

Attendance

- Paul Dennert, SD Game, Fish and Parks Commissioner
- Chris Hesla, South Dakota Wildlife Federation
- Spencer Vaa, South Dakota Waterfowl Association
- Rolf Kraft, Western Regional Advisory Panel Member
- Jack Broome, Central Regional Advisory Panel Member
- Mike Elsen, South Dakota Farm Bureau
- Mark DeVries, South Dakota Stockgrowers
- Brad Johnson, United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- Chad Switzer, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Keith Fisk, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Nathan Baker, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Jacquie Ermer, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Rocco Murano, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Paul Mammenga, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Mark Grovijahn, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Cindy Longmire, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- Tom Kirschenmann, SD Game, Fish and Parks
- John Kanta, SD Game, Fish and Parks (via conference phone)
- Josh Delger, SD Game, Fish and Parks (via conference phone)
- Scott Lindgren, SD Game, Fish and Parks (via conference phone)
- Not Present: Brenda Forman, Rich Grosz, Brad Merrill, Tim Olson or John Johnson.

Secretary Kelly Hepler, SD Game, Fish and Parks: welcomed and thanked the stakeholder group for their service.

Tom Kirschenmann, SD Game, Fish and Parks: handed out the book “A History of Waterfowl Management, Research, and Hunting in South Dakota” to all stakeholders.

Chad Switzer, SD Game, Fish and Parks: shared latest draft (paper copy) of the management plan with stakeholders; still to be included in plan are the following: executive summary and implementation table that will assign key staff members and responsibility to accomplish strategies.

Discussion

- Each stakeholder was asked to identify topics that still needed to be discussed or addressed
 - Mike Elsen: population objective, depredation tools used if below population objective
 - Paul Dennert: population objective, depredation, buffer strips (2016 Senate Bill 4)
 - Brad Johnson: he sent out the draft plan to all USFWS project leaders in state, refuge managers, and supervisor in Denver- they had no comments. Brad thought the draft management plan captured everything.
 - Spencer Vaa: page 17 of the draft plan, shooting clinic table- missing some cities.
 - Rolfe Kraft: what percent of population is Giant Canada geese? Does it match up with harvest stats?
 - Jack Broome: transect lines within strata of the USFWS survey.
 - Mark DeVries: population objective– if southwest corner of South Dakota is not included in survey, how will we deal with geese if we go to higher objective? Need specific emphasis on depredation tools if we increase objective; buffer strip along water.

- Rocco Murano, SD Game, Fish and Parks: reviewed the significant changes made to draft Harvest Strategy Table in the plan that was sent to stakeholders.
 - Kill permits and nest work were removed from decision table because the table addresses season structures that are taken to commission to consider for rule, depredation tools are an operational decision.
 - August Management Take: decision table- added verbiage “human safety concern”; under Moderate- “can be available”

- Question: In decision table under the Liberal category and daily bag, can we use “up to” verbiage instead of listing a range?
- Discussion: If in liberal why wouldn’t you want the maximum daily bag limit? What do hunters think of 15 daily bag limit and do they want it to change every year? Last few years the average hunter hasn’t even reached the 15 daily bag limit. Use full limit because if in liberal category it’s meant to be a population reduction season. For the daily bag limit for September season, is 5-8 range acceptable to hunters? Likely yes; access and quality of hunt more important than limit.

- Question: Will goose seasons be on a multi-year season setting schedule?

- Answer: Yes, goose seasons will be on a multi-year schedule but a change can be made in off years if necessary.
- Question: Why do we use the 2 consecutive 3-year average?
- Answer: To reduce annual bias/variation and it should provide better trend. Avoids bouncing around on regulations. It's a moving target, need 2 in a row for change in table; population index number is gauged by trend. So we are really talking a 4-year stretch.

Staff addressed list of items brought up by stakeholders earlier in discussion

- What percent of population are giant Canada geese?
 - This plan is geared toward local giant Canada geese. Flyway-wide, small Canada goose harvest is decreasing mainly because giant Canada geese are so available for harvest. Approximately 5% of birds on Missouri River in January are small geese. Subspecies- only *maxima* subspecies (giant Canada geese) in South Dakota during breeding season.
- Strata boundaries?
 - It's a USFWS duck survey and will be a tough challenge to ask USFWS to change those strata from this long-term survey. How are geese in southwestern South Dakota addressed then? Geese found in this area are such a small component to the statewide population and the population trend should be true there as well. Not a different regulatory regime there. We would still address any depredation concerns in this part of the state regardless of population. Agricultural practices are different in southwest than northeast; a lot of irrigation and corn in southwest near Angustora Lake.
- Perennial buffer strips as a depredation tool?
 - SDGFP partners with NRCS, challenge to make this program more attractive to producers, pay incentive, and weed control difficult.
 - 2016 Senate Bill 4: change tax evaluation along water? Ag to non-crop designation. How is Minnesota doing on their buffer strip campaign?
- Free reasonable access/ commercial operator?
 - Concern on wording in current contract.
 - Mike Elsen will send some suggestions to clarify the wording on SDGFP agreement contracts for goose depredation service.

- Decision table
 - Good addition to have in the updated plan.
- Depredation tools at various population objectives?
 - SDGFP will provide depredation service regardless of goose population; programs will be available but can't realistically eliminate 100% crop damage.

Population simulation handout

- Handout included a spreadsheet displaying projected 3-yr spring population index table comparing 125,000-175,000 range vs. 100,000-150,000 range showing different scenario of future spring population index estimates.
 - Comments
 - Still some concern 175,000 too high for upper end of population objective range.
 - South Dakota Waterfowl Association feels 150,000 midpoint is reasonable population goal and don't want August Management Take; prefer non-lethal depredation methods during downward trend in population.
 - Mark DeVries and Mike Elsen: damage has already been done by time season arrives; prefer 100,000-150,000 range; good compromise from high end and previous population objective.
 - South Dakota Wildlife Federation: prefer 125,000-175,000; a lot more depredation tools available now; more realistic goal.
 - US Fish and Wildlife Service: OK with 125,000-175,000; depredation tools are available
- Stakeholder group agrees to increase objective from previous objective of 80,000-90,000, but not unanimous on what revised objective should be. Group wants attainable objective. Let's see what public input wants. Not perfect science or survey to get actual population number. We are not trying to raise goose numbers rather have an attainable and realistic population objective. Depredation still going to happen regardless of population. Maybe need to fine tune the range. It's not final until the SDGFP Commission adopts management plan.

Additional outreach efforts

- Population objective and overall components of management plan

- Landowners Matter Newsletter, sent to 17,000 landowners statewide, should be sent mid-March; will include a postage paid postcard with 2 questions (one on thoughts on population objective and one on what area/region reside in).
- Email to hunters- same questions as Landowners Matter Newsletter; will be sent to 12,000-20,000 hunters in mid-March.
- No reminder emails or postcards will be sent (not a scientific public opinion survey), but rather want to reach out to landowners and hunters and give them a venue to provide us with input on the proposed population objective.
- 2-week internal Department review.
- 30-day public comment (around April 1), news releases, radio announcements.
- Present to the Commission in May.

Miscellaneous

- Stakeholder group was asked if they had any other comments on objectives and strategies found within the draft management plan—there was none.
- Reminder to stakeholders to send in any edits they have to the draft plan so we can incorporate.
- This is last formal meeting but SDGFP will send out notes, comments from public, results of survey, etc. SDGFP will provide annual or bi-annual progress reports on objectives and strategies. Thank you again for your time and commitment.