

# **COTTONTAIL & SQUIRREL**

The 2024 cottontail rabbit and tree squirrel seasons covered 1 September 2024 - 28 February 2025. Harvest surveys were sent to resident and nonresident hunters after the close of the pheasant season on 31 January 2025. It is assumed that this captured the majority of cottontail and squirrel hunting and harvest.

For cottontail, the daily limit was 10, possession 30, and the season was open statewide. For squirrel, the daily limit was 5, possession 15, and the season was open statewide. Residents holding small game, 1-day small game, adult or senior combination, or youth small game licenses were eligible to participate in the season. Nonresidents were required to obtain either a small game or a youth small game license to hunt upland game.

In 2024, there were 86,366 resident and 87,475 nonresident licenses nonresident licenses issued that allowed holders to hunt small game. Approximately 15,000 residents and 13,000 nonresidents were surveyed for the small game seasons. Survey response rates were 27% for residents and 32% for nonresidents.

Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting cottontails, there were a projected 3,767 resident and 574 nonresident cottontail hunters. Based on survey responses indicating at least one day of hunting squirrels, there were a projected 1,591 resident and 148 nonresident hunters. An estimated 20,937 cottontails and 5,556 squirrels were harvested during the 2024 small game seasons.

When asked their satisfaction on the season, (1 being least satisfied, 7 being most satisfied), resident hunters reported an average satisfaction level of 5.26, while nonresidents reported a rating of 5.63.

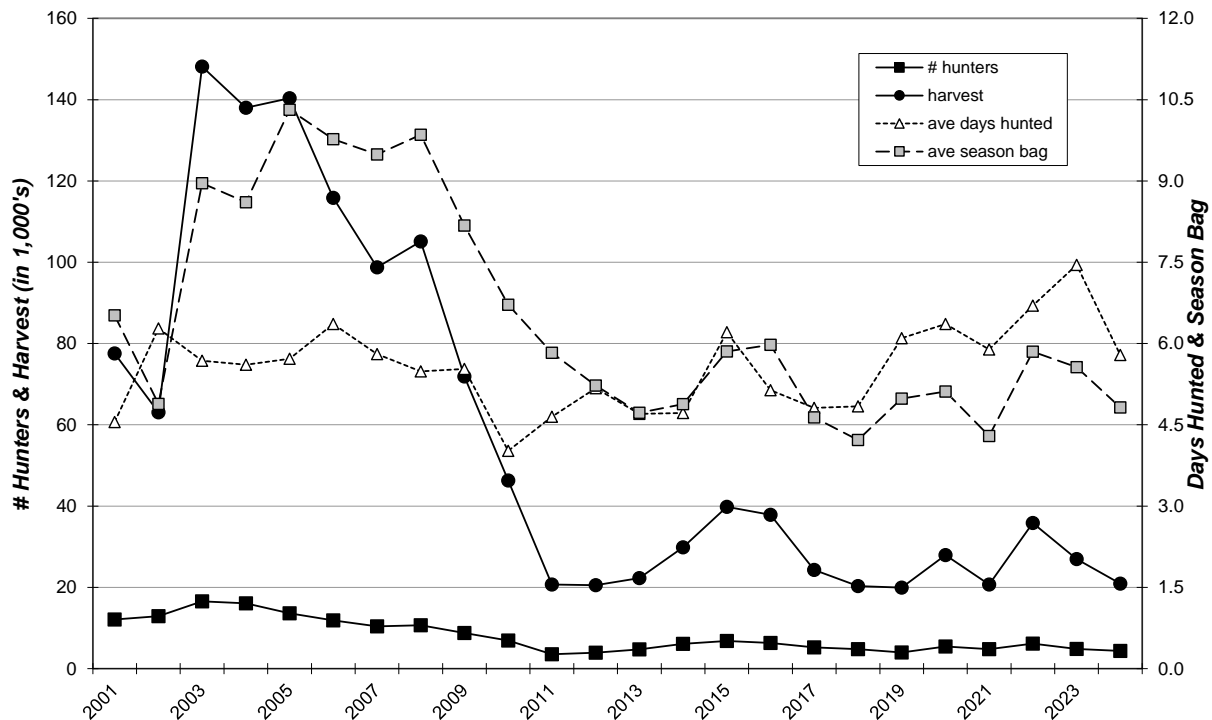
## Comparison of the 2015 - 2024 cottontail and squirrel harvests

Year	Cottontails				Squirrels			
	Hunters		Harvest		Hunters		Harvest	
	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres	Resident	Nonres
2015	5,779	1,020	37,407	2,397	2,870	171	13,311	180
2016	5,584	754	35,649	2,224	2,786	181	11,614	262
2017	4,628	607	22,711	1,561	2,571	87	9,850	260
2018	4,341	475	19,386	937	2,302	141	8,241	293
2019	3,563	437	19,329	604	2,542	87	12,077	116
2020	4,871	597	27,026	928	3,174	119	12,757	239
2021	4,063	754	19,385	754	2,248	74	8,014	59
2022	5,333	796	33,910	1,943	2,466	80	9,949	48
2023	4,158	688	25,148	1,803	2,096	107	8,281	214
2024	3,767	574	19,559	1,378	1,591	148	5,173	382

UPLAND GAME HARVEST PROJECTIONS FOR 2024								
Last Revised: 12 June 2025								
	RESIDENT TOTALS BY LICENSE TYPE					NONRESIDENT TOTALS		
	Comb- ination	Senior Combo	Small Game	Youth SmGm	Sum Estimates	Nonres Sm Game	Youth Sm Gm	Sum Estimates
Licenses Sold	46,248	12,124	21,676	6,318	86,366	83,991	3,484	87,475
Projected ACTIVE UPLAND GAME HUNTERS	2,532	475	765	500	4,272	496	98	594
Number Sampled by Survey	8,225	2,063	3,616	1,089	14,993	12,752	501	13,253
Number Responded to Survey	2,265	843	708	202	4,018	4,128	70	4,198
% Responded and Participated in Season	5%	4%	4%	8%	5%	1%	3%	1%
Responded and Participated in Season	124	33	25	16	198	25	2	27
Responded but DID NOT HUNT	2,141	810	683	186	3,820	4,103	68	4,171
Survey Response Rate	27.5%	40.9%	19.6%	18.5%	26.8%	32.4%	14.0%	31.7%
No. Hunters Reporting Cottontail Days	106	32	22	15	175	24	2	26
Sum Cottontail Hunted Days	529	314	169	70	1,082	104	8	112
Average Days Hunted Cottontails	4.99	9.81	7.68	4.67	6.18	4.33	4.00	4.31
Sum Cottontails Bagged	505	196	117	91	909	46	19	65
Average Cottontail Bag for Season	4.76	6.13	5.32	6.07	5.19	1.92	4.75	2.50
Projected Days Cottontail Hunting	10,801	4,516	5,174	2,189	22,681	2,064	392	2,456
Projected No. Cottontail Hunters	2,164	460	674	469	3,767	476	98	574
Projected Cottontail Bag	10,311	2,819	3,582	2,846	19,559	913	465	1,378
TOTAL COTTONTAIL HARVEST =						20,937		
No. Hunters Reporting Squirrel Days	46	11	11	5	73	5	1	6
Sum Squirrel Hunted Days	190	99	32	26	347	13	4	17
Average Days Hunted Squirrels	4.13	9.00	2.91	5.20	4.75	2.60	4.00	2.83
Sum Squirrels Bagged	158	41	28	16	243	2	7	9
Average Squirrel Bag for Season	3.43	3.73	2.55	3.20	3.33	0.40	7.00	1.50
Projected Days Squirrel Hunting	3,880	1,424	980	813	7,096	258	196	454
Projected No. Squirrel Hunters	939	158	337	156	1,591	99	49	148
Projected Squirrel Bag	3,226	590	857	500	5,173	40	343	382
TOTAL SQUIRREL HARVEST =						5,556		
Mean Satisfaction Score *	5.20	5.06	5.48	5.75	5.26	5.64	5.50	5.63

\* Based on scale of 1-7 with 1="very dissatisfied" and 7="very satisfied"

## SOUTH DAKOTA COTTONTAIL HARVEST, 2001-2024



# SOUTH DAKOTA SQUIRREL HARVEST, 2001-2024

