

SOUTH DAKOTA

The Pheasant Hunt Planner.

Seven sections of field knowledge from the guides at Rieger Creek. Everything you need to plan the trip, in one place.

01	The Season	Dates, limits, and what it means to hunt here.	P. 02
02	The License	Every license type, and how to buy.	P. 03
03	Weather	Averages, reality, and the forecast link.	P. 04
04	Gear & Packing	What we cover, what's at the lodge, what to pack.	P. 05
05	When You Arrive	Everything included, down to the details.	P. 06
06	Guides & Dogs	The people and the dogs who run your hunt.	P. 07
07	About & Book	Five generations on this land. How to book.	P. 08

01 / THE SEASON

The Season.

When you can hunt, and what a day on this ground actually looks like.

PRESERVE SEASON

Sept 1 to Mar 31

Sunrise to sunset

TRADITIONAL SEASON

3rd Sat October to Jan 31

10 AM CT to sunset • 3-rooster daily limit

We hunt a mix of preserve and non-preserve land across 7,000-plus acres. During traditional season, days flex between wild pheasants in the morning and preserve hunts in the afternoon, or whatever the conditions call for. The combination lets your group go past the state's three-bird daily limit on the days that warrant it. The guides build each day around the wind, the cover, what the birds did yesterday, and what your group wants.

EARLY SEASON

September to Mid-October

Preserve season is open. Mild weather, full cover, unpressured birds. Warm enough that afternoons can open up for half-day fishing or a round of golf. A good fit for mixed-experience groups.

Choke. Improved Cylinder. Birds hold tight, most flushes inside thirty yards. #5 shot.

MID SEASON

Late October to Mid-November

Traditional season opens. Birds get smarter, the cover changes, and the weather flips by the hour. The most variable stretch of the year, and a favorite for hunters who like reading conditions.

Choke. Modified. Flushes turn unpredictable, and a balanced choke serves the average shot well.

LATE & WINTER

Late November to January

Cold, sharp, concentrated. Fields bare out and birds bury in the thick cover. Demanding weather that rewards the prepared, and some of the most memorable days of the year.

Choke. Improved Modified to Full. Birds flush wild and fly hard, so shots run longer.

A DAY IN THE FIELD

Breakfast

Full breakfast in the lodge before you head out.

The plan

The guides read the wind and the cover at the truck.

In the field

Walk the cover, work the dogs, birds in the air.

Hearty lunch

In the field or back at the lodge, depending on the day.

Supper

Prime rib at the center of the table, the day retold.

No two days run the same. Shooting hours open at 10 AM Central in traditional season and at sunrise on the preserve.

Every license type is on [page 3](#). The full gear and packing list is on [page 5](#).

KNOW BEFORE YOU BUY

The License.

Knowledge of the licenses and preparing in advance can help you hit the ground running once you arrive. Every hunter here is a non-resident, so this is your list.

Small Game License (Adult 18+)

\$142

3RD SAT OCTOBER - JAN 31 • + \$25 HABITAT STAMP

- Traditional season hunting, and also covers licensed shooting preserves
- Valid for two separate five-day hunting periods
- Daily limit three rooster pheasants
- Also covers other small game (see SD GF&P)

Shooting Preserve License (5-Day)

\$96

SEPT 1 - MAR 31 • NO HABITAT STAMP NEEDED

- Preserve hunting only, on licensed shooting preserves, for five days
- Small game not included
- No traditional off-preserve wild bird hunting

Youth Small Game (Ages 12-17)

\$10

SAME SEASON WINDOWS AS THE ADULT LICENSE

- Same privileges as the adult small game license
- Includes both traditional and preserve hunting
- Hunter safety certificate required

Mentored Youth (Under 16)

\$10

FOR YOUTH WITHOUT HUNTER SAFETY YET

- Adult mentor must accompany, stay unarmed, and have had hunter safety
- Includes traditional and preserve hunting
- No minimum age under SD's mentored program

THE SMARTER WAY TO BUY

Hunting only the preserve, or coming before the October opener? The five-day preserve license is all you need. It is cheaper and skips the habitat stamp. Hunting the wild season? The small game license covers both the wild birds and the preserve, so it is the only license to buy, plus the \$25 habitat stamp.

Some youth are required to complete hunter safety. We recommend it for everyone. A safe hunt is the fun kind.

HOW TO BUY, ONLINE IN ABOUT TEN MINUTES

- 1 Go to gooutdoorssouthdakota.com and create a mySD account.
- 2 Have your date of birth, last name, Social Security number, and a card ready.
- 3 Select **Buy Fish / Hunt Licenses** on the home page.
- 4 Pick your license, preserve or small game, and enter a start date.
- 5 Check out from the cart in the upper right corner.
- 6 Download the Go Outdoors SD app and keep your phone on you for verification in the field.

Do it before you travel, not at the lodge. Booking a group? **Christine can license everyone at once.**

AN HONEST WORD

Weather Here Doesn't Follow Rules.

Hunters ask about the weather before they travel. It is a tough question to answer with a straight face. The numbers below are averages. **Pack like the forecast is a suggestion.** Central South Dakota can change fast. October can be 70 and sunny, or 30 with a north wind that cuts through everything you own. November through January can swing 40 degrees in a single day. We have watched hunters borrow Steve's snow pants because they showed up in shorts. The ones who stay comfortable layer right, they do not just pack the heaviest coat.

NOAA's Selby Seven-Day. The forecast Steve checks as a farmer is NOAA's local point forecast. Go to forecast.weather.gov and search Selby, SD. More reliable than most apps. Bookmark it before you pack.

BY THE SEASON • AVERAGES

EARLY • SEPT TO MID-OCT

Highs in the low 60s to mid 70s, lows in the upper 30s to mid 40s. A single day can swing 40 degrees. The mildest stretch of the season, though October mornings in the low 20s are possible.

LATE • LATE NOV TO MID-DEC

Highs in the mid 20s to low 40s, lows in the teens to low 20s. Fields are baring out, snow cover becomes possible, and wind chill makes things meaningfully colder.

MID • LATE OCT TO MID-NOV

Highs in the low 40s to upper 50s, lows in the mid 20s to upper 30s. The most variable stretch. Frosty 25-degree mornings and 65-degree afternoons in the same week.

WINTER • LATE DEC TO JAN

Highs in the 20s to 30s, lows from zero to twelve. Wind chill on the open plains can push feels-like below zero. Snow cover is likely. Concentrated birds, short days.

SHOW UP READY

Gear & Packing.

What you pack, what comes with your hunt, and what is waiting at the lodge. Print this page and check it off.

☐ PACK THIS YOURSELF ☒ IN YOUR PACKAGE ☐ AT THE LODGE

An open box means you bring it. A filled box means we provide it: dark red comes in your package, gold is waiting at the lodge.

CLOTHING & LAYERING

- ☐ **Moisture-wicking upper base layer, at least 2** *the kind that wicks perspiration*
- ☐ **Moisture-wicking lower base layer, 1 to 2 pairs** *thickness depends on the weather*
- ☐ **Socks, at least 4 pair** *midweight, moisture-wicking*
- ☐ **Insulating upper layers, light fleece or wool** *plan on about four upper-body layers so you can add and shed as the day swings. Skip cotton, wet cotton means cold*
- ☐ **Lightweight long-sleeve top** *early season 70s to 80s days. Guards your arms in the brush, doubles as a base layer*

OUTERWEAR

- ☐ **Fleece or sweatshirt** *works as an outer layer on a nice fall day*
- ☐ **Upland pants, 2 pair** *sand and cockle burrs live in these fields. Chaps are an option*
- ☐ **Outer layer, waterproof and windproof jacket and pants** *your most important piece besides boots. Rain, snow, dewy mornings. Add insulation if the forecast looks really chilly*
- ☐ **Rain shell, jacket and pants** *if rain is in the forecast*
- ☐ **Shooting gloves, 2 pair** *thin leather like deerskin or goatskin for dexterity and briar protection. Add a thin wool or fleece liner for late-season cold. Fit matters most, snug enough to feel the trigger*
- ☐ **Boots, waterproof, broken in** *lighter early, more insulated later. No snake boots needed*

FIELD & GEAR

- ☐ **Shotgun, 12 or 20 gauge** *rentals at the lodge*
- ☒ **Ammunition, field and trap loads #5 shot for 12 and 20 gauge**
- ☐ **Shell vest, preferably blaze orange** *at the lodge*
- ☐ **Blaze orange hat or beanie**
- ☐ **Shooting glasses** *we expect you to wear them, free at the lodge*
- ☐ **Hearing protection** *free at the lodge*
- ☐ **Neck gaiter and ear-warming headband** *for cold forecasts*
- ☐ **Hand and toe warmers**

OTHER

- ☐ **Soft-sided cooler for frozen birds home** *we have them at the lodge, take one*
- ☐ **Hunting license** *gooutdoorssouthdakota.com, see page 3*

WHAT'S COVERED

When You Arrive.

You bring your gun and your crew. We handle everything else. Then there's the smaller stuff, the kind of detail you don't realize matters until it does.

LODGING

The Rieger Creek Den. 10,000 square feet, sleeps up to 25 between The Theatre Wing, The Prairie Suites, The Station, and The Granary. Seventeen rooms, not a bunk-bed setup. High-end finishes throughout.

FIELD TRANSPORTATION

Personal vehicles aren't needed during the hunt. Lodge buses and guide vehicles handle the run to and from hunting locations, dogs included. Bring your own vehicle if mobility calls for it.

BIRD PROCESSING

Cleaning, processing, and vacuum-packaging included. Birds go home ready to cook. Soft-sided coolers or insulated boxes available for the flight home.

MEALS

Three meals a day. Full breakfast in the lodge, a hearty lunch, and supper as the centerpiece: prime rib, local ingredients, some grown right on the farm. Dietary requests handled in advance.

GUIDES & DOGS

Professional guides exclusively for your group. Trained upland bird dogs work the hunt. Bring your own dog if you'd like, just give us a heads up.

PRO SHOP & TAXIDERMY *(additional fees apply)*

Jackets, vests, hats, and gear available at the lodge. Need something specific? Call Christine ahead. Taxidermy is coordinated and shipped to your address after the season.

ALREADY AT THE LODGE • THE COMMON SPACES

High-speed Wi-Fi and premium TV channels throughout. Stocked bar. 24-hour fitness center. Infrared sauna and massage chair. Heated outdoor fire pit and indoor gas fireplaces. Pool, ping pong, darts, corn hole, poker table. Free access to the local golf course, carts and clubs included.

OTHER

Private bathroom with toiletries. Sound machine on the nightstand. USB ports next to every bed. Bottled water. Twenty-plus private lockers, each with its own boot dryer. Guest laundry on-site. Gun cleaning station with tools and oil. Dog kennels on request. Using a CPAP? Tell Christine in advance and a gallon of distilled water will be waiting.

FIELD NOTES

Guides & Dogs.

Justin Baumann and Todd Wientjes have more than fifteen seasons here between them. JB has been head guide since the very beginning, with over seventeen years on this land. Todd joined in 2018 and is closing in on a decade himself. Returning groups know them by name. New groups will too, usually by the first morning.

01

Listen to the morning brief.

The talk at the truck before you walk matters more than most hunters realize. Where we're hunting, the wind, what the birds did yesterday. It changes outcomes.

02

Stay in the line.

When one or two hunters drift out of formation, birds slip out the back. The line works because everyone holds it.

03

Trust the dogs.

When a dog locks up, hold your position and wait for the flush. About 95 percent of retrieves come back through the dogs.

I don't think you're coming back year after year if you don't respect and love where you're going.

JUSTIN BAUMANN, HEAD GUIDE

DOGS ARE FAMILY HERE

BRING YOUR OWN IN THE FIELD

You're welcome to bring your dog. Let your guide know in advance so we can plan. A trained dog in good shape will have the time of its life on land like this. Out-of-state dogs need a current health certificate before travel.

IN THE LODGE

Dogs are welcome in the lodge. Kennels are available on request if you'd prefer.

IF YOU BRING YOUR OWN

If you bring your dog, it hunts with your group and your guide. The guides' dogs handle the rest, and most retrieves come back through them.

IF YOU'RE NOT BRINGING ONE

Our guides bring well-trained upland bird dogs to every hunt. You won't be missing a thing.

FAMILY OWNED. VETERAN OWNED.

History Still Lives Here.

The Rieger Creek Den sits on land the Sawinsky family has homesteaded since the 1880s, nearly 150 years. **Steve still farms that same ground, the fourth generation on it.** Alongside him are his wife Christine, a U.S. veteran, and their daughter Jayda, the fifth generation to work this land.

The building has lived several lives of its own. It started as a wooden granary on the creek. When that was outgrown, Christine saw something in the old Star Theater on Historic Main Street in Selby. Built in the 1950s, it had been a movie house, a restaurant, and a bar, and through the eighties a music venue that pulled people in from across the counties to hear the bands. Rather than let it fall down, she restored it, and the original brick and ceiling became the heart of what is now a 10,000-square-foot lodge.

History still lives here. In the generations still working this land, and in a building shaped by every era it has passed through. Steve keeps improving the ground, Christine keeps improving the lodge, and neither of them is done. Come make a little history of your own.



Book Your Hunt.

Most hunters book with a phone call. Christine handles every booking personally. Tell her your group size and the dates you're considering, and she'll find the right fit. Flying in? Mobridge Municipal is about 20 minutes out for private or charter flights. For commercial, Aberdeen is closest at about an hour and fifteen, Pierre about an hour forty, and Bismarck about two hours but with the most airline options. Pickup can be arranged.

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