest in 1916, at which time the U.S. Forest Service claimed congress had not completed all action necessary to finalize the land trade and took the State to court. The State won that court battle and proceeded improving the park, including the

CUSTER
STATE•PARK

construction of the State Game Lodge. The lodge was originally completed during the summer of 1921, but it burned to the ground the following October. It was quickly rebuilt and reopened on June 15, 1922.

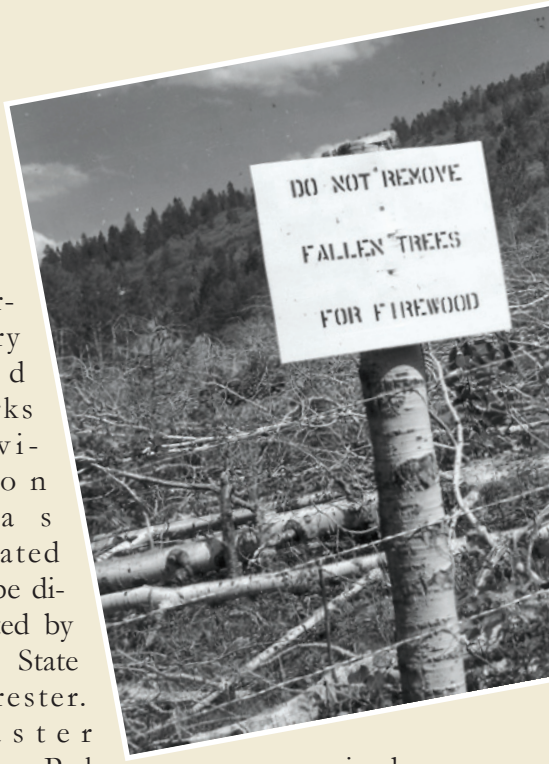
But any tourist will tell you that one of the most important aspects of the park's history is the buffalo.

A shipment of 26 buffalo came from local rancher Scotty Philip's herd near Fort Pierre, S.D. It was actually the second introduction of animals, preceded in 1913 by 25 elk obtained from Wyoming. The third introduction was in 1916 consisting of 12 antelope from Indian Creek Flats in northeast Haakon County.

After being elected senator in 1920, Norbeck made arrangements with Canada, the South Dakota Game and Fish Commission and the State Park Board to introduce eight mountain sheep in 1922 and six rocky mountain goats in 1924.

Plans for developing Custer State Park were not put on the bottom shelf during the depression and drought of the '30s. Works Projects Administration was looking for projects and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) came to the Black Hills in force. The CCC was active in the park from 1933 to 1941 and built most of the present buildings, roads, bridges and lakes, including Legion, Stockade and Center Lake areas.

The State Park Board merged with the Game and Fish Commission in 1945 and a Forestry and Parks Division was created to be directed by the State Forester. Custer State Park remained a separate entity, partly because of its uniqueness and partly to allow the State Forester to concentrate on two major tasks: to develop and manage state parks in the east and to focus on timberland survey within the boundaries of Custer State Park. The State Forester presented the first timber management plan to the 1947 legislature and came away with an authorization to harvest up to 6 million board feet of timber annually.

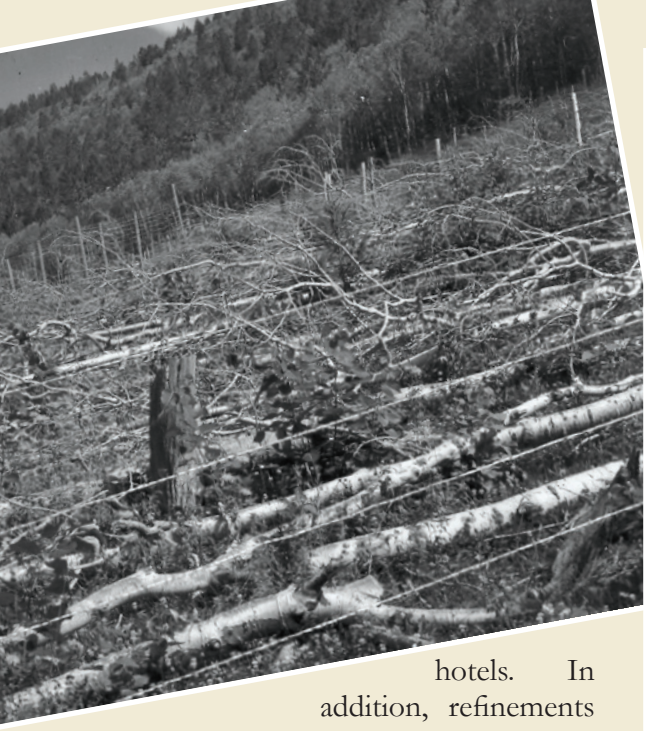


Custer State Park added 6,000 more acres of National Park lands in the southeast quadrant in 1952. Other than building the airstrip in 1952, a motel addition to the Game Lodge and a few residences for employees, expenditures in the park were directed to public service.

With land ownership near 73,000 acres by 1962, the park had gained ground both physically and in terms of national recognition. It was becoming quite the tourist hot-spot.

As visitation increased, so did demand for public service. What were once primitive areas for sightseeing, camping and hiking became modern campgrounds, paved roads, water and sewer systems, restaurants and

Buffalo were harvested for a time to keep numbers at levels the park could sustain. Here, Gov. Herreid and Scotty Philip are shown on a buffalo hunt in 1934.



hotels. In addition, refinements such as informative signs on hiking and horseback trails, availability of evening campfires and special living history programs were introduced.

The first park sticker was $1 per vehicle for overnight campers. In 1967, a $2 per vehicle entrance sticker was required for users of any park facility. The sticker was also valid for entering any of the several other state parks.

Wildlife management continued to be more passive than active until the '60s. Buffalo and elk numbers were held in check beginning in 1940. Park staff harvested some of each annually. These were then butchered, processed and sold at the locker plant located in the park. It was becoming evident, however, that there were still too many buffalo for the available pasture and water. Likewise, deer, elk, antelope, mountain sheep and mountain goats had reached static population levels. Coyote, beaver and turkey also had their ups and downs, so more aggressive wildlife management measures had become necessary.

Hunting licenses on a lottery basis were first offered for elk in 1962, antelope in 1963 and turkey in 1969. The rising costs of operating the locker plant also instigated the practice of selling bison by auction to efficiently control herd numbers. The locker plant continued to operate until the early 1980s, 10 years after the buffalo auction was put into place, and 20 years after the first elk licenses were sold.

TODAY

In retrospect, the first objectives of park management were to develop wildlife, recover from past logging practices and develop public use. Just as the need arose in the '40s to adjust the management of the renewable resources, it is evident today that ongoing repair, maintenance and building of new facilities continue to take place to enhance every visitor's experience. On top of that, natural resource management continues to deal with the forces of nature and the scars of two major wildfires – the 1988 Galena Fire and the 1991 Cicero Peak Fire. There are also current issues, like dealing with the destructive Mountain Pine Bark Beetle. Regardless, the future of Custer State Park looks bright and will continually prevail for generations to come.

Left: Logging has taken place throughout the park for years to keep the lands healthy and serve as a source of income.

Above: The logging process is much different now, but when it first began in Custer State Park, men used much more primitive methods of moving timber, like horses and wagons.

BUFFALO ROUNDUP

Custer State Parks herd of 1,300 bison are herded up during the annual Buffalo Roundup. This event, held in late September or early October is open to the public and is free to watch.

This event is not only a spectacular sight to see, but it is also a critical management tool in maintaining a strong and healthy herd.

For more information on this event, visit:
gfp.sd.gov/state-parks/directory/custer

"In typical smallmouth fashion it jumped, fought and ran. Melissa's delight was evident in the echo of her exclamations off Oahe's bluffs."

NEW TRICKS

by Chris Hull

I know Daddy's been away awhile, but it's been hard to teach an old dog new tricks –A lyric from Roger Clyne and the Peacemaker's Tell Yer Momma.

I like to fish. I like to fish for fish that like to bite. That being said, I usually have a species of fish that I am targeting, but if other fish want to bite when I am fishing, say walleyes, I am not only ok with it, I am usually happy.

Targeting a certain species of fish is very common in our state. Most people like targeting walleyes, perch and probably largemouth bass... in that order. They get proficient at patterning these fish, or they find a hot bite or a secret spot and fun ensues. As an angler, however, when is the last time you have tried to learn about a new species and target them? My wife, daughter, and I got the opportunity to open a new chapter in our angling diary this June by going out with a diehard smallmouth bass fisherman.

STEP 1 (and really all steps)

If you are serious about trying to target a new species of fish, big or small, you can sit down and read a library's worth of magazine articles and books about a fish. If you are like me, however, you probably would rather go out and hit the water. The best way to shorten a learning curve, and quicken your fun, is to find an angler who is willing to take you along. This probably won't be a one-trip and done endeavor, but the road to anywhere starts with one step... or cast in this case.

John Cooper is a diehard smallmouth bass fisherman. He admittedly fishes walleyes "merely for their protein content". Coop's idea of fishing and my wife, Melissa's, are similar. They are casters. They like to have their hands on a rod and feel every bite and bump. While I enjoy pulling plugs and bottom bouncers for our state fish, I have to admit, I'd much rather cast or jig during a day on the water.

Cooper not only loves to fish for smallies, he loves to take kids and adults alike to preach the gospel of smallmouth.

"I grew up in California, and I had an aunt and uncle that owned a marina on Lake Havasu in Arizona. At an early age I was helping on the docks... helping the fishing guides, cleaning up, dealing with bait," Coop said. "Havasu has a good largemouth fishery and some smallmouths. I started getting the itch there. Sealing the deal were my trips up to Rainy Lake in Minnesota. These fish (smallmouth) are so much fun to catch, are great for beginning anglers, and around here (South Dakota) so few people fish for 'em… it's an unbelievable and untapped resource."

Cooper picked us up at the Cow Creek boat ramp on the lower end of Lake Oahe in the late afternoon of a beautiful June day. It was obvious that we were going to have most of the

Image © Chris Hull | SD GF&P

lake to ourselves by the line of boats coming off the water.

"It amazes me," Cooper said. "All of these folks are coming off the water now and it's the most beautiful time to be out. I have had a lot of great evenings all by myself out here. Beautiful evenings where the wind is calm, the temperatures are perfect and the fish are biting... and there is not another soul."

That is most peoples idea of a great fishing outing. We motored over to some rocky shorelines and Cooper handed Melissa a spinning rod with a dropshot rig on it. If you aren't familiar with that rig, it has a small weight on the end of the line. About 6 inches above the weight, a hook and small plastic bait is tied. Melissa had never fished a dropshot, but is comfortable jigging and the idea is the same.

It didn't take her long until she was proficient enough to land her first smallie. In typical smallmouth fashion it jumped, fought and ran. Melissa's delight was evident in the echo of her exclamations off Oahe's bluffs.

"Just a small male, but a good one," Cooper said, releasing the fish.

I was trying to film the outing, shoot photos and help our daughter, Charlotte, fish. It didn't take long, however, until I couldn't resist a cast or two. I had a light spincast outfit with a jig and a minnow and it found fish quickly.

Charlotte didn't want to fish, but was more than content snapping photos with our ipod and playing with the minnows. I've learned from many trips with her that if she doesn't want to fish, we just let her do her thing. She also assumed the role of head cheerleader, shouting encouragement at every hookup.

Melissa soon tied into a bigger smallmouth, around 17 inches. Right before it got to the boat, it jumped, she screamed, and the fish escaped. "That was your picture fish Hull," Cooper said with a smile.

We never did tie into another "big" fish, but all smallies have big hearts, and we caught plenty of fish in the 12-14 inch range to keep us smiling. We pitched jigs, plugs, and dropshots to shore and fished them back to the boat with constant action. Combine that with the beautiful weather and an even prettier sunset and it was the perfect outing.

"Oahe and Lake Sharpe really do have world-class smallmouth fishing," Cooper said as we motored back to the dock. "All it takes is a little research and some time on the water to have success. Success, and repeated success is all it takes for an angler to reach out of their comfort zone and start targeting other species of fish. It's a no brainer to me."

I know that this one trip has my wife thinking about return trips to target smallmouth bass, dreaming of the one that got away and maybe even one bigger. There are plenty of them out there... Right in our backyard. She says they are taunting her. I say I think Cooper created a smallmouth fisherman for life. How cool is that?

TIP - when taking a young child fishing, have back-up plans for passing the time. These photos were taken by the author's daughter, Charlotte during their fishing adventure! Above: Even a little Smallmouths fight is worth the while. Below: The beautiful shoreline of Lake Oahe.

DakotaFlora

Prairie Sandreed

by Dave Ode, GFP Botanist

It is quite likely that prairie sandreed was present at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, not just as a grass growing on the hillside, but as a "wo'tawe" or war charm in the hair of Crazy Horse. War charms aside; I know this grass as the "grass that squeaks." At least that's one of the ways I've come to know prairie sandreed *(Calamovilfa longifolia)*. As the species name longifolia suggests, this is the Calamovilfa with the "long leaves," having leaf blades that are up to 30 inches long, gradually tapering to a thread-like tip. The leaf blades also have a waxy coating to help reduce water loss from the hot, dehydrating winds of summer. If you pull on a leaf while squeezing it between your thumb and forefinger, it will make a distinctive squeak – like the sound of a tennis shoe on the gym floor.

Prairie sandreed is a tall, rhizomatous, sod-forming native grass that grows throughout the Great Plains from prairie Canada south to New Mexico, Kansas and Missouri. Ours is the typical variety *longifolia*, while variety *magna* grows in sand dunes and other sandy soils near southern Lake Michigan and Lake Huron. The Great Lakes variety has a more open and spreading seed head, than our Great Plains variety. Both varieties thrive on coarse soils ranging from shifting dune sands like those found extensively in the Nebraska Sandhills to gravelly soils and even loose shale found on prairie hillsides and floodplains. Depending on the fertility and moisture of the site, prairie sandreed can grow from two to six feet tall, with roots that may extend up to ten feet deep. Also distinctive are the sharp-pointed, scaly rhizomes that support small colonies of prairie sandreed that typically cover patches ranging size from a few square yards to one-tenth of an acre. These rhizomes are the main reason why prairie sandreed is so good at stabilizing erosive soils. In one greenhouse study, prairie sandreed produced over 100 feet of rhizomes within one square meter of soil.

A warm season grass, prairie sandreed doesn't begin rapid growth until late May or June. It produces flowers in mid-July and ripens seed in August. The seed is quite small with about 250,000 per pound, of which a high percentage are dormant. Cold stratification of the seed helps break dormancy and increases germination. Several agronomic cultivars of prairie sandreed have been selected and tested by various Federal Plant Material Centers (PMC) for use in rangeland, roadside and restoration plantings. One of the oldest cultivars is ND-95 or "Bowman" produced by the Bismarck PMC from seed originally collected in southwestern North Dakota in 1956. In 1976 the Montana and Wyoming PMC's released a cultivar called "Goshen prairie sandreed" developed from plants collected in the Torrington area of southeastern Wyoming. Likewise, Nebraska and Kansas PMC's cooperated in the release of "Pronghorn prairie sandreed" in 1988 selected from 48 different wild collections in Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota. These cultivars do well in the semi-arid Great Plains, but are susceptible to plant diseases like the leaf rust *Puccinia amphigena*, the leaf mold *Hendersonia calamovilfae* and a leaf spot fungus called *Septoria calamovilfae*, when grown in more humid environments of the Midwest and eastern Great Plains. For these more humid environments, the cultivar "Koch Germplasm prairie sandreed" might be a better choice. This cultivar was developed and released in 2007 by the Rose Lake, Michigan PMC from native stands found along the southern Great Lakes.

The Lakota name for prairie sandreed is "santuhu hcaka" which roughly translates into the "grass that's like the common reed." The stout stalks of prairie sandreed were apparently used to clean pipes and pipe stems. It is also reported that the famous Oglala warrior Crazy Horse adorned his hair with a feathery seedhead of prairie sandreed before going into battle. One source of this information comes from

Prairie sandreed grows on sandy and gravelly soils in localized clumps and patches all across the Great Plains. *Photo © Matt Lavin*

Father Eugene Buechel who lived and ministered to the people of the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Reservations from about 1902 until the time of his death in 1954. An avid student of Lakota culture and language, Father Buechel recorded the Lakota names and uses for a substantial number of plants that he collected from the prairies, woodlands and wetlands of southwestern South Dakota. Father Buechel's plant collections and other artifacts are now housed in the Buechel Memorial Lakota Museum in Saint Francis. In 1977, Dr. Dilwyn Rogers, a professor of ecology at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, visited the museum and over the next few years assembled Father Buechel's notes and plant specimens publishing the results in a book titled: *Lakota Names and Traditional Uses of Native Plants by Sicangu (Brule) People in the Rosebud Area, South Dakota*. Unfortunately, this book is now out of print, but can be found in many South Dakota libraries.

Crazy Horse or "Tasunka Witho" fought in many raids on the Crow Indians, and in many skirmishes and battles with the U.S. military including the Fetterman Battle, the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and the Battle of Wolf Mountains, without ever being seriously wounded. According to various contemporary books about Crazy Horse, the ceremony that he performed before going into battle included streaking his horse with soil from pocket gopher mounds, painting a bolt of lightning on his cheek, and attaching a sprig of sandreed in his hair. Some suggest that this was to make himself invisible to his enemies. I think that it enabled him to slip between the earth and sky, part of both but bound by neither – like a stem of sandreed swept across the prairie by a whirlwind. Prairie sandreed would have been a common grass for Crazy Horse to find on his many trips through the Nebraska Sandhills to visit the trading posts and forts along the Platte River and Oregon Trail. And, prairie sandreed would have been one of the common grasses on the windy ridges and hilltops of western South Dakota and eastern Montana where you might go to see the distant horizon or to seek a vision. I don't know if Korczak Ziolkowski's mountain sized vision of Crazy Horse includes a stalk of prairie sandreed wound into his flowing hair. I don't have a vision of Crazy Horse. He was never photographed. For me he will always be a reminder of what we have in common – a respect for mystery and power of prairie sandreed.

SHOREFISHING SOUTH DAKOTA

Cast a Line from the Shoreline

By Lucas Smith

Think you need a boat to catch fish? Think again. South Dakota is loaded with fishable shoreline for every age and skill level. From the hardcore angler jigging for trophy walleye to the dad teaching his daughter how to use her Barbie pole, shore fishing offers the boatless angler ample opportunities to catch quality fish.

Not everyone has a Ranger parked in the garage or the time and money it takes to justify owning a boat. To fuel up a truck and boat for an off fishing adventure will cost you a couple Benjamins for sure. For the avid fisherman, this scenario adds up quickly especially if the bite is hot. Fortunately, a great fishing hole is only a short distance away. No matter what body of water you are fishing, there is a shoreline waiting.

MISSOURI RIVER

For the majority of South Dakotans, access to the Missouri River is attainable within a couple hours drive. The Mighty Mo provides anglers with thousands of miles of beautiful shoreline – in fact, the river has more shoreline than Florida. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks provides shoreline information with all accessible fishing spots along the river. One can find almost every species of South Dakota fish at some point along the river.

For those looking to snag a walleye (and who isn't) the man-made dams are great locations to find trophy walleyes. One particular hot spot for walleye fishing is near the Oahe Dam outside Pierre, S.D. When the sun goes down during the fall months, the rocks below the dam become a small angling community. Though it is popular, it is not for the novice angler. Fishing below the dam is not easy and is dangerous when moisture builds on the rocks. Technique is crucial to success and lures can easily snag. The bite is best when more water is running through the dam. The trick is to imitate the baitfish coming through the dam. It takes a lot of practice but when mastered, the results are worth it. You may even catch the occasional salmon.

LAKES

Whether you're fishing the banks of Sylvan Lake in Western South Dakota or Lake Thompson in the east, you can find a lake shore to toss in a line. Shore fishing on the lakes provides a chance for everyone to fish. Handicap accessible areas, boat docks and the beach offer the right scenario for a wide spectrum of anglers.

Lakeside use areas are the ideal environments for less experienced fishermen to hone their skills. These areas also provide convenient facilities like cleaning stations and restrooms for those looking to bring the family out on a fishing adventure. Lakes are also a great place to find a variety of species, allowing anglers to delve into the tackle box and use an array of lures and techniques.

The ideal lake fishing hot spot entails a drop-off to deeper water, close enough to the shore to drop your bait. There is also the option of dangling your feet off the dock and enjoying some cold beverages while you leisurely watch your pole. Does it get any better?

STOCK DAMS

The best-kept fishing secret in South Dakota is the largemouth-rich stock dams hidden within the prairies. These man-made stock dams are more than watering holes for livestock. Though you may encounter the occasional cow, you will also find the best largemouth bass fishing in the state.

If you've been lucky enough to have permission to fish one of these largemouth honey holes, you understand the incredible experience of fishing the banks of stock dams. The best part of fishing the prairies is the seclusion and peacefulness.

No boat is necessary for perusing the shoreline around a stock dam. All you need is a pole and a tackle box full of different bass fishing lures. Choosing the proper lure for the time of year is one of the keys to success. You must also change technique until you discover the correct presentation. Since most stock dams are small in size, you have the freedom to peruse the water and try multiple spots. When fishing the hot months, use top water lures to avoid the muck. The bass will breach the water like a great white shark hunting seals.

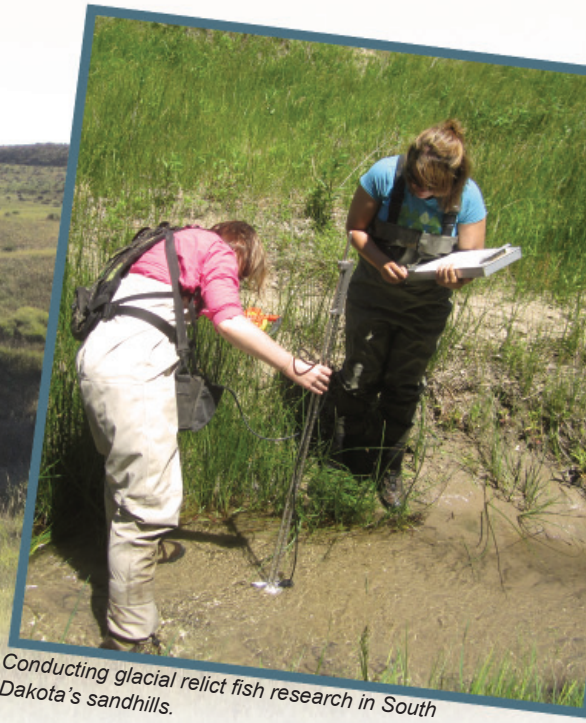
There are thousands of miles of shoreline in the state – grab a rod and reel, a lawn chair and relax.

Lucas Smith is a public relations intern at The Outdoor Campus in Sioux Falls. He enjoys hunting in South Dakota and fishing with his wife and daughter.

NaturalHeritage

The Glacial Relict Fishes of South Dakota's Sandhills

By Chelsey Pasbrig, SD GFP Aquatic Biologist



Conducting glacial relict fish research in South Dakota's sandhills.

Photo © Eli Felts

Many people have heard of the Nebraska Sandhills, however few know about the Sandhills of South Dakota. South Dakota's Sandhills is a unique landscape filled with rolling seas of sand dunes covered by an array of prairie grasses. This small slice of paradise is located on the southwestern edge of South Dakota along the Nebraska state line.

This region was strongly shaped by wind during the last glaciation. The streams of this area depend primarily on groundwater to maintain flow, unlike typical prairie streams which depend primarily on surface runoff. The unique habitat and history of the Sandhills have resulted in a unique fish assemblage dominated by "glacial relict" minnows. These relicts were stranded in the Sandhills during the last glaciation and today are rare in South Dakota and listed in South Dakota's Wildlife Action Plan as species of greatest conservation need (SGCN). Specifically, the streams of the Sandhills provide habitat for Finescale Dace, Northern Redbelly Dace, Northern Pearl Dace, and Blacknose Shiner, all SGCN.

FINESCALE DACE

(Chrosomus neogaeus)

Description - A small, dusky colored fish with a silvery-white belly. A dusky stripe extends from the snout along the sides to the tail, usually ending with a distinct spot. An iridescent, silvery band is found above the dusky colored stripe on the sides. Adult breeding males have a reddish-orange belly and yellow fins.

Distribution & Status - South Dakota is on the southern periphery of this species range and occurs in southern South Dakota in the Sandhills and Black Hills regions. Globally this species has an extensive range, with a low risk of extinction or decline, however in South Dakota it is listed as a state endangered species.

Habitat - Prefer small, quiet headwater streams and ponds with dense aquatic vegetation. Sometimes found in association with Northern Redbelly Dace with which they may hybridize.

NORTHERN REDBELLY DACE

(Chrosomus eos)

Description - A small minnow with an olive-brown back and two distinct bands on their sides. Below the belly is silvery-white except in breeding males, which display red bellies and yellow fins.

Distribution & Status - South Dakota is on the southern periphery of this species range and occurs in southern South Dakota in the Sandhills region and within the Big Sioux River drainage. Globally this species has an extensive range, with a low risk of extinction or decline, however in South Dakota it is listed as a state threatened species.

Habitat - Prefers small, quiet spring-fed areas of streams, bogs, and beaver ponds with dense aquatic vegetation.

NORTHERN PEARL DACE

(Margariscus nachtriebi)

Description - A dark or dusky colored minnow with a silvery-white belly, dark lateral band, and dark spot near the tail. Adult breeding males have reddish-orange sides below the lateral band.

Distribution & Status - South Dakota is on the southern periphery of this species range and occurs in southern South Dakota in the Sandhills region. Globally this species has an extensive range, with a low risk of extinction or decline, however in South Dakota it is listed as a state threatened species.

Habitat - Prefers small, clear streams, lakes, bogs, and ponds.

BLACKNOSE SHINER

(Notropis heterolepis)

Description - A slender, silvery metallic minnow with large eyes. Along the sides, this minnow displays a dusky stripe from the tip of the snout, passing through the eye, and ending at the tail. Dark outlines border the scales above the lateral stripe; however, the belly is silvery-white in color.

Distribution & Status - South Dakota is on the western periphery of this species range and occurs in southern South Dakota in the Sandhills region and in limited sections of the James River drainage. Globally this species has an extensive range, with a fairly low risk of extinction with a few isolated declines in population abundance, however in South Dakota it is listed as a state endangered species.

Habitat - Prefers small, moderately clear, headwater streams, and quiet pools having dense aquatic vegetation.

SOUTH DAKOTA RESEARCH

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is currently working with South Dakota State University and several partners in Nebraska to paint a better picture of the status and habitat requirements of these glacial relicts. Part One has recently been completed with the help of South Dakota State University master's student Eli Felts. A total of 34 sites were surveyed across Bennett, Mellette, Todd, and Tripp counties in the Sandhills region.

What we've learned is that Northern Pearl Dace were regularly sampled, occurring at more than 30% of the sampled sites. Although normally detected in low abundance (<1 fish/minute), occasionally, Pearl Dace were sampled in abundances as high as 25 fish/minute. Northern Redbelly Dace were sampled at three sites, a single Blacknose Shiner was sampled, and no Finescale Dace was sampled over the three sampling seasons for this project.

These glacial relicts appear to be limited by stream type, occupying perennial headwater streams fed by cool groundwater. We have also been able to identify streams within the Sandhills region that are home to high abundances of these species. An interesting and unexpected finding was the importance of beaver ponds. We typically don't think about the interactions between fish and terrestrial wildlife, however, beaver ponds provided important, quiet pool environments for these fish species, which ultimately led to higher abundances and reproductive success.

Part Two of this research will continue with collaboration between South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, South Dakota State University and Nebraska partners. The plan is to resample the streams that had higher densities of these glacial relicts and complete a more extensive sampling effort from headwater to confluence within the Keya Paha River drainage. This will enable us to better understand how these species assemblages change in relation to the habitat, including potential effects of culverts, other migration barriers, and land-use practices on fish. With a better understanding of the key habitat requirements of these species and knowledge of their limiting factors, we hope to better manage these unique "relicts" in the future.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Why should these minnows concern us? After all, they are "just minnows" and most of us have never seen one before. It is the message that these small glacial relicts and other "indicator" species, relay that's important. Eventually, all organisms (including people) are affected when a system becomes degraded, indicator species just respond to those changes sooner. These "relicts" can tell us a story of the watershed's past health and warn us of future problems.

The research identified the importance of beaver ponds for these fish species. Photo © Eli Felts

ParkNotes

CELEBRATE FALL AT NEWTON HILLS STATE PARK'S 14TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION

CANTON, S.D. – Pumpkin catapulting, carving and seed guessing are just a few of the activities for visitors to Newton Hills State Park for the 14th Annual FestiFall on Saturday, Oct. 5.

The popular FestiFall event, scheduled for 1-5 p.m. CDT, is attended annually by people of all ages. This year features many family activities, including arts and crafts with over 30 vendors, kids' games and music.

As in past years, the pumpkin will take center stage with pumpkin catapulting, pumpkin carving demonstrations and decorated pumpkin contests. Visitors are encouraged to bring their own decorated or carved pumpkins for judging. For those who wish, carved pumpkins may also be used on the Candlelight Walk.

Following the afternoon FestiFall celebration, the Candlelight Walk will lead visitors along 2.2 miles of candle-lit trail through the deep woods of Newton Hills. The trail will be solely lit by candles and carved pumpkins. Walkers will encounter many surprises along the trail, including musicians and colorful characters from the past. Walkers may begin the self-led adventure anytime from 7:15-8:30 p.m.

Throughout the weekend, campers are encouraged to decorate their campsites with fall themes. Winners of the campsite decorating, pumpkin seed guessing and pumpkin decorating contests will be announced at 4 p.m.

There is no cost to participate in any of the events; however a park entrance license is required. For additional information, please contact Newton Hills State Park at 605-987-2263 or NewtonHills@state.sd.us or visit www.gfp.sd.gov

CUSTER STATE PARK HOSTS ANNUAL BUFFALO ROUNDUP AND ARTS FESTIVAL

CUSTER, S.D. – A one-of-a-kind western weekend awaits at the annual Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup and Arts Festival Sept. 27 through 29.

The Buffalo Roundup begins at 9:30 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 27, near the corrals along the Wildlife Loop Road. The parking areas open at 6:15 a.m. and close at 9 a.m. For safety reasons, spectators are asked to remain in the viewing areas until all the buffalo are corralled, around noon. The public is then invited to take free shuttles into the corral area where testing, branding and sorting of the buffalo will begin at 1 p.m. in preparation for the Nov. 16 auction. Food and arts and crafts booths will also be available near the corrals on Friday.

"The Buffalo Roundup brings over 14,000 spectators to Custer State Park to see the park's herd of 1,500 buffalo," said Craig Pugsley, Custer State Park visitor services manager. "In addition, the weekend arts festival features lots of entertainment and activities as well as over 100 arts and craft exhibitors, including western and Native American artwork and a number of food vendors."

To alleviate traffic problems, spectators will need to decide upon the viewing/parking area they plan to watch the roundup from prior to Monday morning. Visitors who want to watch from the North viewing area should travel down the Wildlife Loop Road from the State Game Lodge side. Those wishing to view from the South viewing area should travel down the Wildlife Loop Road from the Blue Bell side.

In addition to Friday's Buffalo Roundup, Custer State Park will host a weekend of entertainment, craft and art booths and fun for the entire family at its annual Arts Festival on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 28 and 29. Both days start at 8 a.m. with a pancake feed, entertainment kicks off at 8:30 a.m., and the arts and crafts booths will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Arts Festival takes place near the State Game Lodge.

There is no cost to attend the Buffalo Roundup or Arts Festival. A South Dakota state park entrance license is required to enter the park on Saturday and Sunday. A park entrance license is not required on the Friday of the Buffalo Roundup.

To learn more about the roundup and arts festival or to request a brochure, contact Custer State Park at 605-255-4515 or e-mail CusterStatePark@state.sd.us. More information can also be found online at www.custerstatepark.com.

A THANKS TO SPORTSMEN AGAINST HUNGER GAME PROCESSORS

Sportsmen Against Hunger, Feeding South Dakota, and the Game, Fish and Parks Department proudly recognizes these game processors who donated time, recources, and often sacrificed profits to process donated wild game during the 2012 seasons. They also helped facilitate distribution of the processed game meat to needy families throughout South Dakota.

For a list of processors who will be participating in 2013 check the Sportsmen Against Hunger website www.feedtheneedsd.com.

2012 PARTICIPATING PROCESSORS

Economy Meat Market - Bath
Grandview Locker Plant - Belle Fourche
Integrity Meats - Belle Fourche
Bruce Market - Bruce
Tom's Wild Game Processing - Burke
Chamberlain Locker - Chamberlain
Bob's Custom Meats - Chester
J & L Wild Game Processing - Chester
Dakota Butcher - Clark
Dan's Last Shot - Colome
Top Pin Archery - Custer
Elkton Locker - Elkton
New Elm Spring Colony Butcher Shop - Ethan
Rob's Locker & Catering - Gary
Gosch Meat Market - Glenham
J & M Country Meats - Harrisburg
White Wrapper Meats - Harrisburg
Frohling Meats - Hecla
Black Hills Meat Company- Hot Springs
Howard Cold Storage - Howard
Got Deer - Hurley
Huron Custom Meats - Huron
Family Pride Meats - Ipswich
Diamond S Meats - Lemmon
Peterson Meats - Mellette
Ol' Mill Meats - Milbank
Waldner Specialty Meats - Milbank
Central Processing - Miller
Mitchell Lockers - Mitchell
Shorty's Locker - Mitchell
Westside Meats - Mobridge
Tri County Locker - Newell
Brock's Butcher Block - Onida
Philip Custom Meats - Philip
Cutting Edge Meats - Piedmont
Steamboat Game & Fish - Pierre
Platte Locker Plant - Platte
KC Wildgame Processing - Rapid City
Western Buffalo - Rapid City
Roadkill Processing - Rapid City
Renner Corner - Renner
Eich's Meat Market - Salem
Western Meats & Locker - Sioux Falls
Horton's Processing - Sisseton
The Butcher Shop - Spearfish
Lee's Meat & Sausage - Tea
Jorgenson Meat Processing - Waubay
Mid Dakota Meats - Winner
Steiner's Locker Service - Yankton

TAGGED LAKE OAHE SALMON: FROM SILVER TO GOLD

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is asking anglers to assist in an investigation evaluating how varying stocking salmon at different locations might improve survival and catche of Chinook salmon on Lake Oahe, and anglers could earn cash in the process.

GFP is encouraging anglers to turn in heads of tagged Chinook salmon caught on Lake Oahe and the Oahe Tailwaters. Anglers who return salmon heads from tagged salmon will be entered into a drawing in which ten, $100 rewards will be issued each calendar year, with a maximum of three rewards per person per year. The annual drawing for winners of the $100 prizes will occur by January 1.

"Research projects are underway evaluating salmon return to anglers. Reporting of tagged salmon by anglers is a crucial part of the research," GFP fisheries biologist Robert Hanten said.

According to Hanten, thousands of specially-tagged Chinook salmon have been stocked in Lake Oahe. A small, coded-wire tag, only a millimeter long and the diameter of human hair, was implanted in these fish. Although tags cannot be seen by anglers, tagged fish can be identified by the absence of a tiny fin on their back.

"Salmon have a small fleshy-lobed adipose fin directly in front of their tail, but this fin is removed as part of the tagging process," Hanten said. "If anglers catch a salmon missing the adipose fin, we would like them to turn in the fresh or frozen head of that salmon at the GFP Fort Pierre District Office, Oahe Marina, Spring Creek Resort and Deep Water Marina, Carl's Bait Shop, or West Whitlock Recreation Area."

Information on where and when a salmon was caught along with the angler's address and phone number must be included when submitting salmon heads. In addition, a coded-wire tag must be found in the head of the fish by GFP staff to result in entry into the contest.

"Even though every salmon missing an adipose fin was implanted with a coded-wire tag, some fish lose their tags over time, meaning not all fish caught by anglers without an adipose fin will contain a tag," Hanten said.

For more information, visit: gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/salmon-tags.aspx, or contact the Fort Pierre District Office, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Fort Pierre, SD 57532, or call 605.223.7681.

Game, Fish & Parks
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