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SECOND ANNUAL SOUTH DAKOTA BIRDING FESTIVAL PLANNED

Anderson: Farm economy puts pheasants in a fix

* Re-printed with permission from DENNIS ANDERSON, Minneapolis Tribune

NEAR PRESHO, S.D. — In the nearly half-century he's lived in South Dakota, John Cooper has seen countless beautiful prairie sunsets. But none perhaps prettier than one on a recent late afternoon that arched wild hues of orange, red, yellow and crimson across a darkening sky.

"I never get tired of that," Cooper said, nodding toward the colorful horizon, a 12 gauge double-gun slung over one shoulder and his Labrador retriever walking ahead.

However barren in appearance, South Dakota prairies pulse with life. Eagles, hawks, prairie dogs, pheasants, ducks, geese and sharp-tailed grouse thrive here. So do coyotes, a pack of which yipped their singsong appreciation for the coming night as Cooper sleeved his scattergun following a long afternoon's pheasant hunt.

The retired director of South Dakota's Game, Fish and Parks Department, serving 12 years under two governors, Cooper also has been a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service enforcement agent in North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska.

In those states, he traveled nearly every highway, byway and country road during a 22-year career as a federal officer.

So when he says change is occurring to the South Dakota landscape at a rate never seen before, with far-reaching implications for wildlife and people, he speaks with a perspective few share.

"What has happened here in the past four years is unprecedented," Cooper said as he and I climbed into my pickup and rumbled over a dirt two-track. "Anyone who thinks South Dakota can continue to produce the pheasants, ducks and other wildlife it has in the past just doesn't know what's

going on here. You're quite possibly witnessing the end of an era. Some of the nation's last, best prairies and potholes are going away."

Responsible for the changes is what farmer, rancher and hunting outfitter Steve Halverson of Kennebec, S.D., calls a "perfect storm" of high commodity prices, rising land values, breakthroughs in crop engineering, a seemingly feverish desire by some eastern South Dakota farmers to drain their lands of water, and relatively paltry federal farm bill conservation incentives.

"I honestly think that unless something unexpected happens, we may never see the high pheasant populations again that we've seen in recent years," Halverson said.

Duck production in the state is also at risk. The Natural Resources Conservation Service in Brookings, S.D., has a backlog of more than 4,500 requests by farmers and ranchers to issue wetland determinations on their lands -- up nearly tenfold in only four years.

Most appeals are from landowners wanting to increase their tillable acres by draining water from their property. "The

requests have been doubling each year," said Janet Oertley, NRCS state conservationist in Huron, S.D.

In 2011, with prices hovering around \$6 per bushel, South Dakota farmers planted about 5.2 million acres of corn, a 650,000-acre increase from 2010.

"What's driving it is greed," said farmer and rancher Jim Faulstich of Highmore, S.D., who believes a balanced landscape is critical to South Dakota's economic well-being. "I've lost some friends over comments like that. But there's no other way to describe it."



2012 SDWF YOUTH CONSERVATION CAMP

The 49th annual SDWF Youth Conservation Camp is now in the planning stage. The 2012 camp will run from June 3rd through June 9th. Young people from across South Dakota will be arriving at Camp Bob Marshall in the beautiful Black Hills. They will be learning about conservation and striking up new friendships. The 2011 Conservation Camp was well attended and the programs were well received by the campers. It is our hope to repeat or surpass the 2011 event this year. With the help of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks personal, a unique opportunity is being planned for the young people of South Dakota.

If any of our readers know of young people who like the out of doors, hunting and fishing, or are interested in learning the message of conservation professionals the SDWF

Youth Conservation Camp is a unique opportunity. Any student, girls or boys, in 9th, 10th or 11th grade is eligible to attend camp. Interested young people can apply directly to a local sportsman's club in their area or to their local Soil Conservation District office.

If you would like to view photos from the 2011 camp, join us on our facebook page: SDWF Youth Conservation Camp. For more information about how you or someone you know can attend the SDWF Youth Conservation Camp, contact Camp Director, Mike McKernan, PO Box 246, Murdo, SD 57559, phone 605-669-2829, e-mail hdmac@goldenwest.net or Chris Hesla, Executive Director, PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501, phone 605-224-7524.

BARCODED FLATS

A TURNING POINT FOR WILD BISON

By Dave Dittloff, Regional Rep. from NWF

The history of wild bison over the last 150 years is filled with sad stories of population extirpation, but recent events may herald the start of a new day for the species that once was the monarch of the prairie. Once roaming the Great Plains in the tens of millions, market hunting, agricultural development, and railroad construction led wild bison to near extinction in the 1880s. Some of the last free-ranging, genetically pure bison held out in the Pelican Valley of Yellowstone National Park in a herd numbering less than 30. Nationwide, fewer than 2,000 bison survived the slaughter.

Yellowstone National Park's bison were managed in many different ways over the years. At times, they were penned like livestock. But as time went along, park officials started managing them more like wildlife. The bison were allowed to roam the park freely like elk and deer. But one big difference existed between the bison and the park's other ungulate species. A portion of the Yellowstone bison had contracted brucellosis from cattle kept in the park to feed employees. Brucellosis is a bacterial disease that causes cattle to abort calves. It is transmitted by contact with fluids associated with the birthing process. The U.S. cattle industry has spent millions of dollars to eliminate the disease in its cattle herds. But the test-and-slaughter methods they used to eliminate the disease aren't translatable to wildlife species like bison. By the late 1900s cattle herds in the Yellowstone region were free of brucellosis, but a portion of the bison herd was not.



This led to a schizophrenic bison management strategy. Inside the park the bison were allowed to roam freely like wildlife, but if they left the park in search of forage during harsh winters, the bison were hazed back into the park or possibly even shot or rounded up and sent to slaughter by government officials despite the fact that there has never been a confirmed case of bison spreading brucellosis to domestic livestock.

More than fourteen years ago, after a winter in which more than 1,000 bison were shot or shipped to slaughter outside Yellowstone National Park, I manned an information table at Artist Point inside the park talking to tourists about Yellowstone bison management and ways to change it to more traditional methods of wildlife management. We talked about a number of different policies including letting bison leave the park and use public lands adjacent to the park in the winters and using fair chase public

hunting to manage bison for the carrying capacity of the area. The North American model of wildlife management had worked great to bring back populations of elk, deer, and other ungulates. Bison's large size and the brucellosis issue make bison management a little more complicated than elk or deer management, but those aren't such big issues that traditional wildlife management methods should be thrown out the door.

A topic that kept coming up over and over during my conversations with people at the information table in the park involved quarantining the bison and relocating the disease-free ones to other appropriate public lands and tribal lands across the Great Plains. The idea made sense to a lot of people. After all, for eons bison were an integral part of the prairie's natural functioning, and they are an important symbol of our country's history. A few parks like Wind Cave National Park and Badlands National Park have bison, but the animals there contain some cattle genes from past crossbreeding with domestic livestock. The Yellowstone bison are the only genetically pure bison left in the country. To make sure that these genetics are protected, it is important to relocate Yellowstone bison to other landscapes.

To that end, after more than a century's absence, wild Yellowstone bison were relocated to tribal lands on March 19th reuniting Native Americans with the iconic species that was a fundamental part of their culture and the prairie ecosystem. Sixty-three bison from Yellowstone National Park were trucked 500 miles to Fort Peck in Montana's far northeastern corner. Tribal members from Fort Peck and Fort Belknap hosted Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer and representatives of the National Wildlife Federation at a ceremony a few days later. The relocation of the Yellowstone bison followed two decades of work by the tribes, state and federal officials and conservation groups on what is seen as a major step toward restoring wild bison to the Great Plains and supporting important elements of Native American culture. It is the first-ever relocation of Yellowstone bison, the only wild, free-roaming herd, to tribal lands.

"Ever since the beginning of man, the buffalo basically took care of us," said Robbie Magnan, director of Fort Peck's Fish & Game Department. "They provided everything we needed. We used their meat to eat, their hides for shelters and our clothing, their bones for tools and weapons."

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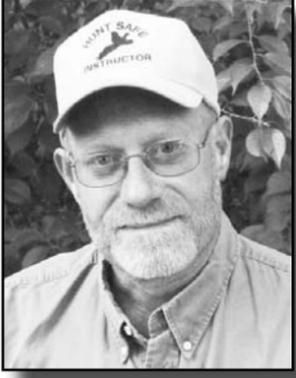
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President's Column *by Bill Antonides*



President,
Bill Antonides

The 2012 legislative session is over, but the work is not. Some anti-sportsman bills were narrowly killed, and they will be back. Even some that lost by a landslide will resurface another year. Occasionally a bill has merit, but is poorly written and as such would cause more problems than it solved; we sometimes find ourselves opposing bills not on the intended meaning, but on writing style or choice of wording. We already spend enough time and resources supporting bills that have the sole function of cleaning up unclear language that has made it into law. Sometimes a good bill comes along, and we throw the weight of the Federation behind it.

Our success rate at either stopping bad legislation or passing good laws runs over 95%, give or take a percent or two. Lest I fail to give credit where credit is due, the Federation doesn't do this alone. Although we are the leading sportsman's organization in the state, a variety of organizations, groups, state agencies, individuals and legislators have many of the same interests and concerns we do. The SDWF works to form alliances, temporary as they may be, to work on issues of mutual interest. The Federation itself is diverse, made up of affiliate sportsman's groups and individual members from across the state, and our nonresident base of supporters is growing.

While the legislature is only in session a couple months of the year, the Game, Fish and Parks Commission meets to consider regulation changes year-round. Pure wildlife management is based on science, but rule making takes on the human dimension. It makes no difference to the survival of a species how an individual animal dies, but it does to us. The equitable distribution of our renewable natural resources is an essential element of American wildlife management. History has taught us if we sit quietly, others are only too willing to take our share. The Federation is not silent. We work closely with GF&P personnel on management issues, and with the Commissioners on rule making.

We are sportsmen, but true to the definition of the word, we are conservationists and environmentalists. Yes, we lobby on relatively small issues such as the dates for deer seasons or the daily limit on walleyes, because these subjects are important to our daily lives and recreation. However, our job is also to continue to educate ourselves and our members on other issues.

Not every question has an easy answer. Is wind power truly the green technology of the future? Perhaps, but the gigantic towers and blinking lights are a blight on the landscape for some, the blades and wires kill birds by the thousands, and the potential effects of electromagnetic radiation from turbines and transmission lines have not been clearly established. On the other hand, wind power is limitless, albeit erratic. Many would argue any environmental damage from wind power is dwarfed by mining and drilling for alternate forms of energy, and for us to wait for the technology to be improved and laws put in place to protect fragile environments is unconscionable.

Another tough question is how our actions as sportsmen affect the environment. Non-toxic shot is now the law of the land when hunting waterfowl. The benefits of using non-toxic shot over wetlands are well established, but the question remains: is that enough? Do we need to switch to copper bullets and non-toxic shot for all hunting, and use lead substitutes for fishing equipment? The science is leaning in that direction, but not every lead bullet or sinker is a threat to our environment. At what point should government regulations override personal choice?

These tough questions are only a few of the dozens we face, and each deserves thorough research and thoughtful discussion before we answer. As sportsmen, we recognize our actions today can have impacts that reverberate far into the future. It is our choice whether the impact is good or bad, and we may only have one chance to get it right. We are not interested in quick fixes that our children and grandchildren will pay for decades later. Every action has a price, and some of those prices are not evident until it is too late. However, inaction carries its own cost. How to weigh the known against the unknown is always difficult.

Thanks to our members—sportsmen and women from all walks of life—we manage to get the job done. It is not a painless process, nor an easy one, but you can't argue with results. As long as we remain firm in our convictions, our children and grandchildren will have the opportunity to enjoy the natural resources we cherish. I can't say this often enough: For today's sportsmen and women, for our children, and for future generations, thanks for all you do.

**"Man has lost the capacity to foresee and to forestall.
He will end by destroying the earth."**

Albert Schweitzer 1875-1965

Executive Director's Update *by Chris Hesla*



I hope you all have a safe
hunting season this Fall!

SDWF and SDWF Camo-Coalition is involved with many things that deal with game laws and legislation by hiring two lobbyists who maintain a daily presence in the State Legislature. We also attend and monitor monthly GF&P Commission meetings dealing with game limits, season lengths, bag limits, topics like toxic shot and non-toxic shot use, road hunting, and habitat—just to name a few.

For the past several years the State's deer and elk herds in the Black Hills and Custer State Park (CSP) have been dwindling to what I consider an alarming small herd number. Several years ago, some landowners wanted the elk herd decreased. Their tolerance of elk competing with their cattle was waning, so the Commission and GF&P decided to harvest many cow elk to decrease the herd size. Since then, in my opinion, the herd has been reduced too far. We now have some landowners and many hunters demanding the rebuilding of the herd to a healthy number. A public meeting held in Rapid City on 3/29 and the public was invited to share their thoughts and concerns about elk numbers. SDWF wrote a position paper and will testify with it at the April 4th GF&P Commission meeting being held in Brookings, SD.

Here is SDWF's position on Elk in the Black Hills:

Elk numbers have dropped dramatically in the Black Hills in the past few years. Significant and sometimes painful steps need to be taken to return this magnificent natural resource to optimal numbers. The SDWF hopes the GF&P will seriously consider these recommendations:

* Rifle season: Drastically reduce the number of cow tags in all

units, perhaps to zero. Private lands units should have no more than two cow tags. Any-elk tags should be reduced by 50% from 2011 numbers.

* Archery season should be treated the same: No cow tags, and a 50% reduction in any-elk tags.

Hunters move elk into private lands where they are not wanted, making the demand by landowners to kill more elk even higher. Rifle and archery seasons should be limited to a three week period for each. Eliminate any late seasons entirely. For example, archery could be the first three weeks of September, rifle season the first three weeks of October.

South Dakota got into this serious situation in response to many factors, the most significant of which is landowner tolerance. Elk were killed in unsustainable numbers to stop the complaints, and also to ensure tags for landowners would be available. Although elk are currently at unacceptably low numbers, landowners with at least 240 acres in a hunting unit and who claim 500 elk-use days are eligible to purchase a tag every year.

There is a misperception by the general public on the meaning of elk-use days. As little as two elk passing through an area on a daily basis can more than satisfy the 500 elk use days requirement. (A pile of droppings from one elk constitutes an elk use day. Presuming an elk defecates once each day, two elk times 365 days equals 730 elk-use days, more than enough to satisfy the 500 elk use days requirement.) The landowner preference system is a severe impediment to elk management, and has almost destroyed public hunting opportunity.

SD corn acres could hit 81-year high

Planting conditions are favorable as South Dakota farmers plan to plant 5.5 million acres of corn this spring, 300,000 acres more than 2011, according to a National Agricultural Statistics Service survey.

Mark Gross, president of the South Dakota Corn Growers Association, said supply, demand and market prices are driving the high numbers.

"Every four days, the world is growing by 800,000 people — nearly the population of South Dakota," Gross said in a news release.

"We'll continue to need more corn for food, feed and fuel in the years ahead. American farmers can meet that challenge, and South Dakotans will play a big role in doing that."

The acres planted will be the highest total in 81 years and will tie the amount planted in 1931.

A large harvest would help replenish a shrinking corn supply both nationally and in South Dakota.

The NASS reported that South Dakota corn stocks totaled 320.7 million bushels on March 1, a 3 percent decline from last year.

Planting intentions are based on a March 1 survey.

Soybean acres are expected to jump to 4.3 million acres, up 200,000 from 2011.

Spring wheat acres are pegged at 1.1 million, down 12 percent from last year, and durum wheat acres are unchanged at 8,000. Winter wheat acres seeded last fall totaled 1.35 million acres, down 18 percent over the year.

Acres of sunflowers, sorghum, oats, barley, flax and dry beans all are

expected to be up in South Dakota this year.

Nationally, farmers are expected to plant 95.9 million acres of corn, up 4 percent from 2011 and 9 percent from 2010.

Other projections are for hay acres to drop 14 percent and spring wheat acres to fall 12 percent. Farmers seeded 18 percent fewer winter wheat acres last fall.



"We'll continue to need more corn for food, feed and fuel in the years ahead. American farmers can meet that challenge, and South Dakotans will play a big role in doing that."

GFP COMMISSION SETS PHEASANT, OTHER HUNTING SEASONS

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission has established 2012 hunting season dates, including those for pheasants.

Pheasant Season will open Oct. 20 and run through Jan. 6. Shooting hours will be noon through sunset the first week of the season, and beginning Oct. 27 will be 10 a.m. to sunset. The bag limit will be three roosters daily, with a maximum possession limit of 15.

The Youth Pheasant season will run from Oct. 6-10. The Resident-Only Pheasant season will run from Oct. 13-15.

Other hunting season dates for 2012: Grouse - Sept. 15 through Jan. 6, Doves - Sept. 1 through Nov. 9, Partridge - Sept. 15 through Jan. 6, Quail - Oct. 20 through Jan. 6, Sandhill Crane - Sept. 22 through Nov. 18, Snipe - Sept. 1 through Oct. 31, Crow - Sept. 1 through Oct. 31; and Mar. 1 through Apr. 30, 2013, Squirrel - Sept. 1 through Feb. 28, Cottontail Rabbit - Sept. 1 through Feb. 28, Fall Turkey - Oct. 1 through Jan. 31, Archery Antelope - Aug. 18 through Sept. 28 and Oct. 15-31, Firearms Antelope - Sept. 29 through Oct. 14, Archery Deer - Sept. 22 through Jan. 15, Muzzleloader Deer - Dec. 1 through Jan. 15, Youth Deer - Sept. 8 through Jan. 15, Black Hills Deer - Nov. 1-30, West River Deer - Nov. 10-25, East River Deer - Nov. 17 through Dec. 2.

Season dates and rules will be published in the 2012 Hunting and Trapping Handbook that will be available in early September.

Nebraska sending hunting/fishing rights issue to ballot

LINCOLN, Neb. — A proposal that would place hunting, fishing and wildlife harvesting rights in the Nebraska constitution is heading to the November ballot.

Lawmakers voted 41-3 on Tuesday to approve the constitutional amendment for voter consideration, despite objections that it isn't needed.



Omaha Sen. Pete Pirsch says he sponsored the measure to shield Nebraska from animal advocacy groups that oppose hunting.

Omaha Sen. Brenda Council says the amendment is unnecessary and would clutter the state constitution with an issue pushed by hunting advocates.

Continued from page 2

The National Wildlife Federation signed an agreement in 1997 with the InterTribal Buffalo Council to cooperate on conservation issues and restore Yellowstone bison to tribal lands. "The thunder of bison on the move is a huge victory. After more than two decades of work, the National Wildlife Federation and our tribal partners are celebrating the return of an iconic wildlife species to the Great Plains," said Larry Schweiger, NWF president and CEO. "The return of these wild bison to tribal lands fills a big gap in the plains ecosystem and a longtime absence in Native American culture."

The animals shipped to Fort Peck were among those placed in a quarantine facility after they wandered out of the park. They have been certified free of brucellosis, a disease that can cause pregnant bison to abort. The animals relocated to Fort Peck and Fort Belknap were held in a quarantine facility near the park where they were tested during the last five years for brucellosis. Half the herd will be moved to Fort Belknap, about 130 miles west of Fort Peck, when fencing and other construction are completed.

The management of Yellowstone bison is a complicated issue politically and biologically. It took fifteen years of fighting for common sense policies after that tough winter in 1996/1997 to get sixty-three bison transferred to tribal lands. But this is a big step forward. Bison will never roam the plains in the millions as they once did. But with thoughtful dialogues between wildlife managers, bison advocates, landowners, tribal officials, and public land managers I hope wild bison can be relocated to other appropriate lands on the Great Plains. It is a goal of the National Wildlife Federation to establish wild bison herds not just on tribal areas, but also on public lands where they could be managed according to the North American model of wildlife management. If this happens, fair chase hunting opportunities could become part of the management equation providing sportsmen new remarkable possibilities. Bison are an incredible piece of our natural heritage. They deserve to be returned to the landscape. To those bison relocated to the Fort Peck Reservation, I say welcome home.

"Take a course in good water and air; and in the eternal youth of Nature you may renew your own. Go quietly, alone; no harm will befall you."

John Muir- 1838-1914-Naturalist and Founder of the Sierra Club

Major Yellowstone elk herd keeps declining

BILLINGS, Mont. — A major elk herd that migrates between Yellowstone National Park and Montana suffered another steep decline last year because of a hard winter, predator attacks and hunting, state and federal scientists said Tuesday.

New data from wildlife agencies show the Northern Yellowstone elk herd is down to about 4,174 animals, a 10 percent drop from the prior year's count. That follows a 24 percent drop in 2011.

Yellowstone biologist Doug Smith said the herd remains healthy despite its smaller size.

The number is more in line with historic levels since wolves were reintroduced and grizzly bears and mountain lions returned naturally, he said.

The herd peaked at about 20,000 animals in 1992, a few years before wolves were brought back from Canada after being absent from the region for decades. Since then, the herd has declined about 80 percent.

Some outfitters and others who live outside the park say officials have not done enough to curb predator attacks, particularly by wolves. The Yellowstone herd supported a thriving hunting industry, with several thousand elk killed in some years, before the numbers started to drop.

The Park Service has no set population target for the herd, but the latest counts have fallen below the target range of Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The state wants between 3,000 and 5,000 elk in portions of Montana just north of the park. The latest count found 2,734 elk in that area.

Smith said it was inaccurate to heap too much blame for the elk herd's decline on wolves.

Wolf numbers, too, have been dropping in recent years, from 94 in 2007 to 38 last year in the area populated by the Northern Yellowstone herd.

"That's some bad news, a 25 percent decline last year and 10 percent this year. But the elk are looking really good," Smith said. "This was one of the hardest winters we've had in decades ... We've got a leaner, meaner elk herd."



Conservationists credit wolves with helping restore balance to the ecosystem, in part by reducing the size of a herd that some had said was far too large at its peak.

To keep the herd from declining too far, Montana wildlife commissioners in February approved a new permit system for Northern Yellowstone elk. Although there are unlimited numbers of the \$9 permits, the requirement is expected to reduce the number of hunters who come to the area, said Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks spokesman Ron Aasheim.

Agency biologist Karen Loveless said despite the decline seen in this year's count there are signs the Northern Yellowstone herd could rebound. Loveless said the number of calves per cow elk appears to be on the increase, an indication that more of the animals survived than in past winters.

"I feel some encouragement in the long-term," Loveless said. "We sure would like to see it at least level off and I would like to see it coming back up. There is a possibility that could happen."

"I feel some encouragement in the long-term," Loveless said.

SD Wildlife Federation Donors

At the 2003 Winter Board Meeting, the SDWF Board created the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. The Council was created to allow recognition of the people who support SDWF above and beyond their membership and raffle donations.

Thank you to the following donors for their contributions to the SDWF. Please consider becoming a member of the Wildlife Legacy Council. SDWF is a 501(c3) non-profit, all donations are tax deductible. These tax-deductible contributions will speak volumes for the future of the SDWF's Wildlife Legacy Council! Please consider your donation today. Donations can be sent to SDWF, PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501.

The Legacy Council consists of five different donation levels. These donation levels were revised October 2011 to: Level V Eagle \$1,000 & above; Level IV Buffalo \$501 - \$999; Level III Elk \$301 - \$500; Level II Deer \$201 - \$300; and Level I Pheasant \$100 - \$200.

March 2012

LEVEL V EAGLE BEADLE CO. SPORTSMEN - SD BLACK HILLS SPORTSMEN - SD DAKOTA SPORTSMEN, INC. - SD HIGH PLAINS WILDLIFE FEDERATION - SD	LEVEL II DEER SD WALLEYE UNLIMITED - SD 29-90 SPORTSMAN'S CLUB - SD MOUNTAIN ELK FOUND. - SD DIETER, CHARLES - SD PEDERSON, TIM - SD PHEASANTS FOREVER YANKTON CHAPTER - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT BAGAU, TERRY - MN BROWN, ALLEN B. - SD CHALUS, DENNIS - CO CRISSMAN, EARLE - SD DAHLBERG, JIM - SD DENISON, LARRY - VA ELBE, ROBERT - WI EVANS, RALPH - FL GOEDE, DAN - SD GRASS LAKES CONSERVATION CLUB - SD HOFTIEZER, GREG - SD	JACKSON, WARREN - SD JUNGERS, ROMAN - WI KRETCHMAN, JIM - SD MADLAND, JON - SD NORDBY, DAVID O. - CA SATHER, DUANE - SD TOBIN, THOMAS - SD WHETSTONE SPORTSMAN CONSERVATION CLUB - SD WICKSTROM, GERALD - SD
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February 2012

LEVEL III ELK STAMMER, MARLIN - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT ANDRESEN, RICH - SD BORMANN, DANIEL - WI	DIVICH, DUANE - TX NEISSL, E.J. - AR RUMPCA, HAL - SD	SIMPSON, JOHN - SD WIDMAN, MARK - SD
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January 2012

LEVEL V EAGLE OLSON, JEFF - SD	LEVEL II DEER BRICK, RICHARD - CA MARTIN, JIM - SD	SCHROEDER, JR., KENNETH - SD	LEWIS, HOWARD - CA MCCARLSON, PAUL - SD PESEK, RON - SD WIDMAN, RICH - SD
LEVEL III ELK MCCARTHY, STEVE - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT MCCLELLAN, JR., DR. HERBERT - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT GOODMAN, RICHARD - OH KASISCHKE, CARL - MI	

December 2011

LEVEL II DEER PARCEL, KERRY - SD	COOPER, JOHN - SD DEBOER, JAY - SD	JOHNSON, DARRELL - SD KING, T. CLEVE - MI MEDEIROS, PAUL - CA MEDILL, COREY - WY MILLER, O. LARRY - SD OVERHEAD DOOR CO. - SD	PAULETTO, JOE - WA RILEY, MIKE - MO SD BOWHUNTERS INC. - SD WISWALL, BRIAN T. - SD
LEVEL I PHEASANT ADAMS, MEL - TN BLACKBURN, JOHN - SD BOWAR, PAT - SD	FLINT, FORREST - MN FUERST, KEVIN - SD GERRISH, ED - SD HANSEN, KYLE - MN		

November 2011

LEVEL II DEER RANDALL, KEVIN - SD SCHEURENBRAND, BRUCE - CA	FRYBARGER, JIM - NM GREGORY, J.T. - GA HAY, MARY & JERRY - WI HILL, DAVID - NC JOHNSON, LYNN E. - SD KALLEMEYN, LARRY - SD	MADSEN, CARL - SD MCMENAMIN, ALBERT - CA OLSON, MURDEAN - SD PAQUIN, STACY - MN PENICK, EDWARD - AR PLUMB, GLENN - SD	POPELKA, C.R. - SD RAINEY, TIMOTHY - MN STANFORTH, WINFIELD - CO SWANSON, EARL - MN WISWALL, F. HERBERT - SD
LEVEL I PHEASANT BROWN, MARK - VA FISCHER, JIM - IA			

October 2011

LEVEL V EAGLE CHAPMAN, JOHN W. - PA	LUTZ, BOB - MT McMASTERS, LEIGH - SD MUDD, WILLIAM - KY PAUL, K-LYNN - AZ SATTTLER, ARNOLD - SD SEELEY, GARY - KS SPEER, HOY - AR SWORDS, L.F. - MS WARE, WILLIAM - MS	BURNS, KENDALL - CA BURTON, DON - CO CARDINAL, DANIEL - WI CASLER, DAVID - MO CHRISTOPHERSON, M.E. - SC CUSTER, GEORGE - TX DOMINIANI, DAVE - NE GARVEY, GARY - OH GRIFFIN, JOHN - OK HEIDELBAUER, JEFF - SD HELLEBUSCH, JIM - MO HOCH, JAMES - CA KETTER, JEFFREY - WI	KRODINGER, LAWRENCE - MO LARSON, GREG - SD METRY, MARK - WI MOHS, GERALD - ND OCHOCKI, ROBERT - CA PAXTON, GARY - OK PETERS, DUANE - SD PONTO, NORBERT - SD SIMON, DARREL - SD WAHL, STAN - SD WILLMOTT, HARRY - MN
LEVEL IV BUFFALO LEMONDS, JIM - SD WORDEN, JAMES - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT ALLEN, H. DUANE - TN BUCKNER, EVERETT - AR BUCKNER II, WILLIAM - AR		
LEVEL III ELK SCHERSCHLIGT, JEFFRY - SD TOSCANI, VIC - SD			
LEVEL II DEER BRAKEBUSH, CARL - WI CROUCH, GARY - TX DRESSING, BRIAN - SD HEEDUM, ROGER - NE			

September 2011

LEVEL IV BUFFALO SCALET, CHUCK & GINGER - SD	LEVEL II DEER KIEFT, LARRY - MI	LEVEL I PHEASANT CONROY, JOE - MN	
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August 2011

LEVEL III ELK ALLSHTRON, KEN - SD	LEVEL II DEER FELL, TOM - AL GILBERT, JIM - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT GARNES, CHESTER - MN SHOEMAKER, TIM - OH	
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July 2011

LEVEL II DEER BEALKA, BOB - WI RITCHEY, CHARLES - MI WIDMAN, RICH - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT GREENWOOD, KEN - OK HANSON, HOWARD - MN NELSON, LAWRENCE - SD	SAMPSON, TERRY - SD SNYDER, ADAM - IN WELCH, HARVEY - IL	WHEELER, STEPHEN J. - SD
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June 2011

LEVEL III ELK JOHNSON, VIRGIL - SD PHEASANTS FOREVER, INC. YANKTON AREA CHPT, - SD	LEVEL II DEER EDER, PHIL - MN PORISCH, ROBERT - IA RANEY, THOMAS - KS	ROBERTS, TOM - SD WILMS, DALE - CA WINTER BROS. UNDER- GROUND, INC. - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT DAVIDSON, JOHN - SD HATCH, DUANE - SD SAMPSON, TERRY - SD
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May 2011

LEVEL V EAGLE ROBERTS, STEVEN - MN	LEVEL II DEER FOXWORTHY, ROBERT - KY LINDNER, RONALD - SD LULEWICZ, JERRY - SD MADSEN, ROYCE - SD O'REILLY, LARRY - MO	CRISSMAN, EARLE - SD HANSEN, VIRGIL - SD HIX, DOUGLAS - ID JAFFREY, DR. BRETT - TN JONES CO. SPORTSMAN'S CLUB - SD KASISCHKE, CARL - MI KIESECOMS, BOB - IL KLODOWSKI, MARK - IN KLUNDT, SCOTT - SD	LOWE, STEVEN - MI MILLER, RICHARD - SD POLENZ, ALLAN - OR POPOWSKI, JOHN - SD STENSLAND, JOHN - IA TRAVERS, MD, HENRY - SD VAA, SPENCER - SD
LEVEL IV BUFFALO OLSON, JEFF G. - SD SPORTSMAN'S CLUB OF BROWN CO. - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT ANDERSON, EDWIN - TN BELL, BOB - MN CRAIN, NEIL - LA		
LEVEL III ELK ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION BIG SIOUX CHAPTER - SD			

April 2011

LEVEL V EAGLE DAKOTA SPORTSMAN, INC. - SD NAT'L WILD TURKEY FEDERATION - SD	LEVEL IV BUFFALO THE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB OF BROWN CO - SD LEVEL III ELK KOCVARA, FRANK - NV	LEVEL II DEER CONNELL, CRAIG - SD HALL, CARL - KY MAYES, TERRY & LA REE - SD SCHUPP, TERRY - AZ WORSHAM, JERRY - WA	LEVEL I PHEASANT ELSHOLTZ, ROBERT - MN MELBY, DAVID - MN TESCH, CURT - SD
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Iowa Sierra Club files suit in flap over lead shot

The Iowa chapter of the Sierra Club has filed a lawsuit challenging the existence and actions of a legislative committee in the dispute over the use of lead shot for dove hunting in the state.

The club said in a news release Wednesday that the Iowa law creating the Legislature's Administrative Rules Review Committee is unconstitutional. The club says the committee overstepped the separation of powers in the state constitution when the committee delayed implementation of the ban on lead shot. The ban was adopted last year by the Natural Resources Commission, which is under the executive branch.

The commission banned lead shot, but the committee delayed that ruling until legislators could address it this session.

A spokesman for the attorney general's office didn't immediately return a call seeking comment.

"I have hunting fever and three sons. As little tots, they spent their time playing with my decoys and scouring vacant lots with wooden guns. I hope to leave them good health, an education, and possibly even a competence. But what are they going to do with these things if there be no more deer in the hills, and no more quail in the coverts? No more snipe whistling in the meadow, no more piping of widgeons and chattering of teal as darkness covers the marshes; no more whistling of swift wings when the morning star pales in the east? And when the dawn-wind stirs through the ancient cottonwoods, and the gray light steals down from the hills over the old river sliding softly past its wide brown sand bars - what if there be no more goose music?"

From A Sand County Almanac, Goose Music by Aldo Leopold



888-OVERBAG

Black Hills lions going strong

SDSU Collegian

The South Dakota mountain lion hunting season is in its seventh year despite controversy. More than 73 lions were harvested this winter during the season, which ran from Jan. 1 through March 1. The season is in place primarily to manage the lion population and is based on a quota system. Hunting lions on public land is only allowed in the Black Hills where their numbers are greatest. Modern lion hunting began in the Black Hills during the fall of 2005. That year, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks determined that lion populations had become stable enough to begin a hunting season.

"We found a harvestable surplus," said John Kanta, the GFP regional wildlife manager for the western third of South Dakota.

The population has remained stable and even grown since 2005, which has prompted GFP to raise season limits.

Lions are managed to maintain what has been deemed a socially acceptable population level, which is somewhere between 150 to 200 individuals. Socially acceptable, according to Kanta, is a number that maintains a healthy population while at the same time limits livestock depredation, impact on other game species and negative human contact.

Not all South Dakotans support a mountain lion hunting season. The Black Hills Mountain Lion Foundation is one such organization. According to the foundation's website it's goal is to preserve mountain lions on the landscape. The foundation's president, Dr. Sharon Seneczko, could not be reached by the time of publication.

Mountain lion population estimates going into the 2012 hunting season stood at around 250 individuals, well beyond the desired population limit. According to Kanta,



the quickest and easiest way to lower the population is through hunting, though not trophy hunting.

"I don't necessarily want to kill big (males)," Kanta said. He explained that removing females from the population is the surest way to keep populations in check. SDSU professor of natural resource management Jonathan Jenks, who studies Black Hills mountain lions for GFP, said that the females are very good at reproduction.

"We had one female who lost her kittens to infanticide during the summer, then went back into estrus and had another litter in December [and] those kittens survived," Jenks said.

According to Jenks, up to 90 percent of male lions born in the Black Hills end up leaving the area.

"We had one radio collared (lion) that went to Oklahoma," he said.

Jenks went on to say that lions with genetic links to the Black Hills have been found as far away as Chicago and Connecticut.

The mountain lion season operates much

like other big game hunting seasons, in that hunters must apply for a tag in order to hunt. Anyone who applies for a tag will receive one but they are bound by special rules.

Hunters must check in every morning before going into the field and they must call and register any kill within 24 hours. GFP can then monitor the number and gender of lions that are harvested. The 2012 season's quota was actually set at 70 total lions or 50 female lions. Three additional lions were killed on March 1 because the hunter who killed the 70th lion did not register his kill before the start of the next day.

"That's not going to make or break the population," Kanta said.

"We found a harvestable surplus,"

SECOND ANNUAL SOUTH DAKOTA BIRDING FESTIVAL PLANNED

The Second Annual South Dakota Birding Festival will be held in the Fort Randall Dam area on May 18-20.

The area offers a unique setting for bird watchers, who will be able to witness a variety of species migrating north. The Fort Randall location in central South Dakota includes the Missouri River, Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge and Karl Mundt National Wildlife Refuge, which are all a major flyways for migrating birds.

Birders will see a wide variety of bird species in a short period of time. During the 2011 festival, birders sighted 136 different species, including green heron, hooded merganser, stilt sandpiper, Eastern screech owl, red-bellied

woodpecker, Bell's vireo, palm warbler and many more.

The festival will offer a full schedule of birding activities, beginning at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 18, at the Rainbow Room in Pickstown. Registration, a social gathering and refreshments are scheduled, with a presentation on bird identification at 7:15 p.m. CDT by Dr. Dave Swanson of the University of South Dakota Department of Biology.

Activities on Saturday, May 19, will begin at 6:30 a.m. at the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge with a bird-banding workshop. Continuing during the day will be birding field trips; a basics of photography workshop by South Dakota nature photographer Roger

Dietrich; an owls of South Dakota program by Nancy Drilling, who is South Dakota projects coordinator, Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory; children's program; a banquet; and an owling field trip at 9:15 p.m.

Sunday will begin with a bird-banding workshop at the Lake Andes National Wildlife Refuge at 6:30 a.m., followed by a birding field trip led by Mike Bryant of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the Karl Mundt National Wildlife Refuge at 7:45 a.m. The Karl Mundt Refuge is not open to the public except at this time, which is a bonus for festival attendees.

For an event schedule and registration form, go to www.sdgreatlakes.org/greatoutdoors/birdinginfo or call 605.384.3741.



Sean Kittrell
Outreach Coordinator
South Dakota Wild Grassland
Coalition

***“Wilderness
is not a luxury
but a necessity
of the human
spirit”,
E. Abbey***

**Wild, primitive, and starkly beautiful; visit the grasslands where
our revolutionary heritage was forged!**

