



South Dakota Hunters Unfazed

RAPID CITY (AP) Hunting enthusiasts attending an annual fundraising banquet in southwestern South Dakota said they are not worried about a sharp drop in pheasant numbers. The Rapid City Journal reports that a brood count survey released by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department two weeks ago estimated a 64 percent drop in the pheasant population. The season begins on Oct. 19 and runs through Jan. 5. Some speculate those numbers could change plans of thousands of hunters who visit every year and contribute to South Dakota's economy. However, many outdoors enthusiasts at the Black Hills chapter of Pheasants Forever banquet Saturday said the event is more about tradition and fun than numbers. "People don't come to get X amount of pheasants,"

said Terry Hulm, Pheasants Forever chapter vice president. "They come to enjoy South Dakota and have fun. Most of these outings are with buddies you only see that time of the year. I look forward to it for that reason more than the birds sometimes." A state report attributes the decline to weather and a reduction in habitat. But officials said South Dakota will remain one of the top destinations in the country with 1.1 million acres of public land available within the state's main pheasant range. "I'm still going to get my birds," Jerry Cole of Rapid City said. "You're just going to have to work for it this year. Three years ago, a person could go out and get their limit by 1 p.m. Now it will probably take all day."

Tagged Lake Oahe Salmon: From Silver to Gold

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department is asking anglers to assist in an evaluation into how stocking salmon at different locations might improve survival and catches, and anglers could earn \$100 or more in the process.

GFP is encouraging anglers to turn in heads of tagged Chinook salmon caught on Lake Oahe and the Oahe Tailwaters.

"Research projects are underway evaluating salmon return to anglers. Reporting of tagged salmon by anglers is a crucial part of the research," GFP Fisheries Biologist Robert Hanten said.

According to Hanten, thousands of specially-tagged Chinook salmon have been stocked in Lake Oahe and implanted with small, coded-wire tags, only a millimeter long and the diameter of human hair. Although tags cannot be seen by anglers, tagged fish can be identified by the absence of a tiny fin on

their back.

"Salmon have a small fleshy-lobed adipose fin directly in front of their tail, but this fin is removed as part of the tagging process," Hanten said. "If anglers catch a salmon missing the adipose fin, we would like them to turn in the fresh or frozen head of that salmon at the GFP Fort Pierre District Office, Oahe Marina, Spring Creek Resort and Deep Water Marina, Carl's Bait Shop or West Whitlock Recreation Area."

Information on where and when a salmon was caught, along with the angler's address and phone number, must be included when submitting salmon heads. In addition, a coded-wire tag must be found in the head of the fish by GFP staff to result as an entry in the contest.

"Even though every salmon missing an adipose fin was implanted with a coded-wire tag, some fish lose their tags during hatchery rearing,

meaning not all fish caught by anglers without an adipose fin will contain a tag," said Hanten.

Ten \$100 rewards will be issued each calendar year, with a maximum of three rewards per person per year. The annual drawing for winners of the \$100 prizes will occur by Jan. 1.

For more information, visit: <http://gfp.sd.gov/fishing-boating/salmon-tags.aspx>, write to the Fort Pierre District Office, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Fort Pierre, SD 57532 or call 605.223.7681.

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Auctioned License Funds SD Bighorn Sheep Recovery

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) Money from an auctioned bighorn sheep hunting license will be used in an effort to rebuild the bighorn population in South Dakota's Black Hills. A South Dakota resident paid \$102,000 for a bighorn sheep hunting tag. KOTA-TV reports that Rip Rippentrop of the Midwest Wild Sheep Foundation says the goal is to use the money to buy more sheep for the Black Hills, where the sheep population has declined. Rippentrop says some areas are being prepared for bighorn sheep. He says the sheep population is dropping because of pneumonia and mountain lions. Rippentrop says money from the auctioned license could help bring new bighorn sheep back into the area.

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