



Regular Commission Meeting Minutes

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks

523 E Capitol Avenue | Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Missouri Avenue Event Center | Pierre, SD | March 7-8, 2024

Call Meeting to Order

Chair Rissler called the meeting to order at 1 pm CST at the Missouri Avenue Event Center in Pierre, SD, on March 7, 2024. Commissioners Stephanie Rissler, Julie Bartling, Jim White, Robert Whitmyre, Jon Locken, Travis Bies, Travis Theel, and Bruce Cull were present. With eight commission members present, a quorum was established. The public and staff can listen via SDPB Livestream and participate via conference or in person, with approximately 107 total participants attending via Zoom or in person.

1. New Commissioner Introduction

[Info Item]

Chair Rissler introduced Commissioner Theel to the other commissioners as well as the public.

2. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler requested the disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest, but none were brought forward.

3. Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for any additions or corrections to the regular minutes of January 2024 meeting. Minutes are available at <https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/archives/>.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 2024 REGULAR COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Additional Salary Days

[Action Item]

Chair Rissler called for additional salary days from the Commissioners. The following additional days were submitted: Rissler (4), Theel (1), Cull (2), Whitmyre (1), and White (1).

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SALARY DAYS. The motion carried unanimously.

5. 2024 Legislative Item Update

[Info Item]

Secretary Robling gave a brief update on the legislative items that were heard during the 2024 legislative session.

6. South Dakota Shooting Sports Complex Update

[Info Item]

Secretary Robling provided the Commission with an update on the South Dakota Shooting Range Complex. Dirt work has commenced, and fundraising efforts are fully underway.

7. South Dakota Go Outdoors Update

[Info Item]

Keith Fisk, Licensing Program Administrator, gave the commission an update on the South Dakota Go Outdoors licensing system.

Jodi Bechard, Parks Business Manager, reported that things are starting to warm up for the season, on the Parks & Recreation side of Go Outdoors South Dakota. Staff continue to make improvements for both internal and external customers. The 90-day window was reported open into June and reservations are starting to come in quickly.

Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, provided some information on the work behind the scenes for system improvements to overall functionality, user experience, and overall efficiency. This includes weekly status meetings with Brandt and GFP teams, submission and review of work tickets, numerous workgroups on all aspects of the system (Parks, Fish/Hunt, events, specialty permits, law enforcement app, mobile app,



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marketing and communications, reporting, call center, ACH (automated clearing house) sweeps when funds are pulled from license agents, accounting/invoicing), quarterly on-site visits with Brandt to review and discuss numerous items related to upcoming enhancements to system updates, identify priorities, etc. In addition, staff conduct extensive testing before moving new functionality or updates to production or before drawings are conducted. Switzer asked the Commissioner to please continue to pass along comments or conservations you have with the public to us so we can follow up with those customers to assist them and take any suggestions they might have to improve our system.

8. New Staff Introduction

[\[Info Item\]](#)

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann introduced several new staff throughout the department to the Commissioners. Those new staff introduced were Andrea Beck, Karina Popek, Sheila Stahl, Brendan Kamerzell, and Tom Mitzel.

Open Forum

Senior Staff Attorney Nick Michels opened the floor at 2:00 pm CST for discussion from those in attendance in matters of importance to them that are listed on the agenda not as a finalization or may not be on the agenda.

- 2:01 pm: Bill Waeckerle of Pierre, SD representing the Lake Oahe Walleye Restoration Coalition testified in person on improvements for fisheries and updates on hatchery capabilities.
- 2:04 pm: Bills Hinds of Pierre, SD representing the Lake Oahe Walleye Restoration Coalition testified in person on improvements for fisheries and updates on hatchery capabilities.
- 2:08 pm: Dick Werner of Herreid, SD testified in person as a proponent to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:12 pm: Cody Warner of Webster, SD representing the South Dakota Waterfowl Association testified virtually in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:14 pm: Paul Lepisto of Pierre, SD representing the Izaak Walton League testified in person in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:16 pm: Roger Hating of Pierre, SD testified in person in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:17 pm: Chuck Dieter of Brookings, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation and the South Dakota Waterfowl Association testified in person in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:22 pm: Zach Hunke of Watertown, SD representing the South Dakota Wildlife Federation as their president testified virtually in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:26 pm: Greg Fischer of Lake City, SD testified in person in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.
- 2:29 pm: George VanDel of Pierre, SD testified in person in opposition to the waterfowl hunting season proposals.

Senior Staff Attorney Michels closed the Open Forum at 2:32 pm CST.



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9. Petition #209: Deer Draw Structure

[Action Item]

Tate Glader of Rapid City submitted petition #209 in which requested the Commission to change the deer drawing structure back to unlimited first choice options for deer seasons.

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann described the petition submitted by Tate Glader and the direct result of the petition. The petition requested the Commission to repeal the current combined deer draw structure and go back to the prior structure where individuals could apply for all six seasons if desired. It was described that the current structure has resulted in more individuals getting their preferred licenses and less hunters having more than 2 buck licenses. Because there is on-going conversations about the deer management plan and discussions around potential adjustments to the drawing structure, the commission denied the petition.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY WHITE TO DENY PETITION #209. The motion carried unanimously.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY WHITE TO ADOPT RESOLUTION 24-03 DENYING PETITION #209. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Use of Parks and Public Lands: Tree Stands and Trail Cameras

[Action Item]

Law Enforcement Section Chief Sam Schelhaas presented a proposal to expand requirements on trail camera placement, tree stand placement and construction on Walk-In-Areas and all private lands leased by the Department for public hunting access. This proposal will allow an individual to hunt without permission from the landowner or lessee on all private lands leased for public hunting access by GFP. This was previously only described as walk-in areas. This proposal would also specify the restriction to only active hunting on lands leased for public hunting by GFP. In addition to all public lands owned, leased, managed, and controlled by GFP, on all private lands leased for public hunting access by GFP, this proposal would restrict an individual from constructing or using permanent tree stands, permanent blinds, and climbing devices. It would require an individual's name and address, or customer identification number (instead of big game license number) to be legibly labeled on the exterior of unoccupied portable blinds, tree stands, and trail cameras.

MOTIONED BY WHITMYRE, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING BEFORE THE COMMISSION FOR FINALIZATION IN APRIL 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

11. Time Restrictions for Use of State Park Systems and Public Lands

[Action Item]

Law Enforcement Section Chief Sam Schelhaas presented a proposal that would clarify that Oahe Downstream Recreation Area and West Shore Lakeside Use Area, and other areas north of Fort Pierre, observe the Central Time zone. This clarifies that while these areas are technically located within the Mountain Time zone, they operate on the Central Time zone as that is what the communities in which they are associated with operate.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING BEFORE THE COMMISSION FOR FINALIZATION IN APRIL 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

12. Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season Proposal

[Action Item]

Director Kirschenmann provided information to the Commission prior to discussion beginning on bighorn sheep proposals and license allocations. He informed the commission that staff have determined that multiple sheep are showing clinical signs of illness (coughing) in Hell Canyon that follows prior confirmation of pneumonia from exposure to *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* in other herds. Twenty-two radio collars were deployed and will be used to help monitor the situation as well as on the ground surveillance by department



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staff. Depending on how illness progresses, it may result in the department providing additional license allocation adjustments at the April Commission meeting.

The Commission approved an amendment to the Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season proposal to add the Rapid City bighorn sheep herd in the Hell Canyon hunting unit (BHS-BH4). Specifically, all of Pennington County within the Black Hills was added to the Hell Canyon unit. As a result, the Rapid City hunting unit (BHS-BH1) will be removed from administrative rule. License number recommendations, totaling 16, for the Bighorn Sheep Hunting Seasons were presented and included an increase from 3 to 4 ram bighorn sheep licenses in Custer State Park (CU1-CSP), an increase from 4 to 8 ram bighorn sheep licenses in Hell Canyon, and no change to Elk Mountain (BHS-BH2; 3 ram bighorn sheep licenses) or the single auction license available. Finalizations for the Bighorn Sheep Hunting Seasons and license numbers are scheduled for the April Commission meeting.

12a. Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season

This proposal removes BHS-BH1. Expands the unit boundary for BHS-BH4 to include the former boundaries of BHS-BH1 and those portions of Pennington County west of Interstate 90, Elk Vale Road and Highway 79.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION IN THE APRIL 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

12b. Bighorn Sheep Hunting License Allocation

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSED CHANGES FROM LAST YEAR. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

13. Custer State Park Hunting Seasons

[Action Item]

13a. Custer State Park Bison

Matt Snyder, Regional Parks Supervisor and Jason Gooder, Natural Resource Manager, introduced this proposal to clean-up administrative rule to remove “bull” and edit “nontrophy” for rule consistency when referring to non-trophy bison harvest in § 41:06:07:01. Will allow the use of archery equipment during the Custer State Park trophy and non-trophy bison harvest season. Decreases the allowable hunting days for trophy bison from three to two days. Increases the number of trophy bison licenses available by random lottery drawing from eight to ten. Increases the number of non-trophy bison licenses from fifteen to twenty.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION IN THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

13b. Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season

Andrew Norton, Wildlife Program Administrator, proposed to extend the Custer State Park Coyote Hunting Season to November 1 through April 30 and allow coyote hunting any time of the day or night. Previously, the season started December 26 and shooting hours were restricted to one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. In addition, a rule in the Custer State Park Hunting Season chapter was removed because it was redundant to a rule in the Custer State Park Restrictions chapter describing restrictions to hunting on roads and rights of ways.

MOTIONED BY BARTLING, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION IN THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Small Game Hunting Seasons

[Action Item]

The Commission approved proposals to extend the Grouse, Partridge, and Quail hunting seasons to end on January 31 to coincide with the end date for the Pheasant hunting season. The Commission also



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approved a proposal to remove the word “common” from the Snipe hunting season to refer to Snipe more generally. There was also a question from the Commission regarding the possibility to extend the Cottontail and Tree Squirrel hunting seasons through March and April. No Commission action was taken for the Pheasant, Cottontail, Tree Squirrel, Crow, and Mourning Dove seasons.

14a. Grouse Hunting Season

This proposal modifies the grouse season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximate 4-week extension to the season.

MOTIONED BY BARLTING, SECONDED BY CULL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

14b. Pheasant Hunting Season

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSED CHANGES FROM LAST YEAR. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING.

14c. Partridge Hunting Season

This proposal modifies the partridge hunting season end date to align with the end date of the pheasant season of January 31. This will result in an approximate 4-week extension to the season.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BARLTING TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

14d. Quail Hunting Season

This proposal modifies the quail hunting season end date to align with the end date for the pheasant hunting season of January 31. This will result in an approximate 4-week extension to the season.

MOTIONED BY THEEL, SECONDED BY LOCKEN TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

14e. Cottontail Rabbit Hunting Season

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSED CHANGES FROM LAST YEAR. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING.

14f. Tree Squirrel Hunting Season

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSED CHANGES FROM LAST YEAR. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING.

14g. Crow Hunting Season

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSED CHANGES FROM LAST YEAR. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING.

14h. Snipe Hunting Season

This proposal would remove the word “common” before snipe to allow harvest of all snipe species.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY BIES TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING. Motioned carried unanimously.

14i. Mourning Dove Hunting Season

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSED CHANGES FROM LAST YEAR. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE MAY 2024 MEETING.



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15. Waterfowl Hunting Seasons Proposals

[Action Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann brought the following proposals to the Commission for consideration.

15a. August Management Take

Proposed changes from last year would be to remove Aurora, Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Clay, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Jerauld, Kingsbury, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Miner, Minnehaha, Moody, Sanborn, Turner, Union, and Yankton counties from the August Management Take Hunting season unit from the August Management Take Hunting Season unit.

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSAL CHANGES FROM JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

15b. Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Season

This proposal would add 210 additional licenses to NRW-00B, 50 additional licenses to NRW-00V, and 55 additional licenses to NRW-00Z for a total of 315 additional licenses added to the Nonresident Waterfowl Hunting Seasons.

NO ACTION TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO PROPOSAL CHANGES FROM JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16. Elk Hunting Season Proposals

[Action Item]

Andy Lindbloom, Senior Big Game Biologist, informed the Commission that the GFP conducts multiple surveys to collect biological and social data on elk herds across the state. The South Dakota Elk Action Plan provides guidelines on population objectives, license allocation, harvest age, and hunter success. An update on elk surveys and objectives was presented. Elk season regulations and licenses for the 2024 and 2025 hunting seasons are being proposed to meet established population and management objectives.

The Commission approved an amendment to the proposal for the Black Hills (Firearm) Elk Hunting Season to include the BHE-9A any elk hunting unit among the list of units open from October 1 – 31 and to restrict antlerless elk hunting to October 15 - 31 for BHE-H2B and BHE-H2E. The Commission also approved an amendment to the proposal for the Prairie Elk Hunting Season to exclude BHE-BH4 from hunting unit PRE-27A in Fall River County. All of these changes are minor rule clean-ups that are not expected to notably change elk hunting regulations. License number recommendations for the Elk Hunting Seasons were presented and included increases to archery and firearm any elk licenses in Custer State Park, Black Hills, and Prairie hunting units. In addition, recommended increases to the number of antlerless licenses during the Prairie Elk Hunting Seasons from 175 to 210 were presented. Finalizations for the Elk Hunting Seasons and license numbers are scheduled for the April Commission meeting.

16a. Custer State Park Early Archery Elk Hunting Season

This proposal would increase the maximum number of licenses from ten to twenty “any elk” licenses and provide the option for up to twenty “antlerless elk” licenses. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action item.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16b. Custer State Park Early Archery Elk Hunting License Allocation

This proposal would update the 2024-2025 Custer State Park Early Archery Elk hunting season licenses from 4 to 5 resident CEE-CU1 “Any Elk” licenses and keep the resident CEE-CU1 “Antlerless Elk” at zero licenses.



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16c. Custer State Park Firearm Elk Hunting Season

This proposal would increase the maximum number of licenses from twenty to thirty “any elk” licenses and the option to provide up to thirty “antlerless elk” licenses. License number and tag type recommendations for the next two years are included in the following administrative action item.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16d. Custer State Park Firearm Elk Hunting License Allocation

This proposal would update the 2024-2025 Custer State Park Firearm Elk hunting season licenses from 11 to 15 resident CUE-CU1 “Any Elk” licenses, zero “Antlerless Elk,” and would keep the resident Raffle at one license.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16e. Special Custer State Park Antlerless Elk Hunting Season

This proposal would specify the option to provide up to twenty “antlerless elk” licenses. No antlerless licenses are recommended for this season.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16f. Black Hills Archery Elk Hunting Season

This proposal would increase the maximum number of “any elk” licenses from 200 to 300 and “antlerless elk” licenses from 150 to 300. It also cleans-up administrative rule to match unit boundary descriptions for Black Hills Archery Elk with Black Hills Firearm Elk.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16g. Black Hills Archery Elk Hunting License Allocation

This proposal would update the total “Any Elk” licenses from 182 to 192 licenses and would keep 90 “Antlerless Elk” licenses for a total of 282 Black Hills Archery Elk Hunting licenses.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

16h. Black Hills Firearm Elk Hunting Season

This proposal would increase the maximum number of “any elk” licenses from 600 to 800 and “antlerless elk” licenses from 1,200 to 1,500.

MOTIONED BY CULL, SECONDED BY THEEL TO APPROVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING. Motion carried unanimously.

16i. Black Hills Firearm Elk Hunting License Allocation

This proposal would increase the Black Hills Firearm Elk hunting licenses from 535 to 570 “Any Elk” licenses and would keep 730 “Antlerless Elk” licenses for a total of 1,300 total Black Hill Firearm Elk hunting season licenses.



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16j. Prairie Elk Hunting Season

This proposal would increase the maximum number of “any elk” licenses from 150 to 200 and “antlerless elk” licenses from 300 to 400.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY BARTLING TO APPORVE THE PROPOSED CHANGES, BRINGING FINALIZATION TO THE APRIL 2024 MEETING. Motioned carried unanimously.

16k. Prairie Elk Hunting License Allocation

This proposal would increase “Any Elk” Prairie Elk hunting season licenses from 102 to 126 and the “Antlerless Elk” licenses from 175 to 210, increase the total Prairie Elk hunting season licenses from 277 to 336.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN AS THERE WERE NO CHANGES FROM THE JANUARY 2024 MEETING. FINALIZATION WILL BE BROUGHT AT THE APRIL 2024 MEETING.

17. Go Forth, Parks RX, and Library Checkout

[Info Item]

Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks & Recreation Director, and April Laron, Marketing Coordinator, provided an overview of the park pass partnership programs: Park Prescription (Rx), Go Forth, and Library Checkout. Funded by DOH (Park Rx, Go Forth) and DOE (Library Checkout), these initiatives contribute to park accessibility, building healthy habits, and community engagement. In 2023, both the Park Rx and Go Forth programs achieved record-breaking participation levels, with 340 Park Rx passes redeemed, benefiting approximately 1148 individuals, and 708 students redeeming Go Forth vouchers, allowing an estimated 2840 individuals to enjoy the park. Additionally, in 2023 the Library Checkout program launched, allowing 98 libraries to lend out 3-day park passes, which were redeemed an impressive 1691 times.

18. Marketing Update

[Info Item]

April Larson, Marketing Coordinator and Jeff VanMeeteren, Parks & Recreation Director presented an update on the 2024 Marketing Plan for the Parks & Recreation Division. This first year-round marketing campaign focuses on three main priorities: increasing lodging awareness and reservations, increasing shoulder season and mid-week camping reservations, and increasing park day use visitation, focusing on sales of park entrance licenses to new users. The strategies emphasize consistent and recognizable messaging, targeting key promotional channels including targeted emails and social media, as well as cross-promotion. Since January, the open rate of the targeted emails has been 30-35%, while social media posts have had as many as 21,000 views and 1,100 interactions. Spring will continue to focus on additional targeted messaging and maintaining consistent, creative content, while also reaching new audiences.

19. Parks & Recreation Revenue and Camping Reports

[Info Item]

Director of Parks & Recreation Jeff VanMeeteren presented the Commission with the revenue and camping reports for February and YTD. February was a positive month for both revenue and camping units. YTD 2024 park entrance license sales remain strong due to marketing and weather at 24% above 2023. Camping reservations were up 6% in February and 2% YTD.

20. Avian Influenza Update

[Info Item]

Chad Switzer, Wildlife Deputy Director, provided an update on the disease, how it is transmitted, symptoms displayed by birds, and best management practices that hunters can implement. Currently, avian flu is not



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expected to impact wild bird populations to the point of a population altering event and that the 2024 migration has been quiet thus far from disease mortalities. GFP continues to work with other wildlife management agencies and commercial poultry facilities to minimize domestic and wild bird interactions. Switzer asked that the public continue to report all observations of sick or dead birds to the department so they can be investigated and documented.

21. Nest Predator Bounty Program

[Info Item]

Jacquie Ermer, Regional Wildlife Supervisor, gave a brief overview of the 2024 Nest Predator Bounty Program and shared the Tail Tracker Dashboard. The program started March 1 for all resident youth under age of 18 and will begin April 1 for all ages. Eligible species include raccoon, striped skunk, red fox, badger and opossum. Payment is \$10/tail with maximum payout of \$500,000. A free live trap will be given to each participating youth that did not receive a live trap last year. Additionally, participating youth have a chance to be drawn for the Benton Howe Weekly Giveaway Package.

22. Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan

[Info Item]

Alex Solem, Senior Wildlife Biologist, presented the draft Ring-necked Pheasant Action Plan to the commission which will be open for public comment. This action plan serves as a guiding document for pheasant management in South Dakota from 2024 to 2028. Objectives and strategies include measurable goals to improve pheasant habitat on public and private lands, increase hunting access on public and private lands, and will continue to monitor populations through harvest surveys.

23. Deer Action Plan

[Info Item]

Andy Lindbloom, Senior Big Game Biologist, brought the Deer Action plan before the Commission. The South Dakota White-tailed and Mule Deer Action Plan outlines priorities, objectives, and management strategies to focus GFP's efforts over the next 4 years. Development of the plan has been an expansive process, to include numerous internal committee meetings, a public opinion survey, and public stakeholder meetings. The current objectives of the draft action plan focus on managing deer for biologically and socially acceptable levels, distributing hunting opportunity fairly and equitably, working with private landowners to alleviate depredation, and increasing deer habitat and hunter access. The draft of the action plan was presented to the GFP commission and is now available for public comment.

24. Bobcat Management and Action Plans

[Info Item]

Chad Lehman presented a summary of the Bobcat Management Plan, information from both the action plan, and larger Management Plan Document. The presentation focused on the management strategies that can be implemented in each zone: 1) Moderate Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for unlimited bobcat harvest per trapper or hunter in that zone; and 2) Low Harvest- a 52-day season that allows for the harvest of only one bobcat per trapper or hunter in that zone. A threshold of importance was from a harvest data collected on bobcat juvenile-to-adult ratios where below 10% could be an indication of population declines. Strategies can adjust based on that ratio and other research data collected.

25. Lake Oahe Update

[Info Item]

Jake Davis, Fisheries Program Administrator, presented to the Commission an overview of recent fisheries management activity on Lake Oahe. Information was provided on recent public meetings and where recordings of those meetings can be found. Additionally, previous stocking numbers and results of 2023 lake survey efforts were provided. Plans for stocking of approximately 1,700 pre-spawn adult gizzard shad and approximately 3.7 million walleye fingerings in 2024 were also shared.



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26. License Sales Update

[Info Item]

Wildlife Director Kirschenmann provided a brief summary of license sales through the end of February. Overall, licenses sales are good, with fishing licenses lagging slightly. Likely influence is contributed to a shortened ice fishing season resulting from abnormally warm conditions. Warm weather conditions may result in an early open water fishing season and could assist in fishing license sales rebounding. Kirschenmann also discussed how the open, mild winter is a positive environmental factor for many species like pheasants and deer.

27. Adjourn

[Action Item]

A Commissioner Governance Meeting will be held on April 4, 2024, starting at 9 am CST, at the Matthews Training Center in Pierre, South Dakota. The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held on April 4-5, 2024, starting at 1 pm CST also in the Matthew Training Center.

MOTIONED BY BIES, SECONDED BY CULL TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 12:10 PM CST ON MARCH 8, 2024. Motion carried unanimously.

Submitted respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin Robling".

Kevin Robling, Department Secretary