

2025 MENTORED BIG GAME HUNTING



APPLICATION DEADLINE

Mentored Spring Turkey	No deadline
Mentored Deer	No deadline
Mentored Antelope.....	Closed
Mentored Fall Turkey	No deadline

LANDOWNER PERMISSION REQUIRED

Permission is required to hunt private land in South Dakota. Every year Game, Fish and Parks receives comments from hunters who drew a license and couldn't obtain permission to hunt private land once the season opened. Do not apply just because licenses are available. Have permission to hunt before you purchase a license.

APPLY ONLINE: gfp.sd.gov

Visit gfp.sd.gov, click on "Licenses," and then "Purchase License" to purchase/apply for a Hunting License. From there, the system walks you through step by step. If you do not already have an account, you will be required to create one. You will begin by selecting a season to apply for. Please note that you are required to provide a credit or debit card number to finish the transaction. Upon completion and submission of your application, you are then awarded the license which will then be mailed to you.

NOTE: All applications must be submitted online.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

REMINDER FOR 2025

• **Mentees can only possess one mentor license, per species in 2025.** Mentees that obtain a Mentor Deer/Turkey license cannot possess any other license for the respective species. For example; if a child has a Mentor Deer license, they cannot possess any other deer license in 2025.

Definitions

Mentee: The youth 15 years of age or younger that will be hunting.

Mentor: The mentee's parent, guardian, or other adult 18 years of age or older.

Eligibility

• Resident and nonresident mentee must be 15 years of age or younger. Licenses are only valid for the mentee that is named on the license.

• **The parent or guardian of the mentee must complete the application for the child.** Applying for a mentor license does not impact license eligibility for the adult (i.e. the mentor).

• The adult mentor can be a resident or nonresident and must be 18 years of age or older and must have successfully completed a hunter safety or hunter education course. Mentors may be the mentee's parent or legal guardian or any other competent adult who has the written consent of the child's parent or guardian.

• Nonresident mentees must have a resident sponsor listed in their application that includes the name, address, and phone number of the resident sponsor. The resident sponsor must be 18 years of age or older.

• The mentor shall be unarmed, with the exception of a legally possessed handgun, and have the mentee under their immediate physical control, direct supervision, and responsibility at the time the mentee discharges the firearm or operates a bow and arrow in the act of hunting.

Social Security Number

The Social Security Number information is required from all U.S. residents before this application will be processed [SDCL 25-7A-56.2]. This information will be kept confidential. The information is required to be in compliance with state law on collection of delinquent child support payments.

South Dakota law prohibits the issuance or renewal of any hunting or fishing

license if an individual owes \$1,000 or more in past due child support unless the individual enters into a repayment agreement with the Department of Social Services for payment of the delinquent child support [SDCL 25-7A-56; 25-7A-1(28)]. There is a requirement to enter into a repayment agreement with the Dept. of Social Services even if the individual is presently making child support payments, or if child support is being withheld from wages or income. To enter into the required repayment agreement, individuals must contact the Dept. of Social Services, Division of Child Support, 700 Governor's Drive-Kneip Building, Pierre SD 57501, or call 605.773.6456.

Fees

Payment for online applications must be made with a valid credit/debit card (Visa, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express).

Your credit/debit card will be charged at the time of checkout. Non-payment in the form of a cancelled/invalid credit/debit card will result in your license not being processed.

Application Rules

• **Applications must be submitted by a parent or guardian.**

• Licenses are only valid for the mentee named on the application/license.

Submitting Applications

Applications must be submitted online, by calling 605.223.7660, or at a GFP Wildlife Division Office.

SEASON APPLICATION INFORMATION

TRIBAL TRUST LANDS. State licenses are valid on private, deeded lands within the exterior boundaries of an Indian reservation. Persons wishing to hunt on tribal lands should contact the appropriate tribal office concerning tribal licenses.

NOTE: The purchase of a mentored hunting license does not affect eligibility of the parent/guardian for other deer and turkey seasons.

MENTORED SPRING TURKEY

Season Dates: Mentored Spring Turkey licenses are valid during the established 2025 spring turkey season.

License Eligibility: A mentor may be the mentee's parent or guardian or any other competent adult who has the written consent of the mentee's parent or guardian. A nonresident application must include the name, address, and phone number of a resident sponsoring the license. **Mentored Spring Turkey hunters cannot purchase a regular Archery Spring Turkey, Black Hills Spring Turkey, or Prairie Spring Turkey license.**

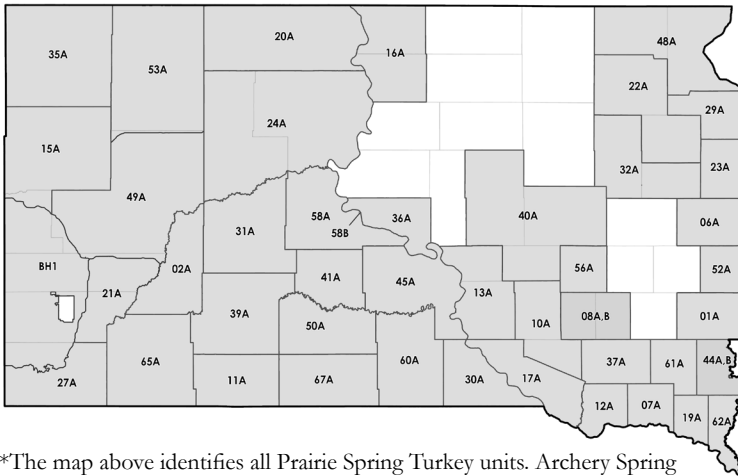
Individual License Quota: One mentored Spring Turkey license per mentee. Applicants may purchase a license throughout the season by applying online, calling 605.223.7660, or at GFP Wildlife Division offices. Please allow ample time (7-10 business days) for the license to be processed and mailed to you before you leave for your hunt.

Processing Licenses: Applications will start being accepted for this season in late January.

SEASON-UNIT-TYPE CHOICES:

MST-ST1-32 Specific season and unit information will be provided with the license. All specific unit and season equipment restrictions apply as outlined in the Prairie Spring Turkey and Archery Spring Turkey season information. Mentored Spring Turkey licenses are valid statewide, wherever a Spring Turkey unit is open (i.e. must archery hunt in an archery unit or shotgun hunt in only shotgun units). Valid for one male wild turkey.

Unlimited resident (\$5); Unlimited nonresident (\$10)
License not valid in Custer State Park.



*The map above identifies all Prairie Spring Turkey units. Archery Spring Turkey is open statewide, except for Custer State Park.

**Mentored Spring Turkey hunters cannot hunt the Black Hills until April 26, 2025.

MENTORED FALL TURKEY

Season Dates: Mentored Fall Turkey licenses are valid during the established 2025 Prairie Fall Turkey season.

License Eligibility: A mentor may be the mentee's parent or guardian or any other competent adult who has the written consent of the mentee's parent or guardian. A nonresident application must include the name, address, and phone number of a resident sponsoring the license. **Mentored Fall Turkey hunters cannot purchase a regular Prairie Fall Turkey license (including the unit in the Black Hills).**

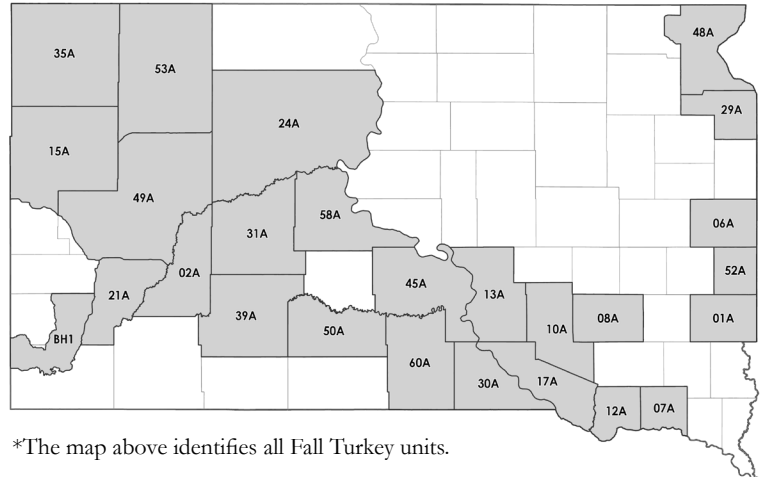
Individual License Quota: One mentored Fall Turkey license per mentee. Applicants may purchase a license throughout the season by applying online, by calling 605.223.7660, or at GFP Wildlife Division offices. Please allow ample time (7-10 business days) for the license to be processed and mailed to you before you leave for your hunt.

Processing Licenses: Applications will start being accepted for this season in late August.

SEASON-UNIT-TYPE CHOICES:

MFT-ST1-31 Mentored Fall Turkey licenses are valid wherever a Fall Turkey unit is open. Unit specific equipment restrictions apply as outlined in the Prairie Fall Turkey season. Valid for one any turkey.

Unlimited resident (\$5); Unlimited nonresident (\$10)
License not valid in Custer State Park.



*The map above identifies all Fall Turkey units.

MENTORED ANTELOPE

Season Dates: Closed for 2025

MENTORED DEER

Season Dates: Mentored Deer licenses are valid during the 2025 Youth and Apprentice Deer season, September 13, 2025 to January 1, 2026.

License Eligibility: A mentor may be the mentee's parent or guardian or any other competent adult who has the written consent of the mentee's parent or guardian. Mentored deer hunters cannot possess any other deer license.

Processing Licenses: Applications will start being accepted for this season in late May.

Individual License Quota: One Mentored Deer license per mentee. Applicants may purchase a license throughout the season by applying online, by calling 605.223.7660, or at GFP Wildlife Division offices. Please allow ample time (7-10 business days) for the license to be processed and mailed to you before you leave for your hunt.

SEASON-UNIT-TYPE CHOICES: _____

MHD-03- License is valid in West River Deer hunting units: 02A, 15A, 15B, 31A, 35A, 35C, 35L, 49A, 49B, 53A, 53C, and 64A (see map for open area), all national parks and monuments are closed to this season.

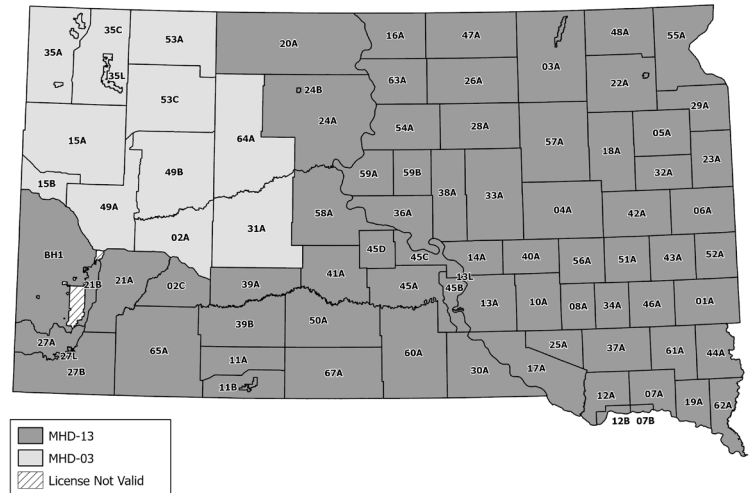
03: License valid for one Any Antlerless Deer.

Unlimited resident (\$5); Unlimited nonresident (\$10)

MHD-13- License is valid for that portion of the state not included in Unit MHD-03, excluding Farm Island State Recreation Area, LaFramboise Island State Nature Area, Custer State Park, and all national parks and monuments. Also, mentored deer hunting is not allowed on Sand Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge, Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge, and Waubay National Wildlife Refuge unless otherwise allowed by the refuge.

13: License valid for one Antlerless Whitetail.

Unlimited resident (\$5); Unlimited nonresident (\$10)



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of the central nervous system found in both captive and free-ranging deer and elk. The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has been conducting surveillance for CWD since 1997 to determine disease presence and prevalence across the state. Chronic wasting disease has been confirmed in free-ranging deer or elk in Bennett, Buffalo, Butte, Corson, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Lyman, Meade, Mellette, Pennington, Perkins, Stanley, Sully, Tripp, Union, and Ziebach counties, including Custer State Park and Wind Cave National Park.

Carcass transportation and disposal regulations apply for all harvested deer or elk that is transported from the county of harvest or from another state back into South Dakota. In summary, the regulations include the following:

- Hunters are recommended to leave as much of the unusable carcass as possible at the location of the harvest in a discrete location. Make arrangements with landowner on property where permission has been granted.
- Regulations do not prohibit a hunter from transporting a deer or elk carcass from the harvest location to anywhere in the state.
- If any portion of the carcass is transported from the county of harvest, the hunter is required to dispose of all carcass remains with a waste management provider, if an allowable trash item, or with a permitted landfill.
- If you are not moving a deer or elk carcass from the county of harvest, the regulations do not apply unless the carcass is delivered to a game processor or taxidermist. Returning carcass remains to public lands and using road ditches to dispose of carcass remains is illegal. Make sure permission is granted prior to disposing carcasses on private land.
- Deer or elk carcasses from another state brought back into South Dakota must be disposed of with a waste management provider or landfill that accepts carcass parts.
- Game processors and taxidermists, regardless of the location of harvest, are required to dispose of all carcass remains with a waste management provider, if an allowable trash item, or with a permitted landfill.

The goal of surveillance strategies in South Dakota is to determine the likely spread of CWD to new units where the disease has not been detected in wild, free-ranging deer and elk. Hunters who would like to get their deer tested for CWD can voluntarily submit a sample for testing. As a voluntary submission, hunters will be responsible for the cost of shipping and any professional sample collection costs unless the hunter delivers a sample to a GFP Office or sample collection area. GFP will pay for the testing cost of the sample at South Dakota State University Animal Disease and Research Diagnostics Lab (SDSU ADRDL). Results will be sent to both the hunter and GFP. These results will supplement GFP's surveillance effort across the state. The process for collecting samples from a harvested elk or deer (same process) and how to properly submit to SDSU ADRDL can be found at gfp.sd.gov/cwd-testing.

More detailed information on hunter submissions for CWD testing will become available prior to the start of the season. For more information CWD, visit gfp.sd.gov/chronic-wasting-disease.

MENTORED HUNT REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

- A mentor may be the mentee's parent or guardian or any other competent adult who has the written consent of the mentee's parent or guardian.
- A nonresident application must include the name, address, and phone number of a resident sponsoring the license. The resident sponsor must be 18 years of age or older.
- A mentor may purchase one mentored deer, one mentored spring turkey, and one mentored fall turkey license for each mentee. A mentor may purchase mentored licenses for multiple mentees; however, the mentor cannot accompany more than one mentee at any given time.
- Each resident license costs \$5. Nonresident licenses are \$10 each.
- Mentee must be 15 year of age or younger.
- A mentee must be accompanied by an unarmed, with the exception of a legally possessed handgun, parent, guardian, or designated mentor and within the immediate physical control, direct supervision, and responsibility of the mentor.
- An adult mentor cannot accompany more than one mentee at any given time.
- A hunting party cannot exceed six people, including the mentee(s).
- An adult mentor must have successfully completed a hunter safety or hunter education course, carry their certification card and must be at least 18 years old.
- All unit, date, and equipment restrictions apply for each respective season.
- Mentees designated on a mentored license cannot possess a regular license for that respective species. For example, if a child has a Mentored Deer license, they cannot possess any other deer license in 2025 (including Youth Deer).

CONTACT US

GFP LICENSING OFFICE

20641 SD Hwy 1806

Fort Pierre, SD 57532

605.223.7660 | TTY: 605.223.7684

Monday - Friday | 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

gfp.sd.gov