

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH SDCTWS POSITION ON  
THE PRIVATIZATION OF WILDLIFE  
IN SOUTH DAKOTA

- Whereas, Our definition of privatization is “the ability or practice of private groups of individuals to dictate or control the access and/or utilization of public and private lands, waters, and/or fish and wildlife resources, and subsequent to this control, the state is obligated to transfer it’s trust responsibilities over public wildlife resources to private groups or parties,” and
- Whereas, It is legally vested that the state of South Dakota, by statute, maintains ownership, dominion and control of public wildlife and that this wildlife shall always, and under all circumstances, remain the property of the state unless such ownership is specifically relinquished as provided by SDCL 41-1-3, and
- Whereas, South Dakota Statutes specifically recognize and define “wild animals”, “big game”, “small game”, and “migratory waterfowl” without distinction or reference to their origin either domestically reared or raised by wild parentage, and
- Whereas, The public administration, management, control and conservation of wildlife resources, in direct contradiction to the European Principle, has proven over the past 50 years, to be best suited to address all issues of public use, enjoyment and involvement with wildlife in South Dakota (a.k.a. access to), and
- Whereas, Prior to the advent of public administration of wildlife management species such as the passenger pigeon, american bison, giant canada geese, white-tailed deer, Audubon bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, elk, wild turkey, and other indigenous wildlife species were exploited to the point of near or complete extinction, and
- Whereas, The advent of publicly supported management of fish and wildlife resources has resulted in reestablishment of viable populations of species such as white-tailed deer, giant canada geese, pronghorn antelope, elk, wild turkey, and
- Whereas, Privatization of wildlife, by its very nature and intent, places private enterprise economics above all other traditional wildlife values by marketing and selling public wildlife and imposing upon the public, a fee for the use of a resource that is already granted to the public in common and legislated law, and
- Whereas, Our definition of commercialization is, “the sale, trade, exchange, or barter of access to free ranging, public fish and wildlife resources by private groups or individuals,” and

Whereas, The SDCTWS recognizes that some land management practices resulting from commercial endeavors on private lands benefit wildlife resources, it neither endorses nor disapproves of such operations and the unregulated commercialization of public fish and wildlife resources may eventually lead to privatization.

Therefore be it resolved, that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, at its annual meeting assembled this third day of March 1989 at Pierre, South Dakota, stands opposed to the concept and practice of wildlife privatization or any proposal that places any control of public fish and wildlife resource in the hands of the private sector.

Be it further resolved, that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society urges the South Dakota Legislature, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and all other public minded organizations concerned with the welfare of wild, free roaming wildlife in South Dakota, to maintain vigilance in opposition to the concepts of "Privatization of wildlife" as herein defined, by adopting laws, rules, policies, and procedures that are consistent with the laws herein referred to and strictly interpreted.

Be it further resolved, that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society hereby recognizes that landowners contribute greatly to the well being of wildlife and the recreational opportunities afforded by these wild creatures to the citizens and guests of this democratic state, and while the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society stands opposed to privatization of wildlife as stated above, we certainly recognize and appreciate all that landowners have historically provided to the benefit of these natural resources and to the benefit of the public.