



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 6, 2018

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Iowa citizens playing key role in tracking imperiled wildlife

It's 10 o'clock on a summer night along a gravel road anywhere in Iowa. In the farm pond next to the road a raucous chorus of male frogs are making themselves heard as they vie for mates. A volunteer stands clipboard in hand, ear cocked, mentally sorting out each of the calling species which are using this seemingly ordinary pond.

Skip over to a Saturday morning by a river where another volunteer has binoculars and a spotting scope trained on the tallest tree in the vicinity. In this tree is a huge nest, home to two bald eagles and their young. A peaceful hour is spent watching one of the most spectacular birds in North America.

Every year, all across Iowa, citizen scientists are making enormous contributions to wildlife conservation. Volunteers are trained through the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program (VWMP).

"The Volunteer Wildlife Monitoring Program provides an opportunity for adults who love the outdoors and wildlife to be directly involved with the conservation and monitoring of Iowa's resources. The work done is crucial to the well-being of these species," said Stephanie Shepherd, wildlife biologist with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) wildlife diversity program.

Every March and April, Iowa DNR staff travel the state leading training workshops, readying folks to collect data on some of Iowa's critical wildlife. So what are these critical wildlife species?

One training workshop focuses on some of Iowa's more spectacular bird species such as bald eagles, ospreys and peregrine falcons. Volunteers are taught how to collect data on specific nesting sites around the state and submit pertinent data such as how many young birds fledge.

“This data collection requires lots of patience and some good optics in order to watch the nest from a distance and not disturb the birds,” Shepherd said. Last year volunteers reported on more than 100 bald eagle nests across the state.

The second survey requires a keen ear.

Volunteers are trained to listen to and recognize the 16 species of frogs and toads in Iowa based on their breeding calls. In 2016, volunteers covered 55 survey routes which translate into roughly 400 wetland sites monitored for frog and toad activity.

“The frog and toad surveyors are particularly special because they have to drive back country roads at night along an identified route to perform the survey. I think most feel that exploring the Iowa wilds at night is a unique experience and opportunity,” Shepherd said.

Interested volunteers must register for and attend a training workshop. The Iowa DNR is partnering with the Iowa, Woodbury and Winnebago County conservation boards to host the following workshops.

Bird Nest Monitoring Workshops

Anyone interested in being a Bald Eagle Nest Monitor must participate in some training.

March 17

In Forest City, hosted by the Winnebago County Conservation Board. The location will be announced soon.

12:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Frog and Toad Call Survey Workshops

Workshop is required to participate in the Frog and Toad Call Survey.

April 10

Nature Center at Lake Iowa Park, hosted by Iowa County Conservation Board

6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

April 12

Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center near Sioux City, hosted by Woodbury County Conservation Board

6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

There is a \$5 fee to cover workshop materials. For more information, go to <http://www.iowadnr.com/vwmp/> or e-mail vwmp@dnr.iowa.gov

Ice fishing shelters must be removed by Feb. 20

DES MOINES – Permanent ice shelters must be removed from all state-owned lands and waters by Feb. 20. Ice shelter owners are encouraged not to wait until the last minute to get their shelter off the ice. If a shelter falls through the ice, the owner is responsible for getting it out of the lake.

Family trout fishing event Saturday at Bondurant

BONDURANT – A family trout fishing event will be held at Lake Petocka, in Bondurant, at noon on Feb. 10. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will stock 1,400 rainbow trout in the lake. Previously scheduled for Jan. 27, the stocking was postponed due to unsafe ice conditions.

Anglers must have a valid fishing license and pay the trout fee to fish for or possess trout. The daily limit is five trout per licensed angler with a possession limit of 10. Children age 15 or younger can fish for trout with a properly licensed adult, but they must limit their catch to one daily limit. The child can buy a trout fee which will allow them to catch their own limit of five trout.

The free event is sponsored by the City of Bondurant and the Iowa DNR.

Media Contact: Ben Dodd, Fisheries Biologist, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 515-432-2823.

DNR confirms Altoona location as site for Feb. 21 listening session on fall hunting and trapping regulations

Des Moines - The Iowa Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the Hy-Vee store in Altoona as the final location for the wildlife rules public meeting on February 21. The meeting provides a setting for the DNR to listen to the public's thoughts on hunting and trapping regulations for this fall.

These meetings are part of the process for making rules in state government. The meeting is from 6 to 9 p.m.

“Any rule changes must be discussed with Iowa's citizens who might be impacted by the changes before the rule changes are proposed. The process helps ensure that rule changes

serve the public's wishes and do not impact Iowa's economy," said Todd Bishop, chief of the wildlife bureau.

At each meeting DNR staff will facilitate a discussion about what went well last fall, what didn't, and what changes hunters and trappers would like to see for this fall.

These discussions along with the data that the wildlife bureau collects on harvest and population numbers will be used to develop recommendations for any rule changes. Any changes must be approved by the Natural Resource Commission and then go back to the public for further comment before taking effect next fall.

Meetings will be held in Altoona, Atlantic, Boone, Burlington, Calmar, Chariton, Council Bluffs, Creston, DeWitt, Knoxville, Lake View, Ottumwa, Peosta, Sheldon, Solon, Spencer, Tripoli and Ventura.

Complete locations are available online at www.iowadnr.gov

Any person attending the public meeting and has special requirements such as those related to mobility or hearing impairments should contact the DNR or ADA Coordinator at 515-725-8200, Relay Iowa TTY Service 800-735-7942, or Webmaster@dnr.iowa.gov, and advise of specific needs.

Feb. 21 wildlife listening session locations

- Altoona, Hy-Vee, 108 Eighth Street SW
- Atlantic, Iowa DNR office, 1401 Sunnyside Lane
- Boone, Iowa DNR research station, 1436 255th Street
- Burlington, Public Library, 210 Court St.
- Calmar, Northeast Iowa Community College Dairy Education Center, 1527 Hwy. 150 South, Site #1793 in Room 114
- Chariton, Iowa DNR research station, Red Hawk State Park, 24570 Hwy. 34 (White building at the Red Hawk Lake Dam)
- Council Bluffs, Fish and Game Club, 531 Comanche Street
- Creston, Southwestern Community College, 1501 West Townline, Room 180
- DeWitt, Central High School, Room 311 (near the auditorium)
- Knoxville, Red Rock Army Corps of Engineers headquarters, 1105 N Hwy. T15
- Lake View, Iowa DNR wildlife office, 116 South State Road
- Ottumwa, Ottumwa High School, 501 Second St E, Room 157
- Peosta, Northeast Iowa Community College, 8342 NICC Drive, Room 203
- Sheldon, Northwest Iowa Community College, 603 W Park Street, Building H, Room 519
- Solon, Middle School, 1775 Racine Ave. NE, Media Center
- Spencer, Iowa Lakes Community College - Spencer Campus, 1900 Grand Ave., Room 108B
- Tripoli, Tripoli High School, 209 Eighth Ave SW, ICN Room
- Ventura, Iowa DNR wildlife office, 15326 Balsam Ave.