

# WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS



# INTRODUCTION



*The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks serves and connects people and families to the outdoors through effective management of our state's parks, fisheries, and wildlife resources.*

Dear Landowners, Farmers, and Ranchers,

As we present this report on Wildlife Damage Management in South Dakota, I want to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude to you; the landowners who play a vital role in raising wildlife and providing the essential habitats for them to thrive. Your commitment and stewardship are invaluable to our state's rich natural heritage.

We understand that, at times, wildlife can create challenges, and these situations require thoughtful solutions. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is dedicated to partnering with you to address these challenges. Collaboration is at the heart of our work, and we take pride in the strong relationships we have built with farmers and ranchers from across the state.

Our focus remains on creating and managing sustainable wildlife habitat, and we recognize that we cannot achieve this goal without your support. Whether you are facing a wildlife damage issue, have questions about habitat management, or are interested in enrolling in an access program, our wildlife damage specialists, along with the rest of Team GFP, are here to assist you in every way possible.

We appreciate the relationships we have cultivated over the years and are excited to foster new connections in the future.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kevin Robling, Secretary  
South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

# WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2024

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**BRENDAN PETERSON**

February 23, 1980 – September 20, 2024

*Brendan Peterson, the Wildlife Damage Specialist in Mobridge, passed away at his home on September 20, 2024.*

*Brendan's attitude of "all I need is a chance, and I will prove what I can do" served him well throughout his career with Game, Fish and Parks beginning as a Fisheries Intern in Sioux Falls. In 2007, he gained his first full time position with GFP as a Habitat Technician in Chamberlain. From there, he quickly transitioned to a Wildlife Damage Specialist position stationed in Mobridge serving the citizens of Walworth, Campbell, and Potter counties, beginning in 2009.*

*Brendan's hard work and professionalism resulted in multiple awards, including the Trapper of the Year Award in 2017 and an Award of Excellence for the work he did with GFP. More importantly, Brendan worked tirelessly for the producers in his area, gaining the respect and admiration of those that he served.*

*As a former supervisor of Brendan's stated, our world - and certainly our department - are better for having had Brendan in it. He will be missed by all.*

# WILDLIFE DAMAGE SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR

## DANIEL “BOONE” LIANE

In 2020, Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) created a Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) strategic plan, a first for our WDM program. One of the three primary goals for the plan is to “mitigate livestock loss through effective delivery of wildlife damage program services.” WDM staff across the state help with this, but it’s most apparent in sheep country. Numerous times staff have heard from producers, “if it wasn’t for GFP staff helping with predator control, I would be out of business.”

To recognize staff who truly rise above the call of duty, GFP staff from around the state nominate a wildlife damage specialist (WDS) who stands out, not only with their ability to assist producers with livestock and property loss, but also their communication skills, leadership, and ability to do a job that many people simply don’t have the skillset to do. All nominations are reviewed and judged by previous recipients who themselves are wildlife damage specialists working in the field and see the everyday challenges faced by their peers.

After careful review and consideration, Team GFP is pleased to announce that Daniel “Boone” Liane was selected as the Wildlife Damage Specialist of the Year for his outstanding performance and contributions during 2023. Stationed in Buffalo, South Dakota, Boone has demonstrated exceptional skill and dedication in managing one of the largest livestock populations in the region, which includes approximately 30,000 sheep, 70,000 head of cattle, a dozen donkeys, and a handful of pigs.

Boone’s expertise in controlling predation, particularly from coyotes, has been instrumental in maintaining the health and safety of this diverse livestock population. His proficiency in managing predator populations has consistently kept livestock losses to a minimum, ensuring a stable and productive environment for local ranchers and farmers.



(L-R) Regional Wildlife Supervisor Mike Klosowski, Regional Program Manager Jack Alexander, Wildlife Damage Specialist Daniel “Boone” Liane, Regional Terrestrial Resources Supervisor Trenton Haffley.

Beyond his proficiency with coyote management, Boone possesses a deep understanding of coyote and beaver behavior, which he applies effectively in the field. His knowledge of these species, combined with his skillful use of the appropriate tools and techniques, makes him highly effective in managing the challenges specific to each situation.

Boone also excels in aerial support operations, where his ability to locate and identify coyotes beforehand ensures efficient coordination with aircraft teams. His professionalism and clear communication with cooperators have earned him the respect and trust of his peers and the community. Boone is always prompt in responding to concerns and consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to his role.

Boone’s expertise, professionalism, and unwavering dedication to managing wildlife and protecting livestock make him an invaluable asset to our community.



# TIMELINE OF PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING



## 1939

Animal Damage Control (ADC) mandated by state law in cooperation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to control predators, beaver, prairie dogs, and nuisance animals.

## 1974

South Dakota Legislature transferred the ADC program from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to GFP. GFP must match county-General Fund dollars on a 1:1 basis using department funds. Due to impending ADC program budget shortfalls, the GFP match was eventually increased to a 2:1 rate where hunters now provide two dollars for every one dollar in county General Funds directed into the ADC fund.

## 1999

Five-dollar surcharge added to most hunting licenses sold in South Dakota to provide more funding to deliver landowner game animal depredation assistance programs caused by game birds and animals. One-half of the money provides private land hunter access programs, with payments going to South Dakota farmers and ranchers who allow hunting access to their properties. The other half supports programs and services to reduce damage caused by game animals as part of a broader “Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) Program.”

## 2001

As a condition to receive assistance with game animal damage, landowners/producers must agree to allow reasonable free hunting access to people who obtain proper permission (for the species they are requesting assistance with).

## 2003

“Special Buck” license revenues help support WDM program services.

## 2009

ADC and WDM programs were formally consolidated into the comprehensive WDM program that GFP operates today.

GFP entered into a cooperative agreement with USDA-Wildlife Services (USDA-WS) for their assistance with aerial predator control in South Dakota.

## 2013

An additional one-dollar surcharge to most hunting licenses is added due to program budget shortages. GFP added three new field staff positions.

## 2016

A second aircraft was added for aerial predator control.

## 2017

Transaction fee from the sale of hunting licenses purchased online increased to help support both WDM and ADC program services.

## 2019

South Dakota Office of the Governor initiated an external review of GFP’s WDM and ADC programs which resulted in hiring additional staff, increasing aerial predator control, new equipment, a shift of focus to prioritize on-going problems, opportunities for producer input, and a WDM strategic plan.

## 2020

Two new field staff positions were created in western South Dakota.

## 2023

South Dakota Legislature approved \$350,000 to be transferred from DANR to GFP annually for an additional plane and pilot for aerial predator control.

## SINCE 2000

GFP has spent over \$33 million on resolving game species depredation (primarily deer, elk, and Canada geese) on private land and over \$34 million on ADC program services.

### ADDITIONAL FUNDING PARTNERS FOR SOUTH DAKOTA WDM PROGRAM

South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (DANR)

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services (USDA-WS)

# WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

## SERVICE GOALS

*Wildlife damage specialists (WDS) play an important role within Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) and provide the people of South Dakota with many valuable services. Wildlife damage specialists may trap coyotes that have killed livestock; construct electric fence to protect growing crops from Canada goose damage; or provide assistance regarding deer damage to stored-feed supplies.*

### PRIMARY PURPOSE

With more than 80 percent of South Dakota in private ownership, private landowners

play a pivotal role in wildlife management and providing hunter and angler access across the state. Landowners and agricultural producers provide critical habitats that wildlife need to live and prosper on private lands, but they also provide outdoor recreational access for the state's hunters, anglers, trappers, and others. Wildlife damage specialists cooperatively work with landowners and producers to alleviate or reduce all types of wildlife damage

to private property. This includes, but is not limited to:

- » Alleviating livestock loss caused by coyotes and fox;
- » Reducing damage to stored-feed supplies from deer, elk, and turkeys;
- » Reducing damage to growing crops from Canada geese and elk;
- » Reducing damage to commercial melon growers from raccoons and deer;
- » Controlling prairie dogs on lands adjacent to public land; and
- » Reducing damage to crops, dams, trees, roads and other property from beaver.

Wildlife damage specialists assist landowners with

a diversity of other human-wildlife conflicts such as pronghorn antelope and pheasant depredation as well as hawk and owl control to protect poultry flocks.

There are also certain situations where wildlife damage staff assists with public safety such as the protection of levees and dikes from wildlife-caused damage, wildlife threats on or near airports, human-wildlife conflicts with aggressive wildlife species, and other situations that arise. Some staff members also train and supervise many seasonal employees and interns who provide the primary workforce for many Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) activities.

Wildlife damage specialists interact with thousands of landowners and producers each year. GFP relies on these staff members to foster relationships and facilitate communications with the citizens of South Dakota that they serve at the grass-roots level.

### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Wildlife damage specialists assist with many different wildlife surveys and disease monitoring efforts that GFP conducts throughout the year while promoting WDM efforts. They assist biologists with deer, elk, and pronghorn surveys. They also help with duck and goose banding, bobcat tagging, and walleye spawning when time allows.

Wildlife damage specialists are called upon to work with other GFP staff on disease monitoring efforts such as chronic wasting disease, epizootic hemorrhagic disease, avian influenza, and bovine tuberculosis sampling in wildlife. They assist with wildlife research projects when projects demand





certain skills or personnel, and play a vital role in the success of many projects. Wildlife damage specialists also provide input on recommendations for the many different seasons and licenses that GFP administers.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

Another important role that wildlife damage specialists play is to provide educational seminars and demonstrations to sportsmen groups, schools, and other interested groups to promote hunting and trapping of furbearers. Wildlife damage staff participate in events throughout South Dakota such as ETHICS SD (Ecology, Trapping, History, Identification, Conservation, and Stewardship), different types of classes for beginning recreationists, and other GFP-sponsored public outreach events.

Wildlife damage specialists present information regarding the WDM program to county commissions, predator control districts, and appear at numerous other public meetings throughout the year. Administrators routinely interact with stakeholder

groups such as the WDM Working Group, Animal Damage Control Policy Advisory Committee, South Dakota Stockgrowers, predator district boards, South Dakota Sheep Growers, South Dakota Cattlemen, South Dakota Ag Unity, GFP Commission, and other organizations, policymakers, and groups. They also coordinate management activities and operations with other partners such as U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Wildlife Services, USDA Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, South Dakota Office of School and Public Lands, and other state and federal agencies, as well as cooperate on wildlife damage research with universities and USDA National Wildlife Research Center.

Program accountability is an important element for GFP, and it's critical that our constituents' needs are being met by our programs and services as well as providing accountability to the sportsmen and women who provide funding for these important programs. Over the past five years, GFP has made



Partnerships with private landowners, like the Controlled Hunting Access Program (CHAP), allows public hunting access to help reduce elk and deer damage at a local level.



Sawyer Trail  
parking area

PARK CARS  
HERE



a considerable effort to demonstrate accountability and transparency through public communication efforts, such as one-on-one conversations, fairs and sport shows, and newsletter articles.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Aerial Permissions Mapping Process<sup>1</sup>

In 2023, the Wildlife Damage Management Program transitioned from outdated paper mapping methods to electronic mapping to improve efficiency. This shift allows the program to maintain an inventory of landowner permissions, assist staff with mapping, track expiration dates, and offer base maps for pilots working the aerial coyote removal program. It also helps staff make informed decisions regarding aerial resources and provides better tools to meet producer needs.

### Annual reviews of program agreement forms<sup>1</sup>

Staff have committed to reviewing program guidelines and agreement forms annually. In doing so, each

agreement form is updated, simplified, and made readily available to all our Wildlife Damage Specialists. In particular, the Canada goose abatement buffer strip agreement form was streamlined, and incentive payments were increased and simplified. Additionally, buffer strip payment rates for both annual and perennial plantings were standardized as well as allowing more options to hay or utilize the buffer strip.

### Mitigating damage from elk and deer through additional hunting opportunities<sup>2</sup>

*South Dakota producers enrolled additional acres in the GFP Elk Hunter Access Program.*

This past winter, producers experienced damage to stored feed supplies due to a growing elk herd, especially along the Bad River. In response, staff hosted a meeting with local landowners to provide information on the estimated elk population in the area, elk hunting license options, private land habitat and access programs, and tools

available through the Wildlife Damage Management Program.

As a result, several landowners enrolled their properties in the Elk Hunter Access Program to increase elk harvest in the area and reduce depredation. Additionally, landowners also signed up for depredation food plots and hayland plots.

*GFP staff work with Hutterite colonies to protect agriculture products while enrolling additional lands in the Walk-in Area Program.*

Staff continue to look for ways hunters can help landowners mitigate damage caused by deer. For example, staff worked with Hutterite colonies in the northeast to provide cost-share for a fence barrier to keep deer out of their growing orchards and nurseries while also enrolling thousands of acres of their working lands into the Walk-In-Area public access program.

*GFP works with SD Legislature to offer landowners additional options to manage elk on private property.*

The 2024 legislature approved Senate Bill 173, which authorized the GFP Commission to promulgate rules allowing landowners in certain prairie elk units to apply for and receive antlerless elk tags. After careful consideration, the GFP Commission approved landowner own land elk tags in most of the prairie elk units. Both landowners and GFP supported the measure, describing it as an additional tool to help producers manage elk populations on their property. As a result of the GFP staff's efforts and this legislation, producers signed up additional properties in the Elk Hunting Access Program.

### Sharing deer depredation strategies<sup>3</sup>

Thinking outside the box, brainstorming ideas with landowners,



Department staff and landowners discuss the growing elk population along the Bad River.



Examples of an alternative bale stacking method (left) versus a traditional bale stacking method (right).



other agencies, and organizations, or simply trying something a little outside our comfort zone can lead to successful results. After reading about proactive deer damage mitigation measures in the *Landowners Matter* newsletter, several producers began using alternative bale stacking methods as suggested in the article to help reduce deer damage throughout the winter months. These producers reported reduced damage to their livestock feed and plan to continue stacking variations in the future. Since every livestock operation is different, the most effective measures depend on the operation. GFP Wildlife Damage Specialists are always willing to meet with producers to discuss options and available tools to meet the unique challenges of a South Dakota winter and deer depredation.

*Staff collaborate with neighboring states on better ways to solve wildlife damage issues.* Managers and wildlife damage staff from both South Dakota and North Dakota Game and Fish Departments met this past summer to discuss and share each state's strategies for alleviating deer depredation on private

property. The focus of the discussions aimed at improving networking opportunities while sharing details of each state's deer depredation program to learn more about what has been both successful and unsuccessful. At the conclusion of the meeting, both North Dakota and South Dakota staff had additional techniques and strategies to deploy for producers in their home states. One option GFP staff in the northeast learned about and plan to use is a different bale fencing material and construction method. Staff also plan to use a multi-species electronic hazing device called a Scatter Box, as demoed by North Dakota staff.

#### **GFP staff continue to enhance predator control services<sup>4</sup>**

*A third airplane will be up and flying soon.* With the 2023 Legislature passing HB1276, which provided additional funding from the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources to GFP, a third plane was acquired and added to South Dakota's aerial hunting fleet. The plane, a CubCrafters XCub, is stationed in Spearfish with the current USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services aerial

crew there. The XCub in Spearfish will be more efficient in western South Dakota, as it is faster and more maneuverable than the Top Cub, greatly reducing ferry time between service requests. The Top Cub plane previously stationed in Spearfish was moved to Pierre, where it will join an existing plane and crew that provides services in central and eastern South Dakota. Although a new plane was readily available, recruiting an experienced third crew proved a little more challenging. GFP and Wildlife Services continue to recruit and station another pilot and gunner in the Pierre area.

*Lambs can be 'easy pickings' if producers and wildlife damage specialists don't work together.* In addition to Wildlife Damage Specialists focusing their predator control efforts on the ground from February 1 to June 15, staff also pay special attention September through October when lambs are moved to pasture for the first time. This is a key period as this move to the pasture also coincides with coyote pups learning to hunt which can be devastating to lambs if not kept in check.

<sup>1</sup>WDM Strategic Plan Goal 3, Strategies 1, 6. Enhance predator control services by obtaining required permissions. Identify opportunities to improve efficiencies in delivery of program services, tracking and accountability.

<sup>2</sup>WDM Strategic Plan. Goal 2. Strategy 2. Continue engagement with producers, landowners, stakeholders. Goal 3, Strategy 5. Improve habitat and food plot options to mitigate wildlife damage.

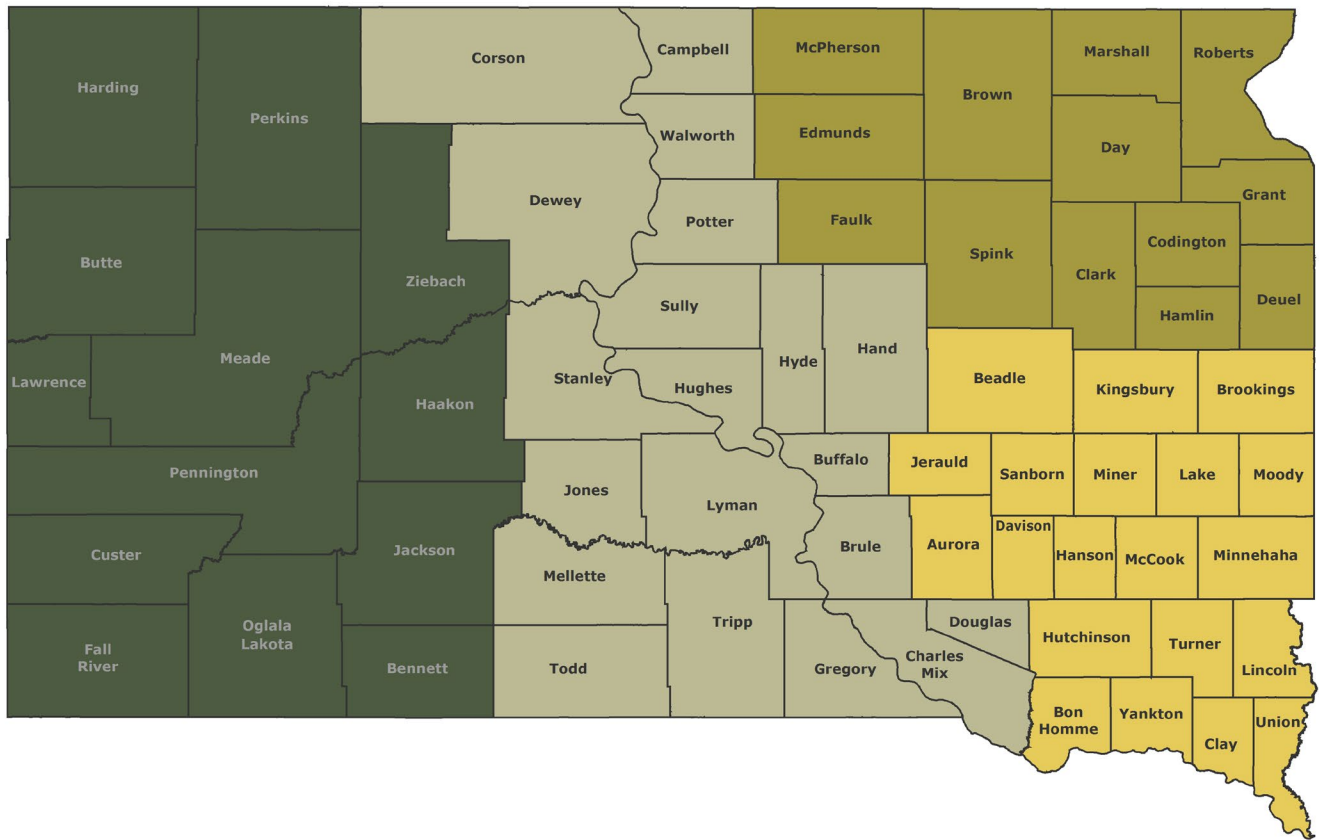
<sup>3</sup>WDM Strategic Plan. Goal 2, Strategy 2. Continue engagement with producers, landowners, stakeholders to make public aware of GFP efforts.

<sup>4</sup>WDM Strategic Plan. Goal 3, Strategies 2, 4. Ongoing aggressive and preventative coyote removal maintenance to reduce loss. WDS will prioritize predator control activities.

# DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

## ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS

The Division of Wildlife’s Operations Section is divided into four administrative regions. Each region works under the supervision of a regional supervisor along with other assistant supervisory staff. Each region has field staff who conduct the “on-the-ground” work and services to the citizens of South Dakota.



### REGION 1 (WEST)

Bennett, Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Jackson, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins, Oglala Lakota, and Ziebach.

### REGION 2 (CENTRAL)

Brule, Buffalo, Campbell, Charles Mix, Corson, Dewey, Douglas, Gregory, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Jones, Lyman, Mellette, Potter, Stanley, Sully, Todd, Tripp, and Walworth.

### REGION 3 (SOUTHEAST)

Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Clay, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerald, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Sanborn, Turner, Union, and Yankton.

### REGION 4 (NORTHEAST)

Brown, Clark, Codrington, Day, Deuel, Edmonds, Faulk, Grant, Hamlin, Marshall, McPherson, Roberts, and Spink.

## SOUTH DAKOTA GAME, FISH AND PARKS ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

**KEVIN ROBLING**, Department Secretary

**TOM KIRSCHENMANN**, Wildlife Division Director

**CHAD SWITZER**, Wildlife Division Deputy Director

**JOHN KANTA**, Terrestrial Section Chief

**MIKE KLOSOWSKI**, Regional Wildlife Supervisor | Region 1 (West)

**MARK OHM**, Regional Wildlife Supervisor | Region 2 (Central)

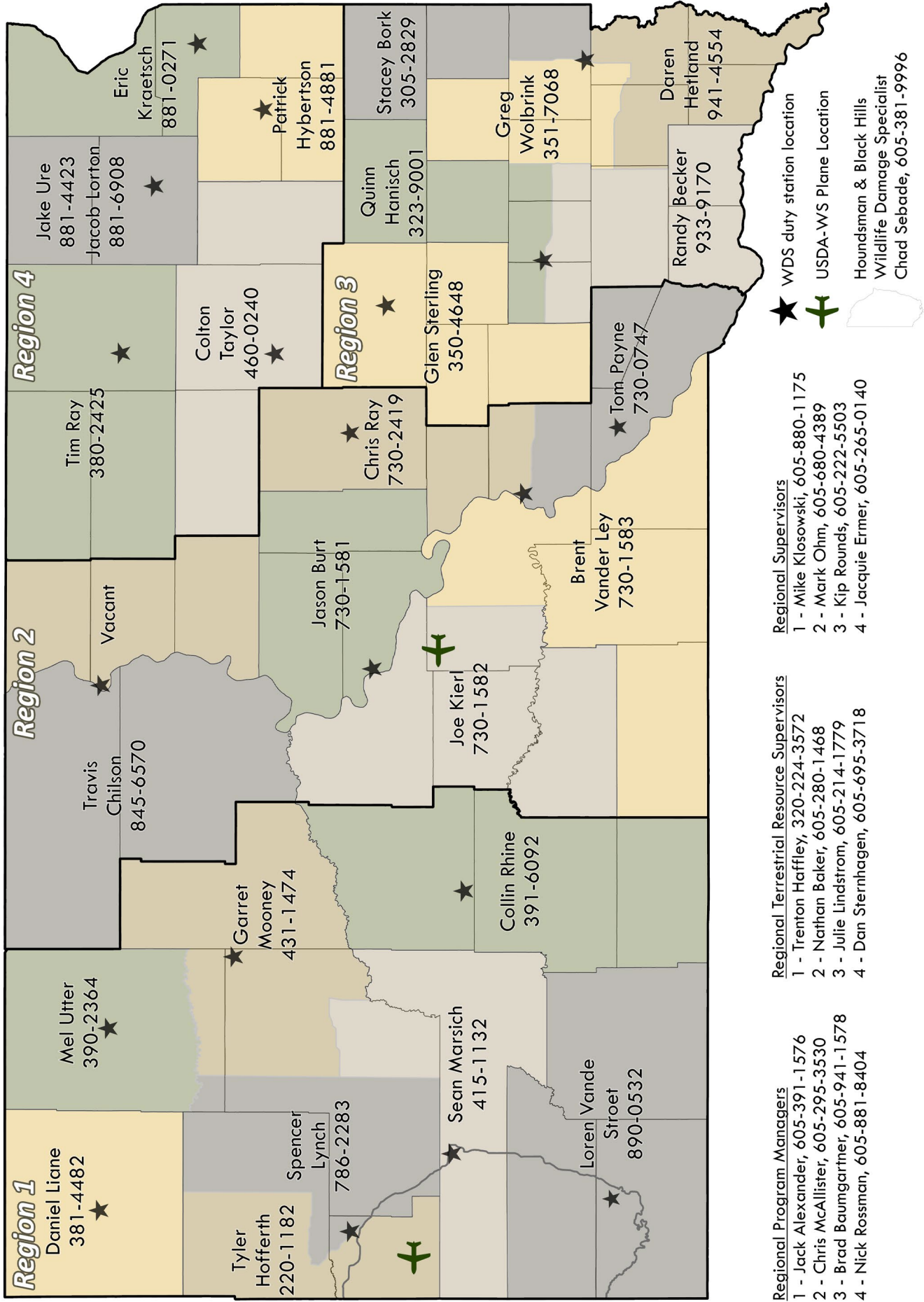
**KIP ROUNDS**, Regional Wildlife Supervisor | Region 3 (Southeast)

**JACQUIE ERMER**, Regional Wildlife Supervisor | Region 4 (Northeast)





# Wildlife Damage Specialists



# STATEWIDE PROGRAM REPORT AND SUMMARY

The state of South Dakota consists of 66 counties and has a diverse landscape from east to west and from north to south. This diverse landscape includes croplands, grasslands, wetlands and lakes, rugged river drainages, badlands, and the Black Hills. These varying landscapes present their own unique set of challenges due to the wildlife species that are present, weather conditions, and population acceptance levels. South Dakota has an abundance of wildlife species and includes populations of white-tailed deer, mule deer, upland game birds, waterfowl, pronghorn, elk, furbearers, turkeys, and mountain lions.

Twenty-eight full-time wildlife damage specialists, numerous seasonal employees, and other Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) staff, provide the “boots-on-the-ground” delivery of the important Wildlife Damage Management (WDM) programs and services. These programs

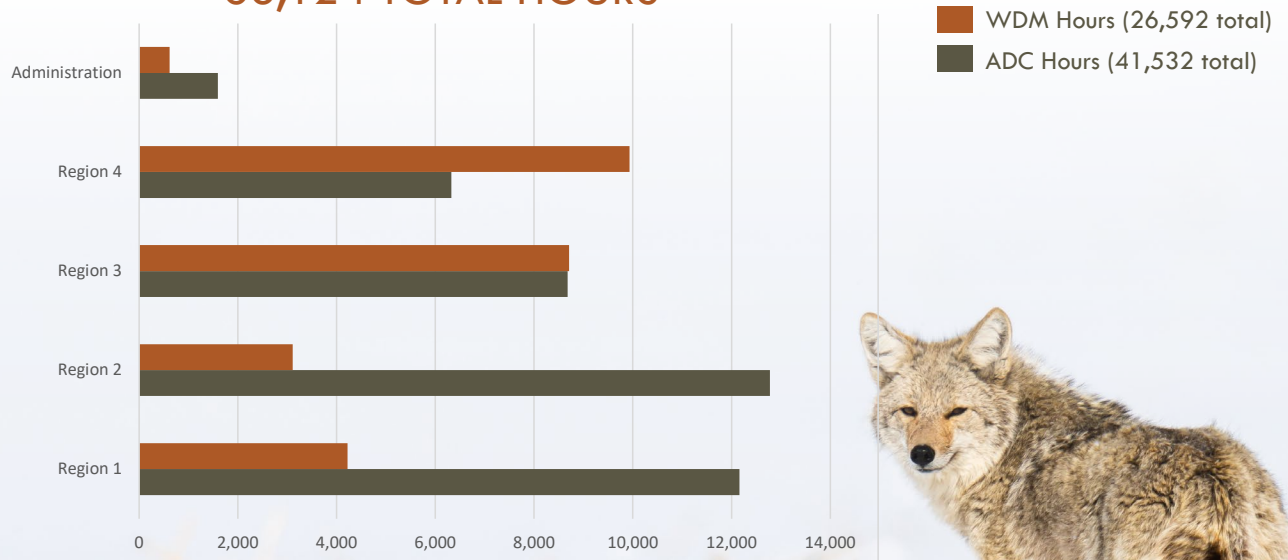
provide direct assistance to South Dakota producers and landowners when wildlife damage concerns arise. GFP provides depredation assistance with beaver, Canada geese, coyote, deer, elk, fox, mountain lion, nuisance animals, pheasant, prairie dog, pronghorn, turkey, as well as other wildlife species. This past year, staff worked with nearly 2,100 cooperators on Animal Damage Control (ADC) and WDM-related requests.

The following graphs and maps show statewide expenditures as well as county breakdown of services provided by the WDM program.

Included in those maps are producers that were assisted by staff with permanent stackyard, secure cover, and protective fencing contracts for deer; food plot, hay land, stackyard, and cable contracts for elk; and buffer strip and permanent fence contracts for Canada geese.

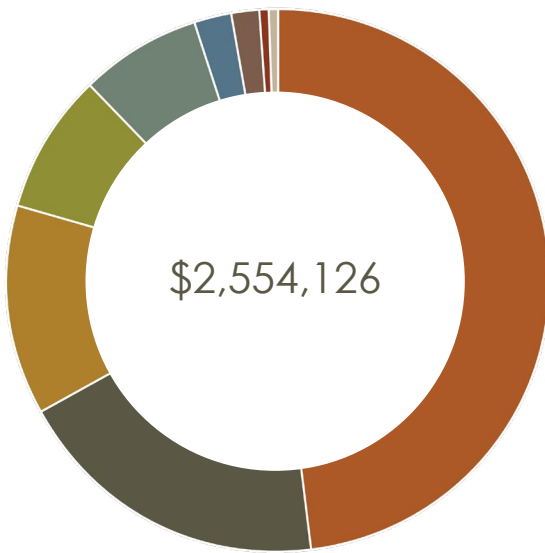
## 2024 GFP STAFF HOURS

68,124 TOTAL HOURS



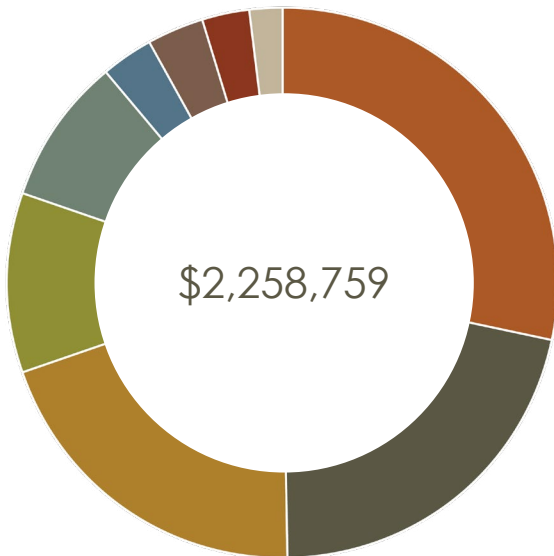


## ANIMAL DAMAGE CONTROL EXPENDITURES - FY2024



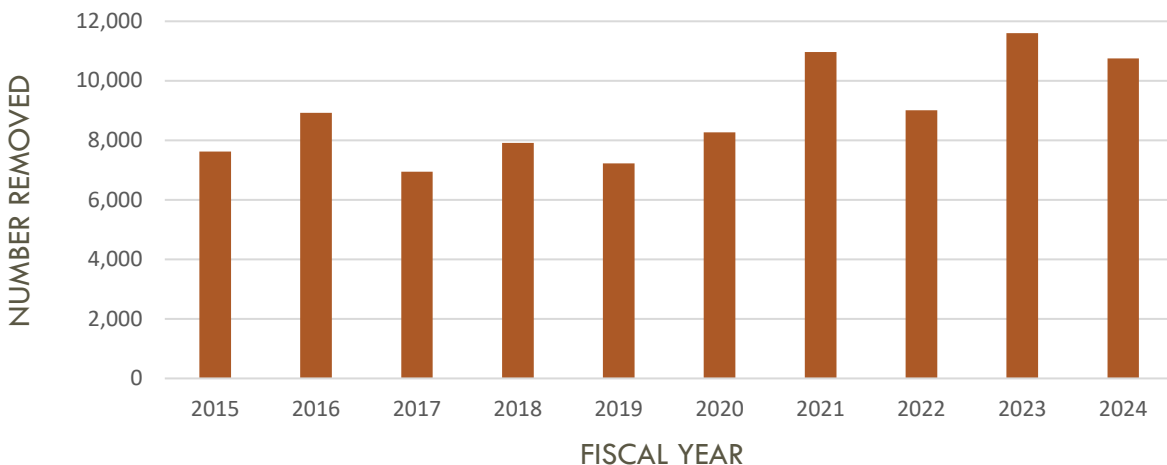
\$1,228,399   48%	Coyote
\$485,872   19%	Aerial Hunting
\$320,904   13%	Prairie Dog
\$210,361   8%	Administration
\$184,416   7%	Equipment Maintenance
\$56,213   2%	Reports/Training/Meetings
\$40,682   2%	Nuisance/Rodent
\$16,420   <1%	Public Relations/Extension
\$10,860   <1%	Fox

## WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT EXPENDITURES - FY2024

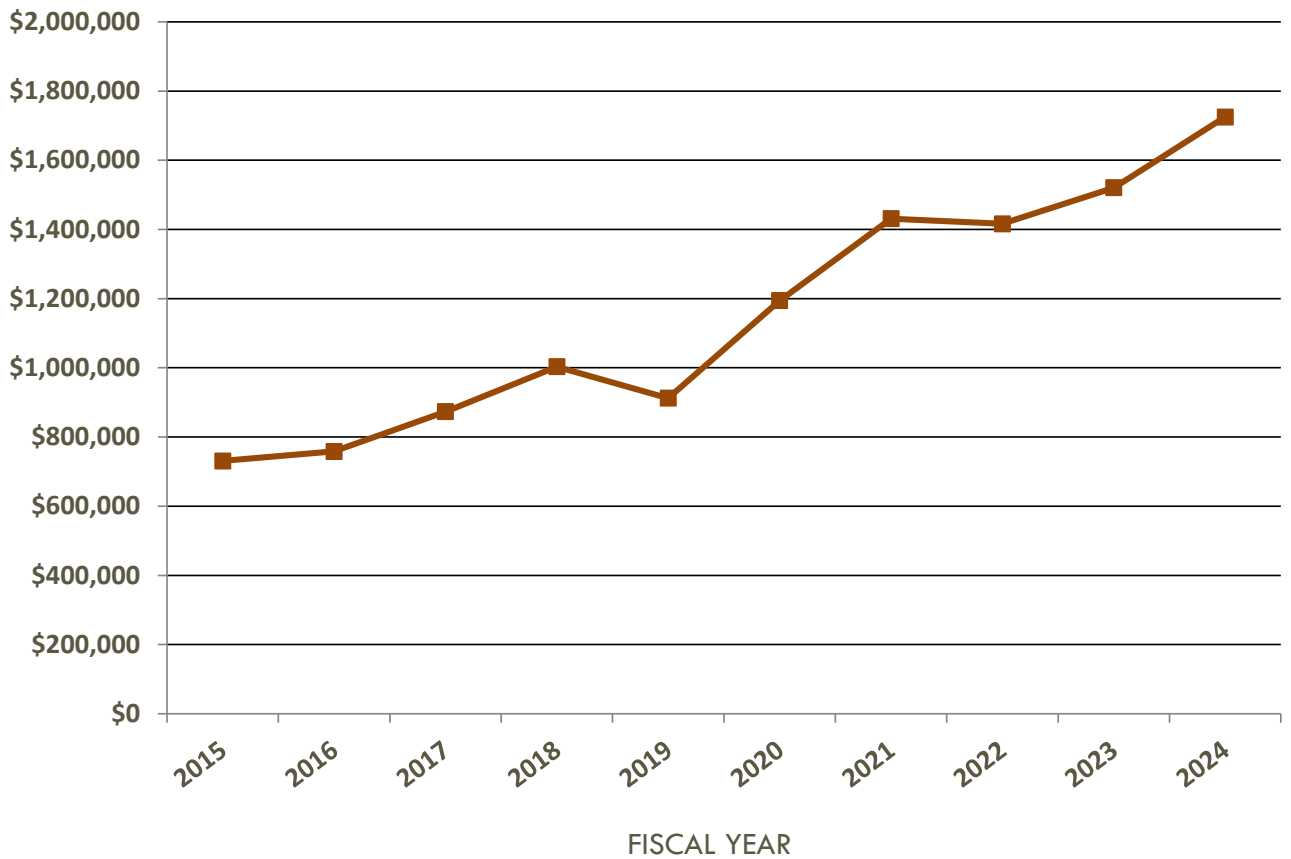


\$644,578   29%	Deer
\$484,342   21%	Elk
\$447,482   20%	Beaver
\$241,103   11%	Canada Geese
\$195,230   9%	Administration
\$70,280   3%	Other Wildlife
\$69,468   3%	Reports/Training/Meetings
\$67,468   3%	Mountain Lion
\$38,807   <2%	Turkey

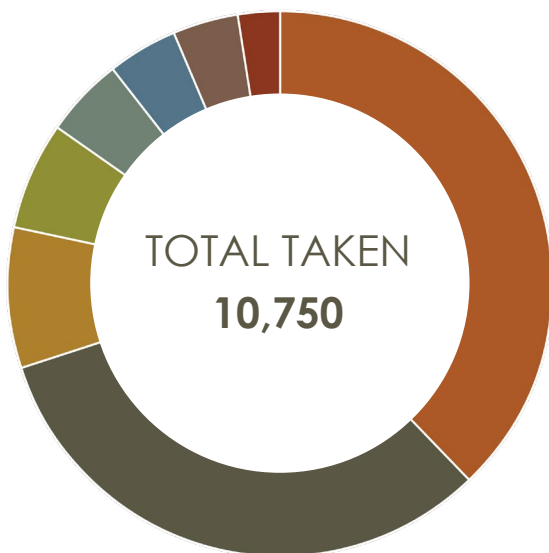
## COYOTE/FOX REMOVED



## COYOTE/FOX CONTROL EXPENDITURES



## COYOTES/FOX TAKEN BY METHOD - FY2024



4,065   38%	Trap/Snare/M-44
3,471   32%	Aerial Gunned - Wildlife Services
912   8%	Aerial Gunned - Contract
671   6%	Aerial Gunned - Predator District
514   5%	Dens
453   4%	Calling/Shooting
400   4%	Thermal/Night Vision
264   2%	Aerial Gunned - Permitted Pilot

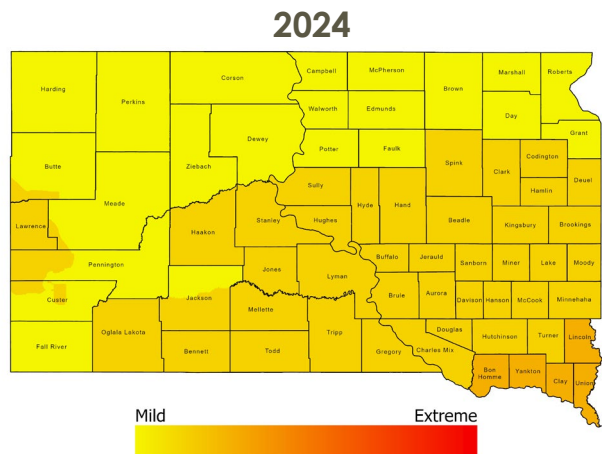
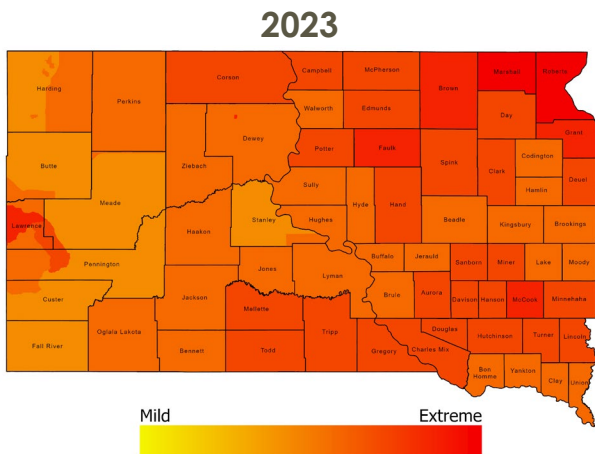
Total requests for service  
**2,071**



# WINTER SEVERITY INDEX: COMPARING 2023 AND 2024

Wildlife can undoubtedly cause damage to stored feed supplies, and severe weather conditions certainly play a role in the number of service requests that GFP receives to help with wildlife damage. Winter Severity Indices (WSI) are one piece of the puzzle to help us understand the relative severity of a winter season. To calculate the WSI, metrics such as the number of days below a certain temperature and the number of days with a certain snow depth are

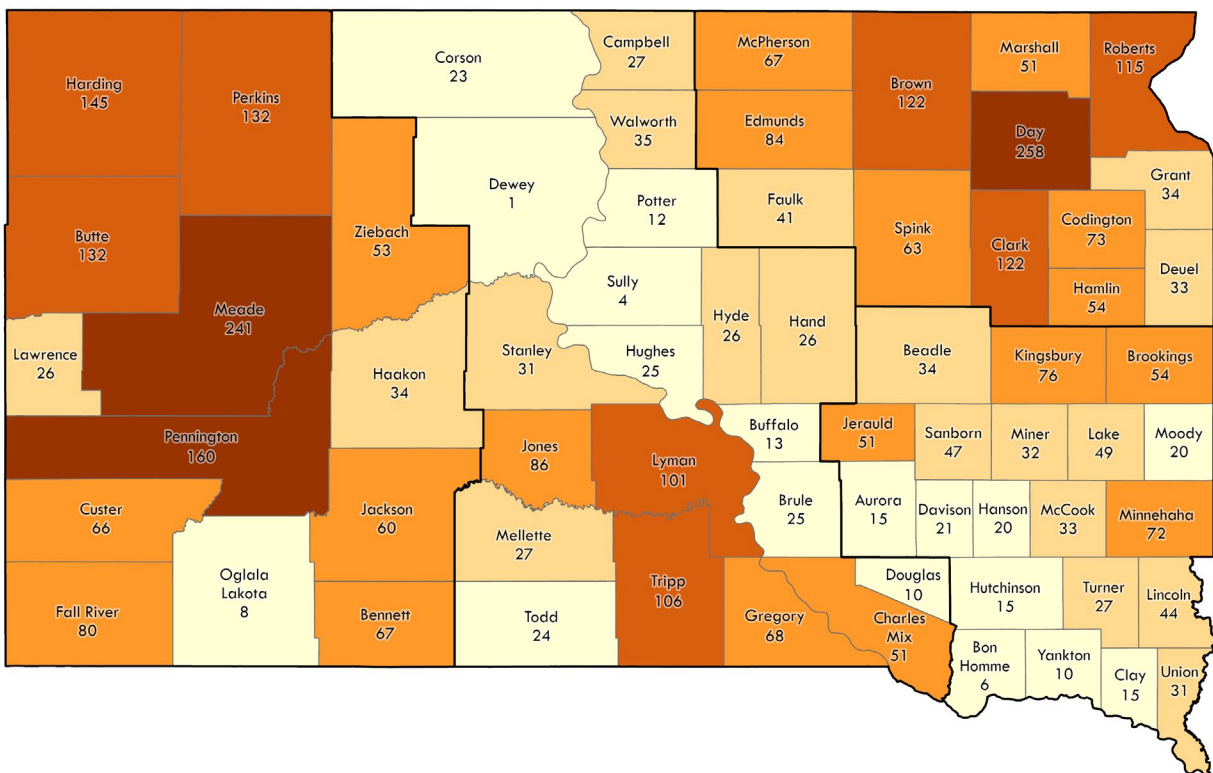
considered. Days that meet these criteria are assigned a point value. Those points are totaled and combined into a single number (Winter Severity Value) that tells us how tough the winter was overall. If the number is high, it means the winter was very cold and snowy. If it's low, the winter was milder and less snowy. The figures below depict the winter severity difference between 2023 and 2024. The winter of 2023 was severe overall, whereas winter of 2024 was mild.



## TOTAL WILDLIFE DAMAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

(INCLUDES ALL SPECIES, PRIMARILY COYOTES, DEER, ELK, CANADA GEESE, BEAVER, AND PRAIRIE DOGS)

STATEWIDE TOTAL: 3,714

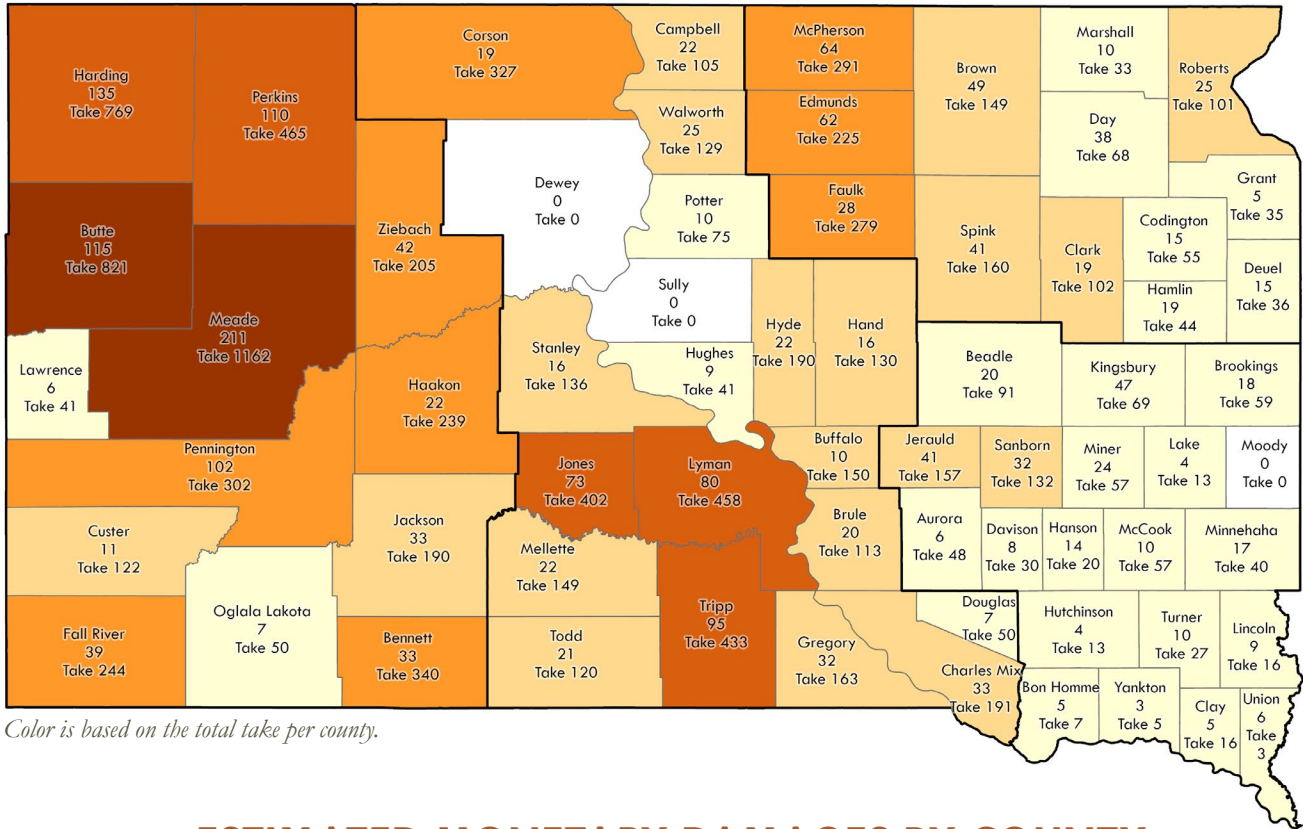


# TOTAL REQUESTS FOR SERVICE AND TAKE BY COUNTY

(COYOTES AND FOX ONLY)

Request for service: 2,071

Total take: 10,750

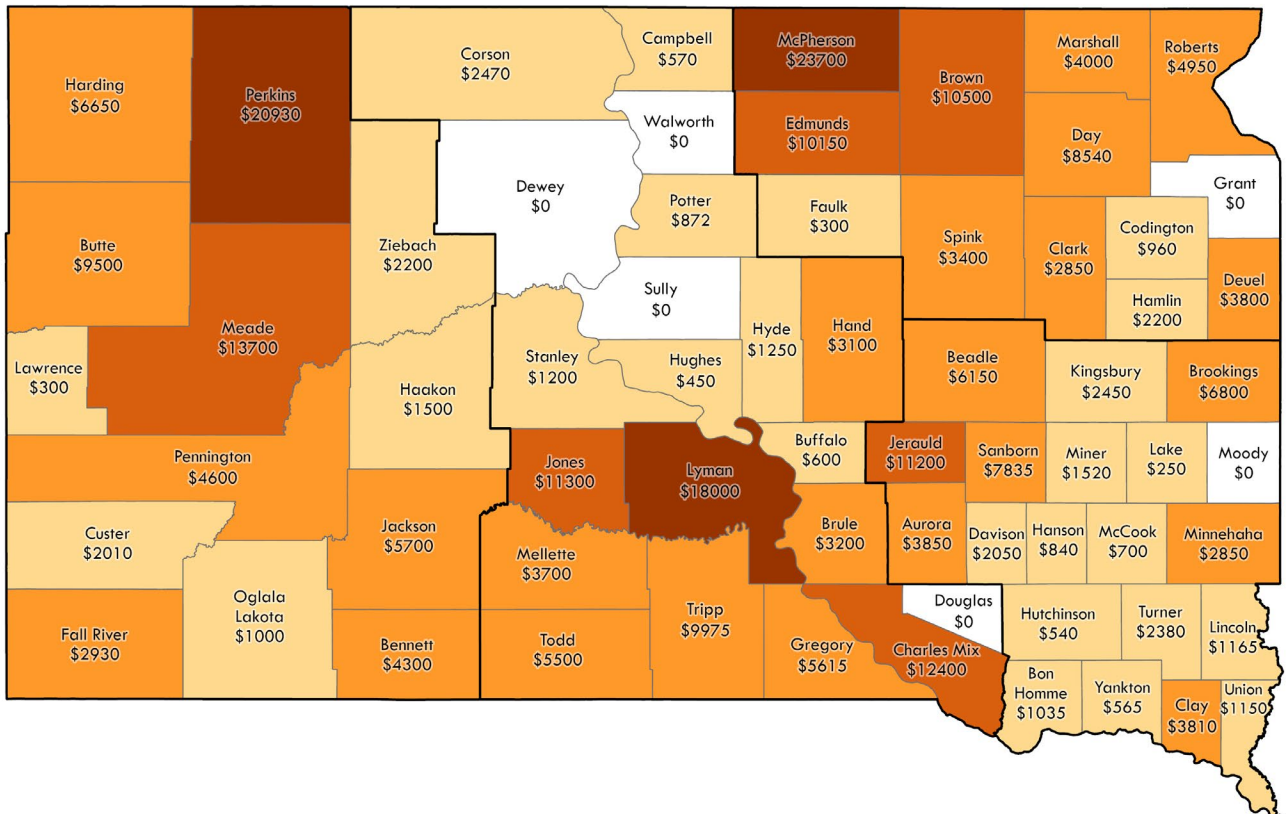


Color is based on the total take per county.

# ESTIMATED MONETARY DAMAGES BY COUNTY

based on request for service

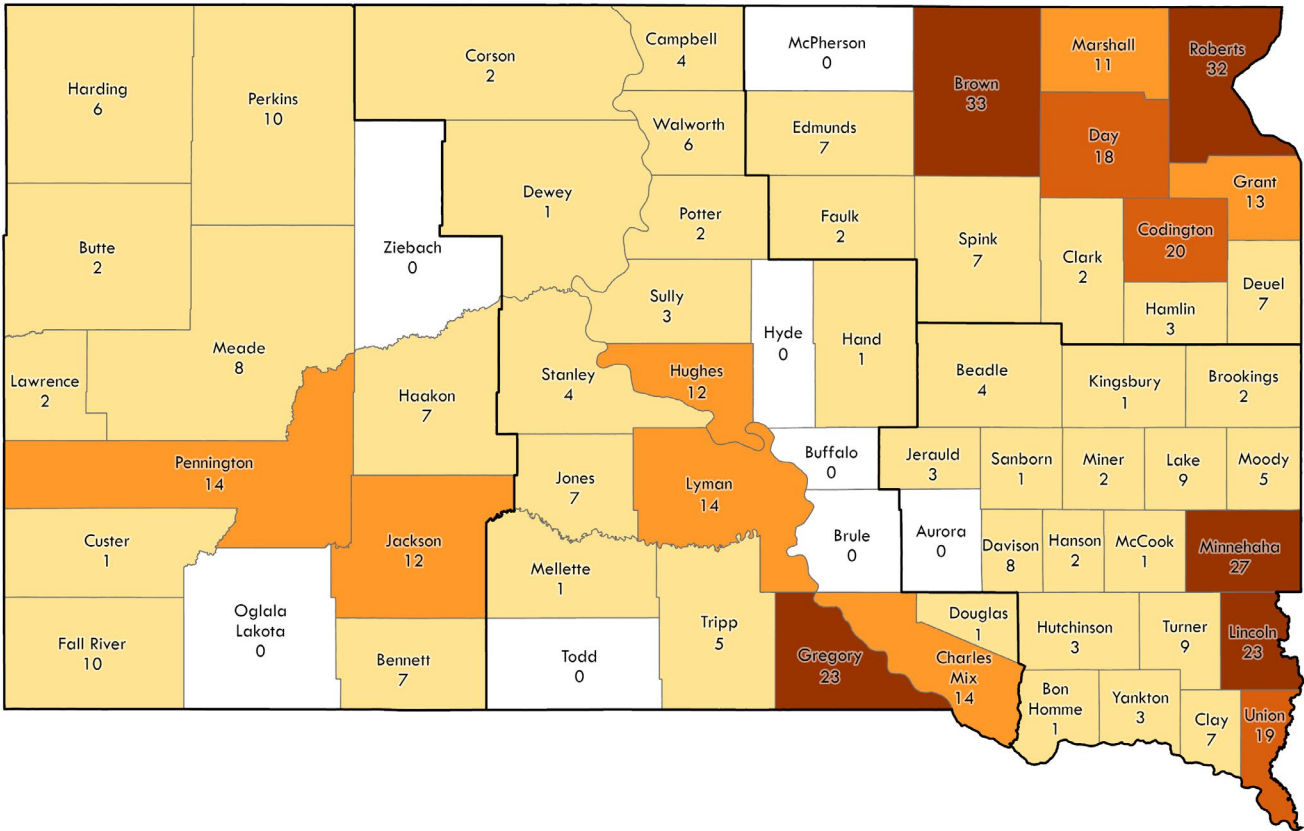
(COYOTES AND FOX ONLY) \$288,012





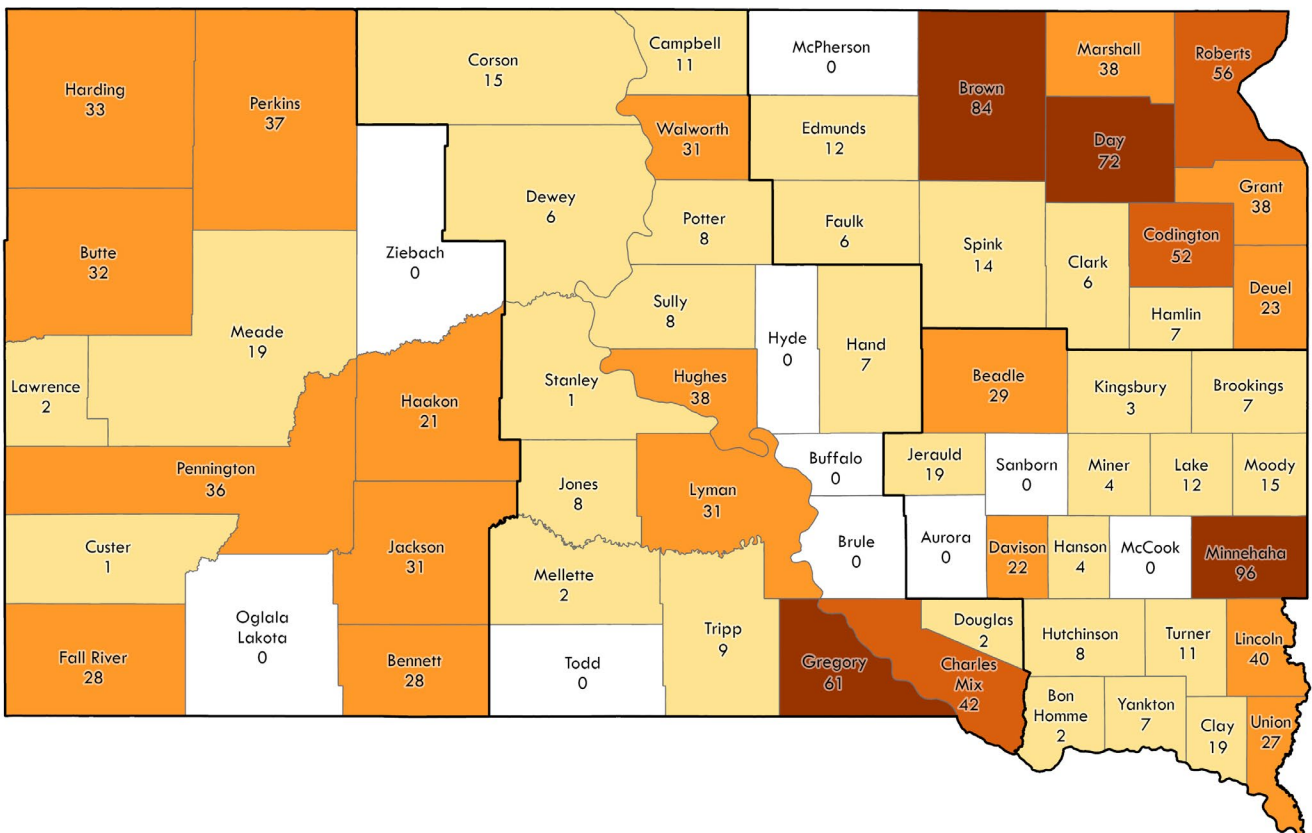
# BEAVER REQUESTS FOR SERVICE

STATEWIDE TOTAL: 464



# NUMBER OF BEAVER TAKEN

STATEWIDE TOTAL: 1,281











**GFP.SD.GOV**

