‘Nest Predator Bounty Program’ Science vs. Misconceptions

Towards Healthy Ecosystems in South Dakota
v. 20260131

“When knowledge runs off, aggression hastens in.”

— David Weston, *Dog Problems: The Gentle Modern Cure* (1993).

By Alexey V. Egorov: alexey.egorov.jr@gmail.com

Content

Acronyms

	CRP	Conservation Reserve Program
*	GFP	Game Fish & Park Department of South Dakota
	IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
*	NPBP	The Nest Predator Bounty Program
	PPM	Pheasants Per Mile index
	RRG	Remington Research Group
	SDCL	South Dakota Codified Laws
	SDSU	South Dakota State University
	USDA	US Department of Agriculture
	USFWS	US Fish & Wildlife Service

Example link: https://phas-wsd.org/sd-nest-predator-bounty-program/

Introduction

What is the Nest Predator Bounty Program?

342,757 animals killed to date

Primary program goals

- Enhance duck and pheasant nest success.
- Increase trapping participation, awareness, and education.
- Ensure South Dakota's hunting and trapping heritage remains strong for the next 100 years.
- Get the next generation involved and interested in outdoor recreation, conservation, and wildlife management while increasing awareness of the importance of good habitat for nesting pheasants and waterfowl.

Program details:

The Nest Predator Bounty Program begins on March 1 for youth under the age of 18. The program is then open to all South Dakota residents from April 1 until July 1, or until the maximum payout of $500,000 is reached.

Species Included:

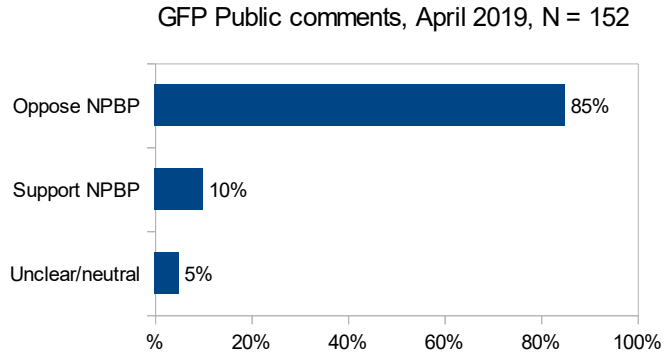
The following primary nest predators: raccoons, striped skunks, badgers, opossums, and red fox.

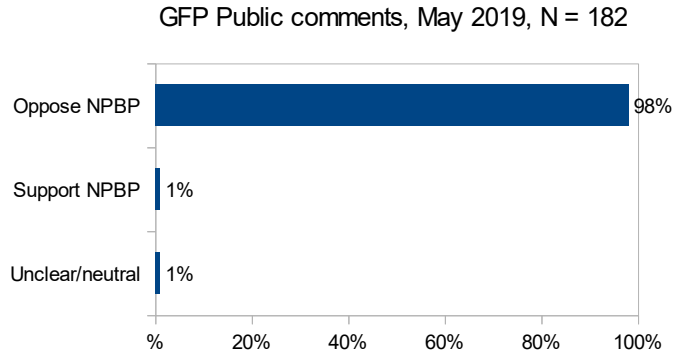
The Nest Predator Bounty Program. Program Details: https://gfp.sd.gov/bounty-program/
GFP official account on X, posted April 11, 2019, 9:30 AM: https://x.com/SDGameFishParks/status/1116347844313735170
The Bounty Program "Tail Tracker": https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/e7bbbd6fa93b48c6a31985aa7c57c5ff

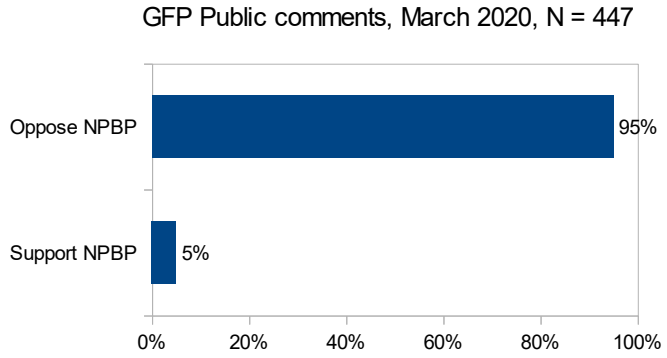
Section 1. The Nest Predator Bounty Program is not supported by residents and professionals

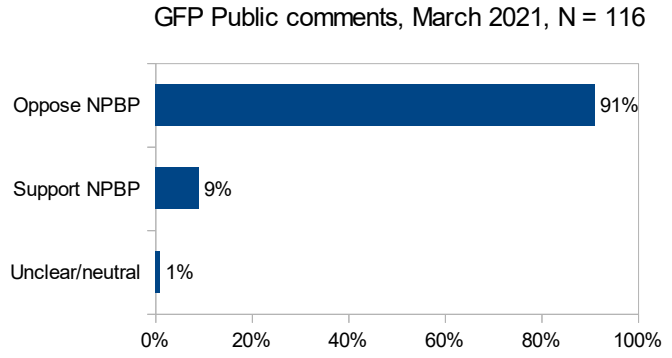
Level of “support” of NPBP by residents. Public comments.

In 2019-2020, the GFP received hundreds of public comments, over 90% of which opposed the NPBP. These comments are publicly available on the GFP website.





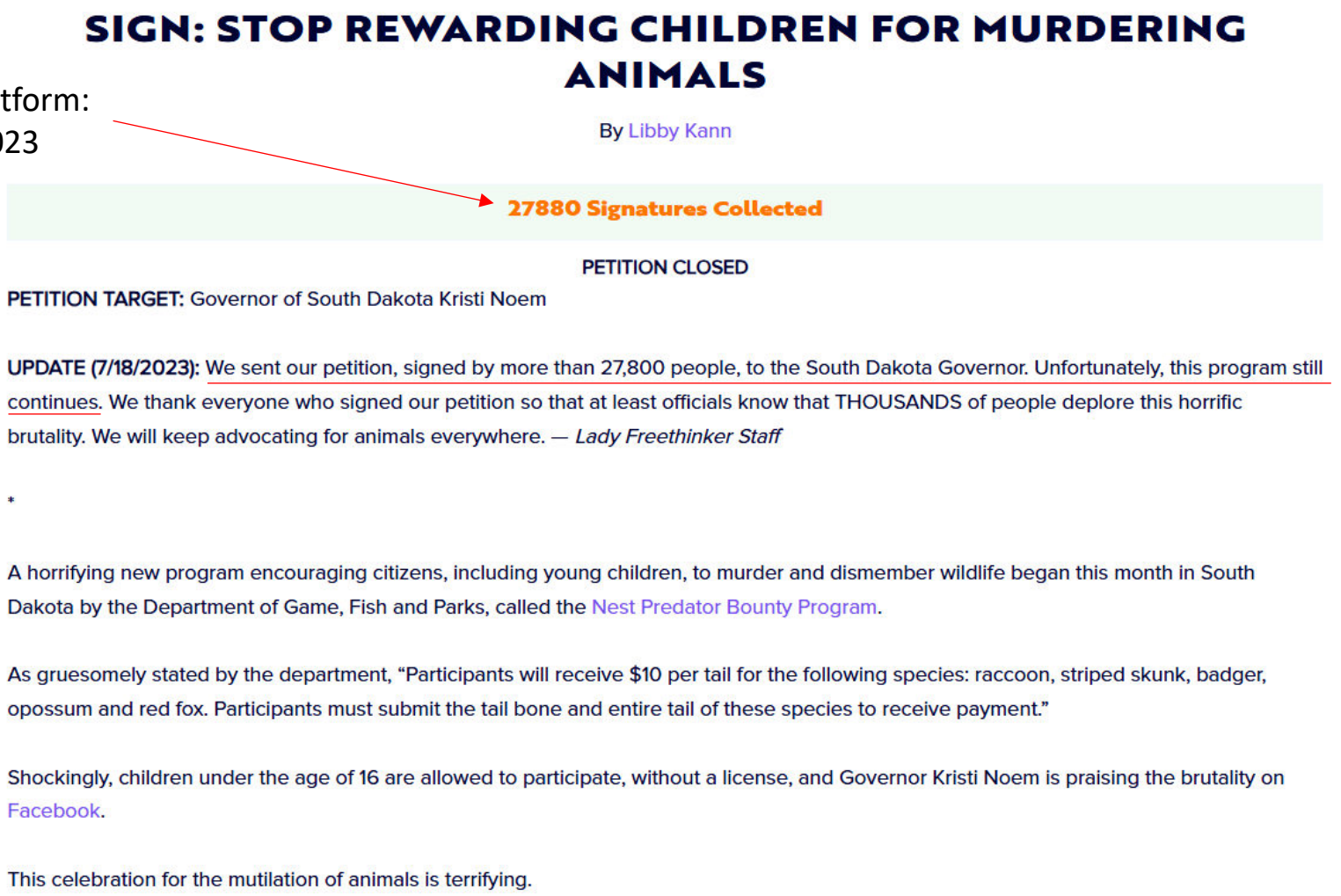




2019.04: https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/Commission_Minutes_4.2019_with_Comments_.pdf
2019.05: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/PublicCommissionComments_-_Revised.pdf
2020.03: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/Public_Comments_1.pdf, https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/Public_Comments_2.pdf, https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/Public_Comments_3.pdf
2021.03: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/publiccommissioncomments1_-3-.pdf, https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/publiccommissioncomments2_-2-.pdf

Four petitions have rallied more than **230,000** signatures against NPBP to date.

‘Lady Freethinker’ platform:
27,880 votes in 2023



SIGN: STOP REWARDING CHILDREN FOR MURDERING ANIMALS

By Libby Kann

27880 Signatures Collected

PETITION CLOSED

PETITION TARGET: Governor of South Dakota Kristi Noem

UPDATE (7/18/2023): We sent our petition, signed by more than 27,800 people, to the South Dakota Governor. Unfortunately, this program still continues. We thank everyone who signed our petition so that at least officials know that THOUSANDS of people deplore this horrific brutality. We will keep advocating for animals everywhere. — *Lady Freethinker Staff*

*

A horrifying new program encouraging citizens, including young children, to murder and dismember wildlife began this month in South Dakota by the Department of Game, Fish and Parks, called the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

As gruesomely stated by the department, “Participants will receive $10 per tail for the following species: raccoon, striped skunk, badger, opossum and red fox. Participants must submit the tail bone and entire tail of these species to receive payment.”

Shockingly, children under the age of 16 are allowed to participate, without a license, and Governor Kristi Noem is praising the brutality on Facebook.

This celebration for the mutilation of animals is terrifying.

https://ladyfreethinker.org/sign-stop-paying-children-to-kill-animals-and-chop-off-their-tails/

Four petitions have rallied more than **230,000** signatures against NPBP to date.

'Care 2' platform: **168,613** votes

https://www.thepetitionsite.com/524/880/254/south-dakota-encourages-kids-to-kill-animals-for-fun-and-profit/

Four petitions have rallied more than **230,000** signatures against NPBP to date.

‘Change.org’ platform: **1,600** votes

The cruelest government-funded massacre of indigenous animals in South Dakota.

1,600
Verified signatures
Change.org helps verify signatures are from real people.

Copy link
Send via WhatsApp
Share on Facebook
Nextdoor
Send via email
Post on X

The Issue

Beyond absolute evil.

Unprecedented in its cruelty and senselessness program funded by the state government, called 'Nest Predator Bounty Program' (1), hereinafter NPBP, to exterminate native predators has been operating in South Dakota since 2019. The effort to boost pheasant and duck populations by paying trappers to kill animals that eat the eggs and hatchlings was first implemented by governor Kristi Noem in the frame of the 'Second Century Initiative'. The effort has led to the senseless killing of 342,757 indigenous animals (raccoons, striped skunks, badgers, opossums, and red fox, according to NPBP Tail tracker) in the past seven years with no scientific evidence that it is working to increase the state pheasant population.

https://www.change.org/p/the-cruelest-government-funded-massacre-of-indigenous-animals-in-south-dakota

Four petitions have rallied more than **230,000** signatures against NPBP to date.

SIGN: END BRUTAL "BOUNTY" PROGRAM, WHERE ANIMALS ARE KILLED AND MUTILATED FOR CASH

By Lady Freethinker

"Lady Freethinker" platform has recently relaunched its campaign against the Nest Predator Bounty Program
36,247 votes to date

36247 Signatures Collected

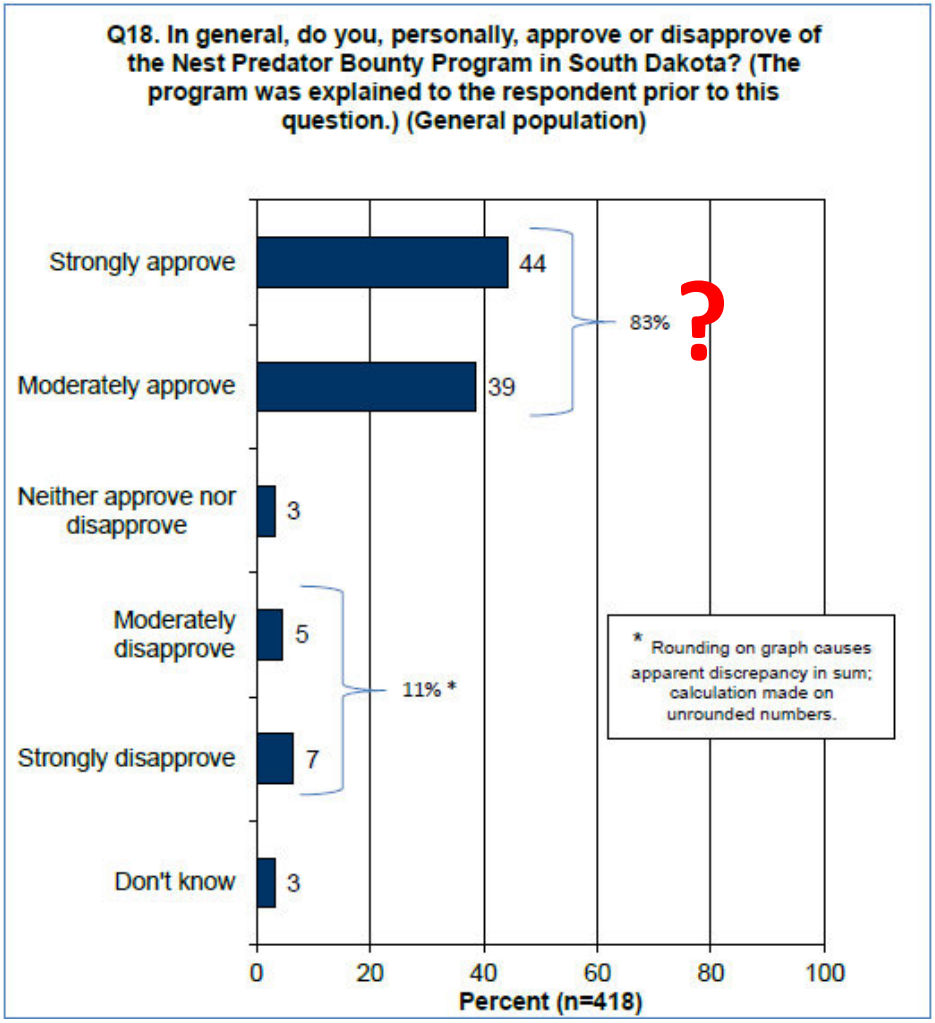
PETITION TARGET: South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden

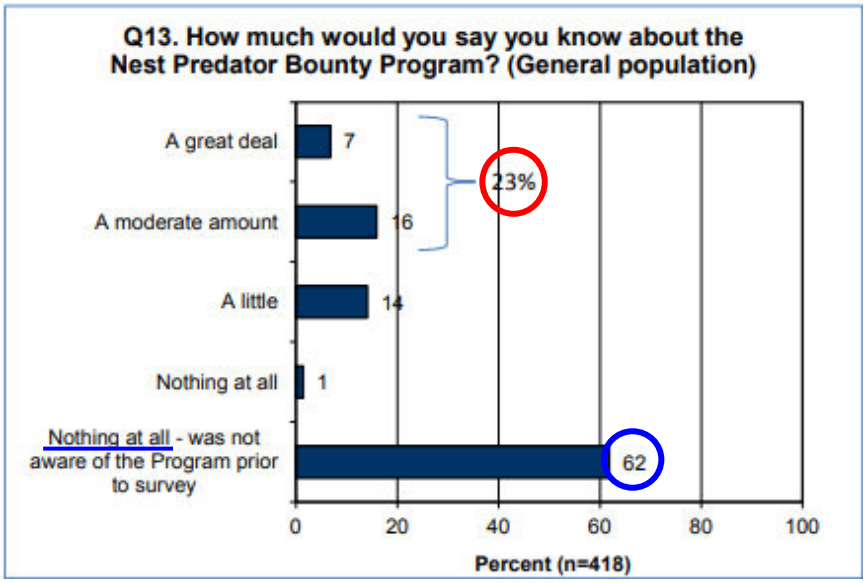
Every year in South Dakota, **50,000 foxes, raccoons, skunks, badgers, and opossums are brutally trapped, killed, and dismembered** in the name of "conservation." A state-sanctioned **bounty hunting program** incentivizes individuals, including children, to participate in this massacre by offering them $10 per tail collected.

The Nest Predator Bounty Program claims to increase populations of pheasants and ducks by eliminating animals who eat their eggs. However, **the state has produced no evidence that the program has been effective,** and even hunting-focused conservation groups emphasize the importance of **habitat preservation over predator control** in maintaining healthy populations of pheasants and ducks.

https://ladyfreethinker.org/end-brutal-bounty-program-where-animals-are-killed-and-mutilated-for-cash/

? Is the NPBP really approved by the overwhelming majority of South Dakota residents ?





The percentage "83%" originates from the social survey conducted in 2019 cooperatively by GFP a commercial firm 'Responsive Management', which fails to inspire confidence. Rather than being a legitimate study designed to measure genuine public opinion, it appears a blatant manipulation – a pseudoscience intended to achieve a preconceived outcome.

Example: only 23% of residents indicated knowing at least a moderate amount about NPBP – the majority's judgments were based on what was explained by a pollster.

Other issues in the GFP's survey, including manipulativeness, prejudice, bias, math error and in general inappropriateness, are described in the detailed analysis.

GFP's survey: https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/2019_Nest_Predator_Bouny_Program_Survey_Report.pdf
Detailed analysis: https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/03SocialSurveyAnalysisNPBP.Alexey.pdf

? Is the legal, regulated trapping really approved by the overwhelming majority of South ? ? Dakota residents ?

Game Fish & Park's (GFP's) survey
418 respondents

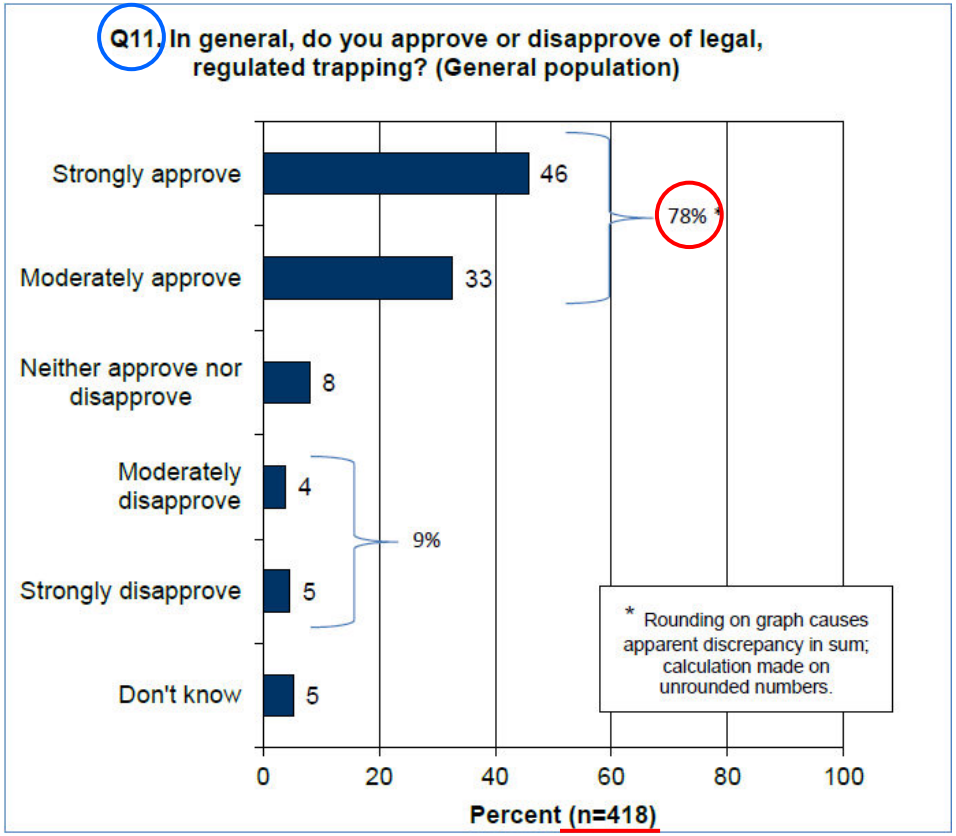
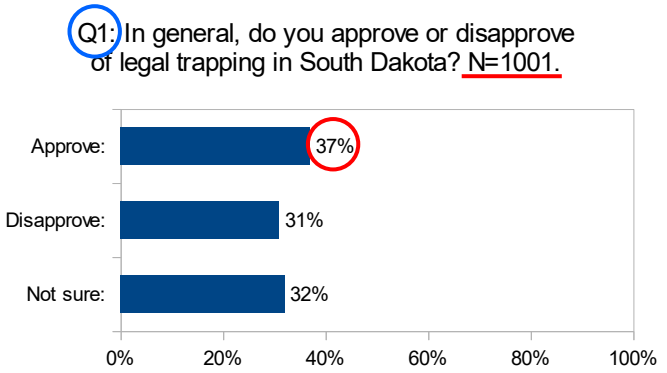


Figure 11. Residents' Approval/Disapproval of Trapping in General

Remington Research Group's (RRG) survey
1001 respondents



Another social survey conducted by the Remington Research Group (RRG, right) and based on 2-fold greater population (1001 vs 418 respondents), showed a fundamentally different public opinion. E.g., trapping was approved only by 37% of respondents (vs 78% in GFP's survey). GFP's survey manipulates respondents' opinions, asking preparatory questions and suggesting the "correct" answer on key questions.

NB. GFP's survey (left) this question was the 11th in line, preceded by 10 manipulative questions. In RRG's survey this question was 1st in line, not affected by pollster's hints.

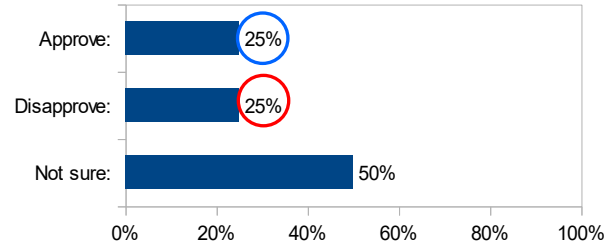
GFP's survey: https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/2019_Nest_Predator_Bouny_Program_Survey_Report.pdf
RRG's survey: https://www.humaneworld.org/sites/default/files/docs/South-Dakota-General-Election-Survey.pdf

Level of “support” of the NPBP by residents. RRG social survey. N = 1001.

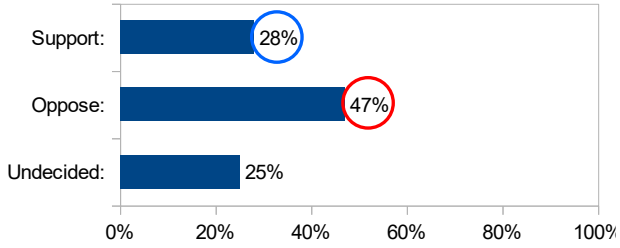
The Remington Research Group survey illustrates how respondents’ low initial awareness artificially inflated the apparent level of support. While asking questions 4–11, the pollster laid out the pros, cons, and hidden caveats of the bounty program, repeating the same question. Q12 was the final, informed-opinion question, which captured respondents’ ultimate view once previously unknown details were presented. The explanatory sequence pushed disapproval from 25% to 53%, implying that previously uninformed respondents revised their views mainly toward disapproval.

26 ~~33~~% of South Dakota respondents approved NPBP.

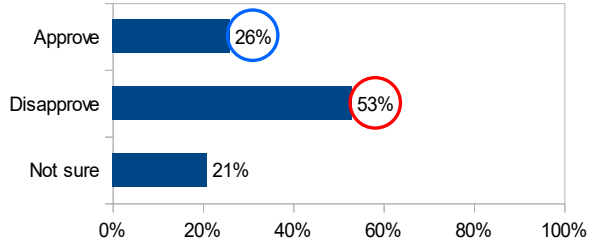
Q3: Based on what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the South Dakota Nest Predator BountyProgram?



Q8: Knowing this, do you support or oppose the Nest Predator Bounty Program?



Q12: Based on what you know, do you approve or disapprove of the South Dakota Nest Predator Bounty Program?



RRG’s survey: https://www.humaneworld.org/sites/default/files/docs/South-Dakota-General-Election-Survey.pdf
RRG’s Methods: https://remingtonresearchgroup.com/about/

Letter from sportsmen. Public comments.

In 2019, ten(!) South Dakota non-governmental organizations, on behalf of many thousands of members, submitted a joint letter to GFP expressing concerns and disappointment regarding the announced NPBP. South Dakota hunters did not want GFP's limited budget spent on this program and requested GFP to postpone any action on the NPBP.

1. South Dakota Wildlife Federation
2. South Dakota Big Game Coalition
3. Izaak Walton League, South Dakota Division
4. Black Hills Sportsmen's Club
5. South Dakota Waterfowl Association
6. High Plains Wildlife
7. South Dakota Bowhunters Incorporated
8. Brookings Wildlife Federation
9. Sportsman's Club of Brown County
10. Dakota Sportsman

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing to express our concern and disappointment related to the announced "Nest Predator Bounty Program" currently outlined in Governor Noem's Second Century Initiative and now under consideration by the Commission.

In order to be succinct and clear in our opposition comments, we offer the following for the Commission's use and for the public record.

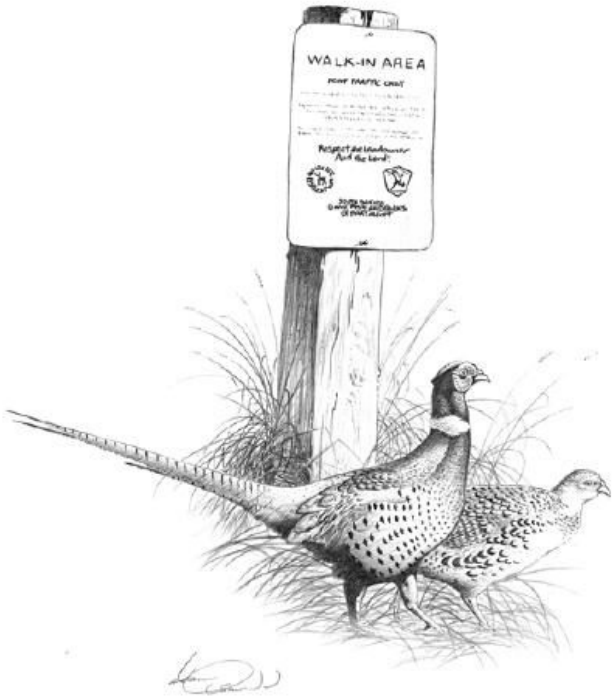
Governor's and GFP's Program:

The Nest Predator Bounty Program (Program) was apparently conceived by the Governor, her advisors and the Game, Fish and Parks Department (GFP) and then presented to the Commission and the outdoor community as the reason for a formal Commission Proposal to make minor rule changes to address issues such as eligible species for bounties; requirements for harvest; submission of electronic bounty forms, etc. That Commission proposal and a related one addressing trapping dates on public lands and certain rights of way are now before the Commission at your April meeting after the required 30 day public comment period to adopt a rule.

Joint letter of sportsmen and conservationists: https://phas-wsd.org/wp-content/uploads/GFPCommission_LTR_-NPBP.Sportsmen.pdf

South Dakota GFP wildlife professionals do not support predator control efforts due to lack of effectiveness and recommend habitat management as the primary tool to encourage pheasant population growth.

RING-NECKED PHEASANT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR SOUTH DAKOTA 2016-2020



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

PREDATOR CONTROL

Predator control is often suggested as a management tool to increase pheasant survival and increase nest success, both of which can increase population growth. Generally, mammalian predation is the primary cause of nest failure and pheasant mortality during the breeding season (Reviewed in Riley and Schulz 2001). Avian predation has been found to be the primary cause of mortality during the winter (Leif 2003, Leif 2004).

Several studies on mammalian predator control efforts have shown an increase in nesting success or found higher pheasant abundance when compared to non-removal sites (Reviewed in Riley and Schulz 2001, Frey et al. 2003). However, the most recent predator removal study in SD found minimal impact on pheasant nest success (Docken 2011). In order to achieve measureable significant improvements in nest success, predator control efforts must be very intense which makes the process expensive and logistically difficult to implement at a large scale. Because new predators fill the void left by removed animals, the impact of predator control is short-lived. Predator control can also have unintended consequences. For instance, intense coyote removal can lead to increased abundance of mesopredators such as red fox and striped skunks which are disproportionately more detrimental to nesting pheasants. Additionally, all raptors are federally-protected under the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and eagles are further protected under the 1940 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Raptor control is not possible under current federal regulatory framework. Habitat management actions such as removing tall trees which could serve as perch or nest sites should be considered to reduce raptor predation. Food plots also provide a secure feeding location for pheasants during winter when raptor mortalities are most common.

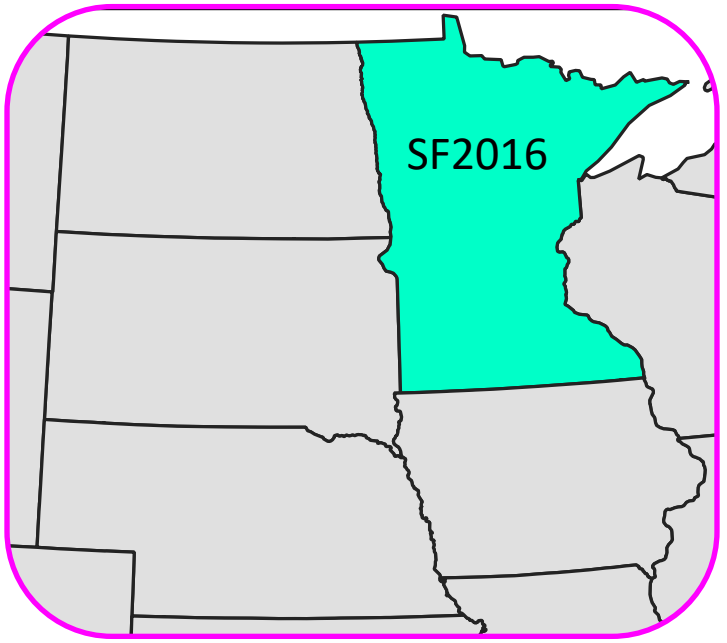
Pheasant populations have risen and fallen in response to habitat availability, mostly grassland nesting habitat, in the absence of targeted predator control. For instance, the pheasant population reached extremely high levels in the mid and late-2000s when favorable weather conditions occurred and abundant CRP grassland habitat was available, and targeted predator control was not used. We recommend that habitat management be used as the primary tool to encourage pheasant population growth (see pheasant habitat best management practices section of this plan). Predation likely has an exaggerated impact on pheasant populations where sub-optimal habitat exists. Where predator control may be considered as a management option, managers should be aware that cost, logistics, and lack of effectiveness often limit success when compared to habitat management.

SDGFP Ring-necked pheasant management plan for South Dakota 2016–2020 https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/pheasant-mngmnt-planpdf.pdf

Section 2. Legislators and governments in the Northern Prairie states do not support bounty programs, …

Minnesota Senate File SF2016. The era of state bounty programs ended in 1965.

In 1965 Governor Karl F. Rolvaag vetoed a controversial bounty bill SF2016, effectively ending the era of state bounty programs in Minnesota paying hunters and trappers to kill predators.



Northern Prairie States

Veto Details

Compiled by the Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

1965 - Governor Karl Rolvaag

Full Bills Vetoed (including pockets): **13**
Pocket Vetoes: **9**
Bills with Line Item Vetoes: **2**
Lines Vetoed: **3** [a]
Full Bills + Bills with Line Vetoes: **15**
Full Bills + Lines Vetoed: **16** [a]

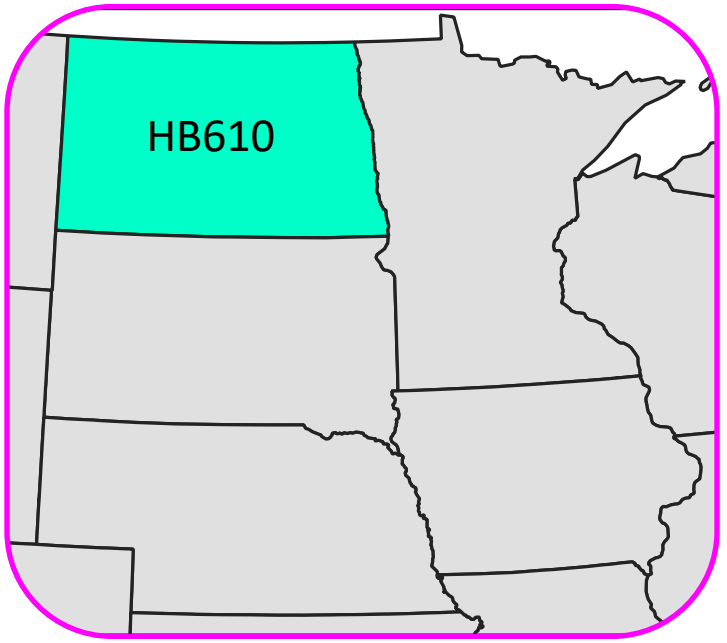
Session	Chapter	Bill #	Companion #	Governor's Message	Topic	Full or Line (# of lines)	Overridden?
64th Legislature	902	SF2016		5/24/1965	Conservation and natural resources bill. **Line Item:** $1,000; For the payment of bear bounties. **Line Item:** $300,000; Miscellaneous Conservation Expenses, payment of wolf, fox and lynx or bobcat bounties.	Line (2)	No attempt

Minnesota Legislative Reference Library. Veto Details: https://www.lrl.mn.gov/vetoes/vetodetails?years=1965

North Dakota House Bill HB610. The era of state bounty programs ended in 1961.

From 1945 to 1959, the state paid over $500,000 in fo bounties, yet the fox population continued to rise. I the early 1950s the fox population started to escalate requiring more and more financial investment an creating a far worse problem for ground-nesting birds.

On July 1st, 1961, the North Dakota Legislatur discontinued state-funded wildlife bounty program after determining that these initiatives were ineffectiv in controlling predator populations and wer financially burdensome.



Northern Prairie States

House Bill No. 610—

House Bill No. 610. A Bill for an Act to amend and re-enact section 20-03-12 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to hunting license fees, and to repeal chapter 20-13 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the predatory animal bounty.

Received from House, 342.
First reading and referred to Committee on Natural Resources, 356.
Reported back, amended, 671.
Amendments adopted, 703.
Second reading and final passage, 747.
Clincher, 748.
Returned to House, amended, 772, 987.
House concurs, 795.
Returned to Senate, signed by Speaker, 869.
Signed by President, 974.

CHAPTER 187

H. B. No. 610
(Anderson of McHenry, Karabensh,)
(Vinje, Berg, Einarson, Christopher)

BOUNTIES AND LICENSE FEES

AN ACT

To amend and reenact section 20-03-12 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to hunting license fees, and to repeal chapter 20-13 of the North Dakota Century Code, relating to the predatory animal bounty.

Be It Enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the State of North Dakota:

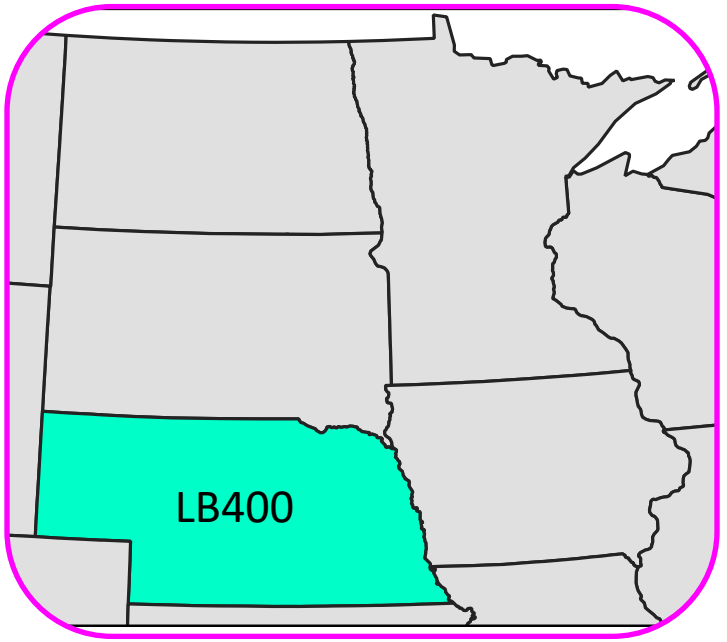
§ 2. **Repeal.)** Chapter 20-13 of the North Dakota Century Code is hereby repealed.

Approved March 16, 1961.

Bounties Revisited. *North Dakota OUTDOORS*, North Dakota Game & Fish Department, November 2011. https://gf.nd.gov/sites/default/files/2016-05/2011-11.pdf
State of North Dakota Journal of the Senate of the 37th Session of the Legislative Assembly. Begun and held at the Capitol at Bismark January 3to March 3, 1961, Inclusive.
Laws passed at the 37th Session of Legislative Assembly of the state of North Dakota. The Legislative Research Committee, Bismark, North Dakota

Nebraska Legislative Bill LB400. Nest Predator Bounty Program failed in 2023.

Legislative Bill LB400 was introduced by Senator Tom Brewer in the Nebraska Legislature on January 12, 2023, aiming to adopt the Nebraska Pheasant Restoration Act, which included provisions for a Nest Predator Bounty Program. LB400 was indefinitely postponed on April 18, 2024, thus, *de-facto* rejecting the bounty program in Nebraska.



Sec. 4. For purposes of the Nebraska Pheasant Restoration Act:

(1) Harvest means to hunt or trap a nest predator;

(2) Nest predator means any badger, coyote, opossum, raccoon, fox, and striped skunk; and

(3) Program means the Nest Predator Bounty Program.

LB400

Adopt the Nebraska Pheasant Restoration Act

Back to Bill Detail | Print Friendly

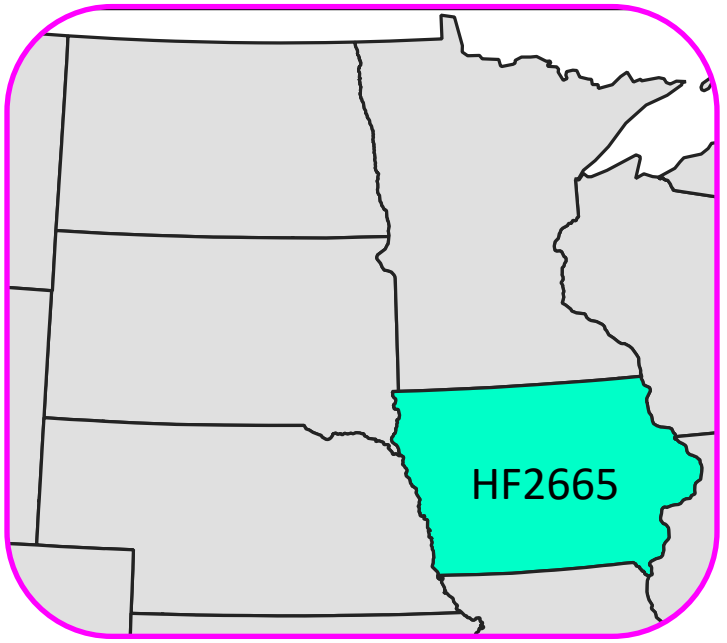
LB400 Actions

Date	Description	Journal	Vote
Apr 18, 2024	Indefinitely postponed	1813	
Jan 03, 2024	Title printed. Carryover bill	55	
Jun 01, 2023	Provisions/portions of LB400 amended into LB565 by AM1314	0	
Jan 27, 2023	Notice of hearing for February 08, 2023	412	
Jan 23, 2023	Hardin name added	369	
Jan 17, 2023	Referred to Natural Resources Committee	259	
Jan 12, 2023	Date of introduction	230	

The official site of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature: https://nebraskalegislature.gov/bills/view_actions.php?DocumentID=50320

Iowa House File HF2665. Raccoon bounty program was effectively defeated in 2024.

House File HF2665 would have used taxpayer dollars to incentivize Iowans to kill raccoons. The bill underwent several amendments, including Amendment H-8268, filed on April 2, 2024. However, HF2665 did not advance beyond this stage and was not enacted into law. Thus, raccoon bounty program was effectively defeated in Iowa's state legislature in 2024.



☐ Northern Prairie States

Bill History Show All ▼

04/02/2024	Amendment H-8268 filed. H.J. 715.
03/26/2024	Amendments H-8248, H-8249, H-8250 and H-8251 filed. H.J. 682.
03/22/2024	Fiscal note.
03/20/2024	Introduced, placed on Ways and Means calendar. H.J. 627.

Fiscal Notes Information

Mar 22, 2024 Trapping of Raccoons, Bounties

H.F. 2665

Section 1. NEW SECTION. **481A.88 Raccoon bounty program — fund.**

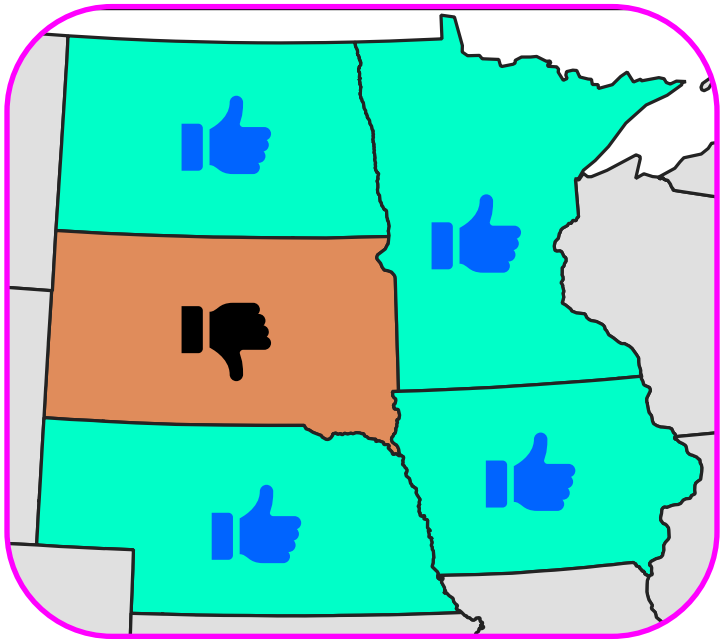
1. The department shall establish and administer a raccoon bounty program, which shall operate during the raccoon trapping season established by the commission by rule.

2. *a.* A raccoon bounty fund is created in the state treasury under the control of the department. The fund shall consist of moneys appropriated to or deposited in the fund, including moneys deposited pursuant to subsection 6, and donations and gifts to the fund obtained from any source. Moneys in the fund are appropriated to the department for the distribution of payment to residents for participation in the raccoon bounty program and as provided in paragraph "*b*".

The Iowa Legislature: https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation/BillBook?ga=90&ba=hf2665

South Dakota House Bill HB1262. An act to terminate bounty payments for nest predators.

House Bill HB1262, aimed at terminating bounty payments for nest predators, was introduced by representative Scott Odenbach and was sponsored by 11 sponsors in SD legislative session 2025. The bill was deferred to the 41st legislative day, effectively defeated by House Agriculture and Natural Resources.



NB: this vote was to defer HB1262,
a "Yea" vote meant voting against the bill.
Yeas 7, **Nays** 5, **Excused** 1, **Absent** 0

Northern Prairie States

Auch, J.	Yea	👎
Goodwin, T.	Yea	👎
Hunt J.	Nay	👍
Ismay, T.	Excused	😐
Ladner, T.	Yea	👎
Nolz, K.	Nay	👍
Peterson, D.	Yea	👎
Rice, K.	Nay	👍
~~Vasgaard, R.~~	Yea	👎
Van Diepen, K.	Yea	👎
Wittman, K.	Nay	👍
Gosch, S.	Nay	👍
Overweg, M.	Yea	👎
Shubeck, J.	-	-

25.833.13 100th Legislative Session 1262

2025 South Dakota Legislature

House Bill 1262

Introduced by: ***Representative*** *Odenbach*

An Act to terminate bounty payments for nest predators, transfer moneys to the general fund, and declare an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA:

Section 1. That § 40-36-9 be AMENDED:

South Dakota Legislature, House Bill 1262: https://sdlegislature.gov/Session/Bill/26187

Section 3. Bounty schemes: decades of testing, millions of dollars wasted — proven failure

To avoid a shipwreck, should sailors blow harder, or lower sails?

Do we have any data that this has increased the pheasant population?

In the sixth year of the NPBP implementation South Dakota GFP confirmed that there is no data to show the program has increased the state's ground nesting bird's population.

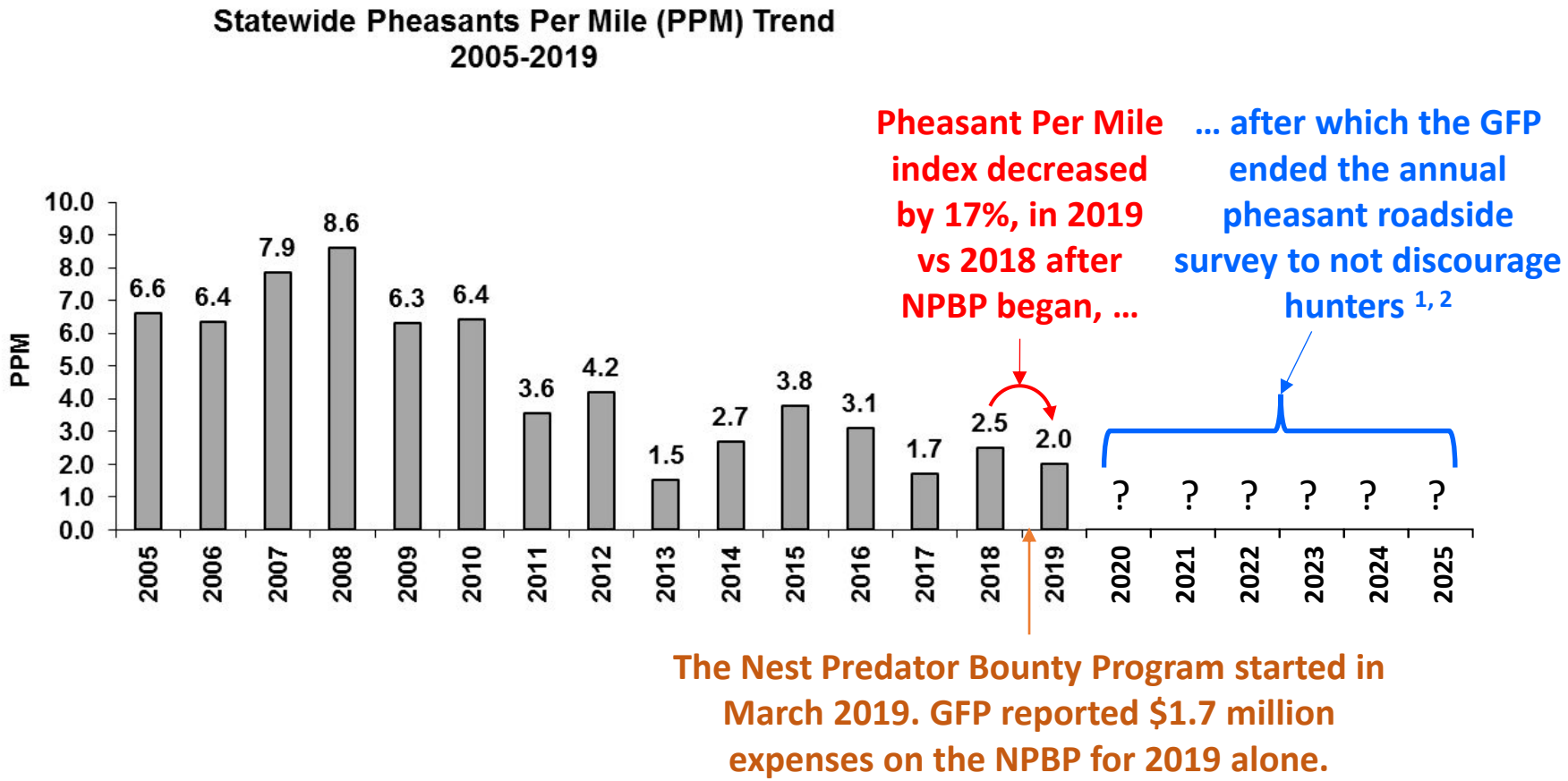
Sioux Falls, Jan. 16, 2024, the State House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources. Representative Kadyn Wittman (left), GFP Secretary Kevin Robling (right).

"State lacks data to prove trapping program increases the pheasant population," South Dakota Searchlight, January 16, 2024:

https://southdakotasearchlight.com/2024/01/16/state-lacks-data-to-prove-trapping-program-increases-the-pheasant-population-official-says/

Pheasant population decreased by 17% after the NPBP started

The statewide Pheasants Per Mile (PPM) index for the 2019 pheasant brood survey (conducted from 25 July through 15 August) decreased by 17% (2.47 to 2.04), compared to 2018.



South Dakota GFP Pheasant brood survey report 2019: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/PBR_2019FINAL.pdf

GFP Live Trap Give Away Program: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/2020_Bounty_Information_-_Fisk_and_Robling.pdf

[1] South Dakota Searchlight | May 4 2024 | *Commission dismisses calls to reinstate annual pheasant count*

[2] Outdoor News | Oct 2 2025 | *SD pheasant season could be special, though no brood survey frustrates hunters*

A science research does not confirm that trapping increases duck and pheasant nest success in South Dakota

Scientific research conducted at South Dakota State University from 2007 to 2010, aimed at evaluating whether trapping could improve duck and pheasant nest success, found no difference between control and treatment sites.

CHAPTER 4: Conclusions

Management Implications

Statistical analyses of Mayfield nest success for both ducks and pheasants indicated that there was no difference at the 95% level between control sites and treatment sites.

Docken, N.R., "Effects of Block Predator Management on Duck and Pheasant Nest Success in Eastern South Dakota" (2011). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 5135: https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6155&context=etd/

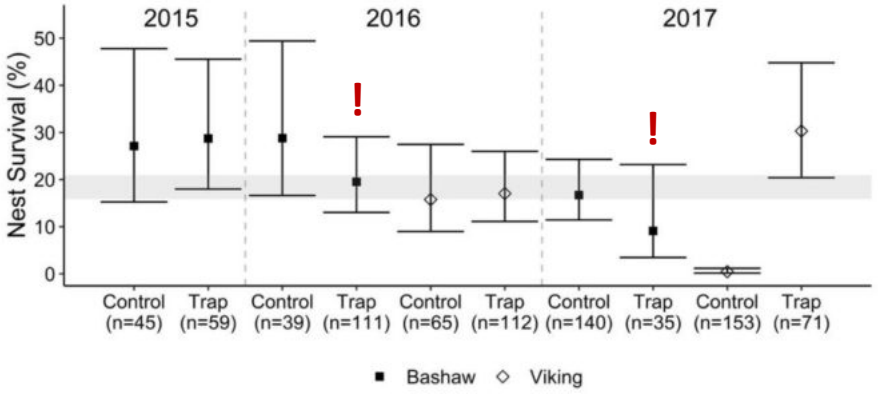
Another science research in Prairie Pothole Region does not confirm that trapping increases upland nesting duck species nest success.

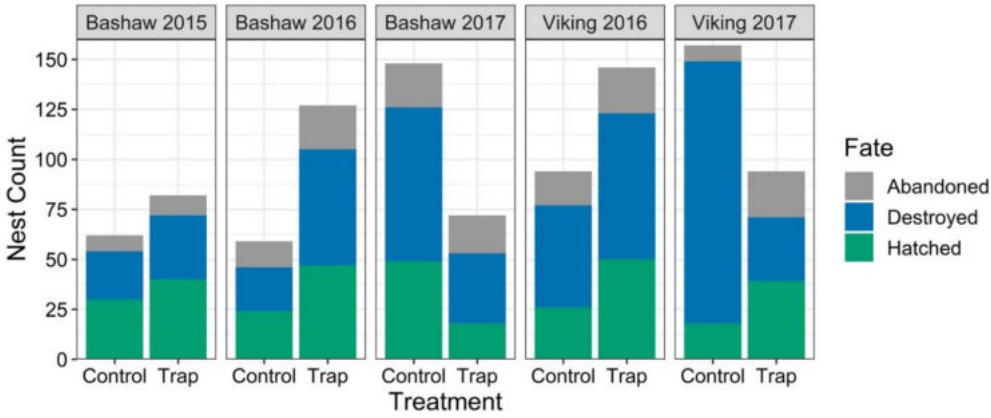
Article

Trappings of Success: Predator Removal for Duck Nest Survival in Alberta Parklands

Emily M. Blythe * and Mark S. Boyce Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2E9, Canada; boyce@ualberta.ca

Received: 10 February 2020; Accepted: 15 March 2020; Published: 24 March 2020





PPR where three-dimensional structure of vegetation is considerably greater. During 2015–2017, we evaluated nest survival on control and predator-removal plots at two study areas in the parklands of central Alberta, Canada. In the second year of the study, we transposed predator removal to control for habitat effects. Estimates of 34-day nest survival did not significantly differ between trapped ($\bar{x}$ = 20.9%, 95% CI = 13.2%–33.7%) and control ($\bar{x}$ = 17.8%, 95% CI = 10.5%–30.0%) plots in any year. We do not recommend predator removal be continued in Alberta parklands due to its ineffectiveness at improving duck nest survival at the local scale.

5. Conclusions

Predator removal was ineffective at increasing duck nesting success and at time of writing there are no plans to continue the predator-control program in the Alberta parklands. Prior to implementing any form of predator management, the benefits should be assessed using a rigorous study design and weighed against potential consequences, including those that might be unintentional or counterintuitive [30]. The substantial resources required to implement predator removal could be redirected at non-lethal mitigation methods that often can be more effective and less controversial [30]

Blythe, E. M., & Boyce, M. S. (2020). Trappings of success: predator removal for duck nest survival in Alberta parklands. Diversity, 12(3), 119. https://www.mdpi.com/1424-2818/12/3/119

A study published in ‘Research’ information bulletin by U.S. Department Of The Interior did not find a statistical difference in nest failures between removal areas and control areas.

Number of Predators Removed Was Unrelated to Nest Success

Intensive Seasonal Predator Removal Had Little Effect on Duck Nest Success in Waterfowl Production Areas

Nest success of dabbling ducks in Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA's) in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota is usually less than the 15–20% needed to maintain duck populations. Predation by mammals, especially red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), striped skunks (*Mephitis mephitis*), raccoons (*Procyon lotor*), badgers (*Taxidea taxus*), and Franklin's ground squirrels (*Spermophilus franklinii*) causes most nest failures. Managers seek ways to reduce depredations of eggs in duck nests in WPA's.

Predator Removal Resulted in a Small Increase in Duck Nest Success

4% other. Duck nest success in uplands was 1 to 52% in removal areas and 1 to 62% in control areas. Mean nest success in uplands was 13.5% in removal areas and 5.6% in control areas ($P = 0.05$). Mean nest success in wetlands was 2.2% in removal areas and 15.9% in control areas ($P = 0.75$), but samples were small. Overall causes of nest failures averaged 86% depredated, 11% abandoned, and 3% other, with no difference ($P = 0.78$) between removal areas and control areas.

Predator Removal Was Costly

Trappers (includes trap-attenders) recorded the total time they spent in each removal area conducting predator removal. Areas were trapped for an average of 97 days, and trappers visited nearly all areas daily. The average duration of daily visits was 1.4 h/area. One trapper could service no more than 4 WPA's/8-h workday. By using these figures and the 1990 wage of $8.56/h paid to trappers in Minnesota, we calculated the direct salary costs of removing predators from each area to be $1,661 (97 days × 8 h/day × $8.56/h ÷ 4 WPA's). This does not include costs of training, equipment and supplies, transportation, supervision, and overhead.

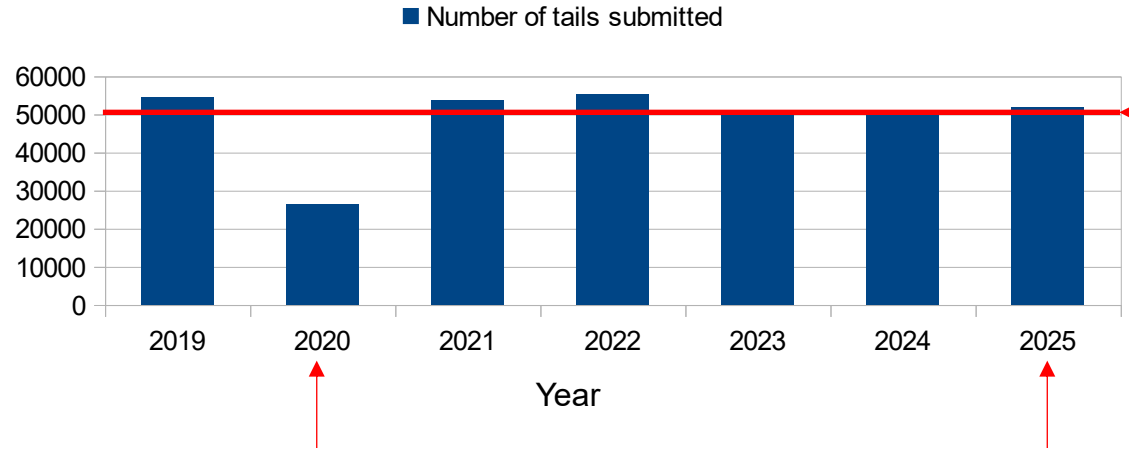
Intensive Seasonal Predator Removal Had Little Effect on Duck Nest Success in Waterfowl Production Areas. Information bulletin U.S. Department Of The Interior, National Biological Survey https://npshistory.com/publications/wildlife/nbs-rib/94-80.pdf
Sargeant, A. B., Sovada, M. A., & Shaffer, T. L. (1995). Seasonal predator removal relative to hatch rate of duck nests in waterfowl production areas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 507-513. https://www.jstor.org/stable/3782962

No evidence shows that the bounty program reduces predator populations

After 7 years of implementing the bounty program, there is no evidence that it has any effect on the population size of the target species. GFP does not provide field census data for targeted species. The number of killed indigenous animals reaches 50,000 every year, limited to $500,000 in allocated funds and has no signs of decrease, according to the NPBP tail tracker.

In 2020 GFP reduced bounty from $10 to $5 per tail. It halved the interest to “recreation”, “outdoor activity” and “trapping”.

In 2025 GFP ended NPBP in June (1 month ahead of schedule) due to an increase in the number of tails submitted.



Number of tails is not limited by animals available in field. It is limited by $500,000 bounties, paid out of public funds.

Price cut from $10 to $5 per tail in 2020.

NPBP has nothing to do with conservation, education or wildlife management.

NPBP is about money.

Number of tails submitted exceeded the limit 50,000 one month before the end of the program in 2025.

This may indicate reproductive compensation effect of mesopredators’ populations.

SD Nest Predator Bounty Program "Tail Tracker" Dashboard: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/e7bbbd6fa93b48c6a31985aa7c57c5ff
Early NPBP termination 2025: https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid0zzYMPnmA4NHnejSH3VJWcs8L3DDssL87RKNJoTKMsDD3mWryf25efRtx4rR14iyKl

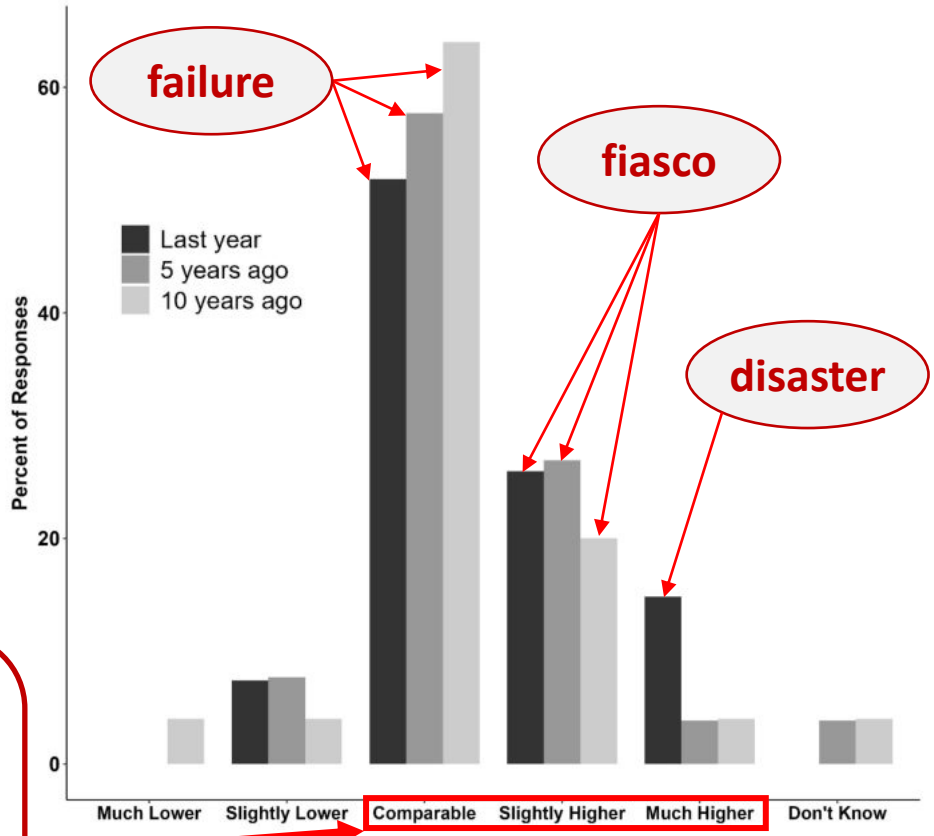
No evidence shows that the bounty program reduces predator populations

https://gfp.sd.gov/bounty-program/

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks is focused on reducing localized populations of nest predators as a way to enhance pheasant and duck nest success, ...

In 2025, GFP completed a landowner survey to gather local information on factors affecting sage-grouse abundance. This is not a science-based field population survey, but it is the only predator abundance estimation GFP is able to produce.

According to GFP's own data >70% of respondents reported that mammalian predator abundance in 2024, excluding red fox and coyote (e.g., raccoon, striped skunk, etc.), was **comparable to or higher than in previous years**.



This outcome may be consistent with a reproductive compensation backfire, where chaotic killing increases population rebound, turning a multi-million-dollar management program into a mechanism that amplifies the problem it claims to solve and intensifies pressure on ground-nesting birds.

Q9. How would you describe the abundance of **mammalian predators** in 2024 other than red fox or coyote (e.g., raccoon, striped skunk, etc.) compared to each of the following time frames?

The Nest Predator Bounty Program. Program Details: https://gfp.sd.gov/bounty-program/2024
Greater Sage-Grouse Landowner/Producer Survey Results: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/sglandownersurvey_2024summary.pdf

A story of bounty system in North Dakota.

North Dakota Game and Fish Department published a report “North Dakota Bounty Data 1897 to 1961” with a brief history of the bounty systems, which included the status of fox bounties in all US states.

NORTH DAKOTA BOUNTY DATA 1897 to 1961

By Arthur W. Adams

A B S T R A C T

A brief history of the bounty system in North Dakota from 1897 until bounties were discontinued in 1961 is presented in this report.

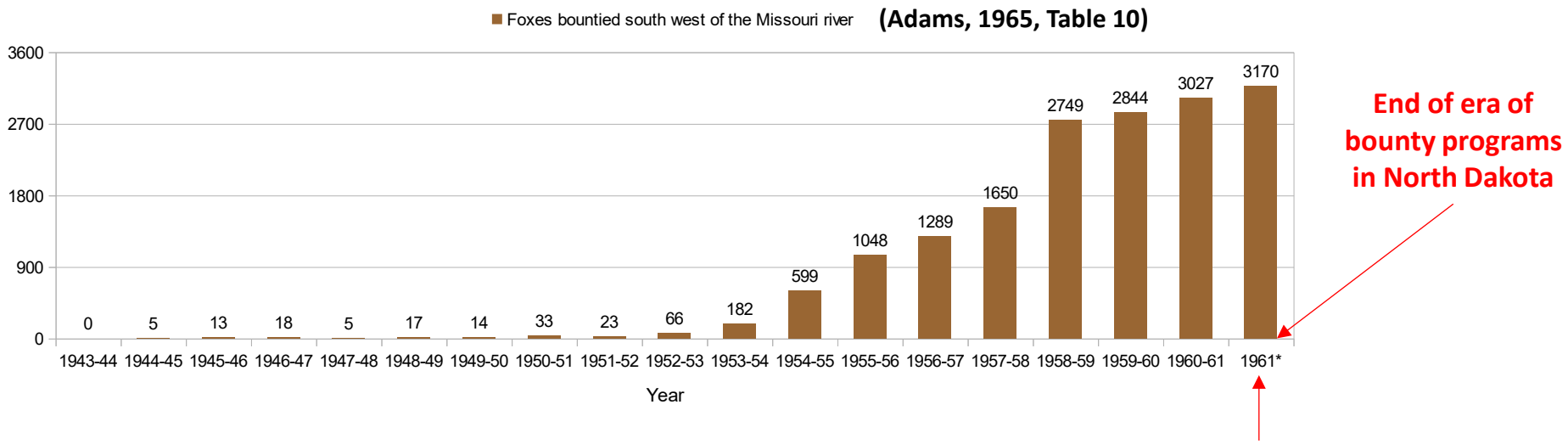
Statistics on the numbers of coyotes, foxes, bobcats, and magpies bounties, the cost of these bounties, and related information are presented in tabular form.

A summary of the current status of fox bounties in all states is also given.

Adams, A. W. 1965. North Dakota bounty data, 1897 to 1961. N. D. Game Fish Dep. P-R Proj. W-67-R-5. 15 pp.

North Dakota. Implementation of bounty program led to rapid growth in the fox population in early 1950s.

From 1945 to 1959, the state paid over $500,000 in fox bounties, yet the fox population continued to rise. In the early 1950s the fox population started to escalate, requiring more and more financial investment and creating a far worse problem for ground-nesting birds.



* Three months only (April, May, June). Bounty discontinued July 1, 1961.

"Bounties Revisited" | North Dakota Outdoors | ND Game and Fish Dept: https://gf.nd.gov/sites/default/files/2016-05/2011-11.pdf

Adams, A. W. 1965. North Dakota bounty data, 1897 to 1961. N. D. Game Fish Dep. P-R Proj. W-67-R-5. 15 pp.

U.S. States where fox bounty programs were implemented

In 1960s The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks sent out a questionnaire to determine the status of the fox bounty in the continental United states. Seventeen states had a fox bounty.

In no state has the bounty program affected fox populations (Adams, 1965)

- **States, where fox bounty programs took place**
- **States, where no fox bounty programs took place**

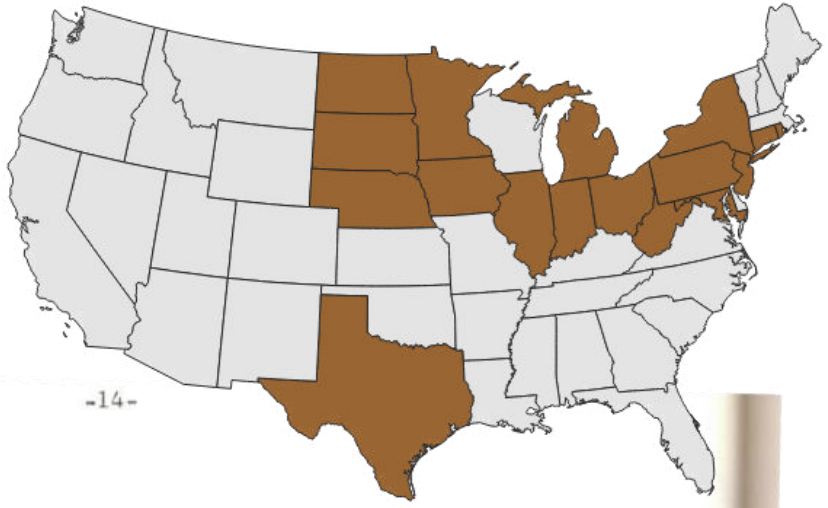


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Table 11 (cont.)

State	Do you now have a fox bounty?	Paid by county or state?	Are license fees used?	Has the bounty affected your fox population?
Massachusetts	No	--	--	--
Michigan	Yes	State	Yes	No
Minnesota	Yes	Both	Yes	No
Mississippi	No	--	--	No
Missouri	No	--	--	--
Montana	No	--	--	--
Nebraska	Yes	Co.	--	No
...	...	...	...	...

Adams, A. W. 1965. North Dakota bounty data, 1897 to 1961. N. D. Game Fish Dep. P-R Proj. W-67-R-5. 15 pp.

Section 4. Why does this not work as expected?

Does cosmetic action solve a structural problem?

Reason 1. Bounty System ≠ Predator Control.
Bounty effect is too diffuse to affect mesopredators' populations.

Larry Fredrickson (former pheasant/furbearer research biologist for SD Game, Fish and Parks)

Chamberlain SD

larryjan@midstatesd.net

Comment:

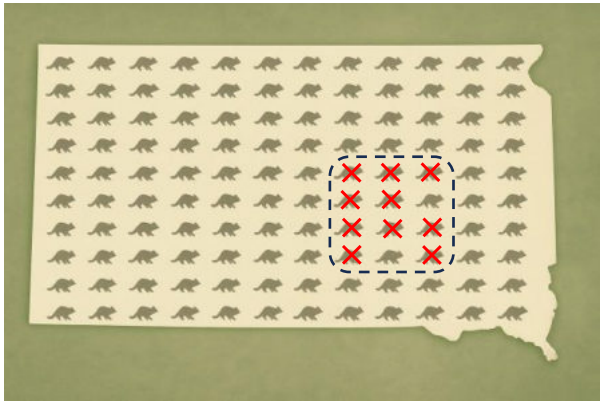
I was a former pheasant/furbearer Research biologist for Game, Fish and Parks. And the study I did on organized landowner sportsmen harvest by trapping and it's effect on pheasant population (1970-1975) did not reveal a significant increase in the pheasant population and was quoted incorrectly by keith Fisk (March 5, the Dailey Republic) as a positive result. Since the difference was not significant it could have been a random result. No scientific data I know of shows that predator bounties ever resulted in a benefit to game birds. Besides the harvest time was in the fall for fur value in my study (a different situation).
All the predator prey study results from Carl Trautman and myself showed that you needed a very intense control effort using all means including poison (banned in 1972) and had to reduce fox, raccoon, badger and skunk population by 80 to 90 percent to get the pheasant increase. The remaining predators under a bounty removal system could still do great damage to the pheasant population.
There is no way enough predators could be taken by live trapping alone to reduce them enough to increase pheasants. You would only be taking off the reproductive surplus. Therefore this is a waste of sportsmen's money (mine included).
Instead I mentioned in several newspaper article the money should be spent on a state run CRP program. The Federal CRP program never will result in enough money to double our pheasant population since it is also distributed to many other states. We need to have a statewide goal of 1.5 million acres in dense nesting cover. We now have 2.47 BPM and could then go to 7.9 (as in 2007) birds per mile. Using bounties again is like re-inventing the wheel. We all went through that before in the 50's 60's and 70's.

Public comments on the NPBP, April 2019: https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/Commission_Minutes_4.2019_with_Comments_.pdf

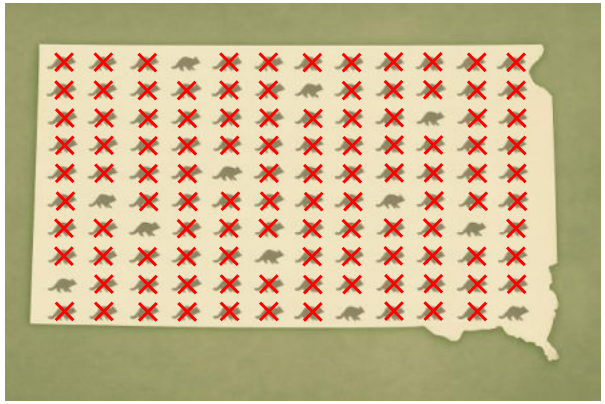
Reason 1. Bounty System ≠ Predator Control.
A schematic visualization of Fredrickson's explanation.

> Our predator prey studies (1965-early 70's)indicated that by intensive predator control on three 100 square mile study areas(using poison drop baits, den litter control, trapping, shooting, aerial gunning and other methods)that you had to remove 80 to 90 percent of the predator populations to even effect the brood stock(reproductive part)of the predator population. So it would be impossible to have much effect by only trapping them.

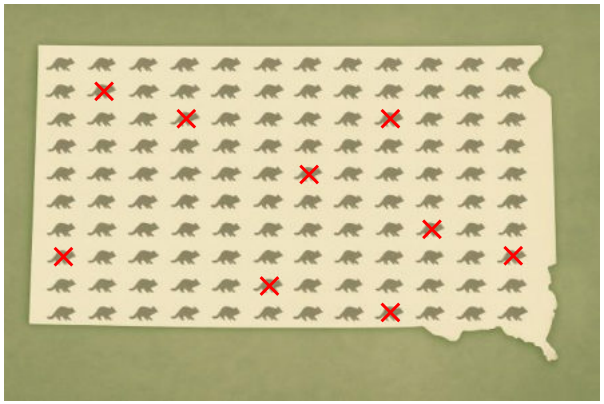
How intense predator removal was in successful case studies.



How intense predator removal should be to increase nesting success statewide.



How NPBP is implemented.



Bounty system is not 'Predator Control'. Bounty system is a chaotic, diffuse, senseless, expensive, and indiscriminate killing.

Public comments on the NPBP, March 2020: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/Public_Comments_1.pdf

Reason 1. Bounty System ≠ Predator Control.
A schematic visualization of Fredrickson's explanation.

Predator management programs can be successful for a short period of time if they are carefully designed, implemented in a small or isolated area (e.g., island) and when employing a dedicated team, or using non-lethal methods [1, 2, 3, 4]. Indiscriminate statewide killing does not appear to be an effective preventative and remedial method for reducing depredations [5].

Multi-million-dollar investments in bounties change
which animals are alive, but **not how many there are**

[1] Chodachek, K. D., Chamberlain, M. J., 2006. Effects of predator removal on upland nesting ducks in North Dakota grassland fragments.

[2] Treves, A., Krofel, M. and McManus, J., 2016. Predator control should not be a shot in the dark. Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, 14(7), pp.380-388.

[3] Kirkwood, R., Sutherland, D.R., Murphy, S. and Dann, P., 2014. Lessons from long-term predator control: a case study with the red fox. Wildlife Research, 41(3), pp.222-232.

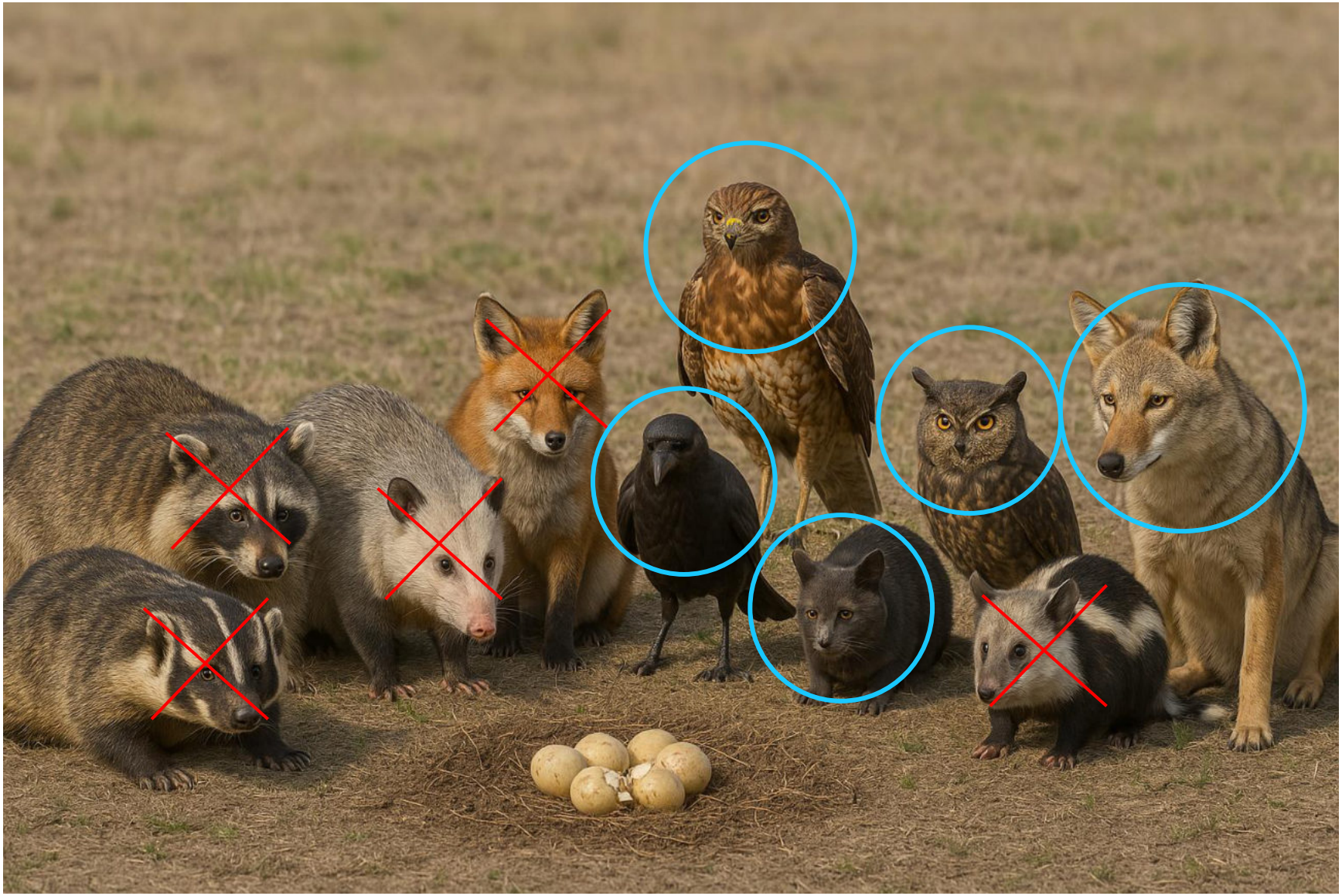
[4] Lieury, N., Ruette, S., Devillard, S., Albaret, M., Drouyer, F., Baudoux, B. and Millon, A., 2015. Compensatory immigration challenges predator control: An experimental evidence-based approach improves management. The Journal of Wildlife Management, 79(3), pp.425-434.

[5] Peebles, K.A., Wielgus, R.B., Maletzke, B.T., Swanson, M.E., 2013. Effects of remedial sport hunting on cougar complaints and livestock depredations. PLoS one, 8(11), p.e79713.

Reason 2. Compensatory predation.
Nest predators of South Dakota are not only NPBP target species.

× The Nest Predator Bounty Program aimed at exterminating 5 target species of indigenous ground-nest predators.

○ However, there are several other predator species that also destroy ground nests in South Dakota.



Reason 2. Compensatory predation.

Five target species of the Nest Predator Bounty Program are only a small fraction (< 1/6) of the nest-predators that destroy ground nests in South Dakota. A significant proportion of non-target nest-destroyers, though less abundant and opportunistic, become much more effective and complete the job of the nest destruction when target species are absent, or habitats are scarce. A 7-year experimental study on mesomammal removal showed that reductions in one predator guild were compensated by increased losses from others, so total nest loss did not fall as expected (Ellis-Felege et al., 2012).

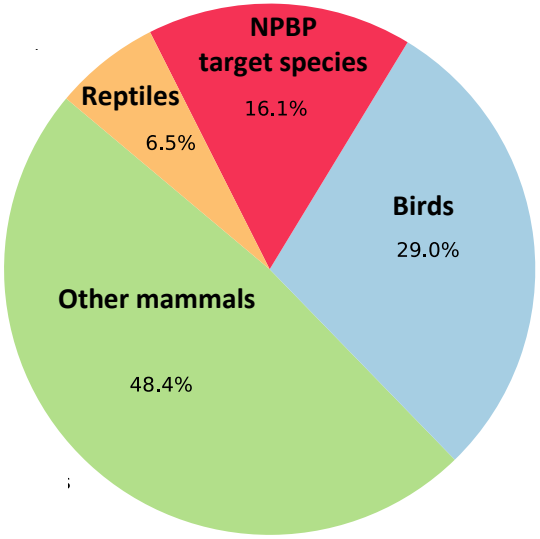
NPBP target species

- ↑ Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) [1w]
- ● American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) [1w]
- ● Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) [1w]
- ↑ Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*) [1w]
- ↑ Striped Skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) [1w]

Other mammals

GFP pretends that feral cats do not exist

- ↑ Feral Cat (*Felis catus*) [s]
- ● Coyote (*Canis latrans*) [1w]
- ↑ Gray Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) [1w]
- ○ Plains Spotted Skunk (*Spilogale interrupta*) [1w]
- ○ Mink (*Neogale vison*) [1w]
- ○ Least Weasel (*Mustela nivalis*) [1w]
- ○ Long-tailed Weasel (*Mustela frenata*) [1w]
- ○ Ermine/Short-tailed Weasel (*Mustela erminea*) [1s]
- ○ 13-lined Ground Squirrel (*Ictidomys tridecemlineatus*) [1w]
- ○ Eastern Chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*) [1w]
- ○ Brown Rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) [1w]
- ○ Feral Dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*) [1s]
- ○ Franklin's ground squirrel (*Poliocitellus franklinii*) [1w]



Birds

- ↑ American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*) [2w]
- ↑ Common Raven (*Corvus corax*) [2w]
- ↑ Black-billed Magpie (*Pica hudsonia*) [2w]
- ● Great Horned Owl (*Bubo virginianus*) [2w]
- ● Blue Jay (*Cyanocitta cristata*) [2w]
- ● Barred Owl (*Strix varia*) [2w]
- ○ Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) [2w]
- ○ Northern Harrier (*Circus hudsonius*) [2s]
- ○ Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) [2w]

Reptiles

- ○ Bull/Gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer sayi*) [3w]
- ○ Plains Garter Snake (*Thamnophis radix*) [3s]

↑ Most effective ground nest predators
● Moderately effective ground nest predators
○ Opportunistic ground nest predators

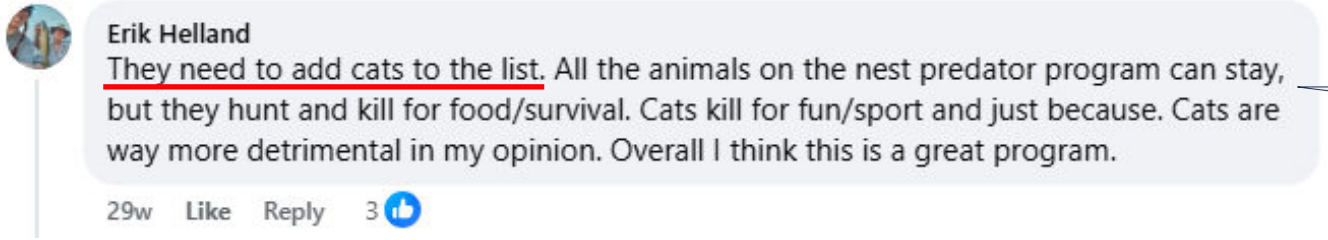
w – Wikipedia
s – science papers

[1] SDGFP's Mammals checklist https://gfp.sd.gov/images/WebMaps/Viewer/WAP/Website/Checklists/Mammals%20Checklist.pdf
[2] SDGFP's Birds checklist https://gfp.sd.gov/images/WebMaps/Viewer/WAP/Website/Checklists/Birds%20checklist.pdf
[3] SDGFP's Reptiles checklist https://gfp.sd.gov/images/WebMaps/Viewer/WAP/Website/Checklists/Amphibians%20and%20Reptiles%20checklist.pdf

Ellis-Felege, S. N., Conroy, M. J., Palmer, W. E., & Carroll, J. P. (2012). Predator reduction results in compensatory shifts in losses of avian ground nests. *Journal of Applied Ecology*, *49*(3), 661-669 https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2012.02126.x

Key

Most effective	Regularly depredate eggs/chicks, major source of nest loss	raccoon, skunk, fox, corvids, rat snakes
Moderately effective	Eggs/chicks are a noticeable but not primary diet item; predation events fairly routine where birds nest	badger, mink, gulls, some large owls
Opportunistic	Only take eggs/chicks under special circumstances; not a staple prey class	deer, squirrels, coyotes, most hawks



Discussion about the 2025 NPBP season

NB. Peer-reviewed estimates show free-ranging cats are likely the largest human-caused source of bird deaths in the U.S., their kills are systematically undercounted (most aren't brought home).

Their **local kill rates exceed those of comparable native predators** due to unnaturally high densities. Free-ranging domestic cats kill **1.3–4.0 billion birds** each year in the United States alone.

The bounty program does not protect nests, it only **changes the name of the predator** doing the damage

Kays, R., Dunn, R. R., Parsons, A. W., McDonald, B., Perkins, T., Powers, S. A., ... & Roetman, P. (2020). The small home ranges and large local ecological impacts of pet cats. *Animal Conservation*, *23*(5), 516-523.

Loss, S. R., Will, T., & Marra, P. P. (2013). The impact of free-ranging domestic cats on wildlife of the United States. Nature communications, 4(1), 1396.

Discussion about NPBP 2025: https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid02KiLCAyNoHcT8VfTRNSmvaijVf7mEQAuSPhwEgtnn5NySKiKrYgSsyZVWQFHMBhpzl

Reason 3. Cutting tails ≠ Protecting nests
NPBP participants are motivated to collect tails rather than protect birds

Patrick Hybertson
Sioux Falls SD
Position: support

Comment:

I submitted a Word document previously but to ensure that what I had to say is read I have included it in this comments box as well.

I am all for the Bounty Program again and thought that it was a great way to get the youth in SD involved in trapping. My only question is if there was truly consideration for a second year of a bounty program would halving everything from the first year still pull in the public's interest? I am asking from a trapping mindset where trappers are influenced by the fur prices of various species where one may be higher than the other and that's what is targeted for the year.

and type of traps set, species caught, and trap type of capture. The trapper was paid $19,200 per year, plus a bonus of $1000 if apparent nest success was greater than 50%, which occurred in both years. (Chodachek & Chamberlain, 2006)

possible choice of removal methods. Programs that stress numbers of predators removed over quality of removal effort are likely to be ineffective.
(Sargeant et al., 1995)

Public comments on the Nest Predators Bounty Program

Lucas Fischer
Hartford SD
Position: support

Comment:

Five dollars a tail is not enough money cover the expenses. Ten dollars a tail is a good number.

NPBP has nothing to do with conservation, education or wildlife management.

NPBP is about money.

Nest Predator Bounty

Jon Sorensen
Sioux Falls SD
sorensen5000@gmail.com

Comment:

" Participants may submit up to $590 worth of tails per household."

You can keep your Bounty Program!!! And your cheap Live traps! Ill spend my money in another state from now on to trap! You make a program and then come up with all the rules after people have spent hundred on equipment and traps for this program and no you limit them to were they cant even re-coop the cost. Badly planned and badly organized as 99% of every program done in South Dakota for wildlife! Lost all my approval and Support of anything for GFP from here out!

Chodachek, K. D., & Chamberlain, M. J. (2006). Effects of predator removal on upland nesting ducks in North Dakota grassland fragments.
Sargeant, A. B., Sovada, M. A., & Shaffer, T. L. (1995). Seasonal predator removal relative to hatch rate of duck nests in waterfowl production areas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 507-513. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3782962.pdf
Public comments 2019.04: https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/Commission_Minutes_4.2019_with_Comments_.pdf
Public comments 2020.03: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/Public_Comments_1.pdf

Reason 4. Reproductive Compensation (Project Coyote example)

project coyote
PROTECTING WILD CARNIVORES
FOSTERING THRIVING ECOSYSTEMS

Disrupting coyote families affects yearling coyotes' ability to learn hunting and foraging behaviors from older generations. This can lead to more conflicts with farmed animals, as inexperienced coyotes may be less cautious around humans, unfamiliar with the area, and more likely to be attracted to human food, increasing the likelihood of future conflicts.

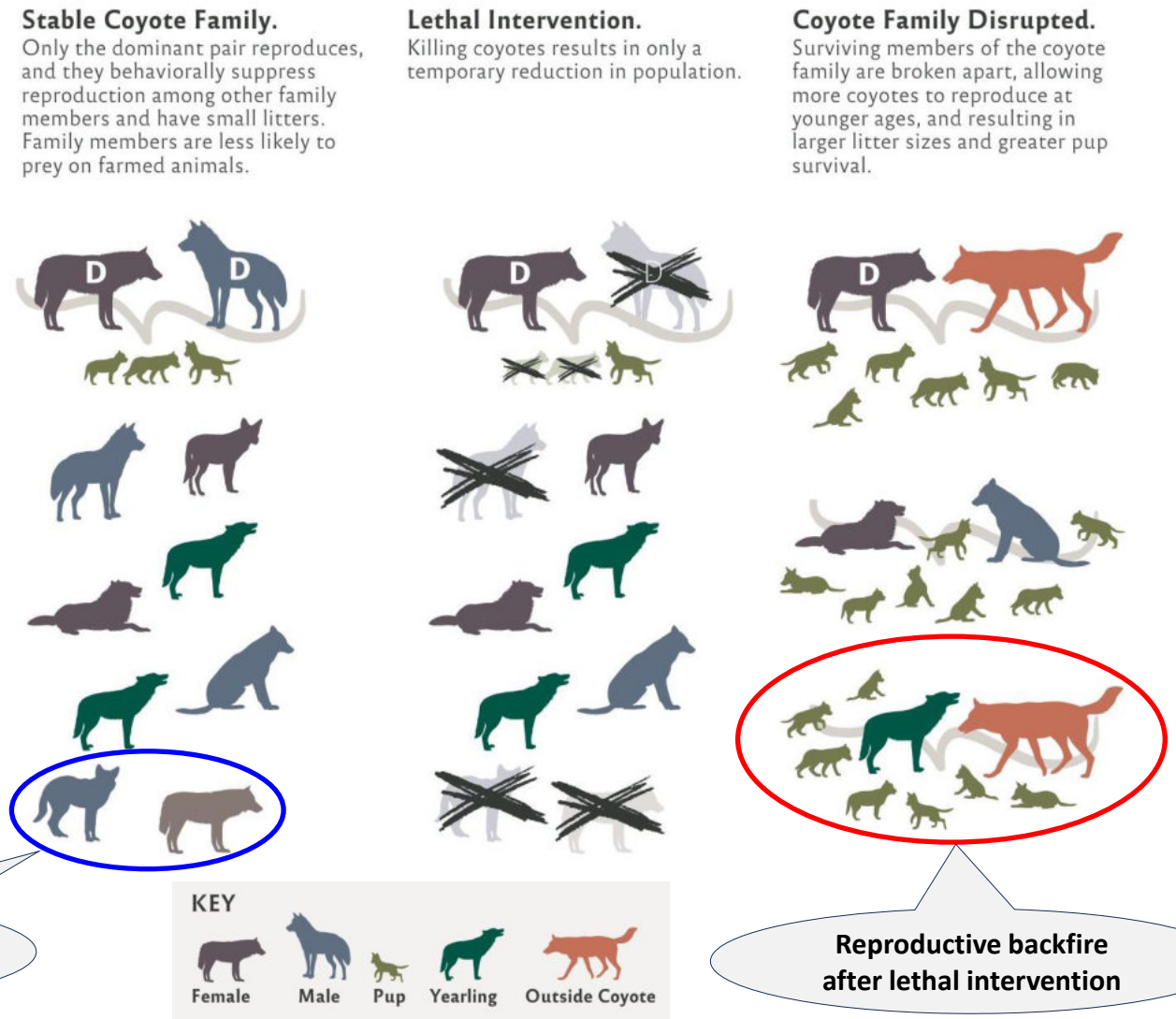
Project coyote: https://projectcoyote.org/act/learning-hub/coyote-profile/

Bret Lythgoe
It's exceedingly difficult to reason with coyote killers. They're not motivated by reasoning or empirical evidence. They're motivated by blood lust, cruelty and sadism.

17 ч. Нравится Ответить 19

Посмотреть все 16 ответов

Jon Stone
Thanks for this clear and concise explanation of coyote population dynamics. I worked in wildlife management and we knew "the more you kill the more you get" principle with coyotes. Ultimately we found that teaching coyotes to fear humans was the best overall approach. We used non lethal deterrence including paintball guns with ball containing pepper spray, BB guns and other methods so they learned that people should be avoided. Numbers of coyote encounters dropped to almost zero after two years of practicing active deterrents.



Stable population without lethal intervention

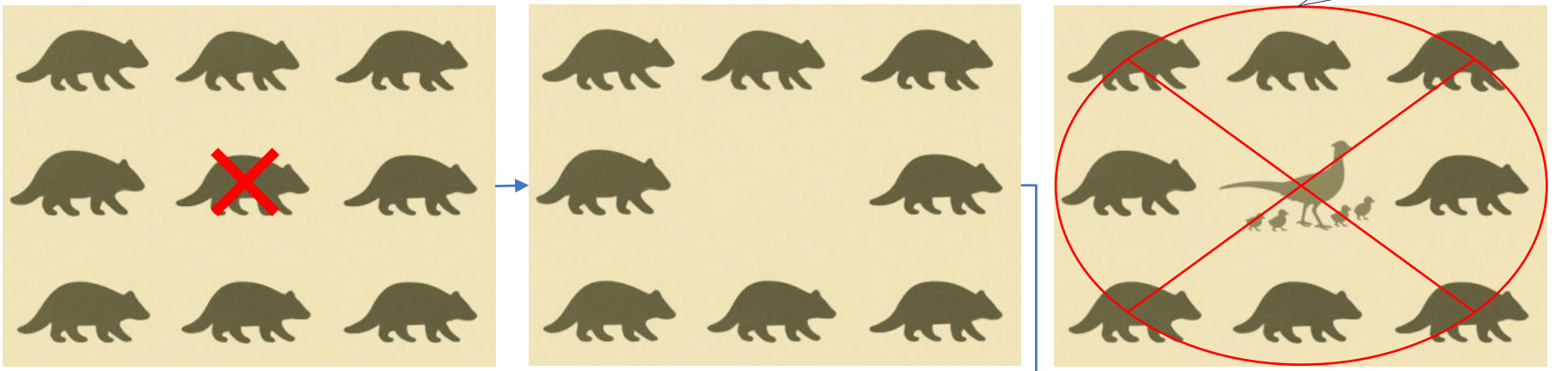
Reproductive backfire after lethal intervention

Reason 5. Predator removal ≠ Nest success

Nature often responds differently than people expect.

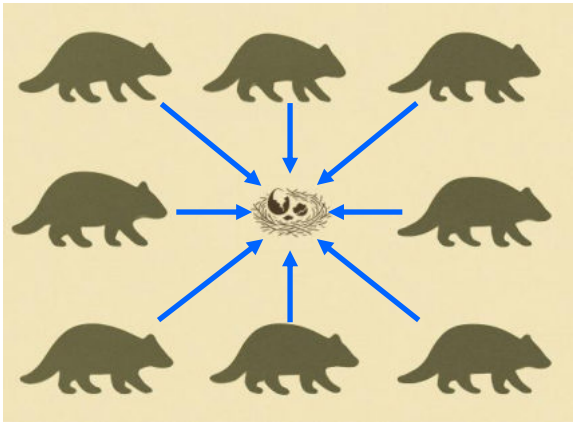
Drinkers of 0-calories beverages hope to lose weight. Instead, they get increased appetite, altered gut microbiota, and weight gain.
Antibiotics overuse expect to cure infections quickly. Instead, it selects for resistant bacteria, making infections harder to treat.
Bounty program does not increase nesting success. It leads to transient/compensatory predation and reproductive compensation.

× What NPBP proponents expected: ×

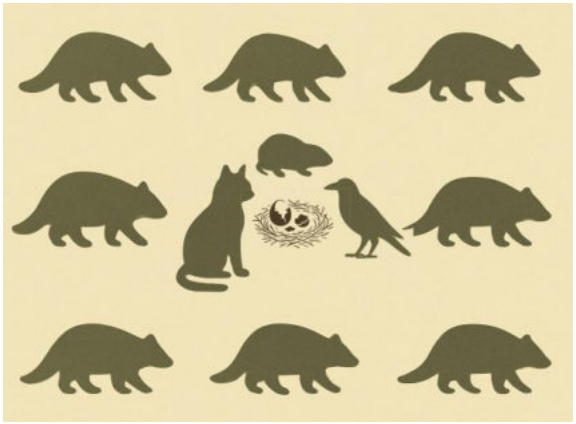


✓ How the nature responds in reality: ✓

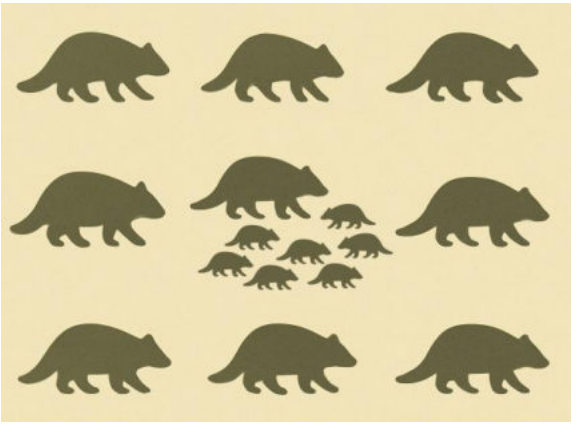
Transient predation



Compensatory predation



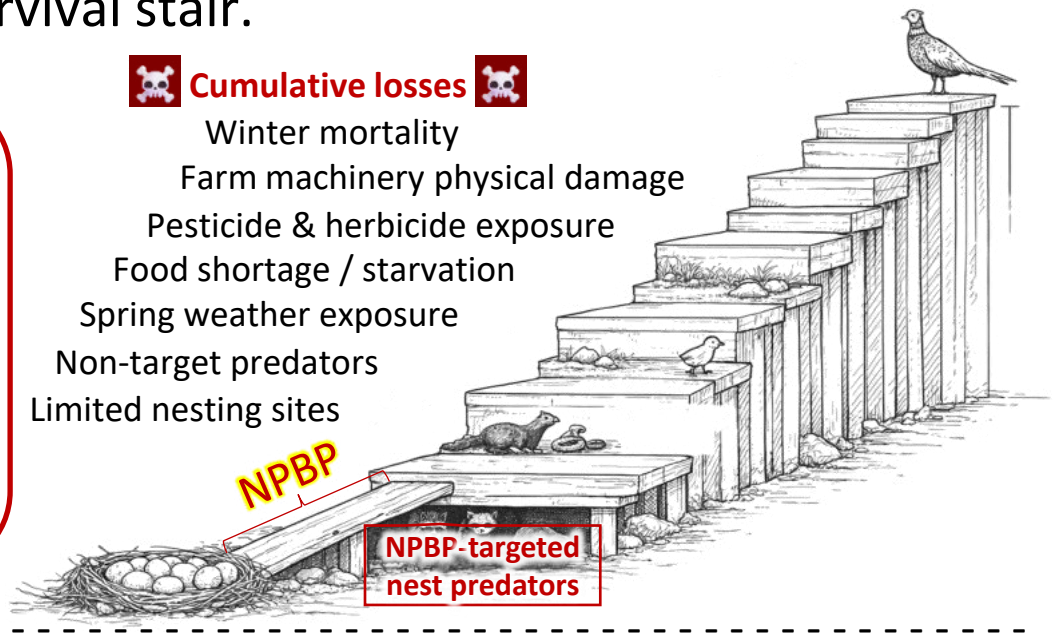
Reproductive compensation



Reason 6. Nest success ≠ Population growth.
Survival stair.

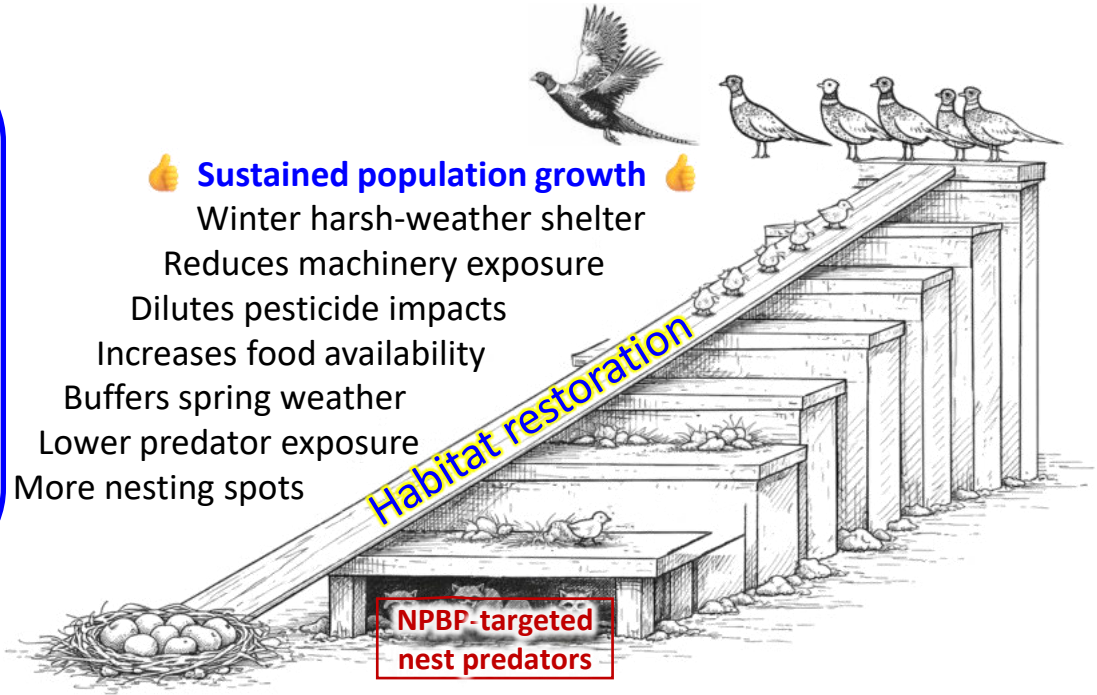
Predator removal - <u>recurring annual cost</u>

affects birds only at the nest stage. It does not reduce post-fledging losses from weather, food limitation, agricultural disturbance, chemical exposure, or winter mortality, nor does it improve adult survival. Because these later life-stage bottlenecks remain unchanged, short-term nest success does not reliably translate into long-term population growth.

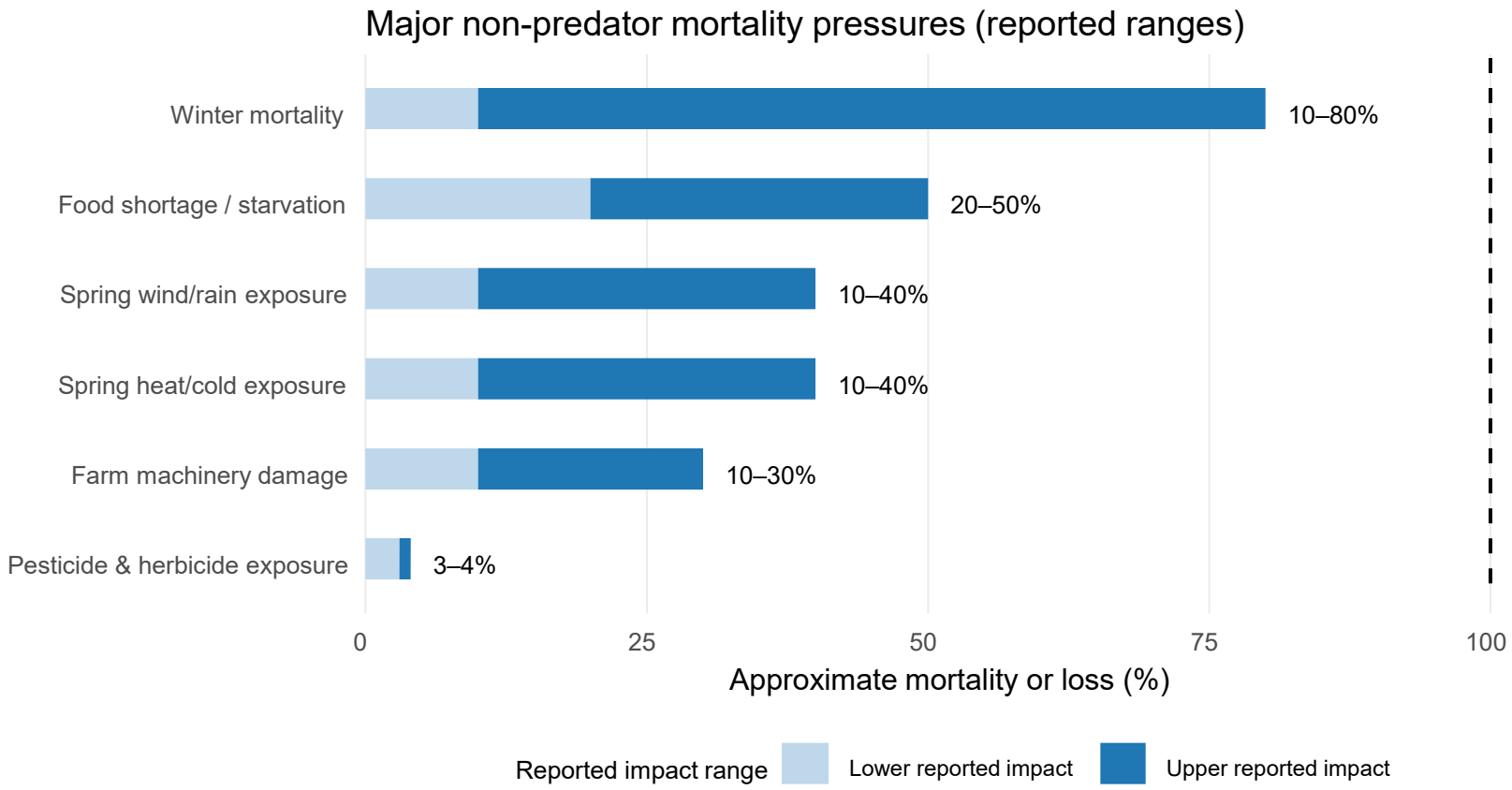


Habitat restoration - <u>one-time investment</u>

improves survival across all life stages. By providing cover, food, and shelter, it reduces weather exposure, starvation, chemical impacts, and accidental mortality, while naturally limiting predation pressure. Because these benefits apply at every step, habitat restoration converts nest success into sustained population growth without repeated intervention.



Reason 6. Nest success ≠ Population growth



A significant portion of mortality occurs outside the nest stage and is **not caused by predators**.

Predator removal does not affect these losses at all. Habitat restoration reduces depredation and all later mortality pressures by improving cover, food, and shelter across the entire life cycle, so predator removal is not needed when habitat is restored.

References (by mortality factor)

Winter mortality

Leif, A. P. (2003). *Ecology and management of ring-necked pheasants in South Dakota.* South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks.

Gates, J. M., & Hale, J. B. (1974). *Seasonal movement, winter survival, and population structure of pheasants.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Burger, G. V., et al. (1995). *Effects of severe winters on ring-necked pheasant survival.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Farm machinery damage

Higgins, K. F. (1977). *Duck nesting in intensively farmed areas of North Dakota.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Klett, A. T., et al. (1988). *Duck nest success in the Prairie Pothole Region.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Leif, A. P. (2003). *Pheasant nest losses in highway rights-of-way.* South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Report.

Pesticide exposure

Hallmann, C. A., et al. (2014). *Declines in insectivorous birds are associated with neonicotinoid concentrations.* Nature.

Mineau, P., & Palmer, C. (2013). *The impact of neonicotinoid insecticides on birds.* Ecotoxicology.

Gibbons, D., et al. (2015). *Neonicotinoids and declining bird populations.* Environmental Science and Pollution Research.

Food shortage / starvation

Hill, D. A. (1985). *The feeding ecology of pheasant chicks.* Journal of Applied Ecology.

Hill, D. A., & Robertson, P. A. (1988). *The importance of arthropod food to pheasant chick survival.* Journal of Applied Ecology.

Potts, G. R. (1986). *The Partridge: Pesticides, Predation and Conservation.* Collins.

Spring wind / rain exposure

Fondell, T. F., et al. (2008). *Nest fate of grassland birds during severe weather events.* The Condor.

Shaffer, T. L., et al. (2006). *Weather effects on duck nest survival.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Spring heat / cold exposure

Dreitz, V. J., et al. (2012). *Temperature effects on survival of ground-nesting bird broods.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Carroll, J. P. (1990). *Thermal stress and chick mortality in galliform birds.* Wildlife Society Bulletin.

Limited nesting sites / habitat availability

Reynolds, R. E., et al. (2001). *Impact of Conservation Reserve Program grasslands on duck nesting density.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Higgins, K. F., et al. (1992). *Habitat use and nest density in agricultural landscapes.* Journal of Wildlife Management.

Under what conditions does predator removal lead to increased nesting success?

Mean	Does NPBP ensure it?
Implemented in a small or isolated nesting sites[1,2,3,4,5…,∞]	✗ No
Removed ≈90% nest predators in protected nesting sites[1]	✗ No
Removed all nest predator species[2], including feral cats and corvids for SD	✗ No
Removed nest predators also in adjacent areas[3,4]	✗ No
Motivated participants to protect nesting sites rather than collect tails[5]	✗ No
Costly, annually recurring, economically unsound investments	✓ Yes

[1] Fredricson public comments on the NPBP, March 2020: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/meetings/Public_Comments_1.pdf

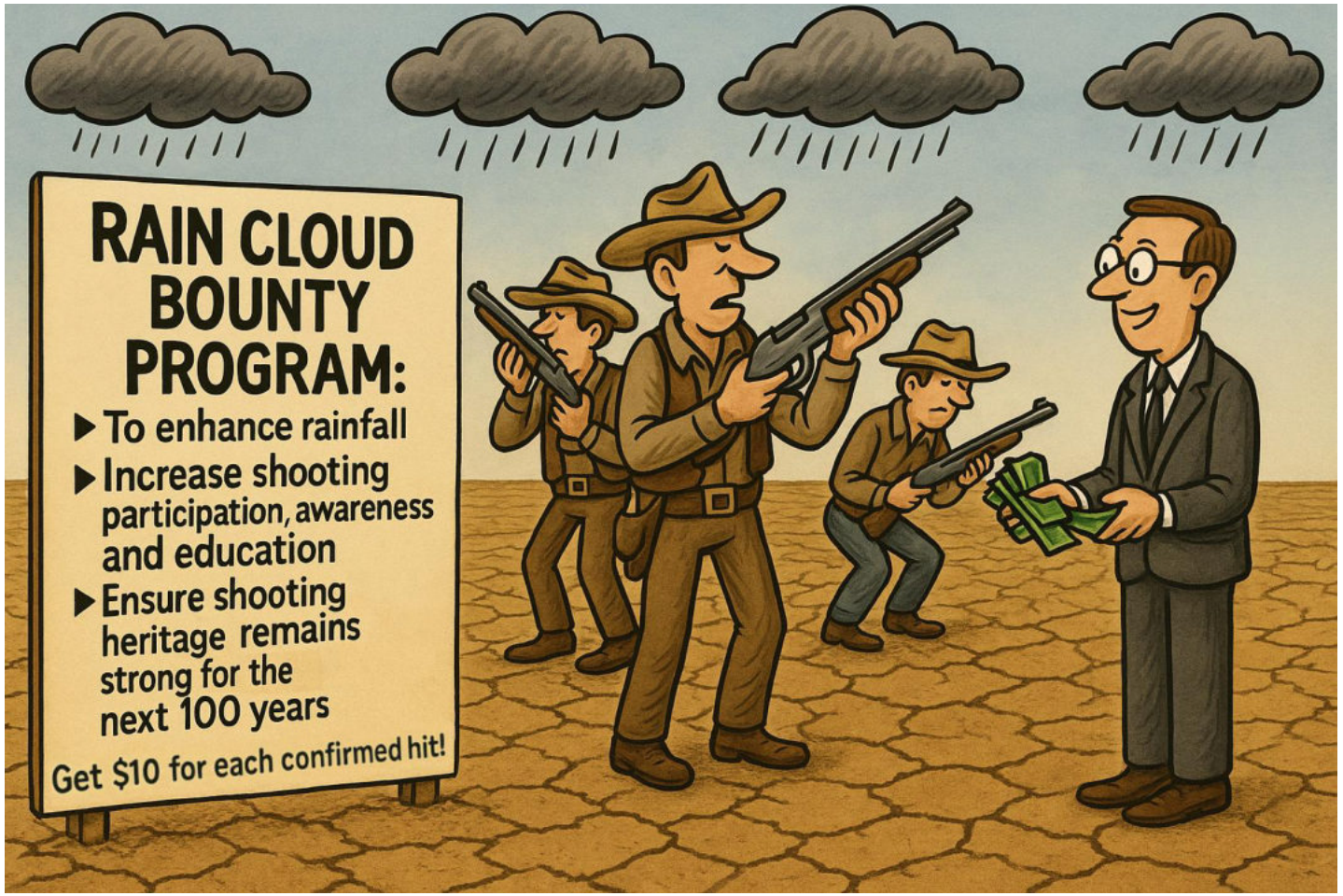
[2] Ellis-Felege, S. N., Conroy, M. J., Palmer, W. E., & Carroll, J. P. (2012). Predator reduction results in compensatory shifts in losses of avian ground nests. Journal of Applied Ecology, 49(3), 661-669

[3] Stocking, J. J., Simons, T. R., Parsons, A. W., & O'Connell, A. F. (2017). Managing native predators: Evidence from a partial removal of raccoons (*Procyon lotor*) on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, USA. Waterbirds, 40(sp1), 10-18.

[4] Conner, L.M., Morris, G., Smith, L.L. (2013). Efficacy of Predator Control: Importance of Space, Time, and Predator Diversity.

[5] Chodachek, K. D., & Chamberlain, M. J. (2006). Effects of predator removal on upland nesting ducks in North Dakota grassland fragments.

Section 5. Fundamentally wrong objectives and methods



Residents gladly line up for cash to shoot at clouds.
Should that enthusiasm alone justify government spending?

Why Keep a Useless Industry?

These ^ photos ^ show **ice harvesting**, a once-essential industry. Before refrigerators, people cut large ice blocks from frozen lakes to preserve food. This work was necessary at the time, but it disappeared once **refrigerators made it obsolete**. Today, no one argues that ice harvesting should be preserved or subsidized, because there is no demand for it.

< The same logic applies to **trapping and the fur industry**. Fur was essential for warmth in the Stone Age and Medieval times, but modern materials have replaced it. With little demand for fur today, there is no reason to support large-scale trapping, just as there is no reason to support ice harvesting in the age of refrigeration.

ⓐ, ⓑ, ⓒ Ice harvesting (Great Lakes region, ca. 1890–1920) Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=ice%20harvesting
ⓓ Fur industry (Seattle, Washington, ca. 1900–1930) Library of Congress: https://www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=fur%20industry

Pheasants are not native to North America and exhibit invasive traits.

Ring-necked pheasants are non-native to North America. They were introduced from Asia at the end of 19th century and exhibit invasive traits, outcompeting native greater prairie chicken, which is in “The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species”. The male pheasants drive off the male prairie chickens; the females pheasants lay eggs in the prairie chicken’s nest, then pheasants hatchlings appear first, and prairie chicken females abandon their own chicks and raise the pheasants. It was losing half its' population every decade as per IUNC 2016 report. 2020 IUNC report shows a recent increasing trend of the greater prairie chicken population.

Supporting pheasant populations not a goal of the US Fish & Wildlife. “We don’t specifically manage our habitat projects for pheasants”, Scott Ralston says, a USFWS wildlife biologist.

Ralston, Scott T <scott_ralston@fws.gov> (personal communication) Nov 21, 2024, 2:13 PM

to me

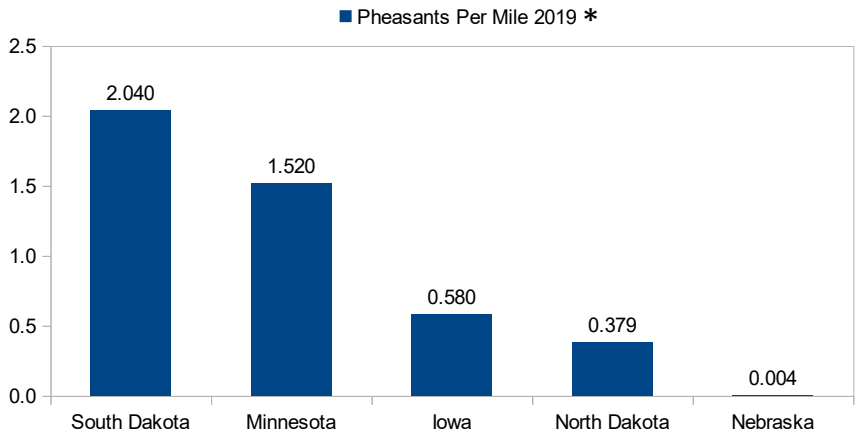
We don’t specifically manage our habitat projects for pheasants. Pheasants are technically an invasive species. They come from Asia so not native to north America. The mission of the US Fish & Wildlife is to manage native populations so they are not our focus. As they are a very popular game bird we don’t necessarily try to manage against them just not specifically target them. However most prairie management we do for waterfowl or grassland birds does also benefit pheasants. Like those other species what they need is larger blocks of grassland. Bigger the better to avoid predators. For food sources they need seeds from flowering plants as well as insects so high diversity plantings like the one we used in your seeding are beneficial. Then they also need cover so tallgrass prairies again provide dense cover for thermal protection and hiding. Shallow wetlands with cattail vegetation provide good winter cover. I’m sure with literature searches you could find plenty of research on pheasant success but since we don’t manage them we also don’t research them.

2020 IUNC report: https://www.iucnredlist.org/species/22679514/177901079

Westemeier, R. L., Buhnerkempe, J. E., Edwards, W. R., Brawn, J. D., & Simpson, S. A. (1998). Parasitism of greater prairie-chicken nests by ring-necked pheasants. *The Journal of wildlife management*, 854-863.

By state estimation of pheasant abundance in the Northern Prairie States

According to roadside surveys provided by state's departments of natural resources, pheasant density in the South Dakota notably exceeds that in neighboring states. Ring-necked pheasants are not endangered, not threatened and non-native to North America and do not require special measures to maintain their population size in South Dakota. While the generally accepted wildlife management practice is the protecting native species from introduced ones, NPBP aims to exterminate indigenous animals in favor of exotic species – an unprecedentedly ridiculous practice in South Dakota.



* The PPM index is provided for 2019 to ensure consistency across states.

GFP discontinued the annual pheasant roadside survey in 2019, after the very first year of the Nest Predator Bounty Program, followed by a 17% drop in the Pheasants-Per-Mile index.

'Pheasants Per Mile' index 2019 derived from roadside surveys, provided by states' departments of natural resources of:

South Dakota: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/PBR_2019FINAL.pdf

Iowa: https://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/Hunting/annual/aug_roadside_2019.pdf

Nebraska: https://outdoornebraska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2019-JULY-RMCS-REPORT.pdf

Minnesota: https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/wildlife/research/populations/2019/01-farmland-wildlife.pdf

North Dakota: Rodney Gross, Upland Game Biologist, North Dakota Game and Fish Department, personal communication March 14, 2025.

NPBP contributes to species extinction and biodiversity loss

NPBP encourages setting thousands of additional indiscriminate traps in South Dakota. Species of Greatest Conservation Need may be accidentally taken.

Swift foxes (*Vulpes velox*) live primarily in shortgrass and mixed-grass prairie, relying on open, sparsely vegetated terrain with good denning soils. The overall abundance of swift foxes in South Dakota is low, with populations in specific regions either declining or at risk. Ongoing conservation efforts are crucial to address habitat preservation, genetic diversity, and other challenges to ensure the species' long-term viability in the state.

The Plains Spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius/interrupta*) is a data-deficient small carnivore native to the central plains of North America that has experienced significant population declines (White, 2024).

What happens when Species of Greatest Conservation Need are trapped or injured? Do GFP clerks actually distinguish their tails — or do they just pay the bounty for any tail?

White, K. M. (2024). The Spatial Ecology of Plains Spotted Skunks in South Dakota. https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/etd2/984/
List of species of Greatest Conservation Need in South Dakota : https://gfp.sd.gov/UserDocs/nav/SD_SGGN_list_as_of_1_May_2023.pdf

NPBP contributes to species distinction and biodiversity loss

NPBP encourages setting thousands of additional indiscriminate traps in South Dakota. Federally listed endangered species may be accidentally taken.

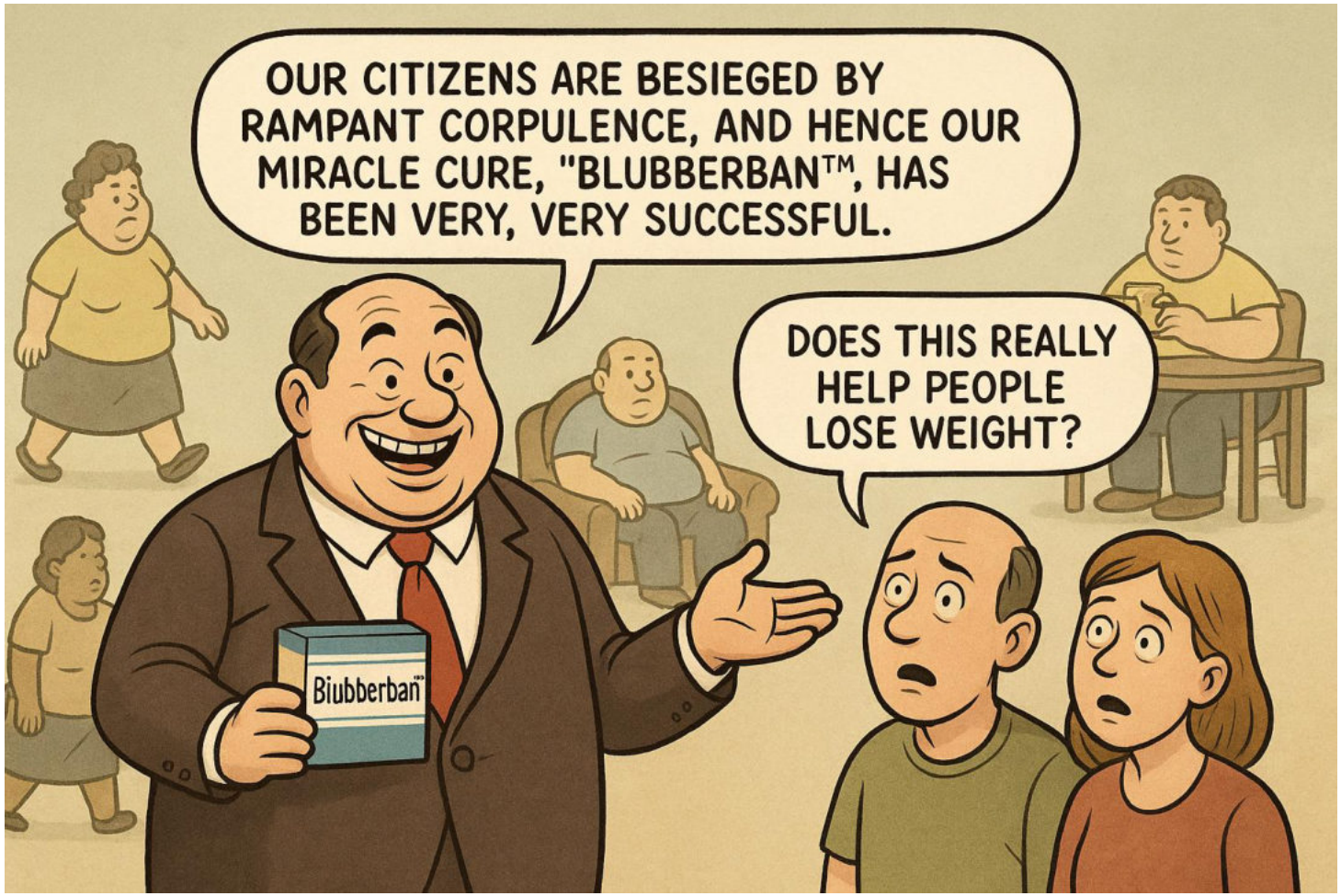
The black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*) is native to North America and listed as Endangered under the U.S. Endangered Species Act by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

It was nearly exterminated and declared extinct in the wild by 1979. A last-minute rediscovery in 1981 and a dedicated captive breeding program have kept the species alive. It has been the subject of major reintroduction and recovery efforts in South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, and other Great Plains states. Despite these efforts, the black-footed ferret remains one of the most endangered mammals in North America, and continued conservation actions are essential for its recovery.

The black-footed ferret inhabiting the same habitats as the NPBP target species (short- and mixed-grass prairies) and may be accidentally taken. **What happens if NPBP participants accidentally kill or injure a federally listed endangered species?**

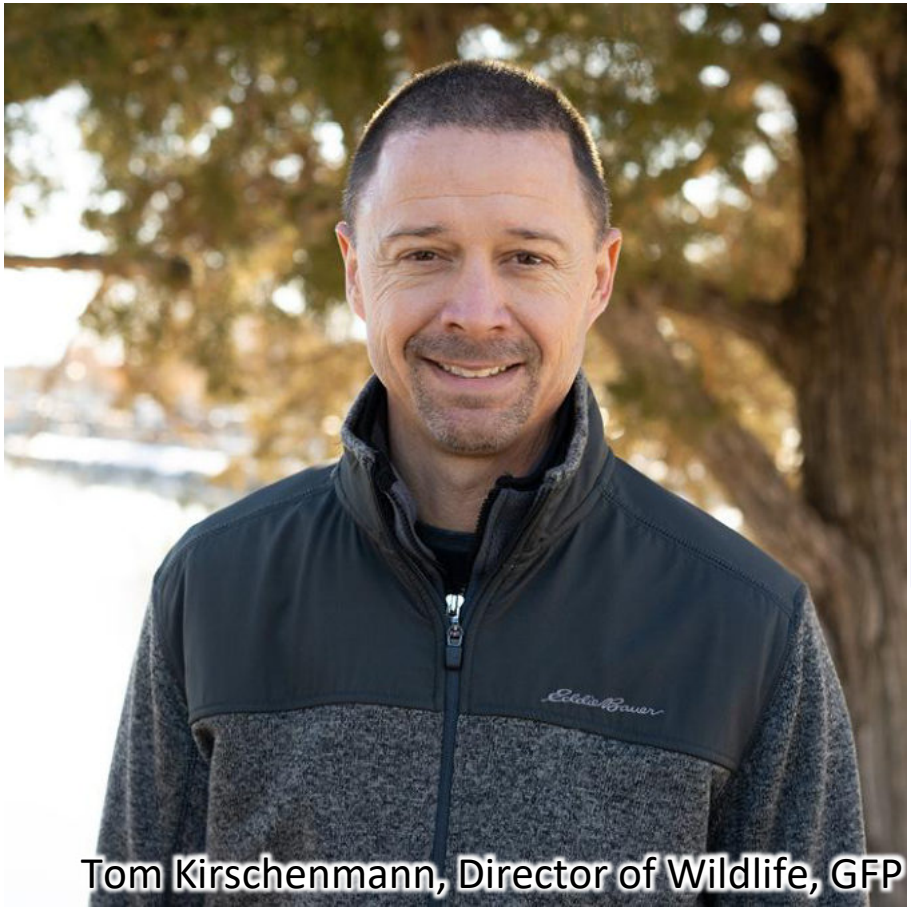
Environmental Conservation Online System: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6953

Section 6. How GFP distorts public understanding.



Does the salesman provide any evidence that the pills actually help people lose weight?

South Dakota Legislative session 2025.
House Bill HB1262 hearing.


Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, GFP

"…the three most important influences on pheasant numbers on an annual basis are **habitat, weather, and predation**…"

"…weather is extremely important to pheasant productions,
weather is out of our hands…"

"…predation does have an impact on pheasant production on an annual basis, and hence why the trapping program has been very, very successful…"

Are you convinced by Kirschenmann's claims about the NPBP effectiveness in terms of increasing nesting success?

UNSUPPORTED ASSERTION manipulative technique works by presenting a claim as if it were a proven fact, without offering evidence, data, or reasoning. The speaker relies on confidence, repetition, or emotional phrasing to make the statement sound convincing, while leaving the audience with nothing concrete to verify. People untrained to recognize manipulations often believe and accept the claim without evidence.

South Dakota Legislative session 2025, HB1262 hearing: https://sdlegislature.gov/Session/Bill/26187
Transcript: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BWa5CLmPHE0Xoajkxbv8_3K8QwPUFM5a/view?usp=sharing&ref=sdnewswatch.org

Whether the weather is out of our hands ?

"Three most important influences on pheasant numbers on an annual basis are: **habitat, weather, and predation**…".

"…**weather is out of our hands**".

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, GFP

"weather is out of our hands" - this is not true. Birds' survival in winter and Autumn hinges on local microclimates, which can be influenced by vegetation, snow cover, and habitat structure rather than large-scale atmospheric changes. There is no need to change the weather in stratosphere. We only need to mitigate harsh weather conditions within a few feet above the ground to provide shelter at a critical time. Can you guess how to do this? Hint: habitat. It is in our hands.

Three most important influences on pheasant numbers on an annual basis are: habitat, ~~weather~~, and …

habitat

Is predator control necessary ?

"Three most important influences on pheasant numbers on an annual basis are: **habitat, weather, and predation**…". "… **predation does have an impact on pheasant production**".

Tom Kirschenmann, Director of Wildlife, GFP

Number of Predators Removed Was Unrelated to Nest Success

Nest success in uplands of removal areas was not related to the total number of adult carnivores removed ($P = 0.76$) or to the total number of predators removed ($P = 0.95$). [3]

Ground-nesting birds and nest predators co-evolved together over eons and developed mechanisms for sustainable coexistence without human management. Destroying natural plant communities and confining birds to small habitat parcels makes their nests easy prey for predators. Restoring habitats eliminates the need for costly predator removal measures — ground-nesting birds will be effectively protected in natural shelters. Nesting success is not a function of predators' abundance[1], but rather of availability protective habitats[2].

Three most important influences on pheasant numbers on an annual basis are:

habitat, habitat and habitat

~~habitat, weather, and predation~~

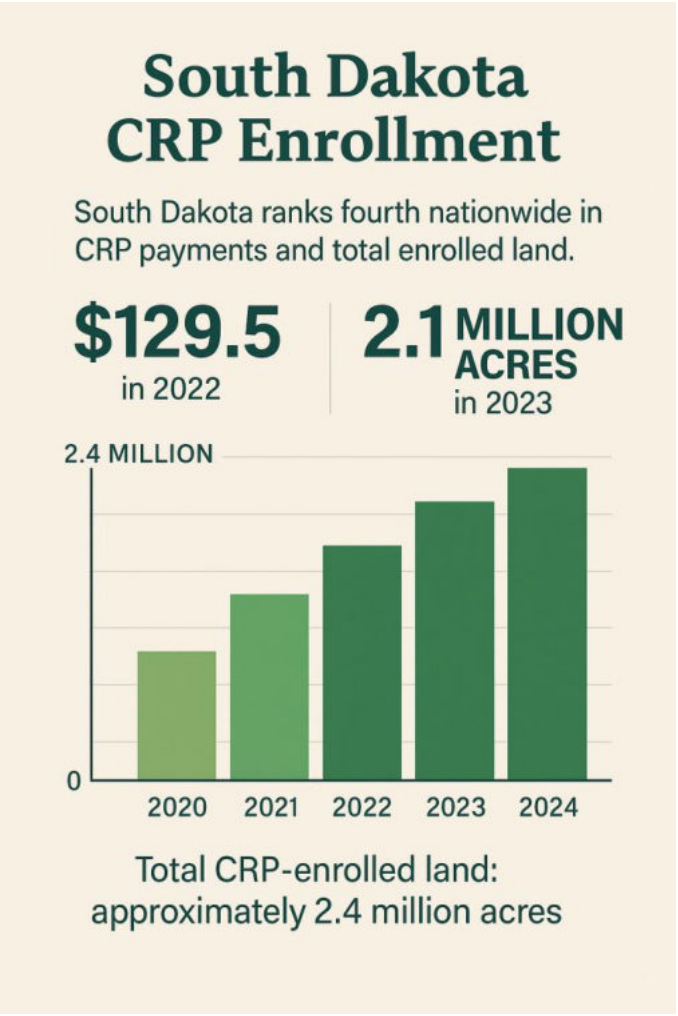
[1] Sargeant, A. B., Sovada, M. A., & Shaffer, T. L. (1995). Seasonal predator removal relative to hatch rate of duck nests in waterfowl production areas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 507-513. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3782962.pdf

[2] Clark, W.R., Schmitz, R.A. and Bogenschutz, T.R., 1999. Site selection and nest success of ring-necked pheasants as a function of location in Iowa landscapes. The Journal of wildlife management, pp. 976-989. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3802812.pdf

[3] Intensive Seasonal Predator Removal Had Little Effect on Duck Nest Success in Waterfowl Production Areas https://npshistory.com/publications/wildlife/nbs-rib/94-80.pdf

Section 7. There are cost-effective alternatives to increasing nesting success

Conservation Reserve Program



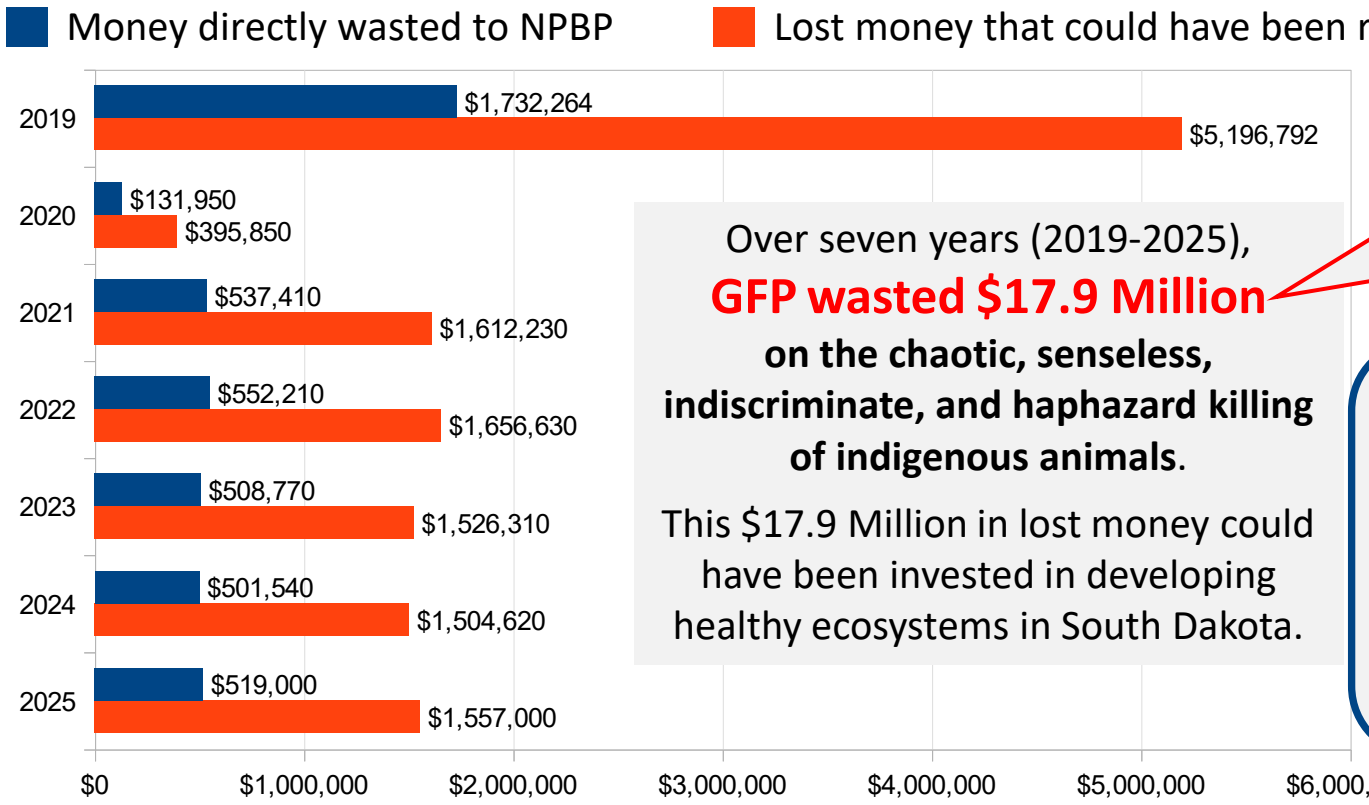
- **CRP** stands for the **Conservation Reserve Program**, a federal program managed by the **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**. It pays farmers to **remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production** and plant grasses, trees, or other vegetation to improve habitat, reduce erosion, and protect water quality.

- CRP land availability is a **stronger predictor** of pheasant abundance than predator control — which is exactly why tying pheasant harvest numbers to the success of the **Nest Predator Bounty Program** is misleading without considering habitat conditions like CRP.
- South Dakota ranks fourth nationwide in CRP payments and total enrolled land, receiving around $129.5 million in 2022, with total enrollments hitting a record 2.1 million acres in 2023. In 2024 alone, nearly 159,000 new acres were added under the Grassland CRP, and total continuous CRP contracts cover about 1.48 million acres, bringing the state's total CRP-enrolled land to roughly 2.4 million acres.

South Dakota Fourth-Biggest Recipient of CRP Payments: https://dakotafreepress.com/2023/10/19/south-dakota-fourth-biggest-recipient-of-crp-payments/
With CRP acres dwindling nationally, Congress seeks reforms: https://www.sdnewswatch.org/conservation-reserve-program-acres-congress-seeks-reforms-farm-bill/
South Dakota ranks fourth in 2024 grassland conservation enrollments: https://southdakotasearchlight.com/briefs/south-dakota-ranks-fourth-in-2024-grassland-conservation-enrollments/

Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act (PR Act)

This program is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and provides **federal reimbursement of up to 75%** for eligible wildlife conservation projects undertaken by state agencies. GFP does not disclose information about the funds spent on the NPBP. According to fragmentary data, GFP spent $1.7 million for the program in 2019 alone. Payments for tails can be estimated from NPBP tail trackers. However, **this underestimates the total expenditures** of the NPBP because there were additional costs (salaries, benefits and miscellaneous expenses).



Over seven years (2019-2025),

GFP wasted $17.9 Million

on the chaotic, senseless, indiscriminate, and haphazard killing of indigenous animals.

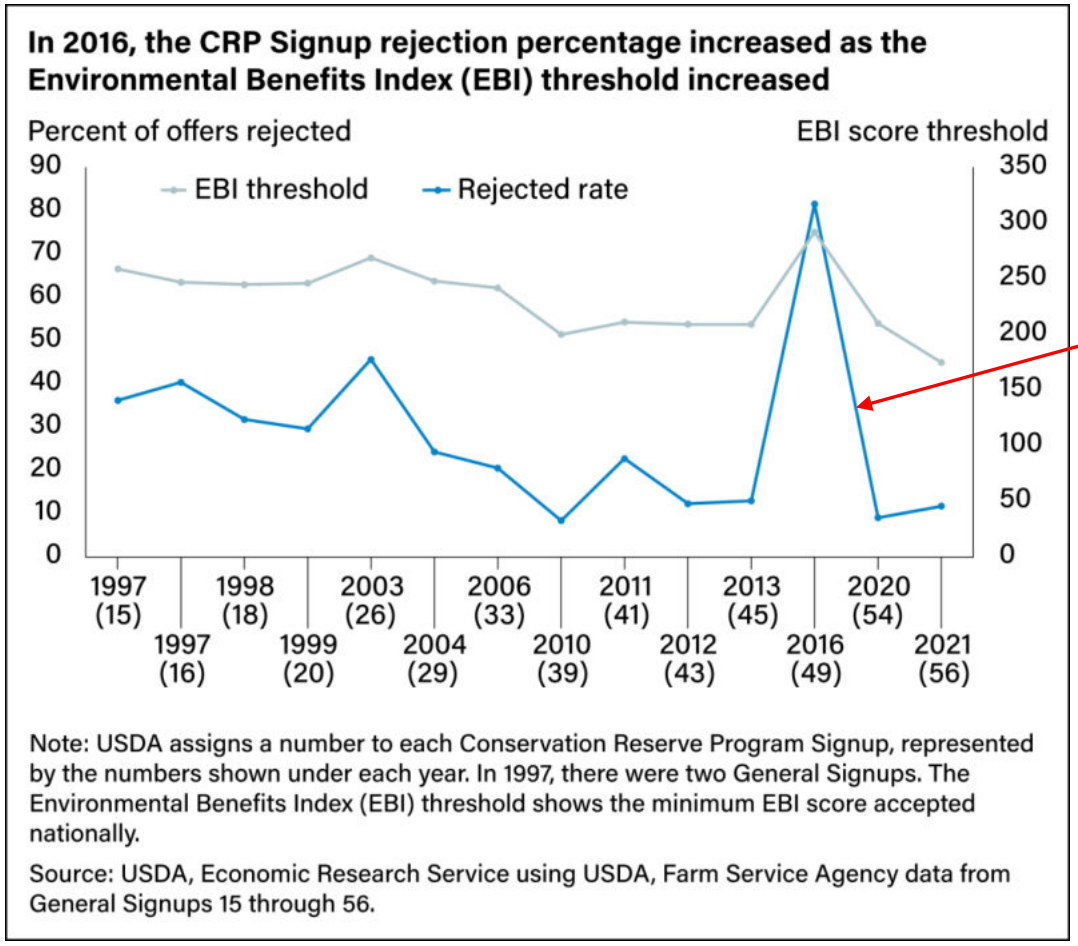
This $17.9 Million in lost money could have been invested in developing healthy ecosystems in South Dakota.

Equivalent to **60,000 acres** of restored habitats

Single year bounties are equivalent to **10,870 resident hunters** buying a standard Resident Small-Game license ($36) plus one Habitat Stamp ($10) for entire year.

SD Nest Predator Bounty Program "Tail Tracker" Dashboard: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/e7bbbd6fa93b48c6a31985aa7c57c5ff
Second Century Initiative Live Trap Give Away Program: https://gfp.sd.gov/userdocs/docs/2020_Bounty_Information_-_Fisk_and_Robling.pdf
Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Training Portal: https://wsfrtraining.fws.gov/mod/book/tool/print/index.php?id=246

There is strong demand for CRP enrollment, but many qualified applications are rejected due to program caps



CRP regularly rejects a substantial share of applications because of enrollment caps, county limits, and budget constraints — not because land is unsuitable. As a result, large areas of cropland that could be restored to prairie and protective habitat remain unconverted. This creates a clear conservation funding gap. These unfunded but eligible projects could be implemented by GFP instead of predator-bounty programs, while leveraging federal Pittman–Robertson Wildlife Restoration funds to generate a sustained, multi-million-dollar flow of federal funding into South Dakota.

USDA Economic Research Service | Amber Waves | April 2025 | What happened to land rejected from the Conservation Reserve Program?
https://ers.usda.gov/amber-waves/2025/april/what-happened-to-land-rejected-from-the-conservation-reserve-program-an-analysis-of-the-2016-general-signup

Shelterbelts and native grasslands are one-time habitat investments that measurably improve winter survival of wildlife.

SDSU research showed that shelterbelts significantly reduce wind speed and improve thermal conditions in winter, conditions that birds and mammals preferentially use to lower energy stress when temperatures and winds are most severe (Schneider, SDSU, 1985).

Instead of costly, recurring payments for a proven ineffective bounty program, one-time investments in habitat restoration, such as native grasslands and shelterbelts, deliver durable, measurable benefits for ground-nesting birds and all wildlife.

Schneider, T. M. (1985). Effectiveness of shelterbelts in improving microclimatic conditions for pheasants in eastern South Dakota. https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1222&context=etd

Section 8. Promoting cruelty among South Dakotans.

There are recognized psychological and behavioral conditions where a person derives **pleasure from harming or killing animals.**

"This is a fun activity for kids..."

These conditions are often linked to deeper issues of aggression, impulse control, or personality disorders.

1. Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) – in adults
- Chronic disregard for the rights of others, lack of empathy, **impulsive aggression**, and often a **history of animal cruelty** during childhood.
- Associated with **psychopathy** in more severe cases.

2. Conduct Disorder (CD) – in children/adolescents
- Includes behaviors like **animal cruelty**, setting fires, and serious rule violations.
- Often a precursor to **antisocial behavior in adulthood**.
- Diagnostic criteria in the **DSM-5** (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders).

3. Sadism / Sadistic Traits
- **Sadistic personality traits** involve deriving **pleasure from inflicting pain** on others, including animals.
- Not classified as a standalone disorder in DSM-5 but appears as a trait in some forensic psychology assessments.
- May also be part of a **sexual disorder** (e.g., sexual sadism disorder), though this is rare in the context of animal harm.

4. Macdonald Triad (historical concept, now debated)
- Suggests that **animal cruelty**, **fire-setting**, and **bedwetting** are early warning signs in children of later violent tendencies.

https://southdakotasearchlight.com/2024/01/16/state-lacks-data-to-prove-trapping-program-increases-the-pheasant-population-official-says/

Promoting cruelty among South Dakotans

A growing body of scientific research indicates a strong correlation (co-called 'Link') between cruelty to animals and subsequent cruelty to humans suggesting that acts of animal abuse is an indicator of future violent behavior towards people. Exposure to animal cruelty is a traumatic experience for children, leading to cascading negative consequences that may persist throughout an individual's lifespan, such as:

https://www.thepetitionsite.com/524/880/254/south-dakota-encourages-kids-to-kill-animals-for-fun-and-profit/

- Bullying [1]
- Delinquent behaviors, including assault [2]
- Physical and sexual coercion [3]
- Approval of using violence within relationship [4]
- Domestic violence [5, 6]
- Child abuse and intimate partner violence [7]
- Maladaptive behaviors (aggression and violence toward humans) [8]
- Firesetting and official referrals for violent offenses and general delinquency [9]

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[1] Gullone, E., & Robertson, N. (2008). The relationship between bullying and animal abuse behaviors in adolescents: The importance of witnessing animal abuse. Journal of Applied Developmental psychology, 29, 371–379.

[2] Henry, B. C. (2004). Exposure to animal abuse and group context: Two factors affecting participation in animal abuse. Anthrozoos, 17(4), 290–305.

[3] Miller, K. S., & Knutson, J. F. (1997). Reports of severe physical punishment and exposure to animal cruelty by inmates convicted of felonies and by university students. Child Abuse & Neglect, 21(1), 59–82.

[4] Flynn, C. P. (1999). Animal abuse in childhood and later support for interpersonal violence in families. Society & Animals, 7(2), 161–172.

[5] Plant, M., Van Schaik, P., Gullone, E., & Flynn, C. (2019). "It's a dog's life": Culture, empathy, gender, and domestic violence predict animal abuse in adolescents—implications for societal health. Journal of interpersonal violence, 34(10), 2110-2137.

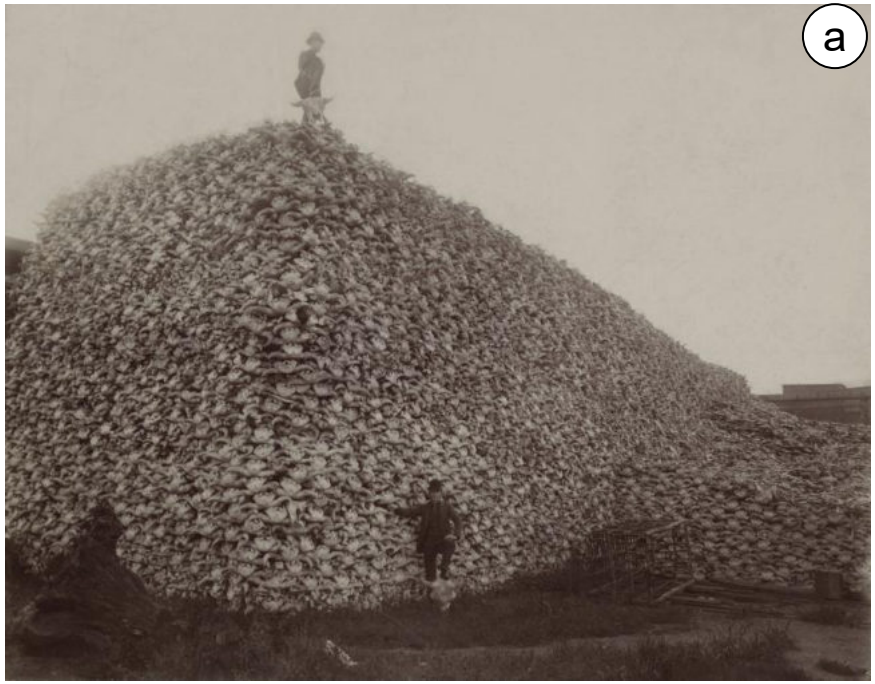
[6] Becker, F., French, L. (2004). Making the links: Child abuse, animal cruelty and domestic violence. Child Abuse Review, 12, 399–414.

[7] DeGue, S., DiLillo, D. (2009). Is animal cruelty a "red flag" for family violence? Investigating co-occurring violence toward children, partners, and pets. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 24(6), 1036–1056.

[8] Thompson, K. L., & Gullone, E. (2006). An investigation into the association between the witnessing of animal abuse and adolescents' behavior toward animals. Society & Animals, 14(3), 221-243.

[9] Becker, K. D., Stuewig, J., Herrera, V.M. & McCloskey, L. A. (2004). A study of firesetting and animal cruelty in children: Family influences and adolescent outcomes. Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 43(7), 905–912.

Déjà vu from bison bones to bounty tails



Then (Across the American Great Plains, 19th century).
People shot bison from moving trains for sport. Only some of the animals were skinned for commercial hides, and most carcasses were left to rot. Millions of precious, majestic native bison were slaughtered for sport and ultimately reduced to **bone char and bone meal** used as fertilizer.

Now (South Dakota, 21st century).
Indigenous animals are killed for recreation under a bounty program, their tails removed as proof of payment, and their bodies buried or left to decompose. Animals are reduced to bounty parts for a **$10 tail payment**, without ecological benefit or use of the remains.

ⓐ Pile of American bison skulls, Michigan Carbon Works, 19th Century, Rougeville, Michigan (Detroit Public Library's Burton Historical Collection)
ⓑ, ⓒ, ⓓ Nest Predator Bounty Program in 21st-Century South Dakota (Photographs by William A. Schultze).

Maiming Live Animals Is Not Exempt from Cruelty

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks's Post

Mike Casanova
Alexey Egorov so your the one that lets em live after the tail is harvested 😡!!! Nothing worse then getting done with the ol baseball bat just to find there is no tail
29w Like Reply 5

Alexey Egorov
Mike Casanova What made you think that about me? That says more about the kind of people you run with than anything about me. I do not touch animals for bounty money. But if you are smashing live creatures with a bat and whining because someone got the tail first, maybe take a hard look at your own ethics - what is left of them? Your problem is not me. It is that you are proud of brutality and mad when it does not pay.
29w Like Reply Edited

Mike Casanova
Alexey Egorov lmao great assessment!
29w Like Reply

Reply to Mike Casanova

Corey Gall
Alexey Egorov ...you should see how many we take out without the program being open.
29w Like Reply

Tyler Metz
😆
29w Like Reply

Erik Helland
Alexey Egorov hahahaha
29w Like Reply

Jackson Wright
Alexey Egorov Let me know where you live and I'll be sure to drop off all the VARMINTS I catch and see how much longer you like them.
32w Angry Reply 11

Alexey Egorov
Jackson Wright I have been living with them for years. They live on my acreage and have never harmed me, although they live in close proximity. And I still like them. And yes, please send me a message in Messenger when you orphan new babies for fun. You do not need to know where I live to send a message.
32w Like Reply Edited 4

Jared Van Engen
Jackson Wright cut their tails off first!
32w Angry Reply

Jackson Wright
Jared Van Engen no worries I'll be sure to do that
32w Like Reply

This was not just a joke

Do you see anything unusual with this raccoon?

SDCL § 40-1-2.4:

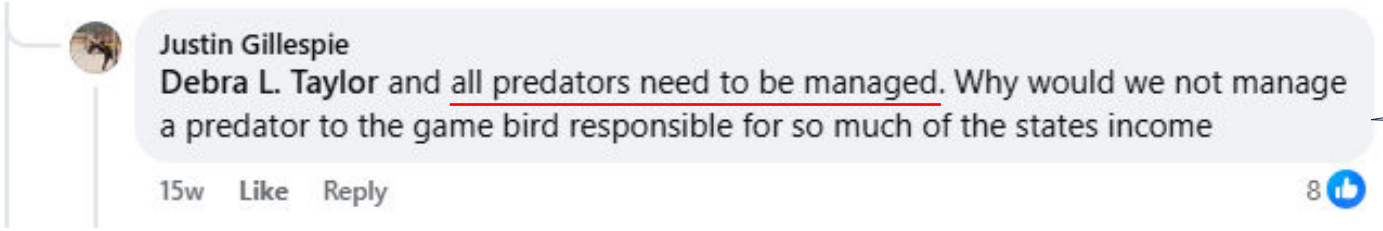
'No person may subject an animal to cruelty. A violation of this section is a Class 6 felony.'

This image shows a live raccoon with a missing tail. Clean tail amputations due to natural causes are uncommon. If an animal is maimed and left alive during authorized wildlife activities, such conduct is not exempt from cruelty protections, regardless of intent, negligence, or accident. But the issue is not that an animal survived. The existence of tailless raccoons highlights how bounty incentives can cause severe, avoidable suffering and biologically absurd outcomes.

Discussion about NPBP 2025: https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid02KiLCAyNoHcT8VfTRNSmvaijVf7mEQAuSPhwEgtnn5NySKiKrYgSsyZVWQFHMBhpzl

Section 9. Recurring narratives

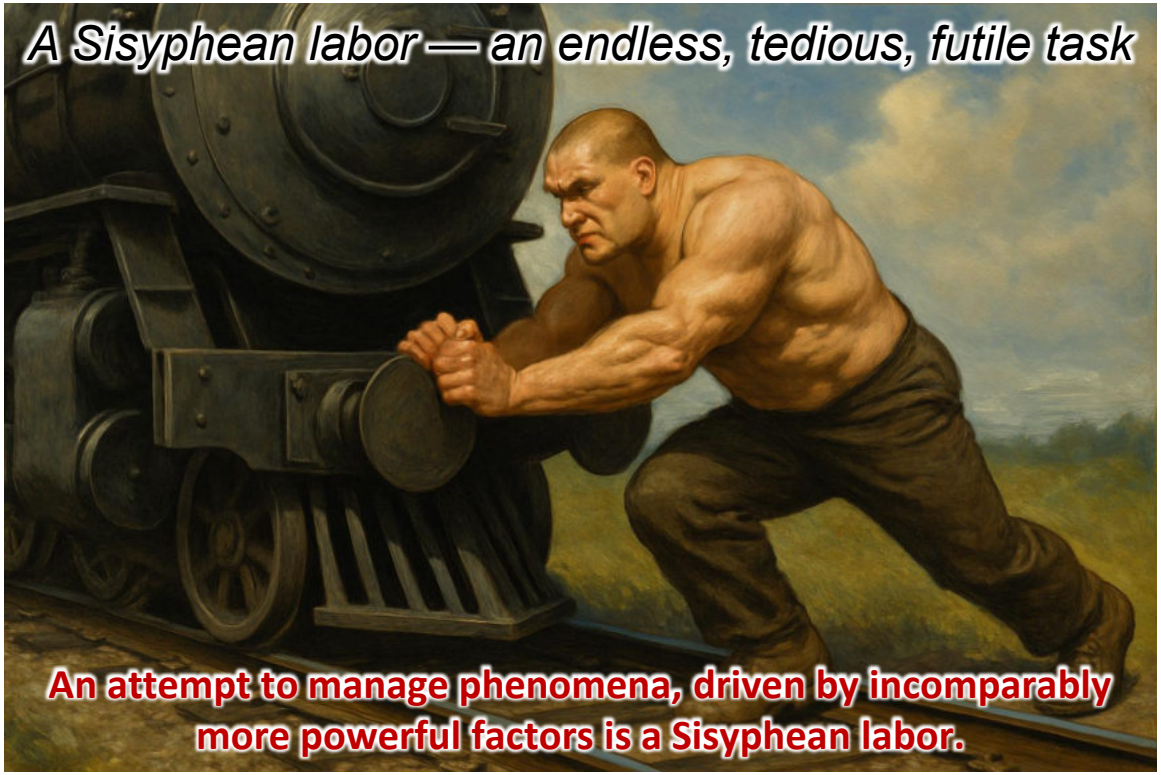
? Predators need to be managed ?



Discussion about the 2025 NPBP season

1) NPBP target species' populations are self-managed and driven by broad ecological factors. Weather, food availability, competition, disease, and habitat conditions exert far stronger control over animal abundance than chaotic trapping.

2) Feel free to manage nuisance animals on your own property and at your own expense. But “management” wildlife on public land with public money requires a public mandate, and that mandate does not exist.



3) To say a species is being ‘managed,’ you first need field population surveys on its abundance and trends in the wild, **not in traps**. The number of animals killed is not a field population survey. Without field population surveys, there is no way to know whether a species is being managed, fluctuating uncontrollably, or even increasing, as it happened under North Dakota’s failed bounty system. Since no field population surveys exist for any NPBP target species, claims of ‘management’ are not appropriate here.

Discussion about NPBP 2025 https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid0zzYMPnmA4NHnejSH3VJWcs8L3DDssL87RKNJoTKMsDD3mWryf25efRtx4rR14iyKl

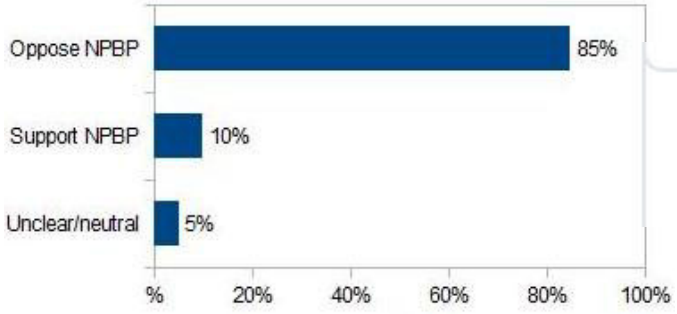
? Everyone I know supports the bounty program! ?

Justin Casanova
Alexey Egorov I support the bounty program! Put that on your poll 💀

20w Like Reply 9

Alexey Egorov
Justin Casanova Done. It does not change statistics.

GFP Public comments + Justin Casanova, N = 153



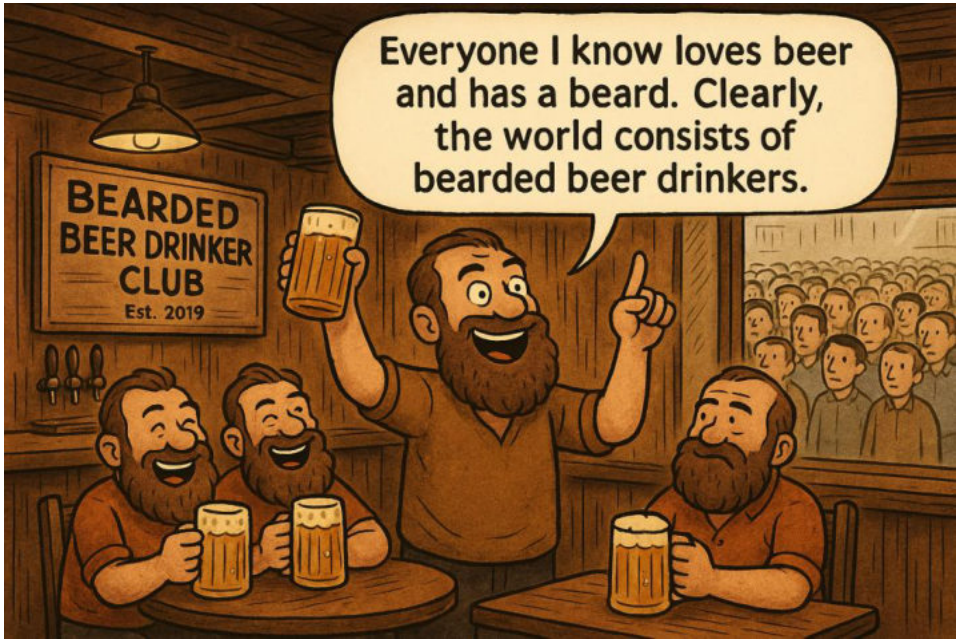
False consensus effect

is a well-established concept in social psychology describing the tendency for people to overestimate how widely their own beliefs, opinions, and behaviors are shared by others because they interact mostly with like-minded people[1].

Justin Casanova
Alexey Egorov I would actually see where you got these numbers from. everyone I've talked to isn't opposed to the idea and have participated in the program

Homophily ("birds of a feather")

is a well-documented principle in sociology describing the tendency of people to form social circles with others who share similar worldviews, attitudes, interests, and lifestyles. As a result, individuals often become surrounded by like-minded peers, reinforcing their existing beliefs and perceptions[2].



[1] Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1977). The "false consensus effect": An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes. Journal of experimental social psychology, 13(3), 279-301.

[2] McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Cook, J. M. (2001). Birds of a feather: Homophily in social networks. *Annual review of sociology*, *27*(1), 415-444.

Discussion about NPBP 2025: https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid02KiLCAyNoHcT8VfTRNSmvaijVf7mEQAuSPhwEgtnn5NySKiKrYgSsyZVWQFHMBhpzl

?But I see, there's birds all over. That means the program is working?

Jack Roberts
Alexey Egorov so, just because there is no "data", you just assume the program isn't working. I don't care either way. I dont hunt pheasants. I do however hunt varmints like raccoons and coyotes. I don't need a scientist to tell me the program is working in my area. There are still many raccoons in this area but far less than have been in years. Coyotes are the same situation as stated above. Pheasant, grouse and turkey population has exploded here. I'm in it every day. I see the proof..... How's that for "learning".

Discussion for the 2025 NPBP season

Jack Roberts
Alexey Egorov get off your screen and go drive around. Pheasant population has been minimal at best in my area. Now, there's birds all over. Don't need some scientists to tell me the program is working. The proof is in the pudding.

Jamie Mertins
Nest predatory program works!
19w Haha Reply 9

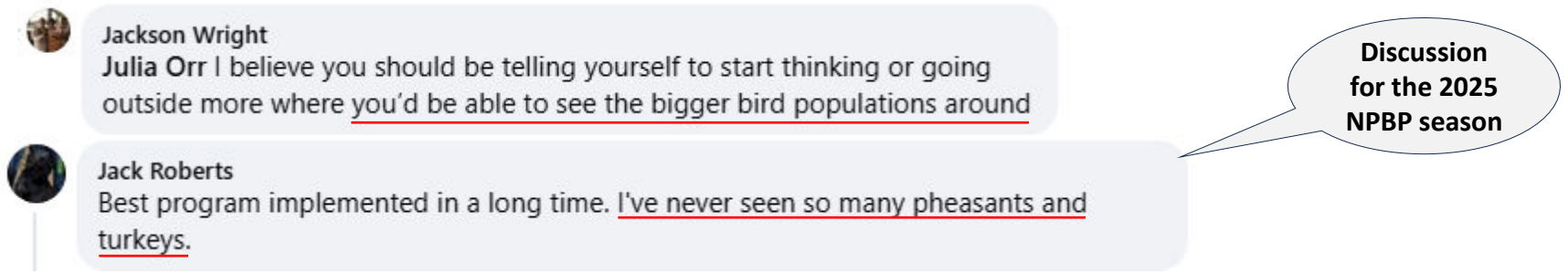
Correlation ≠ causation

Two events, which co-occur cotemporally are not always cause and effect.

A stopped clock shows the correct time twice a day. This doesn't mean that the clock is working. Periodically, bird populations rise and fall, which are natural fluctuations in their population dynamics. When we see an increase in bird numbers, it is driven by natural processes and CRP habitat restoration projects. The bounty program has nothing to do with it. Chaotic trapping has about as much effect on pheasant numbers as dancing with a tambourine has on rainfall.

https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid0zzYMPnmA4NHnejSH3VJWcs8L3DDssL87RKNJoTKMsDD3mWryf25efRtx4rR14iyKl

?But I see, there's birds all over. That means the program is working?



The "I can see" method often fails for the following reasons:

0. Natural population dynamics. Bird numbers naturally rise and fall over time; these fluctuations are part of normal population cycles and are not related to the bounty program.

1. Confirmation bias. If someone expects or hopes that bird populations are increasing, they may notice birds more readily and overlook signs of scarcity.

2. Shifting baseline. A person forgets how abundant birds *used to be*, so today's modest numbers seem "high" compared to a degraded memory or reference point.

3. Seasonal or migratory peaks. Bird numbers naturally spike during migration or breeding seasons, giving the illusion of a long-term increase.

4. Habitat changes in local area. Habitat restoration, new plantings, or better food/water sources in a particular location (e.g., feeder, garden, wetland) may attract more birds locally, while regional populations remain unchanged or even decline.

5. Observer effort and location. Spending more time outside, changing routines, or visiting bird-rich areas can inflate personal impressions of abundance.

6. Technology & Media Exposure. Use of trail cameras, apps like Merlin or eBird, or seeing more bird content online can create a false sense of increased encounters.

7. Weather and Visibility. Good weather makes birds more active and visible. Also, birds may congregate in visible areas during drought or harsh weather, concentrating sightings.

8. Human Activity Changes. Less traffic, reduced noise (e.g., during COVID lockdowns), or fewer disturbances can make birds more audible or noticeable, not necessarily more abundant.

https://www.facebook.com/sdgfp/posts/pfbid0zzYMPnmA4NHnejSH3VJWcs8L3DDssL87RKNJoTKMsDD3mWryf25efRtx4rR14iyKl

In neighboring Minnesota, the DNR reported a 81% average increase in pheasant numbers in 2025 compared to 2024, within prairie-dominated southern regions of Minnesota — a key pheasant stronghold.

NB: Minnesota does not implement a bounty program. Bird abundance is driven by far more powerful natural factors — namely, weather conditions.

2025 Minnesota August Roadside Survey

Steven Woodley, Upland Game Research Scientist *(acting)*
Farmland Wildlife Populations and Research Group
Madelia, MN
2 September 2025

Highlights

- Survey-wide pheasant numbers are up nearly 50% from 2024, thanks to a mild winter and more favorable spring conditions.
- Pheasant indices increased in every region, and were greatest in the Southwest, South Central, West Central, and Central regions. Hunters will have good opportunities in these regions.

Minnesota August 2025 Roadside Survey: https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/recreation/hunting/pheasant/roadside_survey.pdf

Conclusion

What is the Nest Predator Bounty Program?

It is a gross abuse of public funds — an ethically indefensible and scientifically baseless campaign of destruction, masquerading as wildlife management, which encourages children to kill pregnant and nursing females and their offspring for fun, to kill for the sake of killing, indoctrinating them into cruelty under the banner of conservation, promoting the statewide, chaotic killing of five native species that have inhabited these lands since the middle of the Pliocene, wasting millions of dollars from public funds without credible science, without public mandate, and without any support of wildlife professionals.

Further reading

Trapping does not increase nesting success.

· Docken, N.R., "Effects of Block Predator Management on Duck and Pheasant Nest Success in Eastern South Dakota" (2011). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. 5135: https://openprairie.sdstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6155&context=etd/

· Blythe, E. M., & Boyce, M. S. (2020). Trappings of success: predator removal for duck nest survival in Alberta parklands. Diversity, 12(3), 119. https://www.mdpi.com/1424-2818/12/3/119

· Intensive Seasonal Predator Removal Had Little Effect on Duck Nest Success in Waterfowl Production Areas. Information bulletin U.S. Department Of The Interior, National Biological Survey https://npshistory.com/publications/wildlife/nbs-rib/94-80.pdf

Number of predators removed is unrelated to nest success (predator removal must be very intensive).

· Stocking, J. J., Simons, T. R., Parsons, A. W., & O'Connell, A. F. (2017). Managing native predators: Evidence from a partial removal of raccoons (Procyon lotor) on the Outer Banks of North Carolina, USA. Waterbirds, 40(sp1), 10-18. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/26428260.pdf

· Sargeant, A. B., Sovada, M. A., & Shaffer, T. L. (1995). Seasonal predator removal relative to hatch rate of duck nests in waterfowl production areas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 507-513. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3782962.pdf

Mesopredators' backfire - compensatory reproduction and migration .

· Adams, A. W. 1965. North Dakota bounty data, 1897 to 1961. N. D. Game Fish Dep. P-R Proj. W-67-R-5. 15 pp.

· Beasley, J.C., Olson, Z.H., Beatty, W.S., Dharmarajan, G., & Rhodes, O.E. Jr. (2013). Effects of culling on mesopredator population dynamics. PLoS ONE 8(3): e58982. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3604110/

· Conner, L. M., Morris, G., & Smith, L. L. (2013). Efficacy of Predator Control: Importance of Space, Time, and Predator Diversity. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/icwdm_wdmconfproc/147/

· Ellis-Felege, S. N., Conroy, M. J., Palmer, W. E., & Carroll, J. P. (2012). Predator reduction results in compensatory shifts in losses of avian ground nests. Journal of Applied Ecology, 49(3), 661-669 https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2012.02126.x

Cost inefficiency

· Sargeant, A. B., Sovada, M. A., & Shaffer, T. L. (1995). Seasonal predator removal relative to hatch rate of duck nests in waterfowl production areas. Wildlife Society Bulletin, 507-513. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/3782962.pdf

· Chodachek, K. D., & Chamberlain, M. J. (2006). Effects of predator removal on upland nesting ducks in North Dakota grassland fragments. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1463&context=tpn