



Big Game Action Plan

Year End Review - 2014

Timeline of events

September 26, 2013

Independent Review of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Division of Wildlife, Big Game Management Program Final Report

October 2013 Commission Meeting

Final Report presented to GFP Commission

November 2013 Commission Meeting

Department presented 43 point action plan

Final Report

Primary Areas of Focus

Communication (Internal & External)

Commission Recommendation Development (CRD) Process

Management Plans

Population Monitoring

Communication



Internal



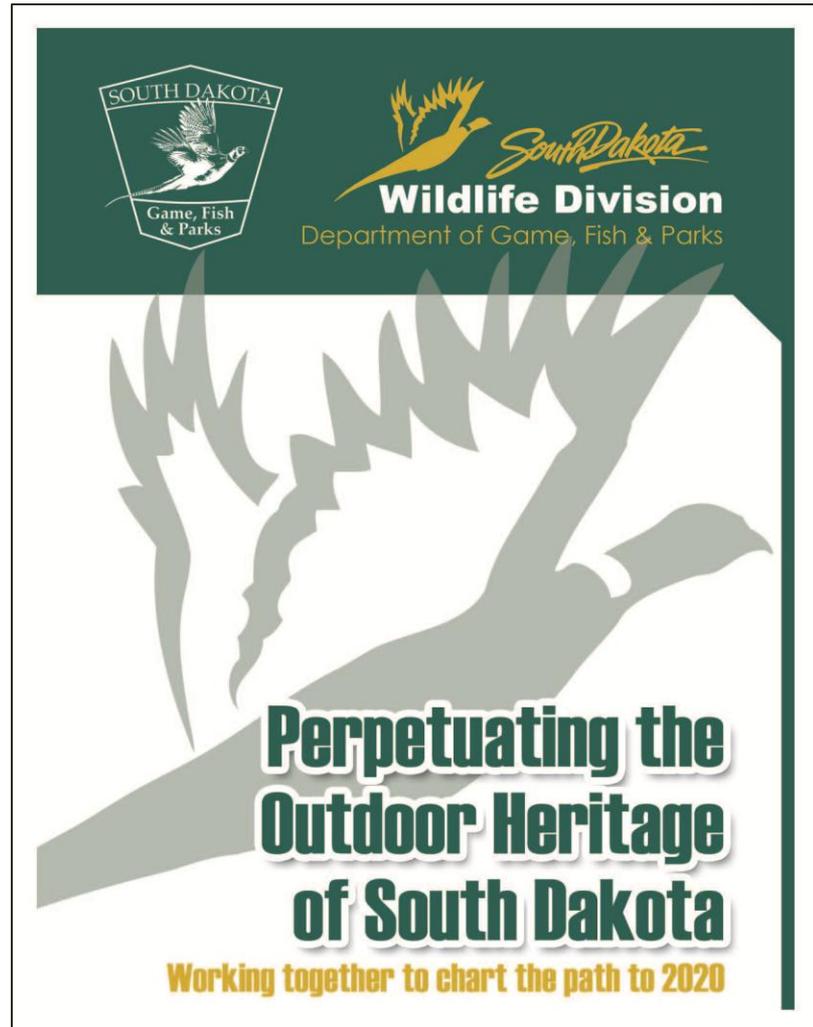
External

Communication - Staff

Division of Wildlife Conference –
Yankton

Guiding Document

- ✓ Having a proper logic for decision-making that begins at the grass roots level of our agency
- ✓ Seeking an appropriate level of staff involvement on important decisions
- ✓ Providing staff with proper feedback and explanations on important decisions



Communication - Staff

Participatory Management & 2-way communication

- ✓ Discussions at regional meetings in fall/winter for next year season's
- ✓ Include Regional Supervisors when discussing high profile or controversial topics
- ✓ Section Resource Discussions (Admin, Terr, Aqu, LE)

Identified roles and responsibilities for big game and regional staff

Informal meetings with staff

- ✓ Senior managers to meet with 3-5 staff per year
- ✓ Senior manager(s) from Pierre to attend regional meetings

Enhanced communication

- ✓ Commission follow-up, CRD follow-up

Communication – Staff

PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

Career Development Program

- ✓ Stand-alone, self-directed program
- ✓ 1-year course of study consisting of 10 training topics
- ✓ Designed as a pre-requisite for the Leadership Development Program
- ✓ Example courses (team building, effective presentations)

Leadership Development Program

- ✓ In the finalization stage
- ✓ Five person committee formed to organize and schedule course content
- ✓ Core components would consist of 4, 2-day workshops over 1 year
- ✓ Example courses (conflict management, adaptive leadership, public involvement, work effectively in teams)

Communication - Public

Use of emails and social media

- ✓ Utilize mass emails where appropriate, and analyzed for future effectiveness
- ✓ Twitter account launched in March
- ✓ Use of YouTube to showcase messages
- ✓ Blog formed to showcase work of staff

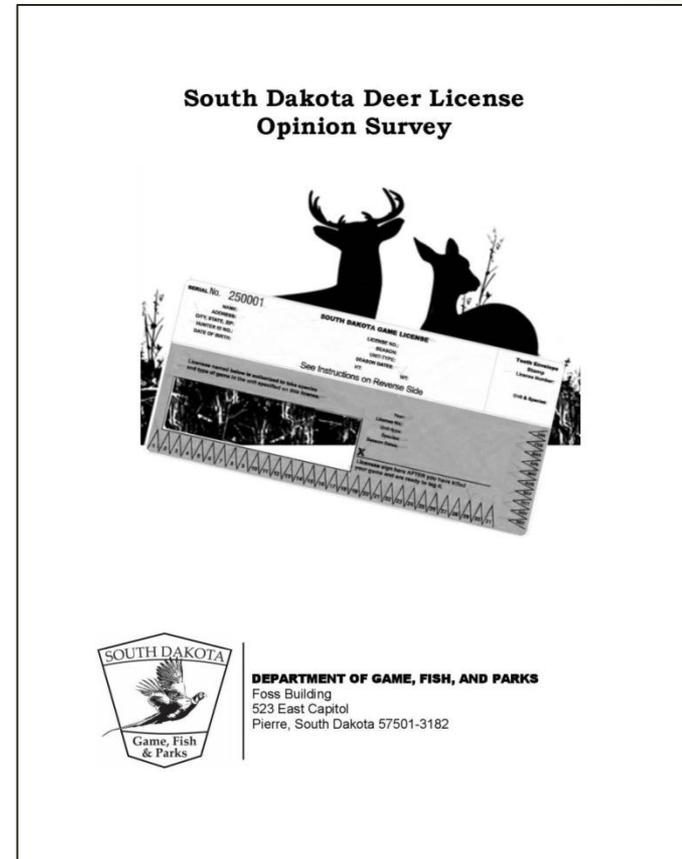
Website

- ✓ Newly enhanced website launched in July
- ✓ Allow users to access news and social networking platforms easier



Human Dimensions

- ✓ Collect data relevant to on-going management or planning process
- ✓ Assist with stakeholder group meetings
- ✓ Plan and evaluate public input strategies and explore alternative tools



Commission Recommendation Development (CRD)



Commission Recommendation Development (CRD)

Provide guidance to staff early in annual process

- ✓ DOW Director discuss items and direction during the February CRD and fish meetings
- ✓ Significant or big items are to be shared with Regional Supervisors and discussed 2-3 months in advance of CRD meeting

Feedback to changes

- ✓ Unit – wildlife manager
- ✓ Region – Regional Supervisor
- ✓ Multi-regional or statewide – Assistant Director/Section Chief
- ✓ CRD Meeting Note
- ✓ Final Department Recommendations
- ✓ Commission Meeting – Summary note sent at conclusion of Commission meeting

Commission Recommendation Development (CRD)

Management plans guide the process and recommendations

- ✓ Plans dictate adjustments to reach or move towards goals/objectives
- ✓ Plans may include license and seasons structure
- ✓ Developed with public input and adopted by Commission
- ✓ Continue to evaluate minimum thresholds and include where applicable

SAGE-GROUSE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH DAKOTA 2014-2018



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA

WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2014-02

Commission Recommendation Development (CRD)

Multi-Year Season/Regulation Schedule

- ✓ Big game seasons and fish regulations on 2-year rotations
- ✓ Multiple seasons on 3-year rotations
- ✓ Staff – more time on management activities
- ✓ Commission – more time on larger concept items

Redesigned approach for development of fisheries regulations

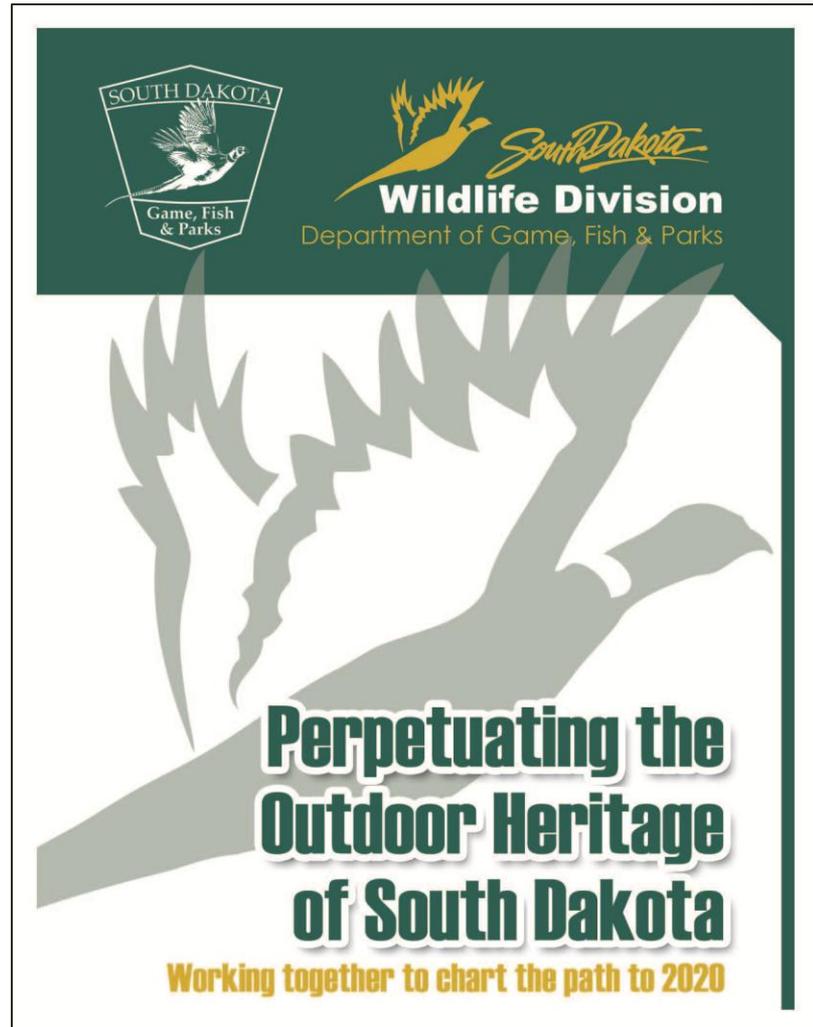


Management Plans

Guiding Document serves as the cornerstone of all management plans.

“Serving People, Managing Wildlife”

- ✓ Cultural Change
- ✓ Agency Guidance
- ✓ Public Involvement & Ownership
- ✓ Source that articulates direction and is the approved management approach



Management Plans - Process

Overall Approach

- ✓ Provide specifics to objectives, how to meet objectives, guidance to agency, and public input through a universally applied, structured approach
- ✓ Engage Commission in planning process and formal adoption of plans

Process

- ✓ Agency staff either directly involved or at minimum have an opportunity to comment
- ✓ Public Surveys
- ✓ Public Involvement/Stakeholder Groups
- ✓ Public Comment Period

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Adaptive Management System

2014 - 2018

Statewide Strategic Plan Components

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
Wildlife Division



Statewide Components Work Group

John Lott	Geno Adams	Mike Barnes
Will Saylor	Dave Lucchesi	Steve Labay
Brian Blackwell	Brian Fletcher	Mike Smith
Leslie Murphy	Robert Hanten	Jerry Broughton
Chelsey Pasbrig	John Carreiro	Cindy Longmire
Mark Ermer	Todd St. Sauver	Dan Jost
Gene Galinat	Mark Finsel	

Formally adopted by GFP Commission: April 4, 2014

Management Plans - Staff

PRONGHORN MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH DAKOTA



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH AND PARKS
PIERRE, SOUTH DAKOTA

WILDLIFE DIVISION REPORT 2014-08

SEPTEMBER 2014

- ✓ Allocation of time and resources to complete drafts
- ✓ Incorporated into PR grant due to elevated importance of plans
- ✓ Review plans months prior to CRD meetings to guide recommendations and assure recommendations follow management strategy and either meeting or moving towards stated objectives

Management Plan - Accomplishments

Mountain Lion Management Plan - January

Fisheries Management Plan - April

- Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Adaptive Management System

- Black Hills Fisheries Management Area Strategic Plan

- West River Fisheries Management Area Strategic Plan

- Missouri River Fisheries Management Area Strategic Plan

- East River Fisheries Management Area Strategic Plan

State Wildlife Action Plan - June

Pronghorn Management Plan – October

Greater Sage Grouse Management Plan - November

Elk Management Plan

Population Monitoring



Population Monitoring - Deer

- ✓ Department continues working with SDSU to determine the needed sample size for fall herd composition surveys – 2015 completion
- ✓ Assisting SDSU in developing a road survey for the Black Hills to assist in monitoring and estimating deer numbers – 2015 completion
- ✓ Developed confidence intervals for fall composition counts to determine statistical differences
- ✓ Developed a field guide to assist in fall composition surveys

Field Guide for Age and Sex Classification

DEER

MALES: Presence of antlers on bucks makes identification clear in most situations, but yearling bucks or adult bucks at long distances may look like does.

DOES AND FAWNS: Body size characteristics are critical when classifying does and fawns. Look for the short snout/law of the fawns around the end of the survey time period since their body size is getting close to that of an adult. Sometimes the white-tailed fawn's tail (or mule deer fawn's ears) will look disproportionately large compared to the rest of the body. A fawn's body is squarer compared to the long rectangular body of an adult.



WTD fawn and doe



WTD fawn



WTD doe and fawn



WTD fawn showing disproportional large tail

HELPFUL CLASSIFYING TIPS: Use binoculars or spotting scope to get accurate classification. When classifying a herd, get an entire herd count immediately, and then count just the fawns (twice if possible) and then the bucks. Be sure to record unknowns if you are not certain about classification. Be sure the entire herd is visible on any recorded count, and remember accurate data is always better than more data! Also remember to accurately classify each count as a white-tailed deer or mule deer species.



Mule Deer doe and fawn



Mule Deer fawn and doe

Population Monitoring - Deer

Matrix of alternatives and strategies for antlerless deer harvest

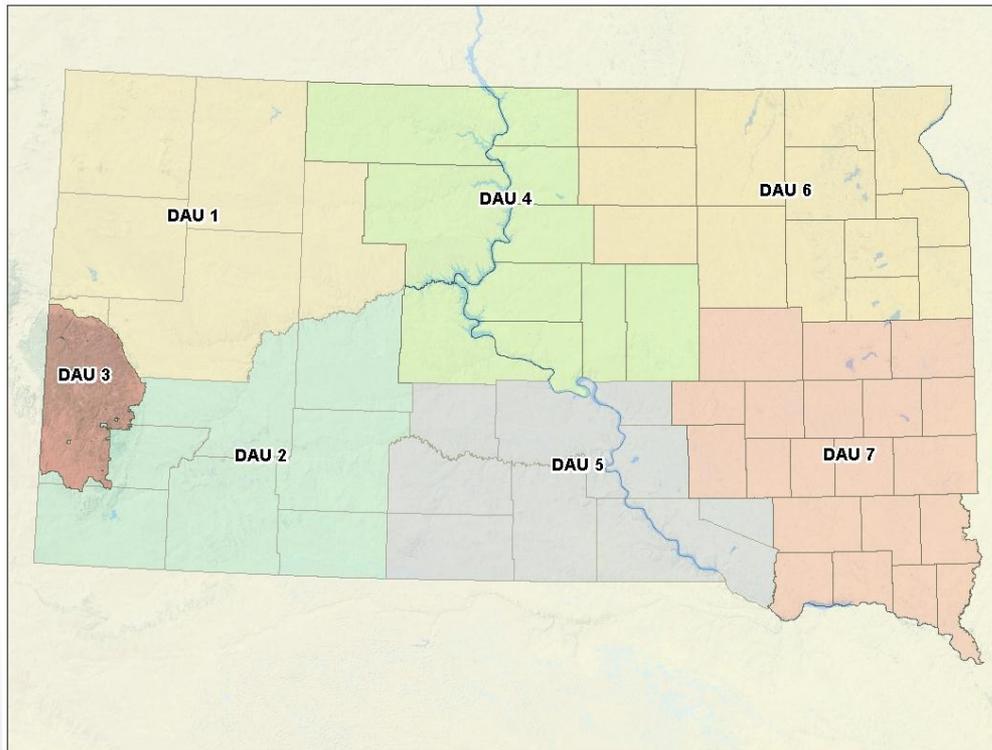
✓ Implemented in 2014 while formulating recommendations

Zone Management Options for Antlerless Deer Harvest

TOOLS	LIBERAL HARVEST	MODERATE HARVEST	RESTRICTIVE HARVEST
Population Objective	Decrease Population	Maintain Population	Increase Population
Firearm License Numbers	Liberal Unlimited per hunter after 3rd draw	Moderate All Available Licenses Sold in 1st and 2nd Draw ¹	Limited All Available Licenses Sold in 1st and 2nd Draw
License Types	Single, Double, and Triple Tag Licenses Antlerless-only Licenses Available	Single and Double Tag Licenses ¹ Antlerless-only Licenses Available	Single-tag Licenses only No Antlerless-only Licenses ²
Firearm Late Season	9-day Late Season	9-day Late Season	Closed: No Antlerless Licenses Issued ²
Youth Deer	Up to 2 Licenses	1 License	1 License
Archery Antlerless Deer	Up to 5 Licenses	1 Single-tag License	No Licenses
Muzzleloader Antlerless Deer	Up to 5 Licenses	1 Single-tag License	No Licenses
Landowner Free Antlerless Deer	Up to 2 Licenses ³	No Licenses ^{1,3}	No Licenses

Population Monitoring - Deer

Data Analysis Units (DAU's)



- ✓ Tentative DAU's have been established until modeling project complete in 2016
- ✓ Combines current management units into larger, biologically meaningful regions for data collection and analyses
- ✓ Current DAU's based on administrative boundaries, winter severity, and habitats
- ✓ Final DAU's will be based on habitat, precipitation, winter and drought severity, and/or current research and management information

Population Monitoring – Statistical Assistance

Outside statistical assistance in population modeling

- ✓ Continue to utilize expertise from SDSU
- ✓ Consulting with population model experts from University of Montana

Deer population modeling project – University of Montana

- ✓ “The development of a SQL Server database and R software package to model deer populations in SD”
- ✓ Began in summer of 2014



Population Monitoring - Pronghorn

- ✓ Department continues working with SDSU to determine the needed sample size for fall herd composition surveys – 2015 completion
- ✓ Developed confidence intervals for fall composition counts to determine statistical differences
- ✓ Developed a field guide to assist in fall composition surveys

Field Guide for Age and Sex Classification

PRONGHORN



2 bucks



3 does and 1 buck

MALES: Presence of black horns on bucks makes identification clear in most situations, but yearling bucks or adult bucks at long distances may look like does. Look for the **black cheek patch** as only the males have this. Some females have small horns, but they will not have a black cheek patch.



doe and fawn



1 doe, 2 fawns, and 1 buck

DOES AND FAWNS: Body size characteristics are critical when classifying does and fawns. Look for the **short snout/law of the fawns** around the end of the survey time period since their body size is getting close to that of an adult. The **smaller rump patch of a fawn** is a good indication as a herd is running away from you. A **fawn's body is squarer compared to the long rectangular body of an adult**.



5 does and 3 fawns

HELPFUL CLASSIFYING TIPS: Always use binoculars or spotting scope to get accurate classification. When classifying a herd, get an entire herd count immediately, and then count just the fawns (twice if possible) and then the bucks. Be sure to record **unknowns** if you are not certain about classification. Be sure the entire herd is visible on any recorded count, and remember accurate data is always better than more data!

Population Monitoring - Staff

- ✓ Annually update the survey grant which provides an opportune time to review surveys and apply adjustments where necessary. Surveys are prioritized and appropriate number of staff are assigned.
- ✓ Trainings on the use of survey data and survey protocols will occur annually at various staff meetings, primarily conducted by biologists and wildlife managers.
 - Experienced Staff
 - New Staff



Population Monitoring - Public

Enhance Human Dimensions component of WL Management

- ✓ Work with DOW to collect relevant data to on-going management or planning process
- ✓ Improve collection of public input (open houses, videos)
- ✓ Incorporate HD element with small groups/stakeholder groups

ELK MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH DAKOTA



DEPARTMENT OF GAME, FISH, AND PARKS

Foss Building
523 East Capitol
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182



Population Monitoring - Public

Stakeholder Opinion Database – finalizing an electronic application where Conservation Officers will be able to record information in a more quantifiable manner from landowner contacts.



Questions?

