

# More Non-Resident Hunters Seeking Pheasants This Fall

BY BOB MERCER  
State Capitol Bureau

MITCHELL — From a revenue standpoint, the state Game, Fish and Parks Commission received good news Friday. More non-resident hunters have purchased small-game licenses for pursuing pheasants in South Dakota so far this fall.

Through October approximately 4,200 more non-residents hunters have purchased the \$121 licenses than at a similar point last year, according to Scott Simpson, a state Division of Wildlife official.

The sales total for non-resident small game as of Oct. 27 was 47,264. Last year it was 46,013 through the season's second weekend.

Sales are likewise up across the board among non-residents for youth small game, annual shoot preserve, five-day shooting preserve and one-day shooting preserve.

Altogether about 4,900 more non-resident licenses for pheasants have been sold.

State biologists reported in August they had observed increases in pheasant broods spotted from roadsides along specific routes throughout much of South Dakota.

Statewide the increase was 42 percent from 2014. The average per mile was 3.80, up from 2.68 in 2014.

Even so, the 2015 numbers were down 30 percent from the 10-year average.

Nonetheless, the positive publicity about the upswing from 2014 evidently helped encourage hunters to visit South Dakota again, after several years of weak or mediocre production and lower sales of licenses.

"We've got a little debate about how much it's going to be up," Simpson told the commissioner. "It's encouraging that we are up."

He said he should have a stronger feel by the commission's December meeting. He joked that he had to wait for his supper Thursday because the restaurant had many out-of-town hunters.

Licensed hunters in 2014 included 63,704 residents and 79,636 non-residents.

They marked a slight rebound from 2013 when there were 57,577 residents and 74,424 non-residents. Those were the smallest numbers of residents since the 1930s and non-residents since the



PHOTO: METRO GRAPHICS

current boom took off in 2003.

Non-residents peaked at 103,231 in 2007. The 100,000 mark was broken again in 2008 and 2010.

Hunter success was solid for the full opening weekend Oct. 17-18, although many crops remained in the fields, said Tom Kirschenmann, the game chief for the Wildlife Division.

He said hunting normally becomes better as the harvest proceeds because the birds have fewer and fewer big fields in which to hide, and they congregate in larger numbers in smaller cover.

"It's nice to see pheasant numbers rise, but the gatherings that happen this time of year, they're priceless," commissioner Cathy Peterson of Salem said.

John Cooper of Pierre, the commission's chairman, said there was a concern in the Mitchell area about spraying of soybean fields in August. He said hunters wondered whether the broods suffered from the loss of bugs.

Cooper asked whether there should be a study of August spraying and whether or not it's going to be a mortality issue.

Kirschenmann said he has been in contact with some members of the state Department of Agriculture staff about the fungicide used during that time frame. He said they didn't think there would be any overall effect but the verdict remained out for individual

birds.

Cooper, who previously oversaw the Game, Fish and Parks Department during parts of the Janklow and Rounds administration, said facts should be gathered.

Kirschenmann said he would keep working on the matter.

Peterson, whose family farms and hosts hunters, said she thought crops in the field had the most effect on holding down the numbers of pheasants killed by hunters in the opening days.

"And because of perception, we do have to be careful. The spraying in August was for a bug that had to be taken care of," Peterson said.

"We're seeing more birds now," she said.

South Dakota pheasant hunters are up somewhat as well.

Sales of resident combination licenses which are for small game and fishing were 46,571 through Oct. 27, up from 44,560 at the similar point last year.

Sales of senior combination licenses were 7,729, up from 6,746. Sales of junior combinations were 7,923, down from 7,928.

Resident small-game license sales were 18,835, down from 19,554. Youth small-game licenses were 4,662, down from 4,706. One-day small-game licenses were 779, up from 565.

# Dakotaraptor Ruled Hell Creek As Lethal Predator

BY DIRK LAMMERS  
Associated Press

SIoux FALLS — Tyrannosaurus rex may have been known as the big guy around the Hell Creek Formation 66 million years ago, but a newly discovered species of raptor would have roamed nearby as one of the region's most lethal predators.

Dakotaraptor stood 6 feet tall at the hips yet moved like a springy, agile sprinter, reaching 30 to 40 mph and rivaling today's ostrich. But potential prey caught admiring the 17-foot-long creature's grace stood little chance, as the strong-muscled winged Dromaeosaur boasted a vicious 9½-inch-long killing claw that could make mincemeat out of any herbivore caught in its path, said Robert DePalma, curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Palm Beach Museum of Natural History.

"It had one of the strongest killing strokes in that slashing claw of any raptor known," DePalma said.

DePalma and his research team including University of Kansas paleontologists announced the new species in a study published Oct. 30

by the University of Kansas Paleontological Institute. Dakotaraptor helps fill a gap in body size distribution between the small bird-like Maniraptora creatures and the giant T. rex found in Hell Creek, which spans parts of northwestern South Dakota, southwestern North Dakota, eastern Montana and eastern Wyoming.

The newly discovered species roamed the earth alongside T. rex, the three-horned Triceratops and the duck-billed Edmontosaurus.

"Dakotaraptor coexisted with all of our favorites from our childhoods," DePalma said. "We had no idea that such a cool and lethal creature existed right alongside them. And it was in the ground the whole time. It's amazing."

Thomas Holtz Jr., a senior vertebrate paleontology lecturer at the University of Maryland, said most of the raptor bones and teeth found in Hell Creek have been from small-form creatures.

"That is what is important about this find," Holtz said. "In fact, it was rather bigger than most of us expected, almost the size of the largest known Dromaeosaurid, the

much earlier Utahraptor."

Dakotaraptor stands about as tall as Utahraptor, a species discovered in the 1990s in east-central Utah, but the raptors have completely different builds. The stockier Utahraptor, which lived about 60 million years earlier than Dakotaraptor, was an ambush predator with thicker bones and leg proportions that limited its speed, making it the "beefy bulldog of raptors," DePalma said.

Dakotaraptor did not fly, which makes the presence of quill knobs on its arms so interesting to DePalma and other dinosaur experts. The bumps serve as reinforcement points for long wing feathers, marking the first concrete evidence that large raptors had wings.

"It really would have made this like a turkey from hell," he said.

The feathers were clearly not just for show, and they could have been used by the dinosaur to intimidate other predators, shield its young or as a tactical method to corral prey. They might also indicate that the species evolved from a lineage that once could fly or was evolving toward flight, DePalma said.

Dakotaraptor's leg bones, wing portions, tail vertebrae, teeth and wishbone were unearthed in 2005 from a remote area of badlands in South Dakota's Harding County.

To find so many fossils from a single creature is extraordinary in the Hell Creek, said Peter Larson, a Black Hills-based dinosaur expert who co-authored the paper.

Hell Creek's sediment gathered slowly over time, so most dinosaurs were eaten or carried away by other creatures before they could be buried. Many of Hell Creek's finds consist of small individual fossils or a bone bed featuring loads of random, hard-to-match fossils, he said.

"Hell Creek is very hard to give up its secrets," said Larson, president of the Black Hills Institute of Geological Research. "We very seldom find articulated or even associated remains."

It's even more difficult to find raptor remains, DePalma said, as the bird-like species' lightweight, hollow and thin-walled bones tend to break before their preservation.

"People actually have been finding them for years without realizing it," he said.

## Lawmaker Asks Secretary To Step Down

PIERRE (AP) — A Republican lawmaker says South Dakota's top education official should resign over the state's oversight of a federal grant program wrapped up in an investigation into a murder-suicide.

KCCR radio reports Rep. Lance Russell asked Department of Education Secretary Melody Schopp to step down.

A department spokeswoman says Schopp will remain and continue overseeing the program. Gov. Dennis Daugaard says Schopp has his full support.

Russell says he's concerned with the state's management of the GEAR UP college-readiness grant.

Audits found financial issues that contributed to the state's decision to cancel its contract with the educational cooperative that administered the grant.

Daugaard credits Schopp with recognizing concerns about the grant.

GEAR UP is part of a state-federal financial investigation stemming from the deaths of the Mid-Central Educational Cooperative employees.

## Ex-CEO Found Guilty In Bank's Failure

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The founder and former chief executive officer of TierOne Bank has been found guilty of 12 counts related to the bank's failure in 2010.

The *Lincoln Journal Star* reports that a federal jury found Gil Lundstrom guilty Friday of fraud and conspiracy counts. Prosecutors say Lundstrom orchestrated a scheme to hide the bank's losses from regulators and investors.

Regulators took over Lincoln-based TierOne in 2010, saying the bank had too many bad loans on its books and lacked sufficient capital to cushion losses. Lundstrom testified at his trial that he never knowingly provided false information to investors or federal regulators.

Lundstrom will remain free until he's sentenced on Feb. 24, possibly to decades in federal prison.

## Tank Explosion At Ag Plant Kills Man

VOLGA (AP) — A Brandon man is dead after an explosion at a soybean plant in Volga.

The Brookings County Sheriff's Office says the blast happened Thursday afternoon at the South Dakota Soybean Processing plant as workers were installing catwalk structures to access the tops of storage tanks.

Thirty-nine-year-old welder Randy Satter was working at the top of a tank when it exploded, killing him.

The cause of the explosion was not immediately determined. The federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the state Fire Marshal's Office and the state Division of Criminal Investigation are helping in the investigation.

## NE Affirms Conviction In Baby's Death

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — The Nebraska Supreme Court has affirmed the conviction and lengthy sentence of an Omaha woman for the 2013 killing of a 4-month-old baby in her care.

Sarah Cullen was convicted last year of intentional child abuse resulting in the death of Cash Bell and was sentenced to 70 years to life in prison. Doctors said the baby had been violently shaken.

In her appeal, Cullen primarily argued that evidence of the baby's prior injuries while in her care should have been excluded from her trial. She also argued that her sentence was excessive.

On Friday, the high court rejected all of her arguments, saying her sentence was within the range allowed by law and that evidence of the baby's prior injuries helped prove Cullen's actions were intentional, rather than simply negligent.

## Rubio Picks Up Rep. Noem Endorsement

PIERRE (AP) — Republican Marco Rubio's campaign says U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem has endorsed the Florida U.S. senator's presidential bid.

In a statement from Rubio's campaign Friday, Noem says Rubio represents the kind of "next-generation conservative leader" that puts Republicans in the best position to win back the White House.

She says Rubio stands out in the Republican field because of his ability to articulate his vision for the country.

Rubio is a first-term senator. Noem is the second member of South Dakota's all-GOP delegation to endorse in the race. Sen. Mike Rounds has endorsed Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

## Retired Railroad Worker To Run In NE

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A retired railroad worker has announced a bid for an open seat in the Nebraska Legislature, representing parts of Lincoln and rural Lancaster County.

Rick Vest is seeking the seat held by state Sen. Ken Haar of Malcolm, who is leaving office in January 2017 because of term limits.

Vest retired in January from BNSF Railway, where he worked as an apprentice and later in the company's general claims department.

Vest earned a degree in human relations from Doane College. He says that, if elected, he would focus on supporting public schools, early childhood development, and the state's criminal justice and mental health system. Vest is a registered Democrat.

Lincoln attorney Mike Hilgers, a registered Republican, is also seeking the seat.

## Mall Gets New Property & Mall Managers

PIERRE (AP) — The mall in Pierre is getting new property managers and a fresh mall manager.

KCCR-AM reports that Pierre company Midwest Construction and Development has bought the Pierre Mall from California-based Sequoia Capital Investments.

Midwest has hired a former Pierre Chamber of Commerce employee as the new manager.

Tony Jockheck says he has plans for the mall such as making upgrades to the parking lot. He says he is excited about the position.

The current businesses will remain once Midwest takes over.

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