

# Audubon News

Newsletter of Prairie Hills Audubon Society of Western South Dakota Inc.  
February/March, 2020



Prairie Hills Audubon Society (PHAS) has had a campaign for over 10 years to reform trapping regulations in SD & for the past year, a [campaign to oppose SD's Nest Predator Bounty Program](#) -- which is a program that pays people to kill **racoons, opossums, red fox, badgers and striped skunks** for an alleged benefit to pheasants & duck population numbers.

On 1/16/2020, the SD GFP Commission & staff created a draft resolution of support for: 1) A \$250,000 expenditure on a nest predator bounty, targeting the same species as last year. 2) This year the bounties will be \$5 each (not \$10). 3) Applicants for bounty must possess a hunting, fishing or trapping license (unless youth or landowner shunting on their own land). & 4) The time period will be shorter --from April 1st to July 1st (last year it was permitted till the end of August but ran out of funds & thus ended in mid August). There is no provision for free traps this year.

To see the 2020 Nest Predator Bounty Program Approval Resolution - that GFP Commission will be voting to approve (or not) at a meeting on March 5th - visit this link:  
[https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/2020\\_Draft\\_Resolution\\_Nest\\_Predator\\_Bounty\\_Program.pdf](https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/docs/2020_Draft_Resolution_Nest_Predator_Bounty_Program.pdf)

## Thursday March 5 - Friday March 6, 2020 Game, Fish and Parks Commission meeting

At 2 pm CT (1 pm MT) the **public hearing** (on at least 19 rule change proposals) will start & then be followed by the "**Open Forum**", where you may **comment on Nest Predator Bounty Program (NPBP) Resolution** (that would approve & fund the 2020 Nest Predator Bounty Program (NPBP)).

Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commissioners are to meet at - Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center at 920 W Sioux Avenue in Pierre. Folks can attend, listen and comment during public hearing and during the "open forum". On 1/16 PHAS asked for remote sites at the March meeting and GFP delivered - there will be **remote sites connected to Pierre via teleconference. The opportunity (to listen and testify) will occur at:**

**Outdoor Campus West, 4130 Adventure Trail, Rapid City,**  
**Outdoor Campus East, 4500 South Oxbow Avenue, Sioux Falls,**  
**Watertown Regional office: 400 W Kemp Ave, Watertown,**

**Live Stream** of Commission meetings is available for folks to listen (but not testify) from a link on SDGFP web site for the "current meeting". The meeting starts at 10 am (CT) on Thursday

### Written Comments - Sunday March 1st

Send **written comments to oppose NPBP**, via this link before **midnight CT, Sunday 3/1/20** <https://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions/>  
Postal contact info is: *Secretary of SD Game Fish and Parks, Foss Building, 523 East Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501* ([send mail to be received before Sunday](#)). Late comments are given to the Commission at the next Commission meeting.

### Other commenting alternatives -

If you send comments to the Commissioners individually by e-mail, home postal mail or call them up -- there is no deadline for direct contacts w/ Commissioners, however your comment(s) sent to individuals does not end up in the formal "Commission Book"..

Link to see their contact info

<https://gfp.sd.gov/commission/members/>

Here are the e-mails of Commissioners:

*MaryAnne.Boyd@state.sd.us, Gary.Jensen@state.sd.us,*  
*Russell.Olson@state.sd.us, Doug.Sharp@state.sd.us,*  
*Travis.Bies@state.sd.us, Robert.Whitmyre@state.sd.us,*  
*Jon.Locken@state.sd.us, Charles.Spring@state.sd.us*

### ADDITIONAL EFFORT -

The NPBP is the "brain child" of Gov. Noem, not SDGFP. Contact Kristi Noem's office - 605.773.3212. Staff person for questions - Jason Simmons is in charge of GFP related issues

On line commenting to the Governor -

[https://iqconnect.lmhostediq.com/iqextranet/EForm.aspx?\\_cid=FSL\\_SD\\_GOV&\\_fid=2100060](https://iqconnect.lmhostediq.com/iqextranet/EForm.aspx?_cid=FSL_SD_GOV&_fid=2100060)

### WHY OPPOSE?

- This killing of predators is not scientifically justified. ----
- Wildlife biologists agree that nest predator control is ineffective unless it is extremely intense and carried out annually on a small area.
  - Effective nest predator control may require hundreds of dollars & man hours per year & per section. The Governor's budget might be enough to cover one township, but probably not a county & certainly not the state.
  - Even intense predator control has limitations. Those animals that escape capture or death often reproduce at a higher rate. This means more effort must be expended and more money must be appropriated each year.
  - Nature does not exist in a vacuum. When one animal is removed, others move in, including other species that may be more effective predators.
  - Nest predators also feed on rodents. If these nest predators are successfully controlled, an explosion in rodents can be expected, with a huge and potentially devastating impact on farmers and ranchers. Rodents eat grain in the field, & infest grain bins, outbuildings and farmhouses. In SD rodents carry fleas/ticks that can have bubonic plague, hantavirus or Lyme disease. Opossums also eat ticks. These costs must be considered
  - Some nest predators are protected by state and federal laws. This would include ALL raptors. (Hawks, owls and eagles are examples.)
  - The nest predator bounty may encourage illegal activity, from trespassing, unlawful night hunting to submitting tails collected out-of-state . NO funds have been allocated for the extra law enforcement.
  - The nest predator program is fiscally irresponsible. The money is desperately needed on habitat programs that actually do provide a return on the investment.
  - Habitat improvements can be cost shared at a rate of 50% to over 75% through a variety of programs. GF&P receives 75% cost share on habitat purchases and improvements through Pittman Robertson funds. They receive zero cost-share funding for nest predator control programs.
  - Predation is much lower when sufficient habitat for nesting birds is provided.
  - Successful nesting will not occur where there is not sufficient habitat, regardless if most predators are removed or not.
  - Good habitat also provides high-protein food sources, clean water and protection from the elements, all in a suitable arrangement. Habitat for pheasants/ducks also benefits various other wildlife & bird species.
  - This is a statewide program, but areas with pheasant and duck populations are much more limited west river. Why pay bounties for west river predator tails?
  - Much of SDGFP budget derives from sale of licenses and most hunters do not want GFP's limited budget spent on this program.
  - Pheasants are an exotic species that competes with a native species - the greater prairie chicken, whose range and population are declining -- losing half it's population every decade.
  - Accidental take of threatened and endangered species may occur. Swift fox is state listed. Black footed ferret is listed federally. There is a petition before the USFWS to list the plains spotted skunk and the prairie grey fox under the Endangered Species Act. The American Martin is a "sensitive species" for the Black Hills National Forest.
  - This program will result in animal cruelty. Some trappers will be trapping with leg-hold traps or snares, or body crushing traps. Some will use live traps. People should realize that in SD the law allows for animals to be left in traps west river for 3 and a partial day and east river for 2 and a partial day. Trapping can be cruel. In high heat, an animal in a box can die in half a day. Animals in boxes or leg-hold traps can freak out and damage their bodies and/or teeth & thus not survive even if released. Dead animals or animals in boxes or traps can't feed their dependent young. Even via a "live trap" non-target species adults and their dependent young will die, in addition to target species.
  - Part of the rational/spin for the program is to introduce children to nature & trapping. Why not introduce children to nature via non-lethal interactions with wildlife such as wildlife watching and spend money on nature guide books, binoculars, cameras & not via bounties & traps?
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- Much more information on this program is on our web site's home page, scroll down in the chronological events/deadline section to March 5th. <http://phas-wsd.org/>. Link to SD GFP's summary of 2019 program: [https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/2020\\_Bounty\\_Information\\_-\\_Fisk\\_and\\_Robling.pdf](https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/2020_Bounty_Information_-_Fisk_and_Robling.pdf). The Humane Society of U.S. funded a public opinion survey on the program, that got much different responses than SD GFP funded survey. The link to the HSUS survey can be found at our web page and at SD HSUS & SD FACT's Facebook Pages. Both have alerts too. <https://www.facebook.com/SDFACT/>, <https://www.facebook.com/HSUSSouthDakota/> Link to the SDGFP's survey can be found on their January 16th meeting web page and our web page.

Prairie Hills Audubon Society (PHAS) is run by volunteers, we need new volunteers to help run organization, but we are especially looking for new Board Members. For information contact Nancy or Mary Jo whose contact info. is listed on the label fold. Visit our web site to stay updated on our & other organization's functions. Please send us your e-mail address so we can send you PHAS announcements. If members are interested in having meetings in other towns besides Rapid City, let Nancy Hilding know. If we had a few interested folks we could at least have social meeting(s) at a restaurant. We need new volunteer(s) to help with our web page.

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**National Audubon Society's Annual Photo contest  
January 13th-April 6th, is the 2020 Entry Period**

We suggest members google the photo contest and especially look at past years winners & some beautiful photos of birds will be seen. We have links up on our web site. We might have an upcoming meeting to celebrate Art & Nature, maybe on Audubon's birthday 4/26/20.

----- **Late Winter Events** -----

**January 14th- March 12th & 30th** - SD Legislative Session

**January 13th-April 6th**, 2020 Entry Period National Audubon's (NAS) Photo Contest

**February 28th** - PHAS evening meeting on SD's Nest Predator Bounty Program, West River Electric Bldg, Rapid City

**March 2nd** - PHAS dinner meeting - Hana's Rapid City

**March 5th-6th** - SD Game, Fish & Parks Commission Meeting

**March 20 and 21**, 50th NAS Crane Festival, in Kearny Nebraska

**March 20th** - 18th annual Black Hills Area Botany & Ecology Workshop (BHABEW), Outdoor Campus West

**March 21** World Water Day, Journey Museum

**March 31st** - PHAS monthly meeting - greater sage grouse

**Saturday, April 25th**, Earth Day Expo. at WDT

**Sunday April 26th**, John James Audubon's Birthday,

**Saturday May 2nd**, tentative date of La Creek NWR field trip Saturday (please verify date -- when we closer to date)

**Friday, May 15th**, in the evening will be the Endangered Species Day Celebration - PHAS always organizes an Endangered Species Day Celebration on the third Friday in May.

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**Prairie Hills Audubon Society** is a Chapter of the National Audubon Society; our territory is much of West River SD. Nancy Hilding - President, nhilding@rapidnet.com, 605-787-466 or 6779, Helen McGinnis - Treasurer, hissyhelen38@gmail.com, Doris Respects Nothing - Secretary, drn.6501@gmail.com, MaryJo Farrington - Board member, 605-716-2151, Jim Petersen - Board member, nfearndesire@gmail.com. PHAS web site : <http://phas-wsd.org/> - We have a Facebook page....google - Prairie Hills Audubon Society of Western South Dakota, Facebook. Our e-mail address is phas.wsd@rapidnet.com.

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Prairie Hills Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 788  
Black Hawk, SD 57718

**Friday February 28th,  
Evening meeting on SD's Nest Predator Bounty  
Program at West River Electric Bldg, Rapid City**

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We need help with our **web site**, as our web designer of years is moving away and we need someone who understands web sites to help work with the web site. (Contact Nancy at [nhilding@rapidnet.com](mailto:nhilding@rapidnet.com) or 787-6466)

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**Friday February 28th,**

**Prairie Hills Audubon Society evening meeting**

**Topic:** the SD GFP's **Nest Predator Bounty Program** -

Meet and Greet - 6:15 pm and start of presentation - 6:30 pm

at the West River Electric Coop Building, Community Room (At: 3250 E Hwy 44, Rapid City - It's a large building, near the intersection of Hwy 44 and Elk Vale Road (Hwy 16 by-pass) - turn onto Twilight Drive to access parking lot from east side.) See inside for more details on the Nest Predator

Bounty Program issue. GFP Commission

hearing is on 3/5/2020, written comments due 3/1/2020



**Tuesday, March 3rd, Prairie Hills Audubon Society's Dinner meeting, 5:15 pm meet/greet- 5:30 - 8:30 pm discussion**

The February discussion agenda will be preparation for upcoming GFP Commission hearing & discussion of the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

Hana's serves Korean/Japanese food, it is located in Rapid City, NE of the intersection of Sturgis Road and West Chicago - at 3550 Sturgis Rd. Hana's web site: [www.SushiRapidCity.com](http://www.SushiRapidCity.com).

PHAS has been scheduling lunch or dinner meetings once or twice a month in Hana's Restaurant's banquet room. We may start scheduling meal meetings in the northern Hills (let us know if you are interested).

**Tuesday, March 31st 2020, PHAS monthly meeting**

Meet & Greet at 6:15, Presentation at 6:30 pm - topic:

**"The Fight to Save the Greater Sage Grouse",**

At the central room at Outdoor Campus West - Erik Molvar, Executive Director Western Watersheds Project will speak on efforts to protect the greater sage grouse, including our sage grouse litigation. Western Watersheds Project, is one of our co-plaintiffs in our litigation over the sage grouse management on federal public lands. We won an injunction against the BLM in Oct 2019.