

LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION ORDER

Information provided in this section pertains only to the Spring Light Goose Conservation Order in South Dakota. The previous section reported only on the regular season.

The 2026 Light Goose Conservation Order covered 16 February - 15 May statewide. The daily bag and possession limits were unlimited. To hunt light geese, residents were required to hold a small game, mentor small game, 1-day small game, adult or senior combination, or youth small game license plus a migratory bird certification. Nonresidents were required to obtain a Nonresident Spring Light Goose or a Nonresident Youth Spring Light Goose license. Hunters were not required to possess a federal waterfowl stamp to participate in the conservation order.

Harvest surveys were sent to both resident and nonresident hunters. In 2026, there were a projected 6,241 license holders who hunted at least one day for light geese during the conservation order dates (2,597 residents, 3,643 nonresidents). From the survey responses, there were a projected total of 155,596 light geese harvested. Approximately 54% of reported harvest was taken using decoys.

Of those that reported hunting the Conservation Order during the previous five years, 9% of residents and 52% of nonresidents reported using a professional guide during the most recent season they hunted.

The average days hunted projected to a total of 28,704 recreation days for the conservation order. Hunters in Union, Edmunds, Yankton, Clark, and Kingsbury counties had the highest reported harvest, accounting for 47% of the total estimate.

Comparison of the 2017 - 2026 Conservation Order light goose statistics

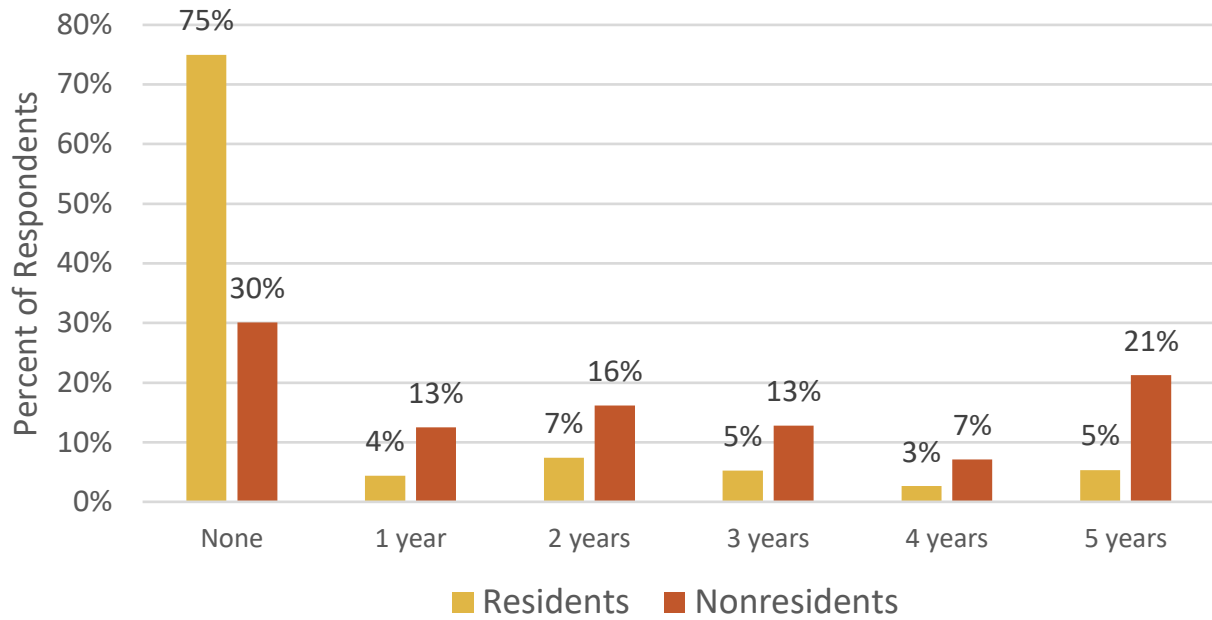
Year	Residents			Nonresidents		
	Number Hunters	Harvest	Total Days Hunted	Number Hunters	Harvest	Total Days Hunted
2017	2,672	56,683	16,068	4,448	124,777	17,559
2018	2,736	51,260	14,029	4,643	114,819	18,548
2019	1,413	31,475	6,976	2,700	49,219	9,490
2020	2,078	31,164	11,197	2,830	65,682	11,498
2021	1,755	32,553	9,144	4,446	95,776	17,870
2022	2,101	51,071	10,856	4,329	118,576	17,610
2023	3,537	61,751	14,497	3,688	102,820	13,856
2024	3,673	106,853	24,316	4,229	121,692	18,401
2025	3,127	53,884	16,602	3,823	91,497	14,537
2026	2,597	61,476	14,104	3,643	94,120	14,600

SPRING LIGHT GOOSE HARVEST FOR 2026

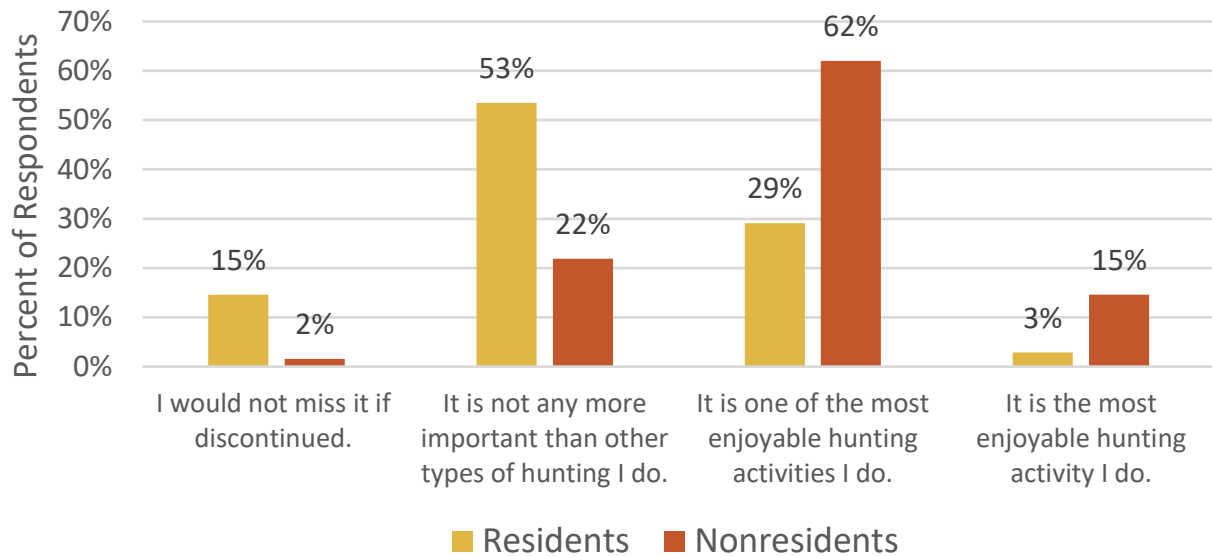
Last Revised: 8 Sept 2026

	Resident	Nonresident
CONSERVATION ORDER LIGHT GOOSE Licenses Sold *3*	22,771	3,781
Projected ACTIVE CONS ORDER LIGHT GOOSE HUNTERS	2,597	3,643
Number Sampled for Survey	8,000	3,571
Number Responded to Survey	1,692	1,017
Responded and Participated in Season	193	980
Responded but DID NOT HUNT	1,499	37
Survey Response Rate	21.2%	28.5%
<i>TOTAL LIGHT GOOSE HARVEST CONSERVATION ORDER = 155,596</i>		
Late Season (Conservation Order) 2/16 - 3/10 Period:		
No. Hunters Reporting Light Goose Days	131	271
Total Reported Light Goose Hunted Days	477	955
Average Days Hunted Light Geese	3.64	3.52
Total Reported Light Geese Bagged	1,573	4,955
Average Light Goose Bag for Season	12.01	18.28
Projected Days Light Goose Hunting	6,419	3,550
Projected No. Light Goose Hunters	1,763	1,008
Projected Light Goose Bag	21,169	18,422
<i>TOTAL LIGHT GEESE HARVESTED 2/16 - 3/10 = 39,591</i>		
Late Season (Conservation Order) 3/11 - 5/15 Period:		
No. Hunters Reporting Light Goose Days	130	811
Total Reported Light Goose Hunted Days	571	2,972
Average Days Hunted Light Geese	4.39	3.66
Total Reported Light Geese Bagged	2,995	20,361
Average Light Goose Bag for Season	23.04	25.11
Projected Days Light Goose Hunting	7,685	11,049
Projected No. Light Goose Hunters	1,750	3,015
Projected Light Goose Bag	40,307	75,698
<i>TOTAL LIGHT GEESE HARVESTED 3/11 - 5/15 = 116,005</i>		
Reported Geese bagged over decoys	3,085	22,444
Projected Geese bagged over decoys	41,518	83,442
<i>Total bagged over decoys = 124,960</i>		
Reported Geese shot but not retrieved	136	633
Projected Geese Shot but Not Retrieved	1,830	2,353
<i>Total not retrieved = 4,184</i>		
<i>*3* Numbers of resident licenses sold are based on the number of 2025 migratory bird certificates in the database purchased prior to May 1, 2026</i>		

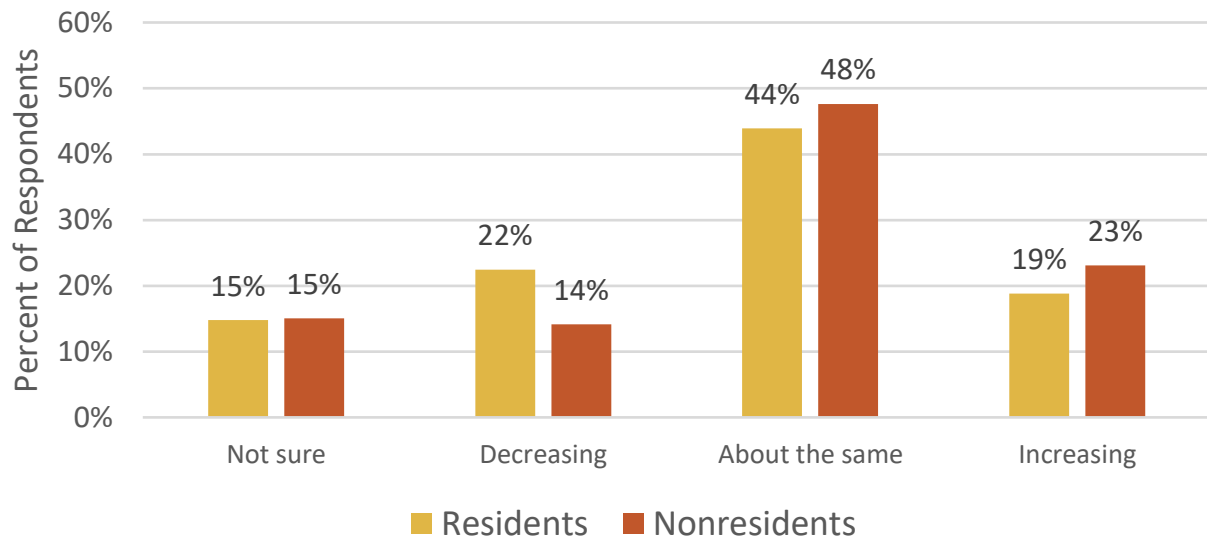
Years Hunted of Previous Five



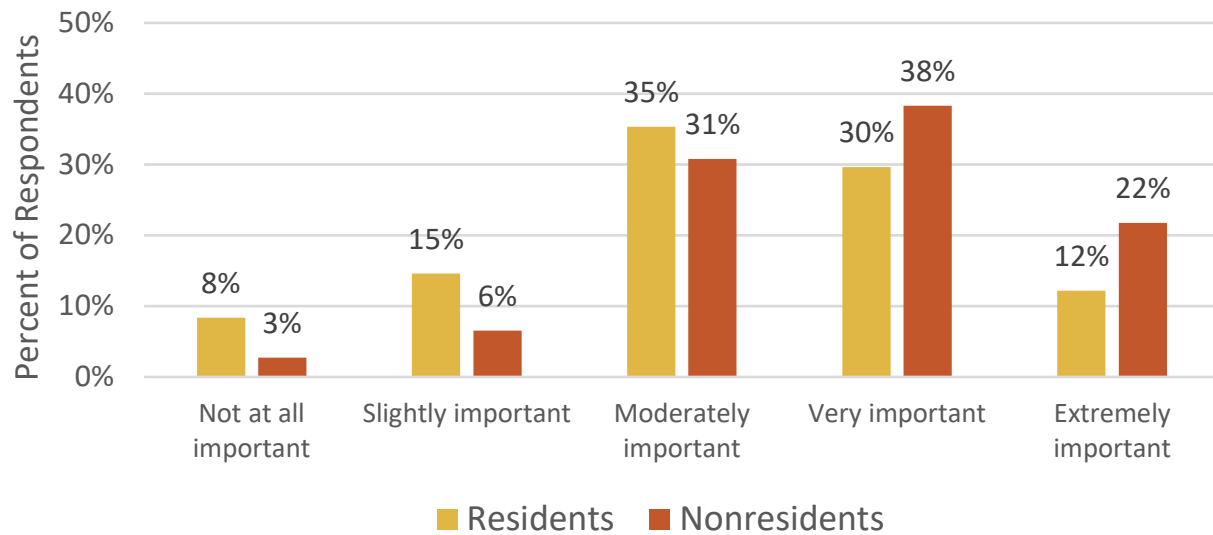
Level of Enjoyment of Conservation Order



Belief of Current Light Goose Population



Importance of Population Control



Effectiveness of Conservation Order

